

**Bureau of Land Management  
Central California District Resource Advisory Council  
July 17-18, 2014  
El Dorado Hills, CA**

**Attendees:**

**RAC:** Reb Monaco (chair), Trent Rosenlieb, Mary Gorden, Blair Knox, Steve Evans, George Armstrong (phone), Sally Miller (phone), Matt Kingsley, Emmy Cattani.

**BLM:** Este Stifel, Reuben Leal, David Christy, Bill Haigh, Rich Burns, Rick Cooper, George Garcia, Steve Nelson

**Public:** Sixto Fernandez, CA State Parks Off-Highway Vehicle Division; Bob Schneider, Tuleyome; Jill Monaco.

Bill Haigh, Mother Lode Field Office Manager, welcomed the RAC to the field office.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** Sally Miller was elected RAC chair and Emmy Cattani was elected vice chair.

**INTRODUCTIONS/REMARKS:**

Action item: David Christy to send copy of Clear Creek testimony to Steve Evans.

Blair Knox asked what would happen when the CA Council on Science and Technology review on oil and gas well stimulation comes out. Este Stifel said the CCST review will be a public document and BLM will use it in its environmental reviews. The state is sponsoring a similar study under SB4.

**FIRE STATUS**

Matt Johnson, BLM Cencal District Fire Management Officer, said fuel moisture levels are about six weeks ahead of normal. There is the potential for large fires. Federal agencies have brought supplemental resources from the Rockies and Southwest to the West Coast. Oregon and Washington already are getting fires. The forecast through September calls for above normal temperatures and low humidity.

**FUTURE RAC MEETINGS**

David Christy said in past years the RAC had in-person meetings three or four times a year. Budgets are tight and there aren't adequate funds for that. It may be possible to hold two in-person meetings annually by meeting in the Sacramento area and not holding a field trip.

Reb Monaco said the RAC could become ineffective without some in-person meetings.

Mary Gorden said there was value in past meetings where the RAC met in person and visited sites on the ground.

Matt Kingsley said there should be at least two in-person meetings that should be run in the most economical way. Trent Rosenlieb and Steve Evans agreed there should be at least two in-person meetings.

Emmy Cattani said there is value in getting the RAC on the ground to see the lands BLM manages. Sally Miller said she learned a lot on the Case Mountain tour. George Armstrong said the RAC needs to visit areas in addition to meetings. If the full RAC can't attend, RAC representatives could go and report back.

Bob Schneider, a former Northwest CA RAC member, said there should be two in-person meetings.

David Christy asked about videoconference meetings versus conference calls. Both methods had been used. RAC members preferred videoconferences, possibly as a way to discuss an important topic and fill in between in-person meetings.

Potential videoconference topics identified are: oil and gas, Lake Berryessa, Berryessa-Snow Mountain National Conservation Area, sage grouse, Alabama Hills

### **SUBGROUPS/STANDING AGENDA ITEMS**

**Alabama Hills:** There is local interest in a National Landscape Conservation System designation. Matt Kingsley said he has heard interest from other communities in how Lone Pine formed the Alabama Hills group.

**Off-Highway Vehicles:** Reb Monaco said the OHV community is a diverse group. The original focus of the OHV Subgroup was new areas, but that shifted to Clear Creek Management Area.

Rich Burns said the subgroup could help with OHV grants. The Ukiah Field Office has two OHV areas, Cow Mountain and Knoxville, that receive a lot of use. The Northwest RAC helped the field office with a fee proposal and plan. The field office also is looking at a potential OHV area near Fort Bragg.

RAC members discussed who would take ownership of the subgroup from the RAC perspective. Sally Miller suggested OHV be made a standing agenda item, but not a standing subgroup. RAC members voted to make OHV a standing agenda item, not a subgroup, and form subgroups for specific issues such as the Temblors.

**Temblors:** Blair Knox said work on the Temblors is waiting for the outcome of the Bakersfield Resource Management plan. OHV use in the area will need to be compatible with oil and gas production. Gabe Garcia said BLM would like to see a public meeting on the issue in the fall after the RMP is signed. One meeting was held 1 ½ - 2 years ago.

