

# Desert Advisory Council (DAC)

## Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA)

### Sub-Group Update

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*January 17, 2013*

#### **BLM Action: ISDRA Update**

**Contact:** Neil Hamada, Acting Recreation Staff Chief

#### **Status:**

- YTD FY 2013 visitation is 544,687, a 12% decrease compared to the same time in last year.
- Annual financial report has been posted to the recreation area and also posted at [http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/elcentro/recreation/ohvs/isdra/dunesinfo/fees\\_and\\_work.html](http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/elcentro/recreation/ohvs/isdra/dunesinfo/fees_and_work.html) (see attached).
- Five Seasonal Park Rangers, one intern, and one park ranger, have responded to 201 calls for service.
- Several seasonal positions for FY2013/2014 are currently being advertised on [www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov) through the end of August.
- OHV Grant projects
  - Closure signing taking place
  - Trash bins in place for the 2012/2013 season.
  - One returning seasonal employee rehired and new military veterans hired to provide EMS / Rescue.
  - One Student Intern Park Ranger EMT and one Paramedic funded.
  - Law enforcement patrols increasing for season.
- Holiday Weekends – BLM continues to receive positive anecdotal comments from visitor contacts regarding the improved family atmosphere and cleanliness of the restrooms.
  - Halloween fell in the middle of the week in 2012 which distributed the visitation over two weekends. Visitation the first weekend was 40,000 and 42,000 during the second weekend.
  - Thanksgiving visitation also continues to decrease, visitation was 133,000.
  - New Years' holiday fell on a Tuesday this season. Visitation was 115,000 the weekend before New Years'.
  - The table below summarizes some of the statistics from the holiday weekends. These statistics do not include the non-holiday weekends.

	Halloween	Thanksgiving	New Years
Visitation	82,000	133,000	115,000
Medical Incidents	41	94	37
L.E. Contacts	6,074	7,932	10,507
L.E. Warnings	1,123	1,122	1,040
Citations	408	507	463
Arrests	43	32	55

- Education programs
  - Staff emphasizing: AB1595/1266, OHV safety, RAMP, Business plan, ATV safety classes.
  - Facebook launched at [www.facebook.com/blmimperialsanddunes](http://www.facebook.com/blmimperialsanddunes), currently over 770 likes. At peak, over 9,000 people reached in one week. Discussion/Notification topics have included: littering, emergency road closures, emergency phone line inoperable, MLK Clean up event, Photo Friday, ISDRA job postings, meeting notifications, safety messages, holiday weekend updates, ATV safety classes, traffic / Wash road update, wildlife education, fee program information, partnerships, lots of photos, and more.



- Continue to work together with UDG to provide guides, maps, frisbees, “Dune Guard” shirts, at ISDRA.
- Working together with ADF for ATV safety classes.
- Proposal to Imperial County to fund kiosk in washes through UDG
- Proposal with ASA to Kawasaki to purchase an educational kiosk for Buttercup Ranger station.
- Issued news release in Dec to keep visitors away from EMS Rescue helicopters.

### **BLM Action: ISDRA Facility Maintenance**

**Contact:** Neil Hamada, Acting Recreation Staff Chief

**Status:**

- Toilet pumping contract was extended and will be out for bid this season.
- One seasonal maintenance workers started in November. Office administrative staff continues to help clean toilets in dunes on holidays.
- Built and installed 75 toilet paper hangers, continuing to build and install more.
- Complaints received about road to Ogilby Camp Area. Road was degraded by storms and has not been rebuilt. Many RVs are getting stuck in deep sand. BLM has place a warning sign on the roadway.
- Buttercup and Cahuilla Ranger Station parking maintenance, complete road edge grinding and moved fence at Cahuilla to facilitate separation from visitors and law enforcement actions.
- Gecko Road and Road Runner Campground shoulder rebuilt in worst areas.
- Sand Removal – Osborn and Wash Road,
- Roof repairs completed over the Cahuilla Ranger Station fuel vault and KCDF trailer repair started.

### **BLM Action: ISDRA RAMP Update**

**Contact:** Greg Hill / Neil Hamada

**Status:**

- Protests are currently being addressed at the Washington level. Once protests have been addressed, a Record of Decision will be completed, and briefings will occur with the California State Office in late January and the Washington Office in February.

