

Meeting Notes, July 21, 2007  
Bureau of Land Management  
Carrizo plain National Monument Advisory Committee (MAC)  
Carissa Plain School

ATTENDEES

MAC: Neil Havlik, Ellen Cypher, Bob Pavlik, Carl Twisselman, Jim Patterson, Michael Khus-Zarate, Ray Hatch.

BLM: Larry Saslaw, Ryan Cooper, Kathy Sharum, Bob Wick, Steve Larson, Johna Hurl, Nancy Dodson, David Christy.

Managing Partners: Tom Maloney, The Nature Conservancy; Deb Hilyard, Alice Koch, California Department of Fish and Game (CDF&G)

Public: Craig Deutsch, Pat Veesart, Pilulau Khus, Cal French, Nancy Ryan, Kathleen Buttke, Maggie Blackwell, David and Ro Webb, Lorraine Unge, Roger Gambs, Pati Nolen, Virginia Kline, Jeff Reschke, Victor Garcia, Tina Salter, Phil Campton

MAC Chairman Neil Havlik welcomed attendees. Following introductions of all present, Monument Manager Johna Hurl said BLM had a robust and active scoping period for the Carrizo Plain National Monument Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP). BLM received 103 visioning sheets with nine letters, 3,039 form letters (including e-mails), 257 postcards and 71 letters.

BLM Planner Bob Wick discussed the planning process and opportunities to make early course changes (**See file Wick PowerPoint**). The MAC will provide a forum for BLM and other parties to discuss issues, exchange ideas and refine thoughts. BLM is willing to do briefings on the planning process for other groups, but hasn't received many requests so far. Johna Hurl recently briefed the Carrizo Plain National Monument (CPNM) Native American Advisory Committee.

Pat Veesart asked if BLM considers the number of public comments on an issue. Bob Wick responded the National Environmental Policy Act states that the public comment process is a way to identify issues, not a voting process. However, if a large number of people provide comments with substance on an issue, BLM will take that into consideration, along with other information such as the monument proclamation and Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Pilulau Khus asked what information is used in the decision process. BLM staff responded the information includes comments, the proclamation and pertinent legislation such as the National Historic Preservation Act and ESA. In addition, data from studies such as biological data is used and there is review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. However, some issues such as hunting seasons are outside the scope of the BLM plan. She asked what involvement BLM's state and national offices would have in approving the plan. Bob Wick said the plan will be signed by the state director. BLM's Washington Office will be briefed before the draft plan and subsequent proposed plan are released. Protests go directly to Washington. Pilulau Khus commented BLM should work cooperatively with the Native American Advisory Committee.

Pati Nolen said Kern County is the leading site in the nation for Valley Fever and Valley Fever should be addressed in the plan for actions such as roads that would disturb the

ground. Johna Hurl noted Soda Lake Road and other roads are county roads, so the county performs maintenance such as grading. David Webb commented some people in California Valley are grading non-county roads and BLM shouldn't grade roads in the CPNM. Johna Hurl responded that BLM doesn't grade unless there is a reason such as public safety and environmental impacts such as protecting endangered species need to be addressed. Bob Wick noted a number of the comments were on issues outside BLM jurisdiction and the plan only covers BLM jurisdiction.

A member of the public asked if the MAC could make recommendations to other agencies such as counties or CDF&G. Neil Havlik said the MAC can communicate with other agencies.

A member of the public asked if BLM had discussed the plan with the California Valley Board and suggested the MAC contact other agencies on issues such as septic systems in California Valley that might impact the monument. BLM staff said BLM could look at broader issues, but BLM only has authority for the monument.

Neil Havlik asked if there were any issues in addition to Valley Fever not included in scoping comments. Possible construction of a powerline in the monument was raised as an issue. Johna Hurl said she would need to follow up, but a different office in the Department of Interior was working on utility corridors. Neil Havlik summarized the additional issues raised as: Valley Fever and health concerns, possible impacts from utility corridors and water quality in the Soda Lake watershed.

Tom Maloney said CPNM, at 250,000 acres, is too large to plan for using single targets such as a certain species for the entire monument. BLM and the managing partners looked at physical parameters in the different areas that would determine the native communities. Subregions were developed using species and management considerations such as visitation, access and historical use.

Deb Hilyard said the Forest Service used a similar approach in dividing California into ecological regions based on factors such as soil, vegetation and climate. BLM and the partners followed a similar approach in looking at the different ecological regions on CPNM. Larry Saslaw said the subregions will be used to help evaluate management alternatives and develop management plans.

The partners divided the CPNM into eight subregions (**see map Subregions**).

- Soda Lake Sink
- North Carrizo Valley
- Caliente Foothills
- Caliente Mountains/Cuyama
- South Carrizo Valley
- North Elkhorn
- Temblors
- South Elkhorn

Tom Maloney said the subregions are a work in progress and asked for suggestions on how they might be modified. The intent of the zones is to provide a framework to evaluate and provide an appropriate mosaic for management and long-term studies.

Carl Twisselman said the concept makes sense. All areas aren't managed the same.

Pat Veersart said he liked the subregions, but noted there aren't clear boundaries between them.

Michael Khus-Zarate said BLM had discussed the idea of subregions in the previous planning process. He asked how parcels cut by fences would be managed since the subregions are defined by environment, not fences. He asked what other areas used the subregions concept.

Bob Wick said the King Range and Escalante national monuments use the subregions concept. Different areas use different levels of detail and defining factors. The Carrizo may need additional subregions such as a Caliente Wilderness Study Area subregion or a Painted Rock subregion.

Neil Havlik asked how the subregions compared to those proposed earlier. Deb Hilyard and Larry Saslaw said the new subregions are divided more and reflect additional experience since the previous effort.

