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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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IMPERIAL SAND DUNES RECREATION AREA

6  
AREA

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/RECREATION

7

MANAGEMENT PLAN

8

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

9

PUBLIC HEARING

10

11 TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2002

12 7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.

13

14 EL CENTRO CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER

15 1275 MAIN STREET

16 EL CENTRO, CALIFORNIA

17

18 REPORTED BY

19 JUDITH WICKLUND, CSR

20 CERTIFICATE NO. 11789

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1 APPEARANCES:

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3 LEWIS MICHAELSEN:

4 Moderator

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6 GREG THOMSEN:

7 Manager, El Centro Bureau of Land Management

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9 LYNETTE ELSER:

10 Environmental Coordinator of the

11 Bureau of Land Management

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13 GEOFF SPAULDING:

14 CH2MHill Representative

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16 NEIL HAMADA:

17 Imperial Bureau of Land Management

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19 ROXIE TROST:

20 Resource Chief, El Centro Bureau of Land Management

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22 CLARK BEENE:

23 Supervisor Ranger, El Centro Field Office

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1 EL CENTRO, CALIFORNIA

2 APRIL 9, 2002

3 7:00 P.M.

4

5 MR. MICHAELSEN: Thank you very much for coming out

6 tonight. My name is Lewis Michaelson and I was hired by the

7 Bureau of Land Management to moderate the public hearings

8 that are going to be held throughout Southern California and

9 Yuma, Arizona. They asked me to get involved, to serve as

10 an objective neutral third party.

11 My role here is to make sure that we have an

12 efficient, orderly and safe meeting and to ensure that

13 everyone knows what we're going to be doing tonight and that

14 whatever procedures or ground rules have been established

15 are followed throughout the night.

16 Just a little housekeeping detail. There are many

17 different entrances into this facility tonight. Those of

18 you who didn't come in this door over here (indicating), if

19 you need to make use of the rest room facilities, they're on

20 this side of the building (indicating). We will not be

21 taking a planned recess or intermission so if you need to

22 get up for those purposes, please feel free to at any time.

23 The purpose of the meeting, hopefully, is clear to

24 everyone, but just in case, there is a few documents put out

25 by the Bureau of Land Management. One is -- and these are

4

1 both Drafts, I want to emphasis that -- is the Draft

2 Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan. And

3 the other one is the Environmental Impact Statement, which

4 is a companion piece to that.

5           And there have been approximately 250 of these

6 documents already distributed for review. In order to make

7 cogent and relative comments, it's a good idea to have the

8 opportunity to familiarize yourself with this document. But

9 just in case, the panel tonight will be giving a brief

10 overview of the contents of these documents for those of you

11 who have not yet had that opportunity.

12           The purpose of the meeting is for the Bureau of

13 Land Management, along with these people before you, to

14 listen to your comments orally that you would like to

15 provide to them tonight on what is in these documents, the

16 nature of analysis, anything that you see in there that you

17 think they need to reconsider, or you have additional data

18 or information to provide to them.

19       So there is a relevance to this meeting, that is,

20 you can attempt to make this a much more effective meeting

21 for the process. So your role in this meeting, again, will

22 be to listen to the presentation, and then after we finish

23 the presentation, if you've got a -- everyone should have

24 gotten a copy of an agenda when they came in tonight. You

25 can see that we will have approximately 45 minutes of

1 presentation followed by two hours of public comment.

2 Speaking of the handouts, there is a number that I

3 want to mention. One is the public comment guidelines.

4 This should make clear all of the opportunities and how the

5 agency has to make its comments. Making them orally tonight

6 is only one road. You can also make them in writing by

7 filling out a written comment card and turning it in, or

8 utilizing fax or e-mail. Those are all valid.

9 Any comments received in writing are given the

10 same weight and consideration as anything offered orally

11 tonight. So -- and you can comment as often as you like.

12 So if you make oral comments tonight, feel free to offer --

13 or provide written comments at a later point in the comment

14 period which is 90 days.

15       The only other piece that I'd like to refer to is

16 this card here. This is a speaker card. If you would like

17 to sign up to speak, we need you to fill one of these out

18 and then turn it in to the staff at the registration desk.

19 And we will be calling on people when we get to that part of

20 the meeting in the order in which the cards were turned in.

21           The last thing I will mention is on both the  
22 written comment card sheet and on the comment guidelines,  
23 there is a Web site address. That is another means of  
24 accessing the documents that I held up before, if you want  
25 to look at those documents in that fashion, and there will

1 be other conditions placed on that as the process goes on,  
2 including transcripts of the meetings held in all of the  
3 locations approximately a month after each one of those

4 meetings is held. So if you want to know what they said in

5 Long Beach, you can go on and pinpoint at the Long Beach

6 hearing, et cetera, and look at those transcripts.

7       So BLM is trying to make this as successful as it

8 possibly can in order to promote the public involvement

9 experience here. With that I'd like to go ahead and have

10 the panel introduce themselves, starting with Geoff

11 Spaulding to my left.

12       MR. SPAULDING: Good evening. My name is Geoff

13 Spaulding. I work for CH2MHill which is the contractor

14 hired by the BLM to assist in the preparation of the EIS.

15 MS. ELSER: I'm Lynette Elser. I'm the environmental

16 coordinator of the BLM.

17 MR. HAMADA: I'm Neil Hamada from the Imperial BLM.

18 MR. THOMSEN: Greg Thomsen, manager for BLM here in

19 El Centro.

20 MS. TROST: I'm Roxie Trost. I'm the resource chief in

21 El Centro and the project lead for this project for the last

22 two and a half years.

23 MR. MICHAELSEN: And they are all here tonight for the

24 express purpose of listening to your comments so that they

25 can consider those and take those and incorporate them into

1 the documents that are under review at this point in time.

2 So we have a nice range of people who have a lot

3 to do with these documents, and this is a nice opportunity

4 for you to let them know what your thoughts are.

5 I'd like to call on Ranger Beene who will also be

6 making a presentation later.

7 MR. BEENE: Good evening. My name is Clark Beene.

8 I'm a supervisor ranger for the El Centro field office. I'm

9 the officer in charge of the Imperial County Dunes

10 Recreation Area.

11 I want to thank you for your cooperation when you

12 came in tonight. One of my tasks as well as being a speaker

13 is to make sure that everybody here is safe in light of the

14 political environment we live in these days. So we are

15 going to do our utmost to make everybody here safe.

16 Thank you very much. Thank you for your

17 cooperation as you came in the door. However, that is not

18 over. I appreciate your cooperation with each other so far.

19 As you come up to speak, I would also thank you for being

20 courteous to one another tonight. And also follow the

21 ground rules that are set forth to help us do our job much

22 better. And hoping for a very interesting evening.

23 MR. MICHAELSEN: Thank you.

24 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Mr. Michaelson? Excuse me, sir.

25 MR. MICHAELSEN: Yes, sir.

1 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Can you explain to me -- your role

2 here is strictly as a mediator?

3 MR. MICHAELSEN: As a moderator.

4 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: As a moderator.

5 MR. MICHAELSEN: Yes.

6 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: That's strictly your only

7 responsibility here?

8 MR. MICHAELSEN: Correct.

9 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Thank you, sir.

10 THE REPORTER: I need your name, sir.

11 MR. LUGO: My name is Amadis, A-m-a-d-i-s, middle

12 initial J., last name L-u-g-o, Lugo.

13 MR. MICHAELSEN: For further clarification, I'm not an

14 employee of the Bureau of Land Management, and I did not

15 even know about these hearings until last week and was asked  
16 to get expressly involved simply to make sure that we have  
17 adherence to the ground rules and everybody has a fair and  
18 equal opportunity to participate in the process. I'm  
19 strictly here to assist in the process. I have no  
20 substantive role whatsoever in these documents.

21         With that I'd like to turn it over to Greg Thomsen  
22 for the manager's welcome.

23         MR. THOMSEN: I'd like to thank you for joining us  
24 tonight. On what Lewis talked about was the two documents  
25 on the Imperial Sand Dunes, the Draft Environmental Impact

- 1 Statement and the Draft Management Plan. I know a lot of
- 2 you have been working with us over two years or longer on
- 3 getting to this point and a lot of your comments were
- 4 invaluable in preparing these Draft documents that we're now
- 5 taking a look at.
- 6       Some of the things that we specifically heard from
- 7 you in the early stages were that you wanted a variety of
- 8 recreational opportunities in the sand dunes, that you

9 wanted both developed areas with facilities and services as  
10 well as undeveloped areas. You said you wanted a safe area  
11 where you could bring your family and enjoy your time  
12 together. And you said that you wanted to conserve the  
13 important resources at the dunes and allow your families to  
14 enjoy them for the long term. And probably one of the main  
15 comments we heard was how important Imperial Sand Dunes are  
16 to a lot of people -- to all of you and a lot more people --  
17 for a whole variety of reasons, recreation, biological  
18 resources, and other values.

19 We developed the alternatives that are in the

20 Draft Environmental Impact Statement to try and cover the

21 recreational use and conservation of resources that are both

22 important in the dunes, and these were all identified by all

23 of you that participated in the scoping process earlier on.

24         So we've worked to provide a range of

25 alternatives, a whole range to consider different ways to

1 manage the dunes based on what we heard.

2         For example, Mammoth Wash is an area that we're

3 looking at and in general we heard that people wanted a more  
4 rural feeling up there, not a real intense developed  
5 setting. So the alternatives for Mammoth Wash range all the  
6 way from a non-motorized use to a low intensity motorized  
7 use.

8       And that type of theme carries throughout the  
9 Draft Environmental Impact Statement, is to try and get a  
10 whole range of ways to look at managing the dunes.

11       Another example is what we heard on the Gecko  
12 Area, and generally we're hearing that that should be a  
13 highly -- a high density recreational use area. And based

14 on what we heard, we've tried to address that as a more

15 intensely managed area. We're identifying additional trash

16 facilities, bathroom facilities, additional law enforcement,

17 looking at a reservation system, pay phones and educational

18 opportunities.

19 We also developed something called an Adaptive

20 Management Area in the center of the southern parts portion

21 of the dunes, and that to assist in both the conservation of

22 environmental species while also allowing some recreational

23 use of the area. And as you can imagine, it was a difficult

24 process trying to pull all these different ideas and

25 possibilities together.