### **BLM Action: Volunteers**

**Contact:** Neil Hamada

**Status:** Homer Himes, camp host at Buttercup Ranger Station, is still working full time. He works on site all year and continues to maintain the facility, vault toilets, vehicle counters, and campground. He also greets the constant flow of visitors throughout the year and provides them information about the area, OHV safety information, and educates visitors about the historic Plank Road.

The volunteers and emergency hires needed to clean restrooms have moved on to new positions.

We are currently recruiting volunteers to be camp hosts. For more information, visit <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/elcentro/recreation/ohvs/isdra/dunesinfo/volunteers.html>

Staff is working together with the United Desert Gateway to prepare for the 16th Annual Dunes Clean Up. Last year there were 1,238 volunteers and 4,912.5 hours of donated time. This could be the last year for the event due to budget reductions.

**BLM Action: Fee Program**

**Contact:** Neil Hamada

**Status:**

On December 14, 2012, BLM announced that we are seeking nominations for three positions in the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Subgroup and has scheduled the next meeting on January 17, 2013. Nominees should have experience in the ISDRA and represent at least one of the following: the local community, California Off-Highway Vehicle interests, Arizona OHV interests, or OHV organizations. To view the press release, go to:

[www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/info/newsroom/2012/december/CDD1325\\_isdra\\_subgroup.html](http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/info/newsroom/2012/december/CDD1325_isdra_subgroup.html)

ISDRA Business Plan – The BLM has detailed a person to assist with the completion of the business plan. He will be analyzing the comments, continue with outreach, and preparing the final this winter. BLM is considering an offer by Imperial County to pay for a contractor to help with the process. Concurrently, BLM will be working on developing a new fee collection system for the 2013/2014 season. The intent will be to reduce the cost of the fee collection. A fee increase is needed to provide critical services for the overall safety of the visitors and provide emergency medical, search and rescue, law enforcement, public health and sanitation, vendor management, and camping area maintenance.

# Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Annual Fee Report

## Fiscal Year 2012

Per Section 804 of the Federal Lands and Recreation Act (c)(2), this information demonstrates, on an annual basis, the use of recreation fee revenues in the El Centro Field Office. It is also provided per guidance in the BLM Recreation Permits and Fees Manual section (2930.06B6j). The information below is based on the best available data from the BLM FBMS System.

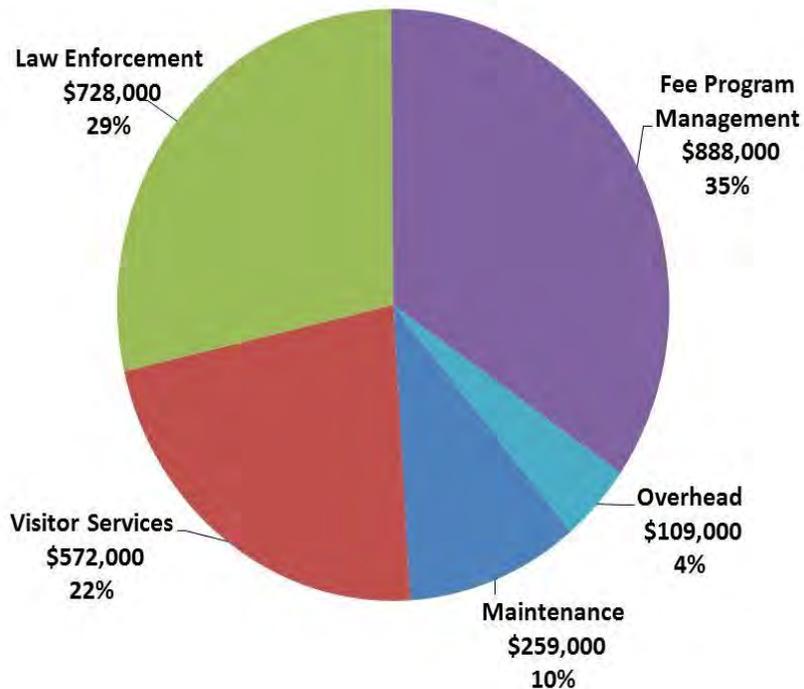
## Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area FY 2012 Fee Program Revenue = \$2,278,000

ISDRA Revenue	\$2,278,000
Carry-over from FY11	\$ 106,000
Unliquidated obligations*	\$ 324,000
<b>Total FY12 Funds</b>	<b>\$2,708,000</b>

