



# United States Department of the Interior



## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

California State Office  
2800 Cottage Way, Suite W1834  
Sacramento, CA 95825  
www.ca.blm.gov

Date: May 8, 2009  
(Submitted April 15, 2009)

### **BLM California State Office Report to the California State OHV Commission**

#### **Program Update:**

#### **Redding Office- Reopening Copley Mountain Staging Area:**

The Copley Mountain Staging Area within the Chappie-Shasta Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) area northwest of Redding will reopen Saturday, April 11. The area had been closed since last summer because of damage caused by the 22,000-acre Motion Fire.

The staging area has facilities for motorcycle and all-terrain vehicle unloading and provides access to the network of roads and trails within the OHV area. Some roads and trails within the OHV area may be closed because of fire rehabilitation work. They urged riders and drivers to stay on roads and trails and to avoid driving on fire lines or closed routes.

The Chappie-Shasta Staging Area and Shasta Campground near Shasta Dam will open later than the Copley staging area. Dates will be announced. Resumption of OHV area access across Shasta Dam also will be announced later.

For more information, contact the BLM Redding Field Office, (530) 224-2100.

#### **Central California OHV Subcommittee Meeting, April 18, Merced:**

BLM's Central California District (CenCal) includes the lands managed by Ukiah, Folsom, Hollister, Bakersfield and Bishop Field Offices. The CenCal Resource Advisory Council (RAC) like its 3 counterparts (NorthEast California, Northwest California, and the Desert Advisory Council) advises the Secretary of the Interior, through the BLM, on a variety of public land issues associated with public land management in Central California. On occasion, the RAC's appoint subcommittees to provide additional input to BLM on specific issues.

The CenCal RAC approved formation of an OHV Subcommittee in April 2007. Steve Koretoff, from Kerman, is the subcommittee chair. The Subcommittee has been engaged with BLM on the

feasibility of locating additional OHV opportunity across the area from the Salinas Valley to the Sierra Foothills.

The Subcommittee held a meeting on Saturday, April 18.

### **California Desert –District Advisory Committee (DAC) March 20, 2009**

The Desert District Advisory Council met at the Barstow Field Office on March 20, 2009 to kick off their quarterly meeting and field trip. The day began at the field office with the council having the opportunity to meet the Barstow Field Office Staff before boarding the Discovery Trails Bus for the 69 mile trek across the desert to Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area. The DAC was provided lunch and administrative and safety briefings. Mr. David Cole of Hammerking Productions had assembled a large group of Off-Road Warriors to provide the assembled members an up close and personal look at a terrain feature rock crawlers affectionately call the “Hammers”. This team of experts were from the “who’s – who” of off-roading and included club members from Extreme Wheelers 4 Christ, Friends of Johnson Valley, Inland Empire 4 Wheelers, NAXIA, Partnership from Johnson Valley, Tin Benders, Victor Valley 4 Wheelers, and numerous individuals not associated with a club. There were 40 seats available and the DAC, BLM Staff and interested members of the public were seated in vehicles for what proved to be a “World Class” experience. When the group returned, the DAC members each believed that their driver was the best of all but agreed that the entire group exhibited professionalism, skill and openness in sharing their passion for the sport. Mr. Cole and the team of volunteers helped the advisory council to have a better understanding of the broad issues in Johnson Valley and most important, all who participated had a ball.

### **Johnson Valley, 29 Palms Base Expansion Update**

The Headquarters, Marine Corps and the Department of Defense have decided that the MCAGCC at Twentynine Palms, CA needs to expand its training capacity. This expansion would potentially impact the Johnson Valley off-highway vehicle recreation area to the west of the installation, as well as lands to the south and to the east of the installation. On August 14, 2008, the Marines submitted an Application for Withdrawal of Public Lands to the BLM that included approximately 422,000 acres that would temporarily segregate the area from uses that would preclude the withdrawal.

The MCAGCC at Twentynine Palms, CA is the Marine Corps Title 10 training facility, with a long history of large-scale, live-fire and combined-arms maneuver exercises. It is the Marine Corp's major training base for completing pre-deployment training for Marines headed overseas.

The expansion, as it is currently proposed, consists of approximately 422,000 acres and would impact a significant portion of the 188,000 acre Johnson Valley off-highway vehicle recreation area which is west of the installation, small areas to the south of the installation, and the largest area to be impacted would be to the east of the installation.

BLM currently has several renewable energy applications within the proposed withdrawal boundaries along with other uses such as rights-of-ways, mining claims. The extent of other uses is currently being identified.

An interagency agreement was signed in November 2008 between BLM and Marines to cooperate on any environmental analysis on a proposed use or land acquisition of BLM managed lands.

BLM held 2 segregation meetings in October 2008 to solicit public input and the Marines held 3 scoping meetings in December 2008 to do the same. Several thousand comments have been received that support military operations however request that expansion should not occur in Johnson Valley.