1           We believe that the proposed action in the Draft  
2 document does that. But certainly we realize that we're in  
3 a draft stage, and the reason why you're all here is to help  
4 us get to the final and a more refined process.

5           So some of the things that we tried to address  
6 were three specific goals that we sort of whittled down from  
7 everything we heard in the scoping process. And those goals

8 are:

9 Goal No. 1, provide a variety of sustainable

10 OHV and other recreational activities;

11 Goal No. 2, maintain or improve conditions of

12 the special status species and other unique natural and

13 cultural resources that's exist in the dunes; and

14 Goal No. 3, create an environment to promote

15 the health and safety of visitors, employees and nearby

16 residents by working with local state and federal agencies

17 and interest groups.

18 So as I said, we're looking forward to your

19 comments tonight. This is a key point in the process and we

20 appreciate you taking the time, and we'd like to hear from

21 you tonight and certainly consider as well the many written

22 submitted comments.

23 Thank you.

24 MS. ELSER: My name is Lynette Elser. I'm the NEPA

25 coordinator for BLM. NEPA stands for the National

2 That's it.

3       When congress passed the National Environmental

4 Policy Act, they established a process for federal agencies

5 to follow when they wanted to implement a project.

6       If a federal agency knows that the project that

7 they're doing has the potential of causing a significant

8 impact to the human environment, the agency issues a Notice

9 of Intent in the Federal Register that -- it explains that

10 they're considering doing a certain project. The agency

11 then begins a scoping process where they ask the public what

12 their input is on the project, what alternatives should be

13 considered, what things are potentially important to the

14 public.

15 All the information that's gleaned from the public

16 is then put into a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and

17 that's the point where we are at in this project. Many of

18 you participated in the scoping process and you have now

19 been given the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. And

20 we're then turning that back over to the public and saying,

21 "This is what we think you want, so could you please give us

22 comments and tell us what you think of this document."

23 During this public meeting and during the written

24 comments that we receive, we will review them and then we

25 will write a Final Environmental Impact Statement. After

13

1 that is issued, there's a 30-day period which is called a

2 protest period. During that time any member of the public

3 can write a letter to BLM and protest the Final

4 Environmental Impact Statement. They can identify the

5 errors that they think are in the final document.

6 After that period of time passes, the agency will

7 issue a Record of Decision that's signed by a manager. When

8 the manager signs the Record of Decision, it's not a matter  
9 of voting -- the public voted it, so many people wanted this  
10 and so many people wanted that and this won -- instead, the  
11 manager looks at the facts and the data and makes a decision  
12 that will meet the purpose and the need that's been  
13 identified in the Environmental Impact Statement.

14 If somebody is unhappy with the Record of Decision  
15 or some parts of the Record of Decision, there's an appeal  
16 process. And there is also -- if the NEPA process was not  
17 properly followed, there's a process where you can file in  
18 federal court to get it changed.

19 Next slide, please.

20 That's not the right slide.

21 That's not the right slide.

22 How to Comment. Actually, there is one that's

23 right before that. It says that you can comment for -- it's

24 got two lines on it. No. Okay.

25 Well, the next item was supposed to have said that

2 in the NEPA process. And the public comment period has  
3 already started and it goes through June 28th, 2002. There  
4 are several different ways that you can comment.

5       You can send us an e-mail, and the handouts that  
6 you have have the e-mail address. You can send us a letter  
7 by U.S. mail, and, again, the letters -- the handouts you  
8 have do have the address.

9       You can comment here at the public meeting orally  
10 or you can comment by giving us the written forms that you  
11 have at this meeting.

12       The ways that you cannot comment are by telephone

13 because we're not really set up to write down and transcribe  
14 your comments, and also by fax because our fax machine just  
15 doesn't have the capacity to accept the comments and allow  
16 us to comment back on a regular basis.

17       When you do comment, there are some comments that  
18 are more beneficial to us than others. Remember that the  
19 purpose of the comments are so that we, as an agency, can  
20 revise the draft document into a final document. So when  
21 you do comment, it's better to comment on the EIS rather  
22 than on the RAMP.

23       Comments that are given on the EIS are considered  
24 formal comments. They will be attached to the Final EIS in

25 the appendix. They will have your comments, and it will

15

1 also have the agency response to your comment on how we

2 considered it and any changes it made in the document due to

3 your comments.

4 If you comment on the RAMP, those comments will be

5 considered but will be considered informally. They are not

6 attached to the final document, and they are not formally

7 responded to.

8       When you do comment, say what you prefer, what you

9 like in the document. Also say what you dislike. Sometimes

10 the comments will just say things that people dislike and

11 they forget to say what they do like, and those things are

12 left out in the final document because nobody really said

13 they liked them.

14       So make sure you say what you like as well as what

15 you dislike. Offer alternatives and suggestions. If you

16 don't like something, say what other alternatives would

17 satisfy you.

18       Identify errors and omissions. We know right

19 now that there are some errors in the EIS. There are  
20 several that have already been identified. One of them is  
21 that the Executive Summary does not identify the Preferred  
22 Alternative. It's identified elsewhere in the document but  
23 not in the Executive Summary.

24       It helps us if you provide dated information to  
25 support your views. If you say your opinion we consider it,

1 but it's not always helpful to us when we're revising the  
2 document. If you can give us facts, it's much more useful.  
3 For example, if you say that the camping at a certain pad is  
4 too restrictive, we can consider that. But if you say I  
5 come to this pad regularly, there's usually this many  
6 vehicles there and this is a desirable number of vehicles  
7 for that pad, then that helps us know what you really want.  
8       And lastly, when you do comment consider all of  
9 the alternatives. Don't just focus on the Preferred  
10 Alternative. The Preferred Alternative can change between  
11 the draft document and the final document. It can also  
12 change between the final document and the RAMP -- not the

13 RAMP -- the final document and the Record of Decision. So

14 don't lose your opportunity to comment on all of the

15 alternatives.

16 Next slide, and it should be Alternatives in the

17 Making.

18 During the scoping process there were several

19 alternatives that were identified for consideration in the

20 Environmental Impact Statement. Three of these alternatives

21 we gave great consideration to, but we did eliminate them.

22 One is a Hybrid Recreation Intense Alternative. This

23 alternative established various areas for protection of

24 species and allowed recreational use in other areas.

25           There's the current Management Alternative which

17

1 is what is currently happening with the temporary closures.

2 And again, this one identifies certain areas that would be

3 closed to OHV use, and other areas would be open.

4           Then there is a Total Closure Alternative which

5 closes the dunes to OHV use completely, but it did allow

6 camping.

7           These three alternatives were eliminated and  
8 there's not a detailed analysis on them. The reason that  
9 they were eliminated is because they did not meet the  
10 purpose and needs in the Environmental Impact Statement,  
11 which was to provide recreation as well. We felt that they  
12 were too restrictive on recreational use without giving a  
13 benefit to the species.

14           The first two that have the isolated areas that  
15 are closed for species conservation had separate  
16 disconnected areas for habitat, and BLM believes that for  
17 species habitat conservation it's better to have large

18 connected areas than a lot of small separate areas.

19 And Geoff is going to continue on now with the

20 alternatives that we did consider.

21 MR. SPAULDING: Can you please go back to slide 4.

22 Okay, 5.

23 Just to go back and to recap one of the things

24 that Greg pointed out, the alternatives that were carried

25 forward in the EIS for analysis, especially what we call

1 the three action alternatives, were based on the issues  
2 identified by the Bureau of Land Management in the scoping  
3 process for DEIS. And there are quite a large number of  
4 those alternative issues, concerns and opportunities, as  
5 they're called in the EIS.

6 The BLM in its day-to-day interaction with the  
7 public obviously knew what a fair number of those concerns  
8 and opportunities and issues were. In addition, the initial  
9 scoping process identified two additional items that are  
10 highlighted there for your consideration.

11 Next slide, please.

12           There you go. Alternative 1 in the Draft

13 Environmental Impact Statement is called the No-Action

14 Alternative, and for the sake of the Draft Environmental

15 Impact Statement, that is the pre-closure management

16 conditions or the -- essentially, if you will, the 1987

17 Recreation Management Plan carried forward into the future

18 the three action alternatives or Alternatives 2 through 4.

19           And it's important to emphasize that none of these

20 action alternatives would have been developed had they not

21 addressed a substantial proportion of those issues, concerns

22 and objectives.

23           In a similar vein, all of those three action

24 alternatives represent some type of balance between opposed

25 priorities. This reflects the BLM's mandate under the

1 federal Land Policy Management Act to provide for multiple

2 and balanced uses of federally managed land, not too far one

3 way, not too far the other way, but accommodating everyone's

4 desire and accommodating mandate under the law to manage

5 these lands in a balanced fashion.

6 MR. HAMADA: Within the Draft RAMP and EIS, the dunes  
7 are divided into nine Management Areas. Each of these  
8 Management Areas will be assigned a setting classification  
9 under the ROS spectrum.

10 So what is ROS? R-O-S stands for Recreation  
11 Opportunity Spectrum and this management tool has been used  
12 by land management agencies for about 25 years. ROS  
13 guidelines help the BLM to focus on the recreational goal.

14 The goal for the dunes' visitor is to have a  
15 satisfying experience or "have a good time." The goal for  
16 the BLM is to provide opportunities. That opportunity may  
17 be in an area or a particular setting or a facility for

18 visitors to have a satisfying experience.

19 ROS recognizes that the factors which make up a

20 satisfying experience vary from person to person and that

21 there's a need for a variety of different opportunities.

22 Each of the nine Management Areas in the dunes

23 have been assigned one of four classifications on the

24 screen: Roaded Rural, Roaded Natural, Semi-Primitive

25 Motorized, and Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized. Each of these

1 classifications have specific social, physical and

2 managerial goals.

3       The Rural classification will include campgrounds,

4 overlooks, parking lots and camping areas in the Buttercup

5 and Gecko Management Areas. Approximately 30,000 acres

6 would be in this ROS class, and it's a substantially

7 modified natural environment that characterizes the Rural

8 classification.

