

Dumont Dunes TRT
MINUTES OF MEETING
March 21, 2006

Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Field Office
Conference Room
2601 Barstow Road
Barstow, CA 92311
(760) 252-6000

Call to Order: BLM Barstow Field Manager Roxie Trost called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

PART I: Organization

1. Introductions

Introductions: Members of the TRT and participating BLM staff introduced themselves:

TRT Members:

Sheri Davis, commercial filming, member, California Desert District Advisory Council
Terry Allen, Nevada off-highway vehicle (OHV) interests
Kathleen Stosuy, California OHV interests
Jim Bramham, OHV organizations
Gerry Hillier, San Bernardino County
Randy Banis, other motorized recreation
John Dagleish, Friends of Dumont Dunes
Bill Presch, member, California Desert District Advisory Council
Ron Schiller, member, California Desert District Advisory Council
David Charlton, member, California Desert District Advisory Council

BLM Staff:

Steve Borchard, Manager, California Desert District
Roxie Trost, Manager, Barstow Field Office
Lynnette Elser, Recreation Chief, Barstow Field Office
Mike Ahrens, Off-Highway Vehicle Coordinator, Barstow Field Office

Also appointed to the TRT was Ed Waldheim, representing the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission, but could not attend due to a scheduling conflict.

BLM Desert District Manager Steven Borchard welcomed the TRT and thanked them for volunteering their time.

An agenda was circulated by Roxie Trost; there were no additions or changes to the agenda.

2. TRT Operating Guidance

Roxie Trost described the relationship of the TRT and the California Desert District Advisory Council (DAC), which authorized the formation of the TRT to advise Barstow Field Office on the collection, expenditure, and accountability of fees, and development of future facilities and services.

Meetings will be announced and open to the public, at which comments may be received on matters before the TRT. Minutes will be made available to the public via the BLM Barstow web site and at the BLM Barstow Field Office.

The TRT was directed to develop a charter statement to guide its work. Jim Bramham distributed to members the charter developed by the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area TRT for review.

3. Structure and Selection of Officers

The following officers were nominated and accepted by consent:

William Presch, Chairman

Jim Bramham, Vice Chairman

Randy Banis, Secretary

4. Length of Terms, Rotation of Terms

By consent, terms of office were set at three years, but that half of the body would serve an initial term of two years in order to stagger terms. After a random process initial terms were set:

Three Year Terms (6)

Ron Schiller

Jim Bramham

Sheri Davis

Randy Banis

Kathy Stosuy

William Presch

Two Year Terms (5)

Ed Waldheim

Gerry Hillier

Terry Allen

David Charlton

John Dalglish

At this time, Roxie Trost turned the meeting over to William Presch to chair.

5. External Communication

By consent it was decided that notices of meetings would be submitted for publication on the BLM New Releases web page, BLM NewBytes email broadcast, and BLM Barstow's Dumont Dunes web page. Minutes of meetings would also be made available on the BLM Barstow Dumont Dunes web page, as well as any other documents of record.

6. TRT Finances

By consent it was decided that TRT members would not receive reimbursement for travel expenses. Although members preferred to have entrance fees waived only while on TRT business, it was determined to be much easier for staff to issue season passes to TRT members instead. Therefore, it was agreed by consent that TRT members would receive passes. Lastly, it was agreed that any other potential expense of the TRT would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

PART II: Projects & Management

1. Restroom Cleaning & Closures for Summer

As in previous years, the on site caretakers will soon begin their annual leave for the summer season. Since cleaning the restrooms is a regular function of the caretakers staff sought the TRT's advice on maintaining the restroom during the upcoming summer months.

Staff reported that experience has shown that closing all restrooms during the summer results in substantial vandalism. Even a partial closure without proper signs directing users to open restrooms resulted in significant damage due to vandalism.

Further, restrooms that remain open will still need regular cleaning. Staff reported that the vendor that holds the contract for fee collection also provides campground maintenance and cleaning services. The alternative to engaging the vendor for this service would be to pay the Dumont Dunes rangers to perform the cleaning.

Following a motion by Randy Banis which was seconded by Terry Allen, the TRT unanimously recommended a partial closure of restrooms augmented by a set of formal, re-usable signs directing users to restrooms that remain open, and supported contracting for restroom cleaning services during the summer season until the caretakers return in the Fall.

2. Road Maintenance

Last year's major road improvements were funded by federal flood recovery money and not out of user fees. However, this season's rains are already beginning to wash away some of the repair work. To maintain the current condition of the road, additional material must be added occasionally to replace material lost through use and grading. Staff solicited the TRT's comments regarding funding the hauling and laying of road gravel prior to major holiday weekends when equipment and staff are staged at the site. If performed four times during the peak use season the annual cost would be \$8,000.00.

