

BLM Desert District Advisory Council
Dumont Dunes Subgroup Minutes
March 11, 2014

Meeting was held in the BLM Barstow Field Office in Barstow, CA.

1. Call to Order and Pledge

Meeting was called to order by William Presch, Chair, and he led the subgroup in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Introduction of Attendees

Dumont Dunes Subgroup Members:

William Presch, Biological/Science, Chair
Terry Allen, Nevada Off-Highway Vehicle enthusiasts, Vice Chair (attended via phone)
Randy Banis, DAC Member
Ed Waldheim, Off-Highway Vehicle interests
John Dagleish, Friends of Dumont Dunes
Andy Silva, San Bernardino County
Brian Brown, Local Community

BLM and Public:

Patrick Chassie, Chief Ranger, Barstow BLM
Katrina Symons, Field Manager, Barstow BLM
Eric Downard, Supervisory Forestry Technician, CA Desert District BLM
Kari Hunter, Friends of Jawbone/Friends of El Mirage
Vern Biehl, Transition Habitat Conservancy
Jill Bays, Transition Habitat Conservancy

3. Agenda

The agenda was presented by William Presch and approved by consent.

4. Minutes

Minutes from November 19, 2013 meeting were previously distributed to members, no changes noted. The meeting minutes were approved by consent.

5. Business

California State Parks, Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division Grant Applications

- Copies of the Dumont Dunes Ground Operations grant application were provided to meeting participants. The road groom proposed by Terry Allen at the November 2013 Dumont Dunes Subgroup meeting was included in the grant application.

- Copies of other grant applications were available for review by Friends of Jawbone, Friends of El Mirage, and the Amargosa Land Trust.
- Meeting participants were encouraged to submit comments on all of the OHMVR grant applications no later than April 7, 2014.

Dumont Dunes Holidays for the 2014-2015 OHV Season

- The Dumont Dunes holiday schedule for 2014-2015 was discussed and the following dates were accepted:
 - Halloween (including Nevada Days): October 28 to November 3, 2014
 - Thanksgiving: November 25 to December 1, 2014
 - New Year's: December 30 to January 5, 2015
 - Martin Luther King (MLK): January 14 to January 20, 2015
 - President's Day: February 11 to February 17, 2015
- For the holiday schedule, Incident Action Plans (IAP) will be prepared. Emergency medical services (EMS) staff will typically be available Friday-Monday. This proposed staffing schedule is based upon review of EMS records.
- Road grading work should be completed on the Monday or Tuesday BEFORE the holidays, rather than the Friday.

FY 14 Dumont Dunes Visitation, Revenue, Emergency Medical Services and Staffing

- Based on traffic counter information to date, the visitation to Dumont Dunes is about ½ that of the past four years.
- Currently reconciling records for the Recreation Use Permits sold by vendors. The revenue information for FY14 will be available at the end of season meeting in June 2014.
- Baker Ambulance has helped BLM in providing EMS.
- To date, there has been one fatality which occurred prior to Nevada Days.
- The following are the BLM 2013-2014 Holiday EMS stats:
 - Nevada Days 10/25-10/28/2013: Total Calls: 8; # of ground transports: 3; # of air transports: 0; AMA's (against medical advice): 2; First Aid: 2; False Alarms: 1
 - Halloween 11/01-11/03/2013: Total Calls: 2; # of ground transports: 1; # of air transports: 1; AMA's (against medical advice): 0; First Aid: 0; False Alarms: 0
 - Thanksgiving 11/27-12/01/2013: Total Calls: 7; # of ground transports: 1; # of air transports: 1; AMA's (against medical advice): 3; First Aid: 2; False Alarms: 0; Public Assist: 1
 - New Year's 12/27-01/01/2014: Total Calls: 3; # of ground transports: 1; # of air transports: 0; AMA's (against medical advice): 0; First Aid: 2; False Alarms: 0
 - Martin Luther King 01/17-01/20/2014: Total Calls: 0; # of ground transports: 0; # of air transports: 0; AMA's (against medical advice): 0; First Aid: 0; False Alarms: 0; Public Assist: 3
 - Presidents Day 02/14-02/17/2014: Total Calls: 10; # of ground transports: 4 (1 transport with 2 patients); # of air transports: 1 (with 2 patients); AMA's (against medical advice): 5; First Aid: 1; False Alarms: 0
- John stated that EMS does a good job and provides "peace of mind" by being on-site
- The BLM budget continues to be tight with a projected downward trend of 5-7% annually. Given the budget projection, the Barstow Field Office has not been able to fill vacancies.