9       The area is modified to enhance overnight camping

10 and dining-related recreation activities. Sights and sounds

11 of humans are evident and interaction between visitors is

12 moderate to high. A considerable number of facilities are

13 designed for use by large numbers of people, and facilities

14 for intensified motorized use and parking are available.

15 Available overnight camping largely defines the visitor

16 supply, or goal, of the rural ROS setting.

17       Approximately 64,000 acres will be classified as

18 Roaded Natural. This classification will primarily be the

19 Glamis Area, the Washes and Dune buggy Flats. These areas

20 have natural-appearing environments, and facilities are

21 designed and constructed to accommodate conventional

22 motorized used.

23 Moderate sights and sounds of humans exist and  
24 interactions between visitors are low to moderate, though  
25 there is evidence of other visitors. Resource modification

21

1 is evident but in harmony with the natural environment.  
2 Available overnight dispersed camping define visitor supply  
3 of the Roaded Natural classification opportunities.  
4 The BLM will manage approximately 105,000 acres in  
5 the Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS class which will include

6 the Mammoth Wash Area, the Buffer Zone Management Area and

7 the Adaptive Management Area.

8 A Semi-Primitive Motorized area is a predominantly

9 natural or natural-appearing environment of moderate to

10 large size. The resource integrity of the area is very

11 important to the visitor experience and concentration of

12 visitors is low, but there may be evidence of other

13 visitors.

14 The Mammoth Wash Area will provide overnight

15 camping and day use for semi-primitive motorized

16 opportunities and overnight dispersed camping.

17           OHV riding will be allowed in the Buffer

18 Management Area on designated routes to minimize OHV impact

19 to vegetation and wildlife, but no camping will be allowed.

20           The Adaptive Management Area, which is the center

21 deep dunes, will provide a unique world-class opportunity

22 for semi-primitive motorized recreation. OHV recreation

23 will be allowed by permit for day use only and no camping

24 will be allowed.

25           The BLM will manage approximately 28,000 acres of

1 Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS class. These acres occur  
2 in a large block in the North Algodones Dune Wilderness  
3 Management Area. A predominantly natural or  
4 natural-appearing environment of moderate to large size  
5 characterizes this setting. Interactions between visitors  
6 are low but there is often evidence of other users.  
7 The area is managed with minimal and subtle  
8 on-site controls and restrictions. Motorized use is not  
9 permitted in this area and one overnight camping party for  
10 every two squares miles defines the visitor supply.

11           Each of these Management Areas, through their ROS  
12 classes, have visitation goals in order to provide the  
13 desired social experience, physical setting and managerial  
14 controls. The table on the screen is the simplified version  
15 of the one in the Draft RAMP.

16           In order to maintain the desired ROS setting in  
17 each particular Management Area, we have assigned a visitor  
18 supply goal for each area. Once the number in the  
19 right-hand column is exceeded, we will no longer be meeting  
20 the ROS class objectives.

21           As you can see, the maximum visitation goal for  
22 the entire dunes, on the bottom right of the screen there,

23 is 55,403. So for a kind of a feel on that, if you were out

24 there on Easter two weeks ago, that was about 50,000 people.

25 This number was reached with the understanding that this is

23

1 a goal for non-holiday weekends. We expect that we could

2 exceed 55,403 during most of the winter holidays.

3 If we exceed the goal for over 15 percent of the

4 days during one season, that will trigger some things that

5 we would do. One of them would be conduct some resource and  
6 social surveys. Two would be promote non-holiday visitation  
7 for OHV recreation. And three would be evaluate the  
8 feasibility of the reservation system, differential fees and  
9 enhancing education.

10 If we exceed the goal for 20 percent of the days  
11 during the season or 15 percent for two consecutive years,  
12 we're also going to set up -- we're going to set up a  
13 reservation for 50 percent -- 5-0, fifty -- of all the  
14 designated campsites and also limit the number of visitors  
15 in the dunes.

16 MS. TROST: My name is Roxie Trost and I'm the project

17 lead for the Imperial Sand Dunes DEIS Dunes Management Plan,

18 and I'm going to talk a little bit about the Adaptive

19 Management Area.

20       The Adaptive Management Area is this dark brown

21 area right in here. It is approximately 34,000 acres and it

22 was developed with the input of a scientific team. And the

23 goal of that team was not to look at just the endangered

24 species in there, specifically the Pierson's milk vetch, but

25 to provide an ecosystem or habitat plan for all species.

1           One of the key parts of this area is it provides  
2 an east/west corridor to route the migration of other  
3 species for that area as well. It's also an Adaptive Area.  
4 The first year and numbers that were specified in this plan  
5 are 525 vehicles at one time, not to exceed that number, and  
6 identified in seven groups.  
7           Now, this number can change through time based on  
8 the prior years' monitoring, both in the use numbers and  
9 with the rural intent monitoring system that we developed  
10 for this area.

11           Some of the major actions of the Adaptive  
12 Management Area is, one, the 525 vehicles at one time. It  
13 will be issued in permits of seven. And I've been asked the  
14 question of how did you identify the number seven? And that  
15 was specifically from our knowledge of people liking or  
16 preferring to travel in that area in groups.

17           The feel was if one person obtained a permit in  
18 that area and they chose to ride out there with their  
19 neighbor or their friend, in order to ensure that they could  
20 ride all together that they would all share in the permit.  
21 The permit would then be valid for seven consecutive days.

22 So if you receive your permit on Monday it would be valid

23 through the following Sunday.

24 Another key factor is that there would be an

25 environmental education program that would be completed

25

1 prior to issuance of the permit. And this system would not

2 be a pass/fail system but an opportunity to educate users on

3 the species in the area and etiquette with plants and other

4 species.

5 Another key part of this is the permit would be  
6 valid from sunrise until sunset, and again, the number is  
7 adaptive, based on the number of visitors to the area as  
8 well as the specific monitoring plan identified as part of  
9 the Draft EIS.

10 MR. BEENE: I believe I'm the last speaker and I'll  
11 make it quick. Law enforcement and public safety, these are  
12 the main items that were identified in the DEIS and RAMP.  
13 Another one is create and maintain a dependable radio system  
14 for law enforcement and emergency services. Another one is  
15 increase law enforcement staff on non-holiday weekends.

16 Another one is ban alcoholic beverages outside of designated

17 camping areas. Another one is the sunup to sundown closure

18 on Competition Hill North and South, Test Hill, Patton

19 Valley. Reopening would be subject to the discretion of the

20 BLM. That's it.

21 MR. MICHAELSEN: Okay, thank you very much.

22 MS. WARREN: Could we just look at that last line

23 again? I have a question.

24 MR. MICHAELSEN: Let me go ahead and clarify something.

25 MS. WARREN: Yeah.

1 MR. MICHAELSEN: We have set up this agenda in such a  
2 manner that we really are not in a position to get back and  
3 forth on a Q and A or --

4 MS. WARREN: I just want a question answered.

5 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: It doesn't match the RAMP.

6 MS. WARREN: It doesn't match either that RAMP or the

7 DEIS so I'm curious about that last bullet. And I didn't

8 read it properly.

9 MR. MICHAELSEN: If you look at your agenda, it is now

10 time for us to go to the public comment section. Everyone

11 who filled out one of these green cards, attached to it were

12 the ground rules for speakers. I want to go over that

13 procedure very quickly if I could.

14 Again, the comments are for the benefit of the

15 panel and the Bureau of Land Management who have come here

16 tonight. So we would appreciate if when you come up to the

17 podium here to make your comments, be sure to make sure you

18 address the panel.

19 Could I have your attention, please? Let me make

20 sure you're listening to the ground rules.

21 Second one is, again, they've given you a lot of

22 really good ideas about what kind of comments and the kind

23 of comments that will make a difference. We encourage you

24 to make comments that will make a difference in this

25 project. But we're not going to get into a back and forth

27

1 Q and A tonight. This is strictly for getting your

2 comments.

3 There is going to be a two-minute time limit for

4 each of the speakers that is going to be enforced evenly and

5 fairly upon everyone. And in order to make it easy for you

6 to know that it's time to begin wrapping up your comments,

7 when there are 30 seconds left in your two minutes, I will

8 hold this up (indicating).

9       That's another reason why it's important for you

10 to be looking forward as you're giving your comments or

11 you'll miss that sign and you'll get cut off in

12 mid-sentence. And we'd like to avoid that, for your sake.

13       This is very important. We know that there are a

14 lot of different folks of you and a lot of different uses

15 and values that people place on the resources in question

16 here. And so you should have come tonight expecting that

17 you're going to hear points of view that you don't agree

18 with.

19 All we ask is that you make sure that you respect

20 that. We don't need any comments or booing or hissing or

21 anything like that. We need to make sure everybody gets a

22 chance to speak in an uninterrupted fashion, and show

23 respect for everyone's point of view as we go through this

24 evening.

25 Also, your time is not transferrable. So you

1 can't give the two minutes to somebody. You're here, you  
2 want to speak, that's fine. You've got two minutes and only  
3 two minutes.

4       And again, we'd appreciate it if you'd focus on  
5 the issues and not comment on individuals or groups.

6       With that in mind, I have 20 people who have  
7 signed up to speak so far. If you look over to my right, to  
8 your left, there is a speaker waiting area. In order to  
9 make this efficient so you don't have to wait for the people

10 to come all the way up to the front, I'll call several names  
11 ahead of time. When you hear your name, please come over to  
12 the speaker waiting area and that way you'll be able to come  
13 immediately up and make your comments. And that way we'll  
14 be able to move through them very efficiently.

15         With that, let me read out the first five names --

16 and I will pronounce them to the best of my ability, but if

17 I mispronounce them I apologize.

18         Also, I did not introduce her -- I should have

19 mentioned earlier but you probably already heard her say

20 speak louder or slow down. She is our court reporter and

21 it's important that she be able to record what you have to

22 say. So, you know, if she says something like that, it's

23 important to do that so that she can capture what you have

24 to say.

25 The first five names are Lynn Howard; Norm Wy- or

1 Wuyt- -- I'm not sure -- Larry Hogue, Nick Ervin and Betty

2 Ball. And if when you come up to the podium you would state

3 your name for the reporter, I'd appreciate it. Also, she

4 would appreciate it if you would spell your name.