### **CALIFORNIA COASTAL NATIONAL MONUMENT**

David Ledig, the new monument manager, gave an overview of the monument which includes 30,000 rocks totaling 1,000 acres along the California Coast.

### **OIL AND GAS**

Gabe Garcia and Rick Cooper said the proposed national rule is at the Office of Management and Budget and contains changes from the earlier draft. It has more local flexibility. In California, BLM and the state use whichever regulation is the more stringent, whether state or federal. BLM is asking for more information from operators

Bob Schneider asked if the Central Valley Water Control Board coordinated. Gabe Garcia said it did.

Gabe Garcia said the Energy Information Administration had reduced the amount of recoverable oil in the Monterey Shale from 15 billion barrels to 600 million barrels.

### **UKIAH FIELD OFFICE**

Rich Burns, field office manager, gave an overview

**Fire and Fuel Projects** – The Ukiah field Office working with CalFire implemented the Mill Creek Vegetative Management Plan Fuels Project covering approximately 1374 acres on North Cow Mountain. The project was a huge success and objectives were met.

Already there have been 3 large significant fires within the Ukiah Resource Area; Butts fire (501 acres) Indian Fire (160 acres) and the Monticello Fire (no BLM Acres but close). There have been numerous small fires of 25 acres or less. The Butts fire has been the most significant due to its location to the Berryessa Estates subdivision. BLM and CalFire implemented fire break projects in this area which were very effective in controlling the fire.

**OHV Grant Funding** – The Field Office received all it asked for in OHV funding after the grant was reevaluated. For 2014 the Ukiah Field Office requested \$133,000 in LEO grant funding, \$158,000 in Operations and Maintenance funding, and \$50,000 in restoration funding for Cow Mountain (Chalk Mountain).

**Knoxville** – Though we have hit some more bumps, the land exchange with Homestake Mining Corporation is scheduled to be accomplished in 2014. Deferred maintenance funding has been received to repair the low water crossing over Hunting Creek in 2014. Work continues with the NRA to identify specific areas within the Knoxville region to be available for shooting.

**Cow Mountain** –The Field Office has completed the draft Cow Mountain Recreation Area Management Plan (CowRAMP). A component of the plan is the route inventory which has also been completed. As with Knoxville, the Field Office is working with the NRA to designate additional areas for shooting sports.

**Mount Konocti/Black Forest** –The Field Office should complete the land exchange in 2014.

**Walker Ridge Wind** – AltaGas continues to stay involved with a 67 megawatt wind energy development project for Walker Ridge. It is unforeseen at this time when a draft EIS for the Walker Ridge Wind project would be available for public review. BLM is waiting for AltaGas to provide cost recovery funding to complete the work being requested by the company.

**Cache Creek** – We are totally indebted to our partners, volunteers, and friends who have stepped forward to help us maintain the Cache Creek natural Area. The Eagle Scouts of Woodland, CA just completed the building and installation of a new kiosk at the trail head of Frog Pond Trail. Tuleyome completed 19 miles of weed monitoring and eradication along Cache Creek. Work continues with habitat improvement and riparian restoration projects being done by UC Davis throughout the Natural Area.

**Stornetta Brothers Coastal Ranch-Point Arena Ranch/California Coastal National Monument (CCNM)** – A local grassroots effort turned into huge results. President Obama signed the Proclamation on March 11, 2014 creating the first mainland portion of the California Coastal National Monument. This location has received lots of press coverage including major national and international magazines. Discover the Coast will be held as an all-day event in Point Arena, CA on July 19.

**Cedar Roughs Wilderness** – BLM is still working with the Land Trust of Napa County on the acquisition of the in-holding within the Cedar Roughs Wilderness.

