

March 7, 2014

**Desert Advisory Council
Overview of Meeting Schedule – Focus Topics
2014**

DATE	FOCUS THEME	LOCATION	FIELD TRIP
March 14-15	DRECP Public participation	Palm Springs	Chuckwalla Bench

The intent of the Saturday public meeting is to provide opportunities for the public to familiarize themselves with avenues and methods available to provide meaningful public comment relative to the DRECP effort.

We anticipate a basic CEQA and NEPA briefing with a possible HTCP component and we also anticipate the ability to provide a DRECP web tool demonstration.

One action the council might move on is the creation of a DAC DRECP SUBCOMMITTEE. This subcommittee would be an internal council committee made up of DAC members only. All meetings of this subcommittee are required to be published in the Federal Register.

Another action before the council is the creation of a Connecting People to the Desert Subgroup. This subgroup would be comprised of members of the public, a DAC representative. The composition of the subgroup would be determined and a public call for nominations would be announced.

DATE	FOCUS THEME	LOCATION	FIELD TRIP
May 9-10	Connecting People to the Desert	Needles	Route 66

The intent of this meeting is to explore, discuss and identify interpretive opportunities across the California Desert that would provide new ways for the public to “connect” with the desert. A main opportunity would be points of interest along Route 66 from Needles to Victorville.

Several concepts to consider: 1) Place-based interpretation; 2) Physical features with cultural values; 3) Tourism-based partnerships; 4) Expanding existing partnership base; 5) Gateway communities.

It is possible that the first work products of the Connecting People to the Desert Subgroup would be available for council review.

DATE	FOCUS THEME	LOCATION	FIELD TRIP
September 26-27	Working Landscapes/ Ecological Processes	Barstow	TBA

The intent of this meeting is to continue the discussion of the “goods and services” that come from public lands. Historical and present day mining and grazing along with BLM’s large realty and lands program (permits and rights-of-ways) are potential topics and field trip ideas.

Potential topics would include restoration, rehabilitation and reclamation projects after resource impacts from grazing, wildfire, mining, renewable energy development, off-route recreation. Suggestion is to look for partnerships between ranchers and ecologists to improve habitat values on public lands (Carrizo Plain National Monument and giant kangaroo rat habitat).

Other ideas: 1) Recognizing the economic value of recreation, potential topic could be economic benefits of recreational tourism; 2) the dramatic increase in Mojave Raven population due to human activities and the impact on wildlife populations.

DATE	FOCUS THEME	LOCATION	FIELD TRIP
December 5-6	Climate Change	Palm Springs	workshop – no FT

The intent of this topic is to explore climate change with a “citizen science” perspective. BLM will discuss on-going interagency efforts (Landscape Conservation Cooperative, Rapid Ecological Assessments). Other topics could include the projected impact of climate change on wildlife connectivity, ecosystem resiliency and fire regimes. Recommendations are that the meeting should begin with a brief overview of the science of climate change and climate change projections. The council would like a phenology presentation as part of the agenda.

Early discussions expressed a desire to host this meeting in cooperation with an academic institution to broaden participation.