5 Lynn Howard is first.

6 MR. HOWARD: Okay, I think I can do that. My name is

7 Lynn Howard, L-y-n-n, H-o-w-a-r-d. I own the store at

8 Gordon's Well called Paradise.

9 My comment is about the closures and the closed

10 areas and the environmental problems that are out there. I

11 understand we have environmental problems and they need to

12 be addressed at different areas, but there's a lot of things

13 that have been overlooked.

14 For all the years -- and everything that's been

15 going on out there hasn't -- you got General Patton in 1940

16 and you've got dune buggies going since 1950, and all the

17 species have survived, and they're all doing very well. A

18 lot of the species are doing better in the off-road areas

19 than they're doing in the closed areas.

20       That, to me, is an important thing to look at,

21 that you can put everything together, that you can go

22 through and see a lot of different things that comes out,

23 and you can look at one item for hours and hours and hours

24 and come up with five or six different things. But if you

25 look at the long-term period over things that have happened

1 throughout the years, everything is working and everything

2 is working well together.

3 As far as the closures and the law enforcement and

4 stuff, everybody is -- all the comments that I hear about

5 law enforcement -- not enough law enforcement, too much

6 rowdy things -- the more that you compact everybody together

7 and you have thousands of people going into a smaller and

8 smaller area, you're going to have more problems. You're

9 going to have things that are going to happen.

10 And by opening the thing up you still have your

11 wilderness and everything that you can take care of. And

12 everybody else that uses the wilderness can use the

13 wilderness, and the people that don't can recreate and

14 everybody recreate safe. We've got the areas for it. And

15 we need to keep things open and keep things going because

16 it's been that way for 50, 60 years, and I don't think

17 anything else like that can happen or go wrong.

18 I guess I'm about out of time. I have a lot of

19 things I could say but I think that the biggest thing to

20 realize is there is environmental things that do go on back

21 and forth, but the bottom line is that they've existed

22 forever and they're still doing so.

23 Thank you.

24 MR. MICHAELSEN: And again I'll just remind everybody

25 that I know in two minutes you can only fit so much in.

1 That's why there's also an opportunity to submit anything

2 else in excess of that in written comment, so you're not

3 limited in time by the two minutes.

4 Norm Wuytif or Wuytemf.

5 MR. WUYTEMF: You did very well.

6 My name is Norm Wuytemf, last name spelled

7 W-u-y-t-e-m-f, from Brawley. I'm a member of Desert

8 Wildlife, and I represent myself and Desert Wildlife.

9 And I just want to say that I do appreciate the

10 work that the administration and the staff have done on the

11 ISDRA draft, but I think the desired and anticipated result

12 has created false or misleading criteria. And after

13 listening to what you told me, I shouldn't be commenting on

14 this; I should be commenting on the EIS. But I wasn't

15 prepared for that.

16 To begin, I would have to inform you that myself

17 and Desert Wildlife are opposed to any and all closures --

18 some of you out there already know that -- to motorized

19 vehicles. To us, limited use is a closure. So we would

20 support Alternative No. 1.

21 We have regularly accused BLM of informentalism

22 (phonetic) with the closures of areas on a piecemeal basis.

23 And I realize that there are things that drive their

24 reasoning and we have to protect unique species, but we

25 don't think that additional closures are necessary. ISDRA

- 1 attempts to address multiple use but I think leans too much
- 2 towards preservation.
- 3       On page 34, item 17, and page 45, the second
- 4 paragraph, ISDRA admits that while human population-enhanced
- 5 recreation are increasing, the recreation areas are
- 6 diminishing. The solution that they put forth is put more
- 7 people in smaller areas. Let's see if we can't reverse that
- 8 and open up more areas.

9           And why is this done? Apparently to protect TNE  
10 species, but remember years ago North Algodones Dunes was  
11 closed for that reason. I consider myself a conservationist  
12 but not a preservationist. We can't save everything or the  
13 dinosaurs would still be here.

14       MR. MICHAELSEN: Larry Hogue.

15       MR. HOGUE: My name is Larry Hogue, last named spelled  
16 H-o-g-u-e. And I represent the San Diego Imperial County  
17 chapter of the Sierra Club. I'm here to speak for the  
18 diversity of public uses of the dunes which is called for in  
19 FLPMA, section 103, and which the Preferred Alternative

20 almost completely failed to provide.

21       In February I had the opportunity to backpack

22 across the central portion of the dunes. The trip was not

23 only much easier than I anticipated, but it revealed a

24 desert world unlike any other I've experienced. Unique

25 plants and animals and incredible solitude and silence.

1 These are experiences that should be preserved and promoted

2 so more of the public can experience them.

3           This alternative, however, allows off-roading in  
4 80 percent of the dunes while also attempting to follow  
5 environmental laws. Meanwhile, the majority of the public  
6 who prefer a quiet walk in nature are left with only 20  
7 percent of the dunes and this area is located in a remote  
8 area with difficult access.

9           How does this propose to meet the needs of the  
10 majority of the American public and achieve a combination of  
11 balanced and diverse resources uses? The existing  
12 Settlement Agreement does a better job of balancing these  
13 competing demands for recreation, preserving the popular

14 areas for continued off-roading while opening up more areas

15 to the rest of the public and protecting the sand dune

16 community of life.

17       The biggest flaw of this plan is that it doesn't

18 even consider the Settlement Agreement as one of the

19 alternatives.

20       Of the four alternatives presented, Alternative 3

21 provides the greatest range of opportunities. This is the

22 only sand dune system in California with a major freeway

23 running through it. This presents the BLM with a unique

24 opportunity to educate the public about this natural

25 landscape.

1           The American public has the right to see the dunes  
2   in their natural state, and the Buttercup Protected Area is  
3   beginning to resemble this, this current closures. The tour  
4   busses that stop here should be encouraged, but the vague  
5   interpretive area won't fulfill the needs for both education  
6   and other forms of recreation.  
7           Thank you.

8 MR. MICHAELSEN: Nick Ervin.

9 MR. ERVIN: I'm Nick Ervin, E-r-v-i-n, first name Nick.

10 Well, I've been exploring and involved with the

11 political process in the California desert for about 25

12 years, all the way back to the original Desert Plan, sorry

13 to say. But I volunteered for the BLM and I was on the

14 Desert Advisory Council about five years, and I currently

15 have the title of president of the Desert Protective

16 Council, which means I don't get paid. But I'm a volunteer.

17 Anyway, it's hard to make a meaningful response in

18 two minutes. It's such a short time since I've been able to

19 get a hard copy of the plans, but I'll make a couple of

20 general comments.

21 One is that overall I see it being a lot of

22 thought going into it. I see it's well-intentioned. I

23 think there's still a bias in favor of recreation --

24 motorized recreational use, but a couple other things that

25 bother me, I have to say, is that the original Settlement

2 of Analysis. Despite the reason given, I find that to be a  
3 flaw in the process already.

4 I think the Adaptive Management Plan is an  
5 interesting idea, but I question whether it's workable in  
6 practice. It's a huge perimeter you're talking about. Even  
7 if you put the cable I think it's going to be very  
8 difficult. BLM has had a three-year, four-part  
9 conservation -- desert for many years, and it hasn't worked  
10 very well. Yuha Desert is a perfect example. And what  
11 about the damage in Jucumba. It doesn't work if you don't  
12 have voluntary compliance and enough monitoring.

13 But to me, ultimately the real problem is that the

14 whole process of desert management has gone awry and all of  
15 us are responsible. The ORV community feels threatened.  
16 The conservation community feels the desert is slipping away  
17 piece by piece, degradation by degradation. And the BLM,  
18 either by lack of resources or by lack of political will or  
19 allocation of resources, sometimes failed to do its duty  
20 and, frankly, has invited the lawsuits of which so many  
21 people are upset.

22 I'm just going to lastly say if ultimately we  
23 don't find a way to do this in a way that doesn't involve  
24 bloodletting, metaphorically -- reminds me more like Israel

25 and the Western Bank movement -- I plead for a different way

36

1 ultimately between the community and the government.

2 Thanks.

3 MR. MICHAELSEN: The next people who are going to be up

4 are Betty Ball, Mike Gilmore, Terry Weiner, Marie Pierce and

5 Lucy Shipp.

6 MS. BALL: My name is Betty Ball, B-a-l-l. I'm here as

7 a member of the Sierra Club and of the Desert Protective

8 Council and as a lover of the desert.

9 When humans crossed the Bering Strait 10,000 years

10 ago, there were mammoths, horses, camels and an assortment

11 of many other fauna which shortly thereafter disappeared.

12 My fear is that we are continuing this process in which we

13 are eliminating our smaller plants and animals, again

14 claiming ignorance of what we are doing.

15 I believe it is unconscionable to go to the

16 documents developed before 1987 -- the 1987 lawsuit

17 settlement that was signed by five off-road vehicle groups.

18 The idea of maintaining species in the Adaptive Management

- 19 Area is incompatible with ORV use. The area should be
- 20 maintained as it is or as it has been under the current
- 21 Management Alternative or given alternative which continues
- 22 a contiguous area equal in area to the current Management
- 23 Area.
- 24 When sand dunes are compacted by wheels or traffic
- 25 treads, vegetation and some animals and insects are killed

2 chains are altered forever. Temperatures are too high for  
3 spring flowers. Perennials and shrubs on the dune fringes  
4 are eliminated. Burrows are mashed. Moisture content is  
5 reduced. Nearby flatlands are pulverized, and blowing dust  
6 increases, increasing the potential for lung disease  
7 downwind. Unique shrub islands are obliterated. The bulk  
8 water content and temperature of the dunes are changed.  
9 Riding down dune shrubs desecrates plants, some  
10 decades old, some older than the redwoods. Riding down the  
11 animals and reptiles may result in direct deaths or death  
12 from stress, dehydration or dislocation. Destruction of

13 rare plants and endangered species is illegal.

14 MR. MICHAELSEN: I'm sorry, your time is up.

15 The next speaker is Mike Gilmore.

16 We have a bunch of people in the back who can't

17 hear what she was saying. Try to get closer to the mike.

