

# Desert Advisory Council (DAC) Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA) Sub-Group Meeting Minutes

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April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012

## ***Attendance:***

### **Sub Group Members**

Meg Grossglass, Chair

Bob Ham

Bob Mason

Jim Bramham

Lee Banning

### **BLM**

Margaret

Goodro

Tom Zale

Neil Hamada

Karissa Blevins

Brian Puckett

Daniel Baca

Andrew

Trouette

Glenn Harris

### **Public**

Nicole Gilles

(ASA)

Monica Soucier (Imperial County Air  
Pollution)

Michelle Ochs (Mesquite Landfill)

Lt. Lucas (ICSO)

Glenn Montgomery-  
absent

Chuck Hattaway -absent

Don Wharton -absent

## ***Action Item Review from the Previous Meeting***

- Send out wish list for ISDRA and divide list into different categories to determine priorities
- DAC assignments – Dick Holliday
- Write meeting notes – Michelle Puckett
- Review chair -- Dick Holliday
- Mesquite Mine presentation (Michelle Ochs) set up
- Membership Review
- January through September 2012-send announcement for application new members
- Set next meeting after Presidents Day (Mid Week?)
- Create a new agenda for the next meeting – Michelle Puckett

## ***Mesquite Landfill Presentation – Michelle Ochs***

## ***ISDRA Update – Neil Hamada (see attachment A)***

- Visitation Stats

- FY12 total was over a million visitors, slightly down from FY11.
- Cahuilla Ranger Station and Buttercup Ranger Station closed as of April 22, 2012
- Fee Program Stats
  - BLM has collected \$1,711,803 and sold 45,228 permits
  - Checked 12,314 vehicles since Oct 1., 95% compliance
  - Vendor permits have generated \$99,488 this FY.
  - Current fee collection contract will expire at the end of next dunes season.
  - Imperial Sand Dunes Report – see handout (attachment A)
- Rescue Stats
  - Year to date
    - 407 responses, 20% up from the 2010/2011 season.
    - 204 treated and released
      - 53 by air
      - 142 by ground ambulance
      - 5 OHV fatalities
- Staffing
  - We had six ISDRA park rangers over the season (two permanent, two students, two temporary)
  - Lowest historical ISDRA staffing level
  - Staff worked 16 hour shifts during busy weekends; less staff working longer hours resulted in 26% labor savings.

***Review Priority Projects – Margaret Goodro***

ISDRA Subgroup Wish List Categorized Activity on ways to improve ISDRA. During the group exercise, the members were provided five green stickers to place next to their personal priorities. They then used a red or pink marker to indicate their five items they wanted removed from the list.

The ISDRA Sub-Group **highest priorities** were:

<b>Votes</b>	<b>Item</b>
4	Pave Wash Road
4	Long Term Visitor Area in the ISDRA
3	A new rescue trailer
3	Children’s fenced practice/ride area for safety training sites
2	Build an OHV bridge from Buttercup to Test Hill
2	New Cahuilla Ranger Station
2	A Road Grader
1	Re-pave Gecko Campground
1	Day use parking
1	Harden the road into Ogilby
1	Create and post signage that relates to dust abatement
1	Create and Pave a road along the canal with camping pads

The items the Subgroup members indicated as **lowest priorities** were:

<b>Votes</b>	<b>Item</b>
5	Boardwalk into the Wilderness area
4	Build a parking area in the high dunes for wilderness access on the north side of Hwy 78
4	Have a cell site on western edge
3	Improve ingress and egress in Dune Buggy Flats
2	Establish reservations sites
1	Improve the watchable wildlife area
1	Magnets for maintenance to clean the camping areas

The following items were not selected as high or low priority:

Create additional camping pads  
Add a camp host pad at Ogilby  
Create a new campground on the south side of I-8 east of the canal  
Pad Maintenance  
Build a walking patch to Gecko Vendor Pad  
Vehicle hoists for storage  
Increased EMS for when BLM is not in service  
East side of the ISDRA development per the 1987 RAMP  
Write a concessionaire contract  
Write a new business plan  
Write a Vendor Plan  
Second vehicle permit  
Re-pave Gecko Road  
Extend Gecko Road 1,000 feet  
Repave Grays Well Road  
Gecko Road shoulder  
Create a new Plank Road interpretation area  
Hire more visitor outreach personnel  
More campground hosts

### ***Public Safety Discussion – Margaret Goodro***

The Sub-Group had a discussion about how to improve safety in the dunes.

They identified the following:

- Post 15mph speed limit signs on:
  - Wash Road
  - Gecko Road
  - Sand Highway
- Training
- Speed limit signing on poles (signs mounted on tall telephone poles near the edge of the dunes meet the flats where visitors camp).
- Education and Enforcement
- Fiberglass speed limit signs on sand highways
- Safety Messages

- “Can’t Reach Don’t Ride”
- “Don’t Ride Alone”
- “Heed the Speed”
- “Look Before Launch”
- “Got Training?”

