

HIGHLIGHTS NEEDLES FIELD OFFICE

California Desert District Advisory Council Meeting

February 28, 2015

Public Lands Cruise

BLM Action: As a part of our continuing community outreach and public land education efforts, the NEFO has partnered with the Needles Chamber of Commerce to sponsor the RT66 Public Land Cruise in conjunction with their RT66 Hot Boat and Custom Car Show (HBCCS). This is the 7th Annual HBCCS. The RT66 Public Land Cruise is a tour and Poker Run on RT66 where participants will visit public land points of interest along RT66 where they will learn about public land, history, and recreation opportunities and pull a playing card in hopes of winning prizes. The prizes will consist of CTUC Trail maps of the NEFO, RT66 books, and other souvenirs.

Agencies: BLM, Needles Field Office and Needles Chamber of Commerce

Contacts: Mike Ahrens, Field Manager

Status: Planning for the event is underway. The local community is very excited about the event and we have received a lot of interest from local car enthusiasts. The stops for the event will be at the 5 Mile Rd RT66 Gateway Site, the NEFO Office, Camp Ibis, the Goff's School House, Amboy Crater, and the City of Needles. The event will end at the beginning of the HBCCS parade route. As the event is the same date as the DAC meeting, I will miss the meeting, but will report on the event at the next scheduled meeting.

NALC/BLM Old Woman Mountains Restoration Project

BLM Action: BLM and the Native American Lands Conservancy has partnered on a project to provide restoration, protective barriers, gates and other associated facilities along the eastern boundary of the Old Woman Mountain Wilderness and at the NALC Old Woman Mountain Preserve. The NALC Preserve is located within and adjacent to the east side of the Old Woman Mountain Wilderness. The BLM provided support and expertise in the development of a California Department of Parks and Recreation, Off Highway Motor Vehicle Division grant request to fund the project. Additionally, BLM has provided technical assistance, logistical support, and materials in support of the project.

Agencies: BLM, Needles Field Office and Native American Lands Conservancy

Contacts: Mike Ahrens, Field Manager

Status: The project is underway. Project completion is anticipated in April.

Camp Iron Mtn

BLM Action: The NEFO is considering opportunities to provide further protection and interpretation of the Camp Iron site. Camp Iron Mtn was one of the Divisional Camps at the Desert Training Center where our troops trained during WWII. Measures could include Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, development of interpretive facilities, brochures, web based education materials, interpretive walks etc.

Agencies: BLM Needles Field Office

Contact: Mike Ahrens, Field Manager

Status: An ACEC Management plan was prepared for Camp Iron Mtn in 1984. Additionally, there is a wealth of information stored in the Needles Field Office from an outreach campaign that culminated in hundreds of letters from soldiers that trained at the Desert Training Center. NEFO staff is reviewing those materials and will either update the Camp Iron Mtn ACEC plan or tier off of it to enhance protection and interpretation of the site.

The NEFO working with the BLMs National Operations Center (NOC) coordinated a test inventory flight of the camp by the BLM Unmanned Aircraft. The objective was to achieve detailed mapping of the site through this new technology that will be suitable to support a National Register Listing Nomination. The four day test was concluded during the first week of February and is considered a great success. The team was able to not only fly Camp Iron Mtn, but also Camp Granite Mtn. The imager collected is suitable to be able to identify individual rocks in rock alignments. The imagery is shot in stereo providing for 3D imagery of the camps. Additionally, another unmanned craft was used to photo document specific sites within the camps to not only provide 3D imagery, but 360 degree, plus overhead vantages.

Abandoned Mine Lands

BLM Action: The NEFO is actively pursuing inventories, prioritization and closures of abandoned mines that may present a public safety hazard.

Agencies: BLM, Needles Field Office with support from the California Desert District and California Department of Conservation

Contact: Sterling White, CDD AML
Mike Ahrens, Field Manager

Status: Bat surveys and other natural and cultural resource surveys are being conducted as funds and staffing allow for the development of a NEPA document and a possible contract for the closures. Much of the inventory work and bat surveys are accomplished by contractors, staff, and volunteers.

Manchester Quarry Closure

BLM Action: The NEFO is cooperating with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) on a project to permanently close the Manchester Quarry. The quarry is located north of Needles CA, within the Dead Mountains Wilderness.

Agencies: BLM, Needles Field Office; Bureau Of Reclamation, Yuma

Contact: Bill Webster, Needles Field Office Realty Specialist
Mike Ahrens, Needles Field Office Manager

Status: BOR contractors have completed restoration of the mine site and access road. NEFO provided vertical mulching and restoration of the obliterated access route through the use of the "WildCorp" crew, a SCA crew of interns provided to CDD to complete restoration and other wilderness related projects in the near future. BOR has indicated that they may need to access the site to complete some unforeseen work. NEFO is coordinating with them to accomplish this using a secondary route which then would also be reclaimed.