*\*Unliquidated obligations are funds that were set aside in previous fiscal years to pay for contracts that may run the course of several fiscal years. Essentially, it is carry-over funding tracked separately in the BLM system.*

## Total FY12 Expenditures: \$2,556,000

Carry-over to FY13: \$152,000



Expenditures included the following services for the 1,140,676 visitors to the dunes:

- Restrooms
- Trash Collection
- Road Maintenance
- Fee Collection
- Outreach & Education
- Emergency Medical/Rescue Services
- Law Enforcement
- Recreation Program Management

The FY 2013 priority projects for Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area will be based on the BLM California Strategic Framework. The Framework outlines three "Community" business line goals, "Recreation, Partnerships, and Public Safety". The priority fee projects for the dunes will be to provide recreation and public safety services within the fee budget while reducing the cost of managing the Dunes through partnerships.

**ISDRA Fee Expenditure Categories:**

***Maintenance*** - Trash collection, restroom maintenance, road and camping pad grading, sand removal from road and campgrounds.

***Overhead*** - Labor, training and travel.

***Fee Program Management*** - Management and labor for permit program including on and off site sales, website management, printing, mailing and vendor management.

***Visitor Services*** - Emergency Medical/Rescue Services, dispatch, travel costs for holiday assistance, vehicles, education and outreach, maps.

***Law Enforcement*** - Labor, vehicles and travel costs for holiday assistance.

**For more information:**

[http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/elcentro/recreation/ohvs/isdra/dunesinfo/fees\\_at\\_work.html](http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/elcentro/recreation/ohvs/isdra/dunesinfo/fees_at_work.html)

**IMPERIAL SAND DUNES RECREATION AREA  
FINAL FY 2012 FEE PROGRAM EXPENDITURES PER THE  
FEDERAL LANDS RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT  
PUBLIC LAW 108-447—DEC. 8, 2004**

SEC. 808. EXPENDITURES (1) shall be accounted for separately from the amounts collected; (2) may be distributed agency-wide; and (3) shall be used only for—

FLREA SECTION	SPENT
<b>(A) repair, maintenance, and facility enhancement related directly to visitor enjoyment, visitor access, and health and safety;</b>	<b>\$259,069</b>
Labor	\$42,803
Operations	\$216,266
<b>(B) interpretation, visitor information, visitor service, visitor needs assessments, and signs;</b>	<b>\$572,392</b>
Labor	\$359,558
Operations	\$212,834
<b>(C) habitat restoration directly related to wildlife dependent recreation that is limited to hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, or photography;</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>(D) law enforcement related to public use and recreation;</b>	<b>\$727,705</b>
Labor	\$541,156
Operations	\$186,549
<b>(E) direct operating or capital costs associated with the recreation fee program; and</b>	<b>\$888,374</b>
Labor	\$0
Operations	\$888,374
<b>(F) a fee management agreement established under section 6(a) or a visitor reservation service.</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Labor	\$0
Operations	\$0
<b>(c) ADMINISTRATION, OVERHEAD, AND INDIRECT COSTS.—The Secretary may use not more than an average of 15 percent of total revenues collected under this Act for administration, overhead, and indirect costs related to the recreation fee program by that Secretary. (WO IM2007-174, WBS FV only)</b>	<b>\$108,647</b>
Labor	\$107,245
Operations	\$1,402