The Marines are currently analyzing the results of scoping and have developed a schedule that anticipates the completion of the draft EIS in 2010, with the final EIS in 2011.

More information is available on the USMC 29 Palms Website:

<http://www.29palms.usmc.mil/las/>

### **Imperial Sand Dunes Management Area (ISDRA) El Centro Field Office.**

#### **Union Pacific Railroad/Glamis Access Road**

Union Pacific Railroad mainline tracks run along the eastern boundary of the Imperial Sand Dunes. The Railroad's access road, called Wash Road, has provided access -both to the tracks and to the camping areas east of the dunes for many years. This spring, Union Pacific announced that they were constructing a fence west of the road to keep sand off the rails, and to reduce the possibility of vehicle accidents on the busy tracks. The railroad plans to prohibit public access to wash road.

BLM El Centro field Office negotiated with Union Pacific to allow access for the remainder of this year's field season, and smoothed access roads into important camping areas. BLM is working to develop separate access west of the fence for next season.

I will try to keep you informed of new developments as they occur. In the meantime the UP has established a website

at:[http://www.uprr.com/newsinfo/media\\_kit/regional/western/glamis.shtml](http://www.uprr.com/newsinfo/media_kit/regional/western/glamis.shtml).

BLM El Centro's website is: <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/elcentro/recreation/ohvs/isdra.html>

### **Budget**

#### **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009**

On Feb17, 2009, President Obama signed the ARRA. In addition to the regular federal appropriations through the normal budget, this legislation was designed to "jumpstart the economy" providing immediate funding to many agencies- local, county, state and federal- to accomplish priority projects in a very short timeframe. A website has been set up for public review of all ARRA projects nationally at: <http://www.recovery.gov/>

Funding will be available to all Department of the Interior (DOI) agencies including BLM. DOI has established a website for all projects at: <http://www.recovery.doi.gov/>. At the current time, potential projects have been submitted from each agency, and no information will be available until a final announcement is made.

The Recovery Act includes \$320 million for the Bureau of Land Management to expand its capacity to authorize renewable energy development on public lands while ensuring environmental protection of these areas, remediate abandoned mines, restore native plants and animals including sage grouse habitat. Funding is also included for Interior agencies to eliminate underbrush and other vegetation in fire-prone areas in order to reduce the threat and potential severity of fire.

## **Legislation**

### **Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (HR146):**

On March 30, President Obama signed an Omnibus lands bill, adding wilderness designations, and other conservation additions to all Federal land management agencies, including BLM. The BLM Land designations include wilderness designations in California, Colorado, Idaho, Colorado, Idaho, New Mexico, Oregon, and Utah; four new nation conservation areas in Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah; one new national monument in New Mexico; and new wild and scenic rivers in California, Idaho, and Utah. Additionally, the bill officially created The National Landscape Conservation System within BLM,

California specific designations include:

- Designation of more than 34,000 acres into the Granite Mountain Wilderness in the eastern Sierra
- Designation of an additional 23,000 acres to expand the White Mountain Wilderness, administered jointly with the US Forest Service
- Creation and Designation of two areas in Riverside as the Beauty Mountain and Pinto Mountain Wilderness, and additions to 5 existing Wilderness. Total new and expansion areas in Riverside County total about 84,000 acres.
- Designation of 26 miles of the Armargosa River as a Wild and Scenic River.

A BLM News Release is attached to this report as Attachment 1

A copy of the entire bill is available from the following link:

[http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/wo/Communications\\_Directorate/legislation.Par.32579.File.dat/HR146enrolledbill.pdf](http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/wo/Communications_Directorate/legislation.Par.32579.File.dat/HR146enrolledbill.pdf)

BLM California Wilderness websites, detailed maps:

[http://www.blm.gov/ca/pa/wilderness/wa/clickable\\_map50.html](http://www.blm.gov/ca/pa/wilderness/wa/clickable_map50.html)

### **Mother Road National Monument Proposal**

On February 10, 2009, The Wildlands Conservancy, in partnership with the Route 66 Alliance, announced plans to propose a Mother Road National Monument to protect approximately 70 miles of Route 66 in eastern San Bernardino County as well as additional public lands south of Route 66.

The proposal was brought on by preservationists concerned with military expansion and renewable energy development in the California desert. The monument would encompass as much as 2.4 million acres which would make it twice as big as Joshua Tree National Monument. Backers of the monument proposal also hope to protect more than a half-million acres of scattered former Catellus checkerboard lands acquired by the federal government as a result of a partnership between the Wildlands Conservancy, Catellus Corp., and federal funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Some of those lands are now subject to applications for renewable energy development.

Senator Dianne Feinstein has not endorsed the Mother Road National Monument concept and other specific provisions sought by The Wildlands Conservancy, Sierra Club California/Nevada Desert Committee and Route 66 preservationists. However, the senator has indicated her intent to ensure the former Catellus lands are protected.