Castle Mountain Mine Re-opening

BLM Action: The NEFO has been contacted by Castle Mountain Mining Company (CMMC) about the possibility of re-opening the Castle Mountain Gold Mine. The mine was operated by the Viceroy Mining Company from approximately 1991 through 2001.

Agencies: BLM, Needles Field Office

Contact: Peter Godfrey, CDD Geologists
Mike Ahrens, Needles Field Office Manger

Status: The NEFO has been in informal consultation with the CMMC since December 2013. CMMC has indicated that they do want to pursue re-opening the mine and that we can anticipate a proposed Plan of Operations (POO) soon. Indications are that the proposed POO will be to initiate operations within the previously authorized foot print of the mine. The NEFO has assembled a small team to offer an initial review of the CMMC proposal and the proposed POO when it is released, and to conduct any necessary environmental review and authorization.

BLM was informed in early November that CMMC would require additional time to develop their proposed POO due to some new metallurgical survey information that they have received.

First Solar Stateline Solar Farm

BLM Action: Desert Stateline, LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of First Solar Development, Inc. (First Solar) constructing a 300-megawatt alternating current solar photovoltaic (PV) energy generating project known as the Stateline Solar Farm. The PV generating facility (Solar Farm), the corridor for

the Project's 220-kilovolt (kV) generation interconnection (gen-tie) transmission line, and the access road would be located in western Ivanpah Valley, east of Interstate 15 and northeast of the Ivanpah Solar Electric Generation System project. The project would connect to the Southern California Edison (SCE) regional transmission grid via SCE's Ivanpah Substation.

Agencies: California Desert District Renewable Energy Action Team and Needles Field Office

Contacts: Noel Ludwig, Project Manager
Mike Ahrens, Field Manager

Status: BLM has contracted with SWCA Environmental Consultants to provide third party compliance monitoring throughout construction. SWCA and multiple subcontractors provide BLM with daily monitoring reports during construction activities, and BLM personnel including Noel Ludwig make frequent onsite inspections to confirm compliance with the ROW terms and conditions. Full construction has now commenced. BLM is now coordinating the implementation of numerous mitigation measures including tortoise fencing both onsite and off, restoration of previously closed routes of travel and other disturbed areas.

Ivanpah Solar Electric Generation System

BLM Action: Solar Partners', LLC have constructed the Ivanpah Solar Electric Generation System, a concentrated solar electrical generating facility capable of generating 370 megawatts (MW) of renewable power. The project is located in the Ivanpah Valley, southwest of Primm, Nevada, and consist of three power plants, Ivanpah 1, Ivanpah 2 and Ivanpah 3. Shared facilities include a substation and natural gas pipeline. The three independent power plants and shared substation are co-located on approximately 3,671 acres of Bureau administered public land.

Agencies: BLM, Needles Field Office

Contacts: Mike Ahrens, Field Manager

Status: NEFO continues to work with NRG to complete a few mitigation projects and monitor operational compliance. Monitoring of desert tortoise, impacts to avian species and glare continue as well.

Partnerships

Chicago Botanical Garden – The NEFO host an intern in support of the Seeds of Success program. The program collects native plant seeds which are stored for use in future restoration projects.

Amargosa Conservancy - The NFO and the Amargosa Conservancy (AC) are working together in protective and conservation efforts at Crystal Springs, Wildhorse Spring, and Horse Thief Springs in the Kingston Range. AC has provided cleanup efforts and are "eyes and ears" for the field office in this remote area.

California Trail Users Coalition - The NFO has entered into an agreement with the California Trail Users Coalition (CTUC) to extend their successful map series to include the NFO. This includes the development of a three map series covering our jurisdiction. The project is funded through a grant from the California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division.

All three maps covering the Needles Field Office jurisdiction have been completed and are now available through the CTUC, and the Needles Field Office. The NFO has also initiated a distribution network utilizing local RV Resorts along the Colorado River.

All maps use a comprehensive route network, developed by staff based on the designated open route system for the map series. This network highlights long distance touring opportunities and access to recreational points of interest. The routes are marked; those with assigned names have been marked with stickers showing the names and numbers that correspond to labels on the maps.

Great Basin Institute – The NFO has entered into an agreement with the Great Basin Institute to provide two interns in support of an OHMVR Grant funded Invasive and Sensitive plant inventory project. The three year project will focus on invasive and sensitive plant species adjacent to our system of roads and trails.

Native American Lands Conservancy (NALC) – The NEFO is partnering with the NALC to support the management of the Old Woman Mtn. Wilderness and the adjacent NALC Old Woman Mtn Preserve. The NEFO supported the NALC in the development of an OHMVR restoration grant to provide restoration and barriers along the borders of the Old Woman Mtn Wilderness and the Old Woman Mtn Preserve. The grant will be administered by the NALC.