18 At the same time you might want to talk into it directly.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. GILMORE: Yes, my name is Mike Gilmore, and I'm a

21 vendor at Glamis. I've been a vendor at Glamis for

22 approximately 17 years.

23 MR. MICHAELSEN: Spell your last name, please.

24 MR. GILMORE: G-i-l-m-o-r-e. I had a great six-minute

25 thing put together here, but let me try to condense it down.

38

1           As a vendor at Glamis for the last 17 years, I've  
2 seen a lot of things change. Along with the lawlessness,  
3 et cetera, et cetera that's been happening out there, we've  
4 also had a great increase in the amount of people. The  
5 amount of people by BLM's numbers went from 150,000 or so in  
6 about 1987, I believe, to over 1.4 million last year, 2001,

7 is what I said.

8       Along with this came the need to have the vendors

9 out there and their services. In other words, the need has

10 grown, and I just don't agree with the part of the plan that

11 calls to limit the vendors out there.

12       The vendors have become the first point of contact

13 for a lot of the visitors midweek to the Dunes of Imperial

14 County -- that come to the dunes midweek when people aren't

15 there. If we're trying to disperse the campers who come out

16 midweek, why are we telling those people come out and camp

17 in midweek but there will be no visitor services?

18       I realize there are other businesses in the area

19 that can handle that stuff, but why kill us out there

20 because we want to be out there in the middle of the week

21 free. It's a free economy system. If it's working, why

22 change it? It it's not economically feasible for me to be

23 there, I wouldn't be there. If I wouldn't be making money,

24 I wouldn't be there.

25 Back in the '80s I was just there on weekends, as

1 were most of the vendors. This last year there was three of

2 us that stayed all year. It was economically feasible for

3 all of us to do it. I don't want anyone to get the

4 impression that all eight vendors were there all year. We

5 weren't. We were just there the big weekends.

6 Two last comments. On the 55,000 people, I'd just

7 like to say I would hate to be someone on I-10 the weekend

8 before Thanksgiving. 200,000 people trying to get to one of

9 50,000 spots, that would be pretty tough.

10 MR. MICHAELSEN: Thank you very much.

11 Next speaker, Terry Weiner.

12 MR. WEINER: Hi. My name is Terry Weiner, W-e-i-n-e-r.

13 I'm here as a conservation coordinator of the Desert

14 Protective Council. DPC thanks you tonight for the

15 opportunity to address the Draft EIS and we'd also like to

16 thank you for the obvious amount of energy that's gone into

17 figuring out something creative for continuing managing the

18 dunes. We'd also like to retain the privilege to submit

19 written comments on this EIS during the 90-day period.

20 I have to say we are disappointed in the plan

21 insofar as you've eliminated the alternative which continues

22 protection of the dunes that we have right now. We feel

23 that keeping half of the dunes open to vehicle use and half

24 closed is a good deal in balanced recreation and it provides

25 for the ongoing protection for the plants and animals that

40

1 live there.

2 This area is a national natural landmark and we

3 think that keeping half the dunes open would encourage

4 people to come and visit as such.

5 Our main problem with the Preferred Alternative is

6 that in the Adaptive Management thinking, comprehensive

7 surveys of the special plants and animals haven't been  
8 completed yet. There's so much we still have to learn about  
9 these dunes' ecosystem. So if we haven't completed the  
10 surveys on the insects -- the reptile surveys just began  
11 last summer -- we don't even know what all lives in the  
12 dunes.

13       How can we do an Adaptive Management if we don't  
14 know what we are adapting it to? We need more baseline  
15 information. And we'd like to see the dunes kept open so we  
16 can continue to go off-road. However, we'd also like to see  
17 more encouragement of other types of uses. Believe me,

18 they're out there.

19 MR. MICHAELSEN: Thank you.

20 Next speaker, Marie Pierce.

21 MS. PIERCE: Hi, my name is Marie Pierce, P-i-e-r-c-e.

22 I'm a proprietor of Sweet Marie's, and I sell ATC

23 accessories and mobile concessions at the dunes.

24 I'd like to address the multiple use thought, and

25 that is that there's ample wilderness on the north side of

1 78, and I would suggest that people that love plants and  
2 animals that want to walk in the sand have an ample amount  
3 of room to do that north of Route 78.

4 South of Route 78 in 1977 was set aside as a land  
5 bank for recreation. And I believe in recreation and I  
6 believe that families should have an opportunity to make  
7 close family bonds, and our children are our most important  
8 endangered species and that's -- that would be my primary  
9 concern.

10 Thoughts that I have are the federal code, the  
11 43 CFR 834 dealing with it required it provide for health

12 and safety of dunes users. I think in denying the vending

13 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday is contrary to that

14 goal of safety in the dunes. If someone is stuck out in the

15 middle of the dunes, they need a chain. They need to be

16 able to have a place to be able to do it.

17       Back in the '87 RAMP it was determined that the

18 Gecko Area, which is where I set up, was 10 miles from other

19 sources of products, and for that reason there was a big

20 stress in the '87 RAMP to move over toward the Gecko Area.

21 That's where I am and I would like to seriously consider

22 doing the seven day.

23       And I brought with me what I gathered, most of

24 it -- well, I got the RAMP last Wednesday morning. From

25 Wednesday morning at 10:00 o'clock, 664 signatures says we

42

1 want vending seven days in the dunes.

2 MR. MICHAELSEN: Next, Lucy Shipp.

3 MS. SHIPP: Thank you.

4 Good evening, my name is Lucy Shipp, S-h-i-p-p. I

5 serve on the Yuma County Board of Supervisors representing

6 District 2 and Yuma County. And we don't call them the Yuma  
7 Dunes, but we are the gateway to the Imperial Sand Dunes and  
8 the activities on the sand dunes are very important to Yuma  
9 County.

10 They're an economic engine for us. And it isn't  
11 just the businesses, the dealerships that cater to the  
12 off-road users. It's also the gas stations, the tire shops,  
13 the fast foods, the restaurants, the hotels/motels, the  
14 grocery stores. I don't know if you're aware of last  
15 Thanksgiving, but convenience stores ran out of ice so the  
16 duners shop in Yuma.

17 We were appalled at the closures, and we are most

18 pleased to see the efforts being made to find a balanced

19 multiple use of these public lands.

20 We're also most pleased and encouraged to see that

21 you're basing your decisions not on simply emotional retort

22 but that you're going back to scientific research and basing

23 your decisions on scientific fact. And that pleases us very

24 much.

25 Any activity that draws the tens of thousands of

1 people we are seeing using the sand dunes is a perfect  
2 example of public lands being enjoyed by the public. And we  
3 appreciate your efforts. We look forward to your wisdom in  
4 finding an appropriate balance between sustaining the  
5 environment and allowing the public to recreate on their  
6 public lands.

7 And we thank you for your efforts. Bear in mind  
8 you're dealing with the economy of Yuma County in your  
9 decisions as well.

10 Thank you.

11 MR. MICHAELSEN: Next speakers ready to come up after

12 Doug Dowding will be Vicky Warren, Mary Ferguson, Bob Ham,

13 Chuck Mobley and Vivian Mobley.

14 MR. DOWDING: Good evening, My name is Doug Dowding,

15 D-o-w-d-i-n-g. My wife is Sweet Marie. We reside at

16 101 Gecko Road. We purchased special use permits to operate

17 there because it is a vending pad, it is not a camping pad.

18 There's a stipulation there that we're working on and trying

19 to figure out how we're going to get around this camping

20 problem they think the vendors are doing.

21 We are not camping. We have to be there every day

22 to sell. And we stipulated in a letter two years ago that

23 we had to be open every day that we paid to be there. We

24 are. So to be there we have to have a place to sleep at

25 night at least a couple of hours.

44

1 I was astounded to see the map in the DEIS.

2 Figure 31-3A doesn't have a single drawing that shows the

3 Gecko vendor pad. I don't understand this. I don't

4 understand why it isn't in there, but it should be. I

5 brought in the original drawings; I have them with me. I'd

6 be glad to show them to you. I have pictures to show it's  
7 there. If you look in your DEIS on pages, you'll see us  
8 setting there behind your picture.

9 Mike Gilmore and my wife pretty much covered  
10 everything else that I had to say. It was very well done.

11 And that's it.

12 MR. MICHAELSEN: Thank you.

13 Vicky Warren.

14 MS. WARREN: Hi, I'm Vicky Warren, W-a-r-r-e-n.

15 There are many discrepancies between the Draft EIS  
16 and the RAMP that will need to be addressed. If I could

17 speak to the people behind me, I would tell them to read

18 both very carefully and please mark these very carefully so

19 that we can get this fixed.

20 For instance, visitor use stage in the Draft EIS

21 say 197, but in the RAMP it says 240. 240 is what we need.

22 We need to get those things cleared up. Just like we don't

23 allow for camping in some places, moderate in others. The

24 estimated visitors are all over the map. Three-and-a-half

25 million, 750,000, you name it. We need to look very

1 closely.

2 I have very specific comments that you will be

3 receiving in writing, but there are things that I need to

4 say that I believe many people will want to say.

5 One of the things I noticed first is that the

6 California Native Plant Society within the Draft EIS is

7 given authoritative status. This is an advocacy group.

8 This is not a government-funded group. It's an advocacy

9 group. It does not belong in this study. I don't want my

10 dunes closed because of any plant that they decide they need

11 to protect when they are an advocacy group, just as the

12 American Cancer Association is an advocacy group.

13 The Osborne takeover is not necessary. You can

14 keep the radio tower and the helipad, but we don't want to

15 lose any more camping than we already have unless it -- if

16 you want a unique camping experience, there is nothing else

17 like that one camping spot anywhere in the Imperial Sand

18 Dunes Recreational Area. So we need that to be kept.

19 I have two positive comments I'll make in my last

20 30 seconds. One is, I think it's wonderful that the

21 closures -- the temporary closures were not used as a

22 baseline in the RAMP. They don't belong there. They are

23 temporary as a result of a lawsuit. That was a terrific

24 thing.

25 I also think it's clear that this RAMP

46

1 acknowledges that the OHV users have a role in resource

2 management and takes steps towards getting these things

3 corrected.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. MICHAELSEN: Before we have our next speaker, I

6 just want to say how much I really appreciate everyone

7 sticking to two minutes and everyone holding their applause

8 until everyone finishes their comments.