In addition to discussing this option, the TRT discussed long range solutions such as widening the water crossing for two or three vehicles so as to reduce the long wait when

exiting during peak weekends, and the possibility of widening the road to three lanes so that two lanes could be dedicated to entering or exiting as appropriate.

For the next meeting, William Presch requested from staff a thorough breakdown of 2005 operational income and expenses for the area for both peak and non-peak use periods. Gerry Hillier also requested that the analysis include appropriated moneys as well as funds received from the California OHV Trust Fund.

Roxie Trost distributed the Barstow Field Office Holiday Staffing Plan for 2006, as well as an accounting ledger with year-to-date postings to the Dumont Dunes account. It was noted that the ledger did not yet include February activity, such as the very popular Presidents Day weekend.

Following a review of the documents, there were no objections from the TRT to staff periodically funding the laying of road gravel to maintain the improved access to the area.

3. Trash Collection

Currently, visitors to the Dumont Dunes Recreation Area are required to pack out their own trash as there is no trash collection services provided by the BLM. However, the BLM received complaints that some visitors who were returning home through Tecopa were dropping their trash at the community dump station which is provided for the use of Tecopa residents only.

In response to this problem, the Barstow Field Office has placed one additional dumpster at the Tecopa collection site full time, and places a second dumpster during peak weekends, paying for additional pick up costs directly with the hauler. Also, the new signs made and installed the dump site informing visitors that the dump site is for Tecopa residents only. Flyers were printed and distributed to dunes visitors. Follow up monitoring by the BLM resulted in only a few personal contacts with offending dune visitors and local complaints have subsided.

However, Inyo County officials continue to press the Barstow Field Office to offer trash collection services for Dumont Dunes visitors. The TRT discussed this option at length with members expressing concern about the resulting cost, ravens and vermin, and loose trash. There were further concerns about defeating on going efforts to educate users to be more responsible with their own trash in the back country.

By consent, the TRT resolved to support the Barstow Field Office's position against implementing trash hauling service at Dumont Dunes, and its efforts to educate users via flyers, signs and web site notices.

4. Discussion on Supplemental Rules

The Barstow Field Office has the authority to issue supplemental rules to address area specific problems. Staff presented examples of supplemental rules from the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area that were implemented to address problems with unsafe riding practices, and excessive consumption of alcohol. Another example is the prohibition on burning of wood palettes in campfires at Dumont Dunes, implemented by the Barstow Field Office.

The TRT discussed two problems at the Dumont Dunes Recreation Area that might be addresses by the issuance of a supplemental rule. The first is the practice of dune visitors to stake and rope excessive areas for their own use, or to hold for others in an extended party. The result is ill-will between larger and smaller groups, difficulty in navigating around campsites to gain access to the dunes, and hazardous staking practices involving rebar.

Although TRT members expressed concerns over formal rule making versus educational campaigns, a Supplemental Rules committee was formed by consent to study the issue in detail. Those named to the committee were:

John Dalglish, Jim Bramham, and Kathy Stosuy.

The committee was urged by staff to include the participation of the Dumont Dunes law enforcement ranger in its discussions, and the TRT concurred.

A second problem that was discussed was the need to possibly relocate the growing cadre of vendors permitted and present at the area, particularly on peak weekends. Currently the vendors congregate in an area that creates a bottleneck and unsafe riding conditions, and also makes it difficult for vendors to secure their merchandise and booth.

Staff suggested formally designating an alternate location east of restroom #10 as the vendor area. Members of the TRT suggested another option of the mesa near restroom #12. At the TRT's request, staff reviewed the permitting process for vendors and emphasized the need for a vendor's products or services to relate in some way to the recreational activities at the dunes.

This issue was also referred to the Supplemental Rules committee. Staff agreed to solicit vendor involvement over the summer in designating a new, more appropriate vendor area.

Thirdly, the rapidly growing use of the newer golf cart type OHVs, i.e. Rhinos, prompted discussion about the lack of helmet and safety belts use by occupants. Jim Bramham offered to research rules implemented in Oregon regarding the use of these types of vehicles.

At this time, Chairman William Presch returned to open issues from earlier in the agenda.

PART I: Organization

3. Structure and Selection of Officers

Jim Bramham circulated a revised version of the ISDRA TRT charter to members for them to review. By consent, the TRT agreed to finalize the charter at its next meeting.

Secretary Randy Banis was requested to develop a TRT roster of email addresses to facilitate member communication between meetings.

By consent, the TRT agreed that decisions would be made by majority vote of members present, and that no quorum was required. Also by consent, the TRT agreed to abide by Roberts Rule of Order in lieu of procedural rules specifically adopted by the body.

Next Meeting:

By consent, the TRT set the following date, time and location for its next public meeting:
Tuesday, May 16, 2006, 10:00 AM
BLM Barstow Field Office Conference Room

Adjournment:

By consent, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Randy Banis
Secretary, Dumont Dunes Technical Review Team

APPROVED on May 16, 2006