Neil Havlik said there is a planning hierarchy going from monument-wide to a specific area. He asked how far down in the hierarchy the planning document would go and suggested planning areas need to be of an appropriate size to address in the RMP or another document.

Larry Saslaw said BLM will need to describe how it will use the units, not just identify them. Bob Wick said key outcomes/objectives will need to be determined for each subregion. There will need to be flexibility in actions to respond to changing conditions such as weather and monitoring to make sure there is progress in moving toward the objectives.

Neil Havlik said he likes the concept, but the subregions will need to be aligned with what is done on the ground. There needs to be logic to the subregions. Some subregions such as an archaeology subregion may cover the entire monument. Also it was possible that there might be additional subregions upon further evaluation, such as the south side of the Caliente Range and adjacent Cuyama Valley areas.

Ellen Cypher asked if the plan would have objectives for the subregions. Bob Wick said in some cases the plan may say they need more information. The plan will describe the subregions, explain how they were identified and what BLM plans to do.

Bob Pavlik said there should be a feedback loop to allow for management changes as conditions change or new information comes in.

Neil Havlik summarized the consensus of the MMAC as approving of the approach but noting the subregions must be applicable with actual management.

Bob Wick said there is Department of Interior guidance on adaptive management, which provides flexibility to change management as conditions change.  
<http://www.doi.gov/initiatives/AdaptiveManagement/index.html>

Neil Havlik asked if the subregions would be in the preferred alternative. Bob Wick said they will be in the draft document. BLM would like to get feedback on the subregions at the next MAC meeting on September 22.

Tom Maloney said BLM and the managing partners had an initial conference call with scientists that will be providing scientific review. The goals of the scientific review effort are to provide for review of ongoing studies, allow scientists to network, bring context to studies, help partners clarify their resource questions and set priorities, and provide independent review of agency work.

Larry Saslaw said there was a grazing study that looked at 25 pastures across CPNM from 1997 to 2005. Caroline Christian at Sonoma State University is analyzing the data and should have a report in about a month. Information will be used to help develop alternative management prescriptions. Pat Veasart asked how the information would be vetted. Larry Saslaw said it would be subject to scientific review along with other studies on subjects such as antelope, tule elk, mountain plover, long-billed curlew and bats. Neil Havlik said there is a soil survey of the Carrizo, but it doesn't define what good, average and poor years are. Bob Wick said decisions will be based on the best available information and the studies used will be referenced in the administrative record.

Bob Wick gave an overview of how the RMP will be structured. **(See file Outline).**

Neil Havlik and Bob Pavlik said they like the new approach compared to three alternatives with the middle one being the preferred. Bob Pavlik said there also should be information on climate change and energy use.

Ray hatch requested that packets be sent to MAC members far enough before the meeting so they have time to review them.

Neil Havlik asked that there be historical information such as precipitation records, legal constraints (split-estate issues, etc.) and different grazing permits.

Pilulau Khus said she has concerns about Taylor Grazing Act permits; permits can't be canceled without just cause. The right to graze runs with the land, so is transferred on sale, and increases the value of the private land. Free-use permits, on the other hand, are evaluated at renewal.

Bob Wick said grazing permits are subordinate to the objectives contained in the RMP. If grazing doesn't meet the objectives, it can be modified or cancelled. BLM needs to develop defensible land-use objectives.

Pilulau Khus said the RMP should spell out the rules for free-use versus Taylor grazing.

Bob Wick handed out a draft schedule that includes opportunities for public comment at different stages in the process. The comment period will allow BLM to make mid-course corrections while developing the plan, he said. Deb Hilyard said CDF&G would find it difficult to meet the proposed schedule and would like to extend it as the plan is developed. BLM and CDF&G plan to meet to discuss the schedule.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Cal French said he is pleased how the process is going, but has concerns the plan may change during review in Washington. He expects there will be interest in the monument and Wilderness Study Areas.

Pilulau Khus said she is pleased how the managing partners are managing the monument and it is imperative they stay together. People on the ground need to discuss issues and reach beyond the monument boundaries. Hunting should be prohibited near places sacred to the aboriginal peoples, including Painted Rock.

Pat Veasart said he is optimistic about the planning effort and the work done on the ground by BLM, the managing partners and the MAC.

David Webb said he is glad to see the Carrizo has monument status, but is concerned that California Valley isn't involved.

Pati Nolen said her land borders the monument and California Valley is a free-for-all. A judge recently struck down federal grazing regulations and BLM is giving in to pressure from the grazing industry. California is 60-80 percent rural and there are better places to graze livestock than on a national monument.

Virginia Kline asked why hunting is allowed on CPNM. She has found bullets and bottles in the area used by wild pigs and hunting shouldn't be allowed there.

Johna Hurl said some areas are closed to hunting and those will be carried forward to the next plan unless there is a change to allow hunting. Deb Hilyard said BLM can close areas, but hunting is regulated by CDF&G. Virginia Kline said the problem is hunters who don't follow the rules.

#### CLOSING REMARKS

Carl Twisselman asked what direction the MAC should go in – beyond identifying objectives?

Neil Havlik said MAC members can state their own opinions and promote their point of view.

Jim Patterson said he like the process of notices before the meeting and a summary posted after the meeting. He would like to see meeting materials in advance.

Ray Hatch welcomed the public to see the new Gateway to the Carrizo sign in Taft.

Michael Khus-Zarate said he is happy to see progress and feels there is more structure in the current planning effort.

Bob Pavlik said staff is doing a good job and he is optimistic about the process.

The next meeting of the MAC will be September 22. A Carrizo tour is planned for August 11.