9 This is working out very well. Thank you.

10 Jerry Ferguson.

11 MS. FERGUSON: My name is Jerry Ferguson. I represent

12 the Cal- -- F-e-r-g-u-s-o-n, sorry. I represent the

13 California Association of Four Wheel Drive Club.

14 The first thing I would like to deal with is the

15 intervenor status. The San Diego Off-Road Coalition, Blue

16 Ribbon and California Wheel and the Desert Vipers all were

17 intervenors on the lawsuit. We did not agree to any

18 closures. We did sign for closures.

19       What we agreed to are temporary closures until

20 this RAMP and EIS came out. We were kind of pushed in a

21 corner. We got told that if we didn't agree that the center

22 would ask for full closure of the dunes. So we were pushed

23 into a corner. I want that to be made perfectly clear to

24 the people from the newspapers and Sierra Club, that we did

25 not agree to any closures.

1 Two of the other things that they're just kind of  
2 like what Vicky brought up. In the RAMP -- or the EIS,  
3 there's nothing that deals with the buffers. There's no  
4 explanation. There's no reasoning behind it. There's  
5 nothing. All it says is that there's going to be a buffer  
6 and it doesn't say why. It says where it's going to be and  
7 all that.

8 The other thing was on the camping closure east of  
9 the railroad tracks. There's no desert tortoise habitat.  
10 It may be potential, but if you read the Desert Tortoise

11 Recovery Plan and if you read the NEPA plan, none of that  
12 area is desert tortoise habitat. It may be potential for  
13 desert tortoise recovery sometime, somewhere, someday, but  
14 right now it's not desert tortoise habitat. So I don't even  
15 think that should be in the plan.

16       And I, like Vicky, will follow up with more  
17 in-depth detailed comments.

18       Thank you.

19       MR. MICHAELSEN: Bob Ham.

20       MR. HAM: Good evening, my name is Bob Ham, H-a-m.

21 Since 1999 I've served on the TRT as a representative for

22 the County of Imperial, and I'd like to make some

23 observations on what I saw in the EIS and the RAMP based on

24 some of the things that we talked about on the TRT. I'm

25 certain the County of Imperial is going to have significant

48

1 comments later.

2 But first of all, I did see some reference that

3 the plan called for the hiring of some new federal agents.

4 One of the things we found on the TRT and experience has

5 shown, the local law enforcement people on the big weekends  
6 are needed to control. There's nothing in there that talks  
7 about a steady dose of federal funding to continue a  
8 contract for local law enforcement.

9 I don't believe that you can continue to go to a  
10 new sticker every single year, so you need to correct that  
11 deficiency and figure out how you're going to take care of  
12 financing that.

13 The other issue that I'm kind of confused about is  
14 this alcohol ban and the curfew. The -- in looking through  
15 the Plan and the EIS, they're all one-line descriptions.

16 There's no talk about a methodology. There's no talk about

17 goals, objectives, alternatives, anything like that.

18 And most importantly, it's going to be a federal

19 regulation. We've all seen that unless the county sheriffs

20 can write on that regulation, which they can on -- the

21 federal magistrate, Mr. William Poppit (phonetic) -- I think

22 that needs to be better brought out. It should be referred

23 to the county sheriff to make that call and not the federal

24 agency. I think you better take another look at that.

25 Thank you.

1 MR. MICHAELSEN: Chuck Mobley.

2 MR. MOBLEY: My name is Chuck Mobley, M-o-b-l-e-y.

3 First, I'd like to thank the BLM rangers for the

4 wonderful job they've done since Thanksgiving in making the

5 dunes safe for me and my children. And on that fact, I

6 would like to see that continue to happen out there in the

7 dunes and -- because in the EIS you mentioned closing some

8 of the sand hills at night and having curfew and alcohol

9 bans, I think the money we spent this year for that should

10 be used -- or continue to be used.

11 And I think that is what is going to stop the

12 problem, not bans and new rules. You need to continue to do

13 the rules you have. And I want to thank the BLM rangers for

14 the great job they did and the Imperial Valley Sheriff's

15 Department.

16 I want to thank the -- I have a lot of

17 positives -- I want to thank you guys for including

18 socioeconomics here in the Imperial Valley. I'm a Brawley

19 resident.

20 Some of the EIS numbers aren't substantiated to

21 what the Chamber of Commerce is, so I would like you to

22 relook at those numbers.

23 Temporary closures, I'm glad you put those --

24 you didn't include those in there because they were

25 unsubstantiated and the prevent system, that was -- just

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1 off-roaders having to take the test is not fair. If someone

2 wants to walk in that area, would they have to take a test?

3 Some gentleman earlier said that 20 percent of the

4 dunes are only for people who aren't off-roaders. But  
5 according to your data, only 10 percent of those people use  
6 the dunes. So why would they have more than 20 percent. If  
7 you take your numbers, that means every year 75,000 people  
8 go out to the dunes that aren't off-roaders.

9 I want to thank you for the hard work you've done  
10 and I'll have more comments coming.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. MICHAELSEN: The next speakers after Vivian Mobley  
13 will be Susan Potts, Brian Warren and Lee Gray and Randy  
14 Gray and John Makin. And when I call your name as next  
15 speaker, I'd appreciate it if you would take a seat over

16 here in the waiting area.

17 Vivian Mobley.

18 MS. MOBLEY: My name is Vivian Mobley.

19 First of all I have a positive comment, and that

20 is that the temporary closures were not considered in the

21 baseline. Also I enjoy having the vendors out there all

22 week long. We spend a lot of time out there and I don't

23 feel that they should only be there on the weekends. Like,

24 we were out there today and we had no ice, and it would have

25 been nice to have someone out there for us.

1 I don't feel that closing the comp and the drags  
2 and all is the answer to the problem we have. Since we've  
3 had additional law enforcement, it has been very calm. So I  
4 believe if we could just enforce the rules that they have  
5 now, the problems will be solved.

6 Also, I'm not for the capacity limit. We spend a  
7 lot of time out there. We have teenage children and they  
8 all enjoy to go no matter how old they are, and it's our  
9 time together, spending time by the fire, talking about

10 what's going on in their lives. And I think if you do the  
11 capacity limit you take that away, and we could all use  
12 that.

13 I have a young daughter and we spend a lot of time  
14 together and I'd like to be able to have that with her out  
15 there.

16 MR. MICHAELSEN: Next, Susan Potts.

17 MS. POTTS: My name is Susan Potts, P-o-t-t-s. I, too,  
18 have written something up that I was going to read tonight,  
19 but I won't be able to fit that in with the time limit.

20 One of my concerns is about the special species

21 out there, the biological resources there. I don't believe

22 the survey has been very thorough. They haven't been

23 complete. Earlier you had mentioned about being large

24 connected areas. I understand that is a concern of

25 biological resources.

1 It doesn't make sense to me that if we close -- or

2 open areas to off-road vehicles when the surveys aren't

3 complete, and rather than having smaller segments or opening

4 it, that maybe we can look at having larger segments.

5       Also, there would be concern -- I was going to

6 speak more on that, but I'd like to talk more about the

7 recreation. I hear a lot about off-road vehicle recreation.

8 I have not heard much about the hiking opportunity. I spent

9 a lot of time in that area, a lot hiking north of the 78, in

10 that area.

11       In February I was able to have the opportunity

12 with other people to hike -- it was a backpack trip -- to

13 cross the Adaptive Management Area, the central closure. I

14 live and work in the desert. I hike, camp and backpack all

15 the time in desert areas so I'm very aware of the beauty and  
16 the variation and incredible opportunities that are in the  
17 desert and I was overwhelmed by my experiences in the dunes,  
18 hiking across there, going up into an area where it looked  
19 very beautiful but still somewhat dead. And you get into  
20 that area and you see animal tracks of all sorts, lizard  
21 tracks, all the life out there, the variety of plants.

22 I'd love to have that opportunity to go out there  
23 and continue backpacking, to bring friends. Frankly, when I  
24 showed people pictures of the trip and explained it, they  
25 thought I was crazy going there because they're afraid for

1 safety reasons.

2 People say they would love to be able to come back

3 if they could find a place to safely park their vehicles and

4 feel like they're not going to get run over if they're to

5 walk to see different areas, to see some of these plants

6 that are so special.

7 MR. MICHAELSEN: Brian Warren.

8 MR. WARREN: My name is Brian Warren, W-a-r-r-e-n.

9 My talk is real simple here.

10 The camping pads, you guys are showing that you're

11 only going to get on an acre of camping pads no more than 24

12 vehicles. We did a little math and giving 1,200 square-feet

13 per rig is 36 per acre. And that's real generous compared

14 to what we're normally used to camping at. So as far as

15 your numbers go, the 55,000, if you're looking strictly at

16 camping opportunities, the number's far greater than that.

17 That's it.

18 MR. MICHAELSEN: Lee Gray.

19 MR. GRAY: My name is Lee Gray, G-r-a-y. I'm a local

20 enthusiast. There seems to be one thing that is not

21 mentioned, and overlooked is that you hear the Sierra

22 Club ladies and gentlemen and environmentalists saying

23 how much they love the desert. But you forget, the

24 environmentalists -- we love the desert just as much, if not

25 more, than the environmentalists do. We just use it

1 differently. But we are not murderers. We just enjoy

2 outdoors stuff. I just wanted to make that first point.

3           Also in the study from the ASA, which I applaud,  
4 for the record there were 71,000-plus bushes in the open  
5 areas, the areas where we can actually drive. That -- I'm  
6 no math major, but that doesn't sound like an endangered  
7 species to me at all, 71-000-plus. This is something I  
8 think should be considered as far as closures.

9           Also, to consider the family. I have a family  
10 now. I'm a third generation. I hope my daughter is a  
11 fourth generation along with other family and friends.

12           What -- one thing I don't understand. I'm an  
13 outdoors man and enthusiast. And I don't understand  
14 environmentalists like they don't understand me.

15 I don't understand the kind of country we live in.

16 For instance, it is totally illegal in this country to kill

17 or disturb bald eagle eggs. That's like a \$15,000 fine.