**Proposed Berryessa Snow Mountain National Conservation Area (NCA)** - BLM is providing assistance as requested. The Berryessa Snow Mountain National Conservation Area Act of 2013 was reintroduced by Representative Mike Thompson and co-sponsored by Representatives Jerrod Huffman and John Garamendi. According to organizations tracking the legislation, there is a movement to change Berryessa Snow Mountain from a proposed NCA to a National Monument.

**Lake Berryessa Proposed Land Transfer** – Congressman Mike Thompson introduced legislation (H.R. 4166) which would transfer the lands and management of Lake Berryessa from the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to BLM. The legislation went through the Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power in June, 2014. There are also discussions within the Department of a legislative transfer. The BLM is working with BOR to develop models on how a transition for Lake Berryessa could take place. Lake Berryessa is a very popular water based recreation destination located approximately 80 miles west of Sacramento in Napa County. The Lake has received over 2 million visitors/year. Under the current situation less than 400,000 annual visitors are going to the Lake.

**Geysers** –The Ukiah Field office is working with CalPine on the drilling of an additional well, geotechnical studies, and a potential pipeline expansion. Bottle Rock Power LLC is to develop a third pipeline to the Geysers where treated waste water from Lake County could be re-injected into the geothermal steam field. The Field Office is also accomplishing the Bureau's first geothermal permit renewals for 2 power plants.

**Marijuana Eradication Efforts** –The Field office is working in partnership with sheriff departments from Yolo, Colusa, Lake, and Mendocino Counties; along with National Guard assistance from Sacramento to clean up and rehabilitate another 19 individual garden sites scattered throughout the Ukiah region. It's looking like another big year for illegal marijuana cultivation.

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Steve Evans asked about possible funding sources for law enforcement. Bill Haigh said the Mother Lode Field Office receives about \$100,000 annually in fee and part of that goes to law enforcement. Some money from hydro relicensing also is used for law enforcement. Mother Lode has a strong partnership with all the sheriff's offices in the field office boundary.

Steve Evans said in addition to protecting public safety, adequate law enforcement also can allow BLM to avoid closures like the Kaweah River area.

### **MOTHER LODE FIELD OFFICE**

Bill Haigh reported a cost avoidance study on fuels treatment was released this year for the Mokelumne River watershed. The study found, based on fire risk and property values, that fuels treatment in the lower elevations where BLM land is located had the highest returns.

The Mother Lode office completed the first phase of burning piles generated by fuels treatment and timber harvest under the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group. Trees and brush have been thinned on 157 acres near the town of West Point using local contractors, including Native American crews. The project, done under a stewardship contract, generated approximately 5,000 tons of biomass and 160,000 board feet of timber.

Projects were completed at the Yuba River including weed eradication and a rock stairway at Cable Rock.

With its proximity to Sacramento, the Mother Lode office faces urban policing issues. A base jumper, Mike Wilson, strung a cable across the North Fort American River at Lovers Leap. The cable was cut down as a threat to aviation.

Mother Lode hosted a recreation work team during the summer. Mother Lode also replaced windows at the Davis Mill, a historic stamp mill near Nevada City.

At Pine Hill Preserve, a number of projects were carried out including native plant development, seed collection under the Seeds of Success program, research, fuels work and youth involvement.

The Cosumnes River Preserve has been awarded \$5.6 million in grants to do a variety of projects: Cougar Wetlands restoration (\$2,400,000), Bjelland Giant Garter Snake (\$670,000), Methyl mercury wetlands study (\$2,000,000), Lost Slough (\$175,000), boardwalk remodel (\$177,000), visitor center repair (\$185,000). Additional studies also are being conducted on the reintroduction of fire and mountain lions.

### **HOLLISTER FIELD OFFICE**

Rick Cooper provided an overview.

### **Fort Ord National Monument**

#### **Visitor Days**

Badger Hills Trailhead that was constructed during FY 2013 accounts for about 157,315 annual visits per year.

Creekside Terrace Trailhead that was constructed in FY 2006 accounts for about 135,488 annual visits per year.

All other access informal points account for an estimated 36,500 annual visits per year.

Total visitation is estimated at 329,303 annual visits per year.