***Air Quality Discussion – Margaret Goodro***

The Sub-Group had a discussion about how to improve air quality in the dunes. They identified the following:

- Harden Wash Road
- Water vendor area and sand highway
- Look at examples from Maricopa County

***Action Items for Next Meeting***

- Specs to Nicole for a new rescue trailer – Neil Hamada
- Proactive for a solution to find a way to have EMS volunteers in the dunes.
- Pass on safety messages to partners – Margaret Goodro
- Next sub-group meeting decide who will be taking lead on ISDRA wish list priorities
- Write meeting notes – Karissa Blevins
- Check into technology (example: video conf/Southern California Association of Governments) for meetings – Michelle Puckett
- Send out notice of meetings - Michelle Puckett

1. August 28, 2012 4:00-9:00 p.m. at ECFO
2. January 17, 2013 4:00-9:00 p.m. at N. Dunes in the Bay? Glamis Beach Store?
3. April 18, 2013 4:00-9:00 p.m. at ECFO

# ISDRA Sub-group Report

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**BLM Action:** Fee Collection

**Contact:** Neil Hamada, Dunes Manager

**Status:** BLM is currently working on a new business plan. The plan will address the fee collection needs and issues identified by the ISDRA Sub-group. The current fee collection contract will expire at the end of the next dunes season. So far this FY, BLM has collected \$1,711,803 and sold 45,228 permits. The majority of the permits have been sold through off-site businesses (82%) and the majority of them are weekly permits (79%). BLM has checked 12,314 vehicles in the ISDRA and 95% were compliant. Vendor permits have generated \$99,488 this FY.

**BLM Action:** Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Search and Rescue (SAR)

**Contact:** Brian Puckett, Park Ranger

**Status:** As of April 22, 2012, BLM has closed Cahuilla and Buttercup Ranger Stations. BLM staff responded to 407 patient contacts since October 1, 2011. This number is up 20% from the 2010/2011 season, but only slightly above (2%) the four year EMS call average for ISDRA. Over this time period, 204 patients (50%) were treated and released, 142 patients (34%) transported via ground ambulance, 53 patients (14%) transported via air ambulance, and five resulted in fatal injuries (1%). Almost half of all ISDRA patients get transported to a hospital for definitive medical care. The bulk of ISDRA medical incidents were responded to by six ISDRA Park Rangers (two permanent, two students, and two temporary), which is the lowest historical ISDRA staffing level. Staffing hours were changed this season and Park Rangers worked 16 hours shifts (instead of having two shifts) during the busy weekends which resulted in more than a 26% labor savings.

Current EMS projects include, staff hiring and training, equipment maintenance and set up, grant requests, and expanding partnerships with local EMS providers and authorities.



**BLM Action:** Maintenance

**Contact:** Martin Gibson, Force Account Supervisor

**Status:** Trash collection went well this season with very few issues and was funded through an OHV grant. The toilet cleaning contract will end this FY and will not be renewed. BLM will hire two seasonal employees and complete the work in-house for FY 13. BLM projects a savings of 43% the first year. An ADA parking pad has been poured at the vault toilets near the Plank Road through federal funding. Staff completed about 100 yards of road shoulder construction on Gecko Road this summer and continues to push sand off the roads and campgrounds. Volunteer staff continues to maintain Buttercup Ranger Station and the CXT vault toilets in the south dunes. BLM also uses a weekly volunteer who assist staff on routine maintenance projects in the dunes. Closures in the ISDRA were regularly signed by the maintenance staff and funded through a CA OHV restoration grant.

**BLM Action:** Volunteers and Partnerships

**Contact:** Neil Hamada, Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Manager

**Status:** The American Desert Foundation (ADF) has completed another year of training students in ATV safety funded through the OHV program. During Presidents' Weekend, 67 students participated, a new partnership record for BLM and ADF. Border Patrol continued their support of the BLM Emergency Medical Services program by providing staff at the dunes during the Presidents' and Easter Weekends and offering training to BLM staff during the summer months. United Desert Gateway and BLM continue to partner on several projects for outreach, interpretation, education, clean ups, and others. Volunteers are currently being used for maintenance in the ISDRA.

**BLM Action:** Imperial Sand Dunes RAMP

**Contact:** Daniel Steward, Resources Branch Chief

**Status:** We are continuing preparation of the FEIS Proposed ISDRA RAMP based on public comments and should be released to the public in the Spring of 2012. The Proposed Plan and Final EIS will be published with a 30 day protest period. Following the protest period and any resolution of protests, the ROD will be signed. After this is

signed, the plan will be submitted to the Court for a 90 day review period.