**TOTAL FY2012 expenditures**

**\$2,556,188**



# Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Business Plan

Public Comment Content Analysis  
January 2013



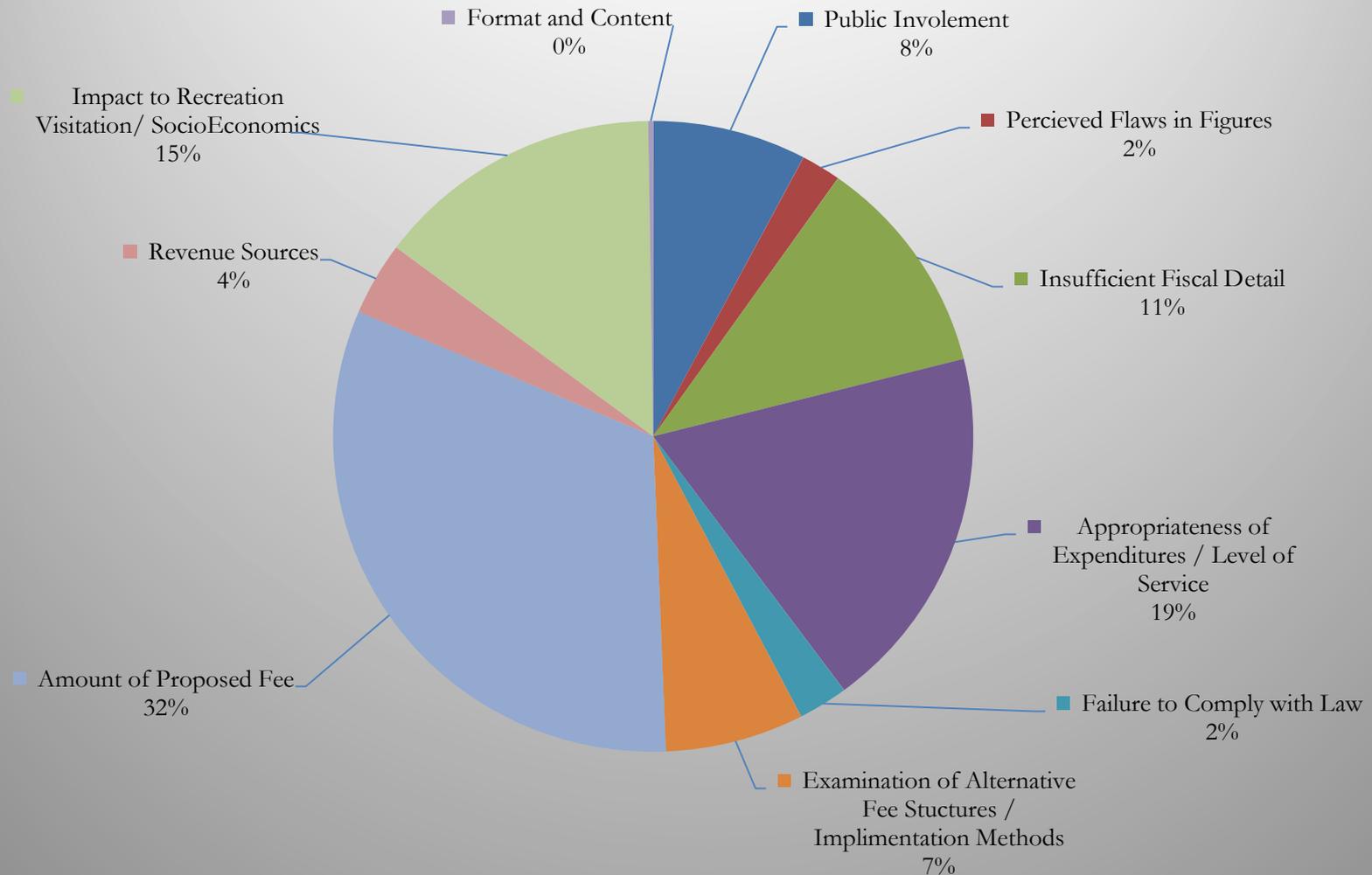
# Public Comment Period

- Document Public Oct 18<sup>th</sup> 2012
- Comment Period Extended
  - Closed November 30<sup>th</sup> 2012
  - Additional Comments Given Consideration
- Total of 236 written comment letters received
- Content analysis parsed out 400 comments
- Comments group into 10 themes

# Comment Themes

- Public Involvement
- Perceived “Flaws” in Figures
- Insufficient Fiscal Detail
- Appropriateness of Expenditures / Level of Service
- Failure to Comply with Law
- Examination of Alternative Fee Structures
- Amount of Fee Proposed
- Revenue Sources
- Impacts to Recreation Visitation / Socio-Economics
- Format and Content

# Comments Distribution by Comment Theme



# Questions?



## **BLM Action: ECFO Law Enforcement Update**

**Contact: Ian Canaan**

### **Status:**

Law Enforcement staff are engaged in the busy winter OHV season, and the National Details hosted by the El Centro Field Office. In addition to planning for the details, staff are researching and implementing cost savings measures. The lengths of the details, scheduling, travel costs and lodging are all areas being considered for cost savings. The number of staff used for the holiday weekends has been significantly reduced.

Due to budget constraints, services have been reduced, and in some cases eliminated, in specific areas and at specific times. Resources are being allocated to high priority areas, leaving other areas to be responded to on an as-needed basis.