18 But it is totally legal to kill a perfectly human embryo.

19 And that's where I think the environmentalists need to

20 protect the elements.

21 And I want the environmentalists to understand

22 that we love the desert just as much as they do. We just

23 use it in a way we feel it's suited for. It's public land

24 and we are the public and I think that's -- well, my view.

25 Thank you, USA.

1 MR. MICHAELSEN: Randy Gray.

2 MR. GRAY: I'm Randy Gray. That's G-r-a-y. I've lived

3 here all my life, born here. I've been going to the desert

4 dunes since I was 16 years old, and I appreciate all the

5 dune enthusiasts that still continue to do that with their

6 families and do it legally and lawfully, with respect to the

7 law enforcement out there. And I really appreciate the

8 BLM's efforts to try to tame some of these young guys --

9 maybe some older guys too.

10 Anyway, I'm basically just here to -- I don't

11 know. It's so hard to get these two groups together. It's

12 almost like left and right, you know, even in our federal

13 government. But please just work with both sides and do as

14 you're doing and try to get the best means possible for

15 everybody involved.

16 That's all I've got to say. Thank you.

17 MR. MICHAELSEN: The next speakers up will be John

18 Makin -- excuse me on this one, I don't even want to take a

19 guess -- looks like Meg Granglass, perhaps. You'll spell

20 it -- you'll know better -- followed by Robert Holzman, at

21 which point in time we will have exhausted the number of

22 speaker cards that I have.

23       If there is anyone who has been inspired to offer

24 up comments tonight, then could you hold up -- this

25 gentleman over here (indicating) has other cards. You'll

1 fill it out and hand it in. Otherwise, when we get to the

2 end of the speaker cards we will adjourn.

3 Next speaker, John Makin.

4 MR. MAKIN: Good evening. My name is John Makin,

5 M-a-k-i-n. I'm a vendor at Glamis, a relatively long-term

6 vendor at Glamis. But that's not why I've come here

7 tonight. I'm also the mayor pro tem of Westmorland. And as

8 a city, we are very concerned about the -- what you seem to

9 like to call visitors' supply is, in fact, the capacity, and

10 every -- every single retail business on our main street in

11 Westmorland, our biggest customers are the dunes people.

12 We need those people going through our town. They

13 buy gas, food, groceries. They buy all those things, and

14 it's our single biggest customer.

15           And in reading the Environmental Impact Statement,

16 under the socioeconomic portion, you talk a lot about

17 \$7 million or \$9 million, or -- you know, millions of

18 dollars, but we don't bring that down to what that means to

19 our cities.

20           We have the highest unemployment, the lowest per

21 capita income in the county, and this is one of our main

22 sources of income. You'll affect our population. You'll

23 affect the taxes that our city receives, the way we operate.

24 And I'm not pleased with the detail or the amount of

25 coverage that your economic impact study goes to the local

1 level.

2       And it's not just Westmorland. It's Calipatria

3 and it's Brawley. Of course, their impact won't be as great

4 as ours.

5       One other thing that struck me while I was sitting

6 here -- I still got a couple seconds. In a way I envy you

7 guys your jobs because you're not in the private sector of

8 having to make a profit, and you're not elected. I think

9 either -- both of those are kind of tough. I hope that

10 you'll do a survey.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. MICHAELSEN: Some of the people who may have signed

13 up may not have been here at the very beginning, so in case

14 you didn't hear me, you have two minutes to speak. And in

15 order to give you a comfortable place to wrap up, I put this

16 up when you have 30 seconds left.

17 Next, Meg Grossglass.

18 MS. GROSSGLASS: My name is Meg, M-e-g, Grossglass,

19 G-r-o-s-s-g-l-a-s-s. I want to thank you guys for not

20 including the temporary closures in the EIS and the RAMP

21 because they are just temporary. And I want to address the

22 alcohol bans and the -- I hate doing this -- I want to

23 address the alcohol bans, and the capacity limits and the

24 curfew.

25 I think that if we just enforce the laws that we

1 have now, we'll be fine. In the earlier years when we had

2 40 law enforcement officers for 200,000 people, what do you  
3 expect, you know, when you only have that many. If you had  
4 a city of 200,000 people and 40 law enforcement officers,  
5 there would be riots. It would be insane. You know, I  
6 don't know why you would expect different out in the dunes  
7 when people are recreating.

8 Now we have proper law enforcement, and they're  
9 enforcing the laws that we have so we're fine. We don't  
10 need all these other laws that are just going to cost us  
11 more money to get more law enforcement out there, and  
12 they're not going to be effective.

13 You can't really effectively have an alcohol ban

14 outside of camp. And there's no way -- you guys don't say

15 how you're going to enforce that. What are you going to do,

16 stop everybody as they leave camp?

17 I don't think that capacity limits are fair. I

18 don't think if there's a certain percentage, that if we go

19 over that we should have capacity limits. There are too

20 many people that enjoy these lands and we pay taxes and we

21 deserve to use this land.

22 If you guys manage it properly, give us proper law

23 enforcement, we will all be fine. We just need proper

24 management and proper law enforcement. And I just want to

25 say off-roaders are the endangered species here.

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1 MR. MICHAELSEN: Next speakers in order, if you'll just

2 come over to this area here, are Robert Holzman, Amadis

3 Lugo, Mark Harms, Marty Coyne, and Mike Hulsey.

4 Robert Holzman.

5 MR. HOLZMAN: Good evening. My voice is a little

6 hoarse but I appreciate the opportunity to address you

7 tonight. My name is Robert Holzman, H-o-l-z-m-a-n. I'm a

8 board member of the Green Party of the Imperial County. I  
9 do have some comments, written comments, that I'll submit on  
10 behalf of the Green Party.

11 I'd like to make some verbal comments, however, as  
12 an individual, as somebody that's concerned about our  
13 community and what seems to be a rift or a split that's  
14 going on that's between off-road recreational vehicle users  
15 and people that have come forward in supporting the idea of  
16 protecting the dunes as a habitat, as a unique -- a truly  
17 unique habitat in this country and maybe anywhere in the  
18 world. And that's one of the reasons, not just to protect

19 the milk vetch, but to protect the entire habitat.

20       You know, we know by experience our interests are

21 dependent of each other and they're going to depend on --

22 all the animals and plants in that area must survive

23 together. I want to encourage this board to find a way to

24 accommodate the off-road recreation vehicle users, to work

25 out whatever technicalities exist, to giving them access to

1 a portion of the dunes that's going to meet their needs.

2           But I also want you to balance that with the  
3 needs -- what I think a majority of the people in the county  
4 would like to see balanced out -- the need to protect what  
5 Imperial County has, this extremely unique and precious  
6 habitat that we must look after.

7           Thank you.

8           MR. MICHAELSEN: Amadis Lugo.

9           MR. LUGO: Good evening again. My name is Amadis,  
10 A-m-a-d-i-s, last name is Lugo, L-u-g-o. I am a dentist and  
11 I reside in Brawley. For the past 10 years I moved to the  
12 Imperial County. I have no clue about what buggies, the

13 sand dunes, no, but I came up with a thought that as a  
14 recreation area it needed more services. And I think I  
15 could provide them as long as I met the policy of the Bureau  
16 of Land Management.

17 And I did come up with a service that will provide  
18 for seven days a week throughout the whole entire season.  
19 And I did that for six months and you collected my money on  
20 a very big basis, and you had no problem whatsoever. Now  
21 after \$75,000 worth of investment you want to kick me out.

22 I find that I am the first point of contact for a  
23 lot of you people that go out there. There's a lot more  
24 people out there today to taking use of my services.

25           The main reason I came here today is because I

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1   wanted to see the process. I wanted to find out who were

2   the board members. I'd like for you to find out who makes

3   the approval. Those are issues of concern that I will be

4   bringing up at later dates.

5           Thank you very much.

6   MR. MICHAELSEN: Mark Harms.

7 MR. HARMS: Hello. My name is Mark Harms, H-a-r-m-s.

8 I'm a board member with the American Sand Association. I

9 also own a company that's over 33 years old by the name of

10 Sand Tires Unlimited. You can probably appreciate what this

11 means to my company.

12 Greg, I'd like to thank you and your staff. I

13 know that they've been under a tremendous amount of pressure

14 with respect to everything that's going on.

15 But with respect to our friends here today that I

16 consider social engineers, that would have us close ports,

17 that would have us put farmers out of business, that would

18 have us put ranchers out of business, and now

19 recreationalists and people like myself with businesses, I

20 obviously have issues with that because this country is an

21 economic engine, it's not a preserve. And more

22 specifically, this state is an economic engine as well. The

23 impact to the dunes out there is a billion dollar industry.

24       The thing that I have a concern with is that you

25 have five more of these meetings, and I'd like you to speak

1 a little more about the events that are going to happen when

2 we hit these 15 percent and 20 percent triggers.

3       These people in this room may not know that if we

4 hit a 20 percent trigger and there is no reset component in

5 that, that Thanksgiving will not see any more than 55,000

6 people. And your own figures that's between 150- and

7 200,000.

8       So you will eliminate for possibly a generation

9 two-thirds to three-quarters of the people that go out there

10 on holidays. And not just Thanksgiving. And you have no

11 reset component in any of this so we can't ever go back to

12 what we have today.

13           If that particular happens, my business will cease

14 to exist. The fees that you will collect will be directly

15 impacted and the services you will be able to provide will

16 also be impacted.

17           Thank you.

18           MR. MICHAELSEN: The next speakers will be Marty Coyne,

19 Mike Hulse, Mark Gray and Karen Gray.

20           MR. COYNE: Good evening. My name is Marty Coyne,

21 C-o-y-n-e. I am the -- I own two motorcycle/ATV dealerships

22 here in Imperial Valley as well as I have one in Riverside.

23           Speaking of economics, 75 percent of our business

24 is derived from ATV use in the Imperial Sand Dunes. If

25 we're going to continue losing part of that, essentially it

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1 would put us out of business. We employ almost 60 people.

2 Other than getting into the motor homes and trailers or just

3 specifically ATVs, it would drastically affect Imperial

4 County and their employees and incomes.

5 On the family side, my family's a third

6 generation. We've been using the sand dunes for 30 years,

7 and we need to continue doing so. We have little ones and,  
8 of course, and parents, and we want to continue to use them  
9 and like to see that continue.