#### **Recreation Events**

Fort Ord National Monument has a limit of 15 days of competitive recreation events where exclusive use of roads and trails is needed for safety purposes. To date, there has been 13 days of competitive event use on the Monument. This includes 10 days of mountain bike and road bike races, and 3 days of foot races. We expect during the fiscal year, all 15 days of competitive event use will be used by event promoters.

Special event use includes the Sea Otter Classic bike festival that brings around 100,000 visitors to the venue to watch the races and see that trade show. Other events include the High School State Mountain Bike Championship and Get Lost at Fort Ord (Rogaine Event).

## **Volunteer Days**

The National Monument staff is leading yet another busy volunteer effort and the number of volunteer events and participants is among the highest in the state. Last year, Monument staff led a volunteer effort that approached 10,000 hours of effort valued at nearly \$190,000. Many of the volunteers are school children through the BLM and CSUMB –led Return of the Natives Program.

## **Outreach/Schools**

The National Monument staff (led by Interpretive Specialist, Tammy Jakl), is leading another stellar year of outreach and environmental education at schools and other venues. To date, the Monument has led close to 200 outreach event activities which included dozens of visits to local elementary schools, earth day events, and other venues. Interpretive Specialist, Tammy Jakl, was recognized by the Monterey County Teachers Association for a special partner's award in April of 2014. The award thanks Tammy for her high quality programs that she provides students with across the region.

## **Upcoming events or milestones**

Many people will be surprised to learn that munitions clean up is still an ongoing activity on the Fort Ord National Monument. Half of the 14,650 acre National Monument is still administered by the Army and behind barbed wire fences while munitions clean up occurs. This land will likely be available for transfer to the BLM around the year 2020. The Army has recently released a Draft Final Remedial Investigation / Feasibility Study that calls for additional munitions clean up on property (referred to as "BLM Area B") that was transferred to the BLM in 1996. Some of this land will likely receive a prescribed burn by the Army in order to remove brush to facilitate the munitions clean up. While the land is being cleaned up, public closures will likely be enacted by the Army over some of the currently open National Monument lands for munitions safety purposes. Additional information may be found here:

<http://www.fortordcleanup.com/news-2/>

## Clear Creek Management Area Resource Management Plan 2014 Update

### Final Decision Summary

- Limit motorized use in ACEC to 5 days/year
- Limit pedestrian use in ACEC to 12 days/year
- Manage for non-motorized recreation opportunity in ACEC
- ACEC is limited to day use only

### Appeals to Decision

- Eleven (11) Appeals filed challenging the CCMA Record of Decision/Approved RMP.
  - San Benito County
  - CA OHV Commission
  - AMA D36, CERA, CORVA
  - Individuals (var.)

- IBLA denied three (3) Requests to Stay Decision.
- IBLA has dismissed two (2) of the eleven (11) appeals to date.
- Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) consolidated the remainder of appeals into one (1) case to review.

#### Implementation

- Limit motorized vehicles in ACEC to Highway-Licensed Vehicles
- Control Access with Gates on R1 and R11
- Establish a tiered permit system to enter the ACEC
- As of June 23, 2014, BLM has issued 458 permits for the ACEC. Currently BLM has been issuing permits over the counter and through email to individuals.
- Automated system is planned. BLM working through [Rec.gov](http://Rec.gov). Testing concluded June 30. Site will go live on August 27.

#### Travel and Transportation

- Entire Scenic Touring Route Network (32 miles) signed and graded.
- 2 mile access road to Condon Peak constructed and open to public as of 6/13/2014, allowing non-serpentine access to Condon Peak Management Zone.
- Planning for Travel and Transportation Cantua, Condon and Tucker Management Zones are tentatively planned for 2015.

#### OHV Trespass

- All fence lines in ACEC have been compromised, with the exception of welded pipe. Over \$75,000 estimated in labor and materials to fix fence damage.
- T/E Habitat in Upper Clear Creek Canyon has been adversely impacted by motorcycle use.
- Route proliferation continues to occur in the San Benito Mountain WSA and RNA, as well as the adjacent Joaquin Rocks ACEC.