There are presently 9 Law Enforcement Rangers working in El Centro, including a Supervisory Ranger and a Chief Ranger. El Centro has three new Rangers, two just recently graduated from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) and are just finishing their Field Training. One is about halfway through his training at FLETC and will be back in Spring 2013. El Centro currently has 4 vacant Law Enforcement Ranger positions.

During the first 3 holiday weekends BLM Law Enforcement Rangers made 24,513 visitor contacts, issued 3,285 warnings, 1,378 violations and conducted 130 physical arrests. Of the 4,663 visitors contacted for a violation, 70.5% were warned and 29.5% were issued citations.

During the first 3 holiday weekend Law Enforcement staff was reduced by 27% from the same period in 2011. Down to 121 from 165

New Years' 2011-2012- Visitation-	119,019	4 DUI	Arrests- 32	Citations- 867
New Years' 2012-2013- Visitation-	117,730	32 DUI	Arrests- 55	Citations- 463
% Change	-1%	+800%	+80%	-47%

Most DUI's and Arrests in over 5 years.

## **BLM Action: ISDRA Emergency Medical Services / Search and Rescue Update**

**Contact: Brian Puckett**

### **Status:**

For the current 2012/2013 OHV season in the ISDRA:

- **Staffing and Holiday Operations:**
  - 5 seasonal Park Ranger/EMRs, 1 Permanent Park Ranger/Paramedic and 1 Intern Park Ranger/EMT are primary EMS/SAR staff for ISDRA.
  - EMS/SAR Park Ranger staffing planned from late September, 2012 through mid-April 2013.
  - Reduced holiday staff by 53% for all holidays to 47 when compared to 100 in 2009/2010.
  - Expanded partnerships to utilize other agency personnel for EMS/SAR coverage in ISDRA. Partnering agencies include US Border Patrol and Reach Air.
  
- **EMS/SAR Key Points and Trends Compared to 2011/2012 Season:**
  - Park Rangers have responded to 209 calls. This is down 13% from same time last season.
  - There are increases of injuries to females in all age groups (+10%) and to all genders in the age group 30-49 years old (+10%).
  - There is an increase in UTV related injuries (+9%) and significant decreases to seatbelts used by UTV drivers/passengers (-24%). Park Rangers are very proactive in informing the ISDRA visitors about safety issues and law changes (AB1595), however we are noticing higher injury and noncompliance patterns.
  - There is a decrease to seatbelts used by sand rail drivers/passengers (-17%).
  - While traumatic injuries are historically more prevalent than medical illness, there is an overall increase of traumatic injuries, specifically orthopedic and musculoskeletal injuries (+8%); however there is also a noted increase to heat related conditions (+25%).
  - Overall, there has been an increase in injury severity and decreases to minor injuries and ranger station walk in patients.
  - More of the patients are in deeper dunes and less are in/around campsites.
  - Patient outcome changes compared to 2011/2012 are:
    - Treat and releases are down 23%.
    - Ground ambulance transports are down 35%.
    - Air ambulance transports are up 8%.
  
- **Outreach and Education:**
  - Continued public education and outreach for:
    - Seat belt use on and off road
    - Know terrain hazards
    - 15mph around 50' of camps and other riders
    - AB 1595 and 1266 education
  - Continued safety signing around ISDRA and promoting injury prevention.



**Bureau of Land Management  
El Centro Field Office  
Emergency Medical Services  
2012/2013 Stats**

As of 14 Jan 2013, based upon 209 EMS/SAR calls since 1 October 2012:

ISDRA Seasonal Visitation is down 15% (560,437) and EMS/SAR calls are down 13% from 2011/2012.

**Location of Calls:**

74% North Dunes  
23% South Dunes  
3% West Desert

**Patients by Gender:**

67% Male  
33% Female

**Patients by Age:**

14% <18  
39% 18-29  
39% 30-49  
8% >49

**Patients by Vehicle:**

42% ATV  
13% Pedestrian / No Vehicle Involved  
14% Dirt Bike  
11% Sand Rail  
17% UTV  
3% Street Legal Vehicle

**Location in Vehicle:**

81% Driver  
13% Front Passenger  
6% Rear Passenger

**Protective Equipment Used/Deployed By Patient by Vehicle:**

*ATV:*

- o 96% Helmet Worn
- o 26% Protective Riding Equipment
- o 4% No Equipment Used

*Dirt Bike:*

- o 100% Helmet Worn
- o 70% Protective Riding Equipment
- o 0% No Equipment Used