10 All I see on the regulation side, at some point  
11 if you continue to regulate too much, essentially somebody,  
12 or the environmentalists will get the job accomplished if  
13 they want to anyway. We have experienced that on the  
14 watercraft -- personal watercraft industry over the last two  
15 years. That industry is off 55 percent. And as we even see  
16 here in Imperial County, you can't go out to a lake and spin  
17 a 360, you can't go over 35 miles per hour. So for our

18 customers, their problem is, why bother, it's no fun

19 anymore.

20       So on the regulation of how many people camp out

21 in the desert, the alcohol use, some of the other issues

22 raised in the report that I have not seen yet, I ask you to

23 take a look at that really delicately. Essentially the

24 problems that have been experienced out in the dunes have

25 been on five weekends a year, Easter, Halloween,

1 Thanksgiving, New Year's, and the rest of the time it's

2 pretty pleasant out there.

3 So I ask you, don't look it over and regulate on

4 those issues that may occur on busy weekends only, but the

5 rest of the year it's pretty well fine out there. I have

6 employees also here that are visiting that want to enjoy it.

7 I don't believe I have anything else. Thank you

8 very much.

9 MR. MICHAELSEN: Michael Hulsey.

10 MR. HULSEY: Hi. My name is Michael H-u-l-s-e-y. I've

11 got just a couple comments.

12           One is, I believe the public needs more notice and  
13 time of these meetings. I didn't receive a letter stating  
14 that I needed to -- what the deadlines for a hard copy are.  
15 The deadlines to request a copy of the hard copy is March  
16 29th. I received that March 29th, after 4:00 p.m.

17           I'm against the permits, in the excess permitting.  
18 We already pay a general fee. We pay green sticker fees.  
19 And I assume that -- that would also be a permit use is what  
20 you're talking about. So I'm against permitting.

21           I don't believe capacity limits should be allowed  
22 or reservation system. I would hate -- I mean, I'm a local  
23 here and I would hate to be somebody from L.A. or meet a

24 person from L.A. that's driven 300, 400 miles to come down

25 to the dunes and have them closed. That's going to cause a

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1 lot of hostility. And then for the locals here, that's

2 going to cause more chaos out there at the dunes.

3 I don't believe that the closures of the hills at

4 night or in the evening are a good idea. And from the

5 law -- from law enforcement and EMS standpoint -- I'm an

6 Imperial County EMT as well. I've done service work out  
7 there at the dunes. And the way it's structured right now,  
8 I mean it's great for EMS, law enforcement. They have the  
9 crowd contained. If they do away with that, people are just  
10 going to go further out in the dunes. Access for EMS and  
11 law enforcement personnel are just going to be more  
12 difficult.

13       And I do believe there needs to be more services  
14 and vendors available to the public out in the dunes.

15       MR. MICHAELSEN: Thank you.

16       MS. TROST: I'd like to clarify one item. This is

17 Roxie Trost. The statement was made that there was a

18 deadline to request a Draft document. And that's -- there

19 is no deadline. You may request a Draft document at any

20 time until the comment period, till June 28th.

21 MR. MICHAELSEN: And how would they do that, make that

22 request?

23 MS. TROST: By contacting Jim Komatinsky in our

24 El Centro field office.

25 MR. MICHAELSEN: Thank you for that clarification.

1 Mark Gray.

2 MR. GRAY: My name is Mark Gray, G-r-a-y. I'm a local

3 guy, along with all my cousins and brothers here.

4 I'd like to comment that the BLM did a very good

5 job. I go out there almost every single weekend and the

6 problem times I see are Halloween and Thanksgiving. After

7 that, the loonies, they leave. But the BLM has done a very

8 good job.

9 Second of all, I do not agree with the limit of

10 people. How can you take more people that are getting into

11 the sport and any sport that they're not going to buy a

12 proven fact, and condense them into a smaller area. You

13 want more problems, go ahead and do it.

14       Second of all, as Mr. Warren stated, a very good

15 point there about these pads, you need to -- whatever your

16 numbers are, you need to double and triple it because I park

17 in the sand myself, but a lot of people come down from L.A.

18 and stuff that have motor homes and they've got to have a

19 place to park. And you can't limit it to four to a pad.

20 It's just not going to work.

21       I'd like to -- just some more on the plants and

22 the bug aspect. I mean let's face facts, people, this is a

23 barren desert, all right. Americans have the wherewithal to

24 make what is apparently a money-making deal, and I don't --

25 it really upsets me to see any kind of restrictions placed

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1 on it. I understand there needs to be hiking and stuff like

2 that. The north side is plenty. I don't see why any of the

3 other side has to be touched.

4 I'd also like to see the permits -- any kind of

5 permit I'm totally against. I don't agree with any permits

6 in any area. And also, money spent on tags to stay the

7 weekend, I know there's areas that could be changed there,

8 but I don't like to see brand-new homes there that I can't

9 afford. I'd like to see it spent in other areas.

10 Thank you.

11 MR. MICHAELSEN: We've had a couple more signature

12 cards given to me. Next speakers Erin Gray, Connie Howard

13 and John Dalglidish.

14 Erin Gray.

15 MS. GRAY: Hello. My name is Erin Gray, G-r-a-y. My

16 cousins are here and they spoke earlier. My dad's here and

17 my little brother. And everyone is talking about facts and  
18 stuff. Well, I just wanted to let you guys know about --  
19 that there's lots of families out there. And I've been  
20 going out there since before I was born. My grandpa --  
21 really, in my mother's -- well, my grandpa was out there and  
22 he just enjoyed it, and he made it a family thing.  
23       And my parents have rules to obey, and I know  
24 there are a lot of the people out there that don't obey the  
25 laws, but that's what the BLM are here for.

1           And also about closing the hill at night, I don't  
2 think that's a very smart idea because the crazy people will  
3 always find another hill in the area and so you'll just have  
4 to close that one at night. And so I don't think that's a  
5 very good idea.

6           And also about the limitations, I don't think  
7 that's a good idea because there's a lot of people, like  
8 another man said earlier, that come from far away and, you  
9 know, they pay their money, like their year pass, whatever,  
10 or they pay their weekend pass, and when they get there,

11 they spent money on food, ice, sodas, they fixed up their  
12 vehicles, you know, to get them ready for the dunes and keep  
13 them running and stuff, and they spent a lot of money just  
14 trying to get there, and not to have it taken away from  
15 them. And it's just a big waste of money.

16         And also, when the duners ride out there, our goal  
17 is not to squash any plants. We don't like to run over the  
18 plants. We like to miss them. And our goal is to find the  
19 smoothest route or the highest routes. The plants are in  
20 our way, and we try to avoid them. So I just wanted to  
21 mention that is my main goal.

22         Also, there's lots of families out there, and even

23 though there are a lot of people that break the laws and

24 stuff, that there are a lot of people that are obeying the

25 law. And we love to go out there. And we love the dunes.

69

1 Thank you.

2 MR. MICHAELSEN: Connie Howard.

3 MS. HOWARD: Hi. My name is Connie Howard, and I don't

4 really want to be up here in front talking to everybody

5 but --

6 MR. MICHAELSEN: Could you spell your last name,

7 please.

8 MS. HOWARD: H-o-w-a-r-d. -- but the lady who said she

9 saw the lizard tracks in February, she should have tracked

10 down that lizard because it was a pretty special lizard

11 because they hibernate in the wintertime.

12 And we're always doing surveys of things, and I

13 think we need to do a survey and see how many

14 environmentalists are out there hiking all the time. And

15 maybe they'll be hiking in the summertime and then we can

16 come to a compromise where they can have it in the

17 summertime and the duners can have it in the wintertime.

18 And there won't be anything --

19 MR. MICHAELSEN: We were doing so well.

20 Are you done?

21 MS. HOWARD: Yes.

22 MR. MICHAELSEN: All right. The last speaker card I

23 have turned in is John Dalglidish.

24 MR. DALGLDISH: Good evening. My name is John, last

25 name D-a-l-g-l-d-i-s-h. I also have a thing with this

1 letter that I received from the BLM that Miss Trost just

2 referenced. Let me read to you from it.

3       It says electro or paper copies are available by

4 request by March 29th, 2002. This letter was postmarked on

5 March 27th and it came to my house on April 1st, three days

6 after the time stated on the front of the paper to get

7 copies.

8       I don't think that any of the closures will work.

9 Like people ahead of me said, they'll just go to other

10 hills. I think what needs to be done is we need to take a

11 look at what the increased law enforcement will do in the  
12 dunes. It's -- so far it's made a big difference. See if  
13 it makes a difference on the big holiday weekends,  
14 Thanksgiving and Halloween which are traditionally the more  
15 rowdy weekends, before you start thinking about any  
16 implementation of closures or capacity limits. Give the law  
17 enforcement a chance to work.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. MICHAELSEN: With that I'd like to invite Roxie  
20 Trost to make any closing remarks about tonight's meeting.

21 MS. TROST: We'd like to thank you all for coming out

22 tonight. And just to remind you that if you chose that you

23 didn't -- that you wanted that root canal, rather than to

24 speak in front of everyone, you have the opportunity to

25 provide your written comments to us as well.

1 There's also five other public meetings scheduled.

2 If you'd like to come out and talk with us at any of those

3 meetings, we'll be happy to listen to you there, too.

4 Again thank you, and please drive safely.

5 (The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.)

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1                   REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2                   STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

3

4                   I, JUDITH WICKLUND, CSR NO. 11789, a Certified

5 Shorthand Reporter for the state of California, do hereby

6 certify:

7                   That said proceedings were taken before me at the

8 time and place therein stated and was thereafter transcribed

9 into print under my direction and supervision; and I hereby

10 certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript

11 of my shorthand notes of the proceedings.

12 I further certify that I am in no way interested

13 in the event of these proceedings, and that I am not related

14 to any of the parties hereto.

15

16 WITNESS my hand this 22nd day of April, 2002.

17

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19 \_\_\_\_\_

20 JUDITH WICKLUND, CSR NO. 11789

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