### Panoche/Coalinga ACEC Resource Management Plan Amendment

#### Important components of RMP Amendment:

- BLM plans to amend the Hollister RMP land use decisions based upon new scientific information on threatened and endangered species in the San Joaquin Desert Hills planning area.
- The San Joaquin Desert Hills include core populations of threatened and endangered species identified in the Recovery Plan for Upland Species of the San Joaquin Valley (USRP) (USFWS 1998).
- For more than thirty years, BLM has pursued land acquisitions from willing sellers in the region to conserve habitat for threatened and endangered species. Funding for these purchases were contributed by the BLM, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and US

Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) through the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the \*\*\*Central Valley Project Conservation Program (CVPCP)\*\*\* and the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) Habitat Restoration Program (HRP).

- BLM has a written agreement from BOR to provide as much as \$4,000,000 over the next 5 years to fund parcels identified in our FY2014 proposal. Currently \$680,000 of BOR funds is scheduled for acquisition in FY2014. BLM will receive \$222,074 from USFWS for acquisitions in FY 2014.
- These acquisitions support the goals of the BLM, BOR, and FWS, by contributing to the recovery of the San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizards, giant kangaroo rats, San Joaquin woolly-threads, and the California jewel flower.
- The Panoche-Coalinga ACEC RMP Amendment will identify additional opportunities to conserve threatened and endangered species, protect cultural and paleontological resources, and improve public access for recreation. The BLM's strategy would incorporate the use of conservation easements, acquisitions from willing sellers, and public and private partnerships to accomplish these goals.
- Key themes and priorities that emerged during the public scoping process to be addressed in the Plan:
  - Recovery of Special Status Species
  - Designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern & Research Natural Areas;
  - Opportunities for Acquisition and Disposal of Public Lands;
  - Large landscape conservation goals are compatible with ranching industry in the area.
  - Transportation and Travel Management

#### Coast Dairies Public Lands

The Trust for Public donated 5800 acres of upland coastal land to BLM on April 14, 2014. Coast Dairies public lands are comprised of a series of ancient beach terraces rising up into the Santa Cruz Mountain Redwood zone. The property will be managed in accordance with deed restrictions for habitat protection and open space. Status:

- Working towards final Solicitor approval. The Coast Dairies Final Title Opinion was requested by the Field Office on May 21, 2014 - CASO will be reviewing and working with the solicitor. The package has not been sent to the solicitor for review yet.
- Completed Environmental Assessment for Interim Management in May 2014
- Staff working on inventory, introducing BLM to the community and meeting partners
- Community meetings scheduled in August and September
- Pointing toward a TPL/BLM celebration to commemorate the transfer in late summer/early fall

- BLM hopes to provide limited public access in 2015
- Start the planning process (contingent on funding in 2015)

### **Challenges:**

Property surrounds the small community of Davenport. Community members are very concerned about possible impacts to them with increased public use.

BLM took property subject to leases on land that could continue for decades.

Ongoing reclamation projects occurring on the lease land.

Land survey does not meet Cadastral Survey standards. There could be unidentified boundary issues in future.

Numerous existing rights in form of easements, i.e. water lines, roads, highways, private access, power lines, gas lines, water tanks, houses (life lease), land leases, grazing agreements will be a large initial workload for the realty program.

User groups/residents/county anticipates BLM will receive dedicated funding for Coast Dairies.

### **San Clemente Dam Removal and Carmel River Restoration**

In 2015 BLM and California America Water will finalize transfer agreement.

Earth moving has started. CAL AM is planning to remove the dam in 2016.

### **Hollister Oil and Gas Litigation**

Judge Grewell determined that leasing without an NSO provision was an irretrievable commitment by BLM.

A settlement between BLM and the litigants is close to being finalized. Hollister Field Office anticipates it will need to complete a Plan Amendment to the Hollister RMP and EIS to address new well stimulation techniques and foreseeable oil and gas development impacts.