There will be another opportunity to refresh the workforce plan in the spring/summer of 2014. Given current staffing levels, work on the Dumont Dunes Business Plan will be postponed for the remainder of this fiscal year. The Business Plan schedule will be assessed during the development of the annual work plan for FY15. BLM understands the Dumont Dunes Subgroup's desire to complete a new plan in a timely manner.

29 Palms Expansion/Johnson Valley OHV Recreation Area

- On February 11, 2013, the United States Marine Corps (USMC) issued its Record of Decision selecting Final Environmental Impact Statement Alternative 6 for the proposed withdrawal and expansion of Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC), Twentynine Palms, California. The proposed withdrawal area consisted of public lands to the west and south of the current installation including portions of the former Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area. Congress modified Alternative 6 enabling the USMC to conduct Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) level live-fire training while increasing the amount of land available for recreational use in the Shared Use Area (SUA). The modification also designated Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area which includes the SUA. The legislation was signed into law by the President on December 26, 2013, and is cited as the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 (Act).

The Act authorized the withdrawal and reservation of public lands located adjacent to the current MCAGCC, consisting of approximately 151,000 acres, to be divided as follows:

- Approximately 79,000 acres to the west of the MCAGCC, and approximately 19,000 acres to the south of the MCAGCC, are designated an Exclusive Military Use Area (EMUA) to be managed by the Secretary of the Navy for: (1) sustained, combined arms, live-fire, and maneuver field training for large-scale Marine air ground task forces; (2) individual and unit live-fire training ranges; (3) equipment and tactics development; (4) other defense related purposes consistent with the preceding uses, and changes in use authorized by Section 2914 of the Act.
- Approximately 53,000 acres is designated a SUA to be managed by the Secretary of the Interior for public recreation during any period in which the land is not being used for military training and as determined to be suitable for public use, as well as natural resources conservation. For two 30-day periods per year, the SUA will be used and managed by the Secretary of the Navy for military training. Two company objective areas (approximately 22 acres each) to be used exclusively by the Secretary of the Navy for military training, will also be located in the SUA. The Act prohibits the firing of dud-producing ordnance into the SUA and provides for the use of small, static, short range explosives in the two company objective areas.
- The SUA together with approximately 43,000 acres to the west of the authorized MCAGCC withdrawal boundary has been designated the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area, totaling approximately 96,000 acres.

Private and State land to be acquired by the Department of the Navy and included in the MCAGCC withdrawal boundary consists of:

- Approximately 9,000 acres to the west in the EMUA. The combined acreage of the lands to be acquired and the withdrawn and reserved public lands in the EMUA is approximately 88,000 acres.
- Approximately 3,000 acres in the SUA. The combined acreage of the lands to be acquired and withdrawn and reserved public lands in the SUA is approximately 56,000 acres.

Member Items

- Desert Advisory Council accepted the Dumont Dunes Subgroup's recommended resolution to reinstate the Memorandum of Understanding for Law Enforcement with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department (SBCSD).
- Law Enforcement (LE) Ranger presence seemed "heavy" over President's Day. There were approximately eight LE Rangers at the entrance gate on Monday. Recommend review of LE staffing plans for the 2014-2015 Holiday Schedule to ensure staffing levels are appropriate for the number of visitors. No complaints about LE Ranger attitudes this fiscal year.
- Senator Feinstein will likely introduce another Desert Protection Act
- Work proceeding on a hiking and equestrian trail/trailhead along the Amargosa River
- The Soda Mountain Solar Final Environmental Impact Statement is tentatively scheduled for release in summer 2014.
- The Silurian Valley Solar public meeting on the variance process is scheduled for March 27, 2014.
- Stateline Solar will be voted on by the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors this afternoon.

6. Upcoming Meetings

- Desert Advisory Council Meeting on May 9-10, 2014 in Needles, CA
- Dumont Dunes Subgroup Meetings at the Barstow Field Office from 10 AM to Noon on the following days: June 3, 2014 and September 9, 2014.