*UTV:*

- o 59% Seat Belt Used
- o 5% Helmet Used
- o 41% No Equipment Used

*Sand Rail:*

- o 77% Seat Belt Used
- o 23% No Equipment Used

*Street Legal Vehicle:*

- o 75% Seat Belt Used
- o 0% Airbag Deployed
- o 25% No Equipment Used

**Locations of Injuries:**

22% Head/Neck  
25% Upper Extremities  
30% Torso/Back  
5% Pelvis  
18% Lower Extremities

**Injury vs. Illness:**

88% Trauma  
12% Medical

**Types of Traumatic Injuries:**

46% Blunt Force Trauma – Closed  
21% Soft Tissue Trauma - Open  
25% Closed Fractures  
4% Burns  
1% Puncture/Penetrating Trauma  
4% Open Fractures

**Types of Medical Conditions/Involvement:**

29% Environmental / Exposure  
17% Respiratory  
9% Overdose / Toxicity  
34% Heat Related  
0% Acute Abdomen / Obstetric  
0% Cardiac  
0% Diabetic  
11% Neurologic

**Patient Status/Severity:**

40% Mild  
30% Moderate  
29% Severe  
1% Fatal

**Scene Response Type:**

45% BLM Ground Unit  
33% BLM Rescue Sand Rail  
13% Ranger Station Walk Up  
9% Field Walk Up

**BLM Provider Level On Scene:**

45% ALS  
55% BLS

**Outcome from Scene:**

56% Treat/Release or AMA  
43% Transport to Hospital  
1% Fatal  
0% Law Enforcement Custody

**Transportation from Scene Type:**

67% Ground Ambulance  
33% Air Ambulance

**Single vs Multi Patient Incidents:**

82% Single Patient Scenes  
18% Multiple Patient Scenes

**Outcome % Changes from FY12:**

Treat and Release -23%  
Ground Transport -35%  
Air Transport +8%

## Nicole Gilles (ASA)

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**From:** ORO Desert <orointhedesert@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, December 08, 2012 10:24 AM  
**To:** traml@blm.gov  
**Cc:** meg@ohvaccess.com; mgoodro@blm.gov; srazo@blm.gov; rbanis@deathvalley.com; ASA BOD  
**Subject:** Meeting Request ISDRA Business Plan

Terri  
We were encouraged by your comments at the 12/1/12 DAC meeting. We appreciate your willingness to collect public input, identify the partners, develop discussion "sideboards", and to define what is meant by "collaborative." We encourage you to convene the stakeholders to jointly outline the deliverables that would allow us all to develop a defensible ISDRA Business Plan.

According to Webster, "collaboration" is working together and cooperating to reach a common goal. In moving forward we all need to recognize the constraints imposed on this collaborative process. It appears that the degree of collaboration that the partners and BLM believe is required may be the sticking point. We suggest that the past collaborations such as the SRP Subgroup, the Dumont Dunes Subgroup, and the original TRT's be used as models in defining successful collaboration.

It has been noted several times by several entities that a fee increase is needed to sustain services in the ISDRA for the next five to ten years. The task at hand is to determine how much and to provide a plan that can be supported by the majority of the stakeholders. To meet this objective we request that you convene a group of stakeholders to set a positive and forward tone for the new BP.

Since May 2009 we have looked forward to the BLM following its own directive and suggestion:  
***"A robust, interactive, and open dialogue between the stakeholders and constituents must happen before the BLM can present a proposal to the RRAC with any degree of confidence."***

Potential deliverables from such a meeting:

- 1 • Agreement to allow some or all DSG members to be part of the rewrite of the Business Plan.
- 2 • To include stakeholders, including the County, UDG, ASA, vendors, and other interested parties in the rewriting process.
- 3 • To complete a base line analysis of minimum regulatory costs from which a business plan can be constructed.
- 4 • A commitment to specific public outreach after the rewrite is complete.
- 5 • Required steps for the approval of the Business Plan, proposed meeting dates, and approval authorities.
- 6 • A confirmation that the DAC will entertain a motion to recommend the Business Plan as they did with the SRP subgroup report.
- 7 • A definition of path forward without DAC or RRAC approval

Through the ASA, DSG, and other stakeholders, there is considerable expertise and tremendous desire for the BLM to complete a workable, defensible, and adjustable business plan for the ISDRA. It is in all of our best interests to achieve this goal.

Thank you for your consideration of our request to meet.