### **Williams Hill**

This area is experiencing a significant die off of Knob cone pine. Fire hazard in this area is extremely high.

### **Marina Move 2015**

Monterey Bay Field Office..... Bids due on Building August 8

**JULY 18 SESSION**

## **FUTURE MEETINGS**

The RAC scheduled a video teleconference on Oct 29 at 1 p.m. In-person meetings are planned for March-April and July-August.

## **BAKERSFIELD FIELD OFFICE**

Gabe Garcia said BLM expects to receive the Biological Opinion from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in mid-August, which would allow the Bakersfield RMP Record of Decision to be signed in September.

BLM held two public meetings on OHV use in the Temblors. The plan is to use a managed trail system without competitive events. Staging areas need to be identified. Dispersed camping will be allowed and the boundary between the Temblors and Carrizo Plain National Monument will be fenced.

BLM held two public meetings on recreation at Keyesville, a 10,000-acre historic mining district. The area is heavily used and may have 1,000 people at campgrounds on the weekends. The Temblors and Keyesville are at about the same stage for public involvement.

At Atwell Island, many species are returning and there is active farming. One well went dry and other wells in the area have gone dry. Some farmers are drilling wells 2,000 to 3,000 feet deep.

The Carrizo Plain Monument Advisory Committee held a meeting in March on the Travel Management Plan. The proposed plan was generally well received. Santa Marguerita and Taft, gateways to the Carrizo, are working on an app for visitors. The U.S. Geological Survey is doing a seismic study on the San Andreas Fault.

At Piedras Blancas Light Station, BLM manages 20 acres and co-manages another 400 with State Parks, including elephant seal rookeries. The communications tower has been replaced with a replica water tower constructed with wood from a tower on the Arcata Field Office. A celebration will be held August 9 for National Lighthouse Day. The 2007 Business Plan called for limited access by guided tours. Tours are held six days a week in peak season, three days a week off season, with about 7,500 people attending tours annually. BLM is looking at visitor options such as an area to park with self-guided tours or a joint tour with Hearst Castle.

## **BISHOP FIELD OFFICE**

Steve Nelson, field office manager, said the decision to allow the Casa Diablo geothermal project was appealed by the Mammoth Water District and two unions. On Monday, the Great Basin Air Pollution Control Board denied at stay requested by the water district. The water district was concerned about a shallow groundwater reservoir and the decision requires a groundwater monitoring plan.

For sage grouse, a working group in 2004 developed the first plan. The USGS has found the sage grouse population in Mono County is more stable than expected. An interagency effort, from local to the executive level, has helped maintain the sage grouse population. A concern is a large fire could lead to the loss of the open sage habitat the sage grouse requires. Another concern is ranchers selling property and home construction replacing sage habitat.

The Bodie Hills are the core of the sage grouse population. Two years ago, the area had the highest sage grouse counts ever recorded and a new record was set this year after two years of drought.

Cougar Gold did some exploratory drilling several years ago in the Bodie Hills. BLM has inspected the site and released the reclamation bond since there has been no expression of interest in further exploration by Cougar.

An old powerline ran from Fletcher, Nev., to Bodie State Park. Southern California Edison has started removing eight miles of the old powerline.

The Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership is pushing for a National Monument designation for the Bodie Hills. The implications of that aren't clear.

Sally Miller encouraged BLM to work with the county supervisor. Steve Nelson said BLM is doing that.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

BLM to provide copy of CCMA testimony to Steve Evans.

BLM to make arrangements for Oct. 29 videoteleconference.

VTC to be scheduled re: RAC role in Bakersfield RMP after ROD is issued.

BLM to consider CY 15 in-person meetings in March-April, July-August.

David Christy to develop initial draft of RAC recommendation letter re: Lake Berryessa based on RAC direction.

Temblors to be included on future agendas.

Renewables to be included on future agendas.

OHV to be included on future agendas.

Piedras to be included on future agenda.

RAC to be kept informed of possible role in Bodie Hills.