## **New/On-going Projects**

### **Land Use Planning Update- Ongoing Plan Progress/Public Milestones**

#### **Hollister-CCMA Plan**

The Hollister Field Office is in the process of preparing Resource Management Plan (RMP) with an associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Clear Creek Management Area (CCMA). The CCMA RMP will replace the existing planning decisions for the approximately 63,000 acres of public land contained in the 1984 Hollister RMP and the associated CCMA RMP Amendments.

The Hollister RMP was updated in 2006 to establish goals, objectives, and management actions for BLM public lands that address current issues, knowledge, and conditions. However, the CCMA was not addressed in that document because of concerns expressed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and others regarding the potential for human health risks from exposure to naturally occurring asbestos in the area.

Since 2004, the EPA has been conducting an asbestos exposure evaluation study in the CCMA. The study is designed to provide further information on the exposure levels from various types of activities in the CCMA. Initial results from the EPA study indicated that an environmental impact statement would be necessary to consider the new information and a range of management options for the CCMA.

Accordingly, BLM agreed to work with EPA and the public to appropriately respond to the new information upon completion of the EPA human health risk study. If the information is significantly different than the EPA's previous 1992 risk assessment, BLM agreed to expeditiously initiate a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review to consider the new information and potential management responses at the CCMA in light of any new findings. BLM and EPA agreed that this subsequent NEPA review would address general public access and recreation at the CCMA and analyze a full range of alternatives.

The plan will fulfill the needs and obligations set forth by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and BLM management policies. The BLM will work collaboratively with interested parties to identify the management decisions that are best suited to local, regional, and national needs and concerns.

Some of the major issues that will be addressed in this planning effort include: impacts to public safety and human health from naturally occurring asbestos and past mining activities; management of the San Benito Mountain Research Natural Area; resource management objectives and desired conditions; wildland and prescribed fire management, livestock grazing, motorized and non-motorized recreation management; lands available for disposal or of interest for acquisition; and potential for energy development.

The Draft RMP should be available for public review prior to July, 2009.

**Bakersfield- Carrizo Plain**

The Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Carrizo Plain National monument was released for public review in January 2009, and the review period closed on April 23, 2009. The Proposed

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
4/12/2007 – 6/12/2007	Scoping Period
8/1/2007	Tentative schedule for completion of scoping report.
7/2007 – 12/2007	Planning team develops alternatives.
1/2008 – 12/2008	Planning team analyzes impacts and develops Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.
1/2009 – 4/2009	Public comment period on Draft RMP/EIS. This will include public briefings and a written comment period.
4/2009 – 8/2009	Planning team analyzes comments and develops proposed RMP and Final EIS.
8/2009 – 11/2009	Proposed RMP/Final EIS published. Governor's consistency review and public protest period.
10/2009 – 11/2010	Protest resolution (if needed, Record of Decision signed, RMP implementation begins)

**Bakersfield RMP**

The Resource Management Plan (RMP) is the comprehensive management outline for all activities over a large landscape- in this case all lands managed by the Bakersfield Field Office with the exception of the Carrizo Plain. The Current RMP is a revision of the Caliente Management Plan, which was signed in 1997.

At the present time, the planning team is working in impact analysis and development of the draft RMP. In Late February, the team held public workshops on travel management in Lake Isabella and Taft. In late April, they held socio-economic planning workshops in Bakersfield and Lake Isabella. The draft RMP should be available to the public in late 2009.

**Project Timeline:**

The following timeline has been estimated for revision of the Bakersfield Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. All dates are tentative (except for the scoping period).

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
3/4/2008 – 5/5/2008	Scoping Period
7/15/2008	Tentative schedule for completion of scoping report.
8/2008 – 10/2008	Planning team develops alternatives.
1/2009 – 4/2009	Impact analysis and development of the Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.
10/2009 – 12/2009	Public comment period on Draft RMP/EIS. This will include public briefings and a written comment period.
1/2010 – 8/2010	Planning team analyzes comments and develops proposed RMP and Final EIS.
9/2010	Proposed RMP/Final EIS published.

**El Centro- Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA), Recreation Management Plan (RAMP)**

**Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan**

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) began a revision of its Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP), based on a 2008 publication by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) of its final rule on critical habitat for the threatened Peirson's milk-vetch. The RAMP, approved in 2005, was set aside by a Federal Court order in 2006 and remanded to BLM for further action, as was the previous FWS critical habitat designation. The revision, started in 2008 is due to be released for public review as a draft, in early summer, 2009.

On the project website,

(<http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/elcentro/recreation/ohvs/isdra/dunesinfo/docs/isdramp.print.html> ) the following documents are available:

*\*Note: Adobe Acrobat Reader is required to view documents. To download Reader for free, click here .*

*Mar.  
2009*

\* Alternatives Comparison Table

\* All Alternative Maps (18Mb) *Download all alternative maps or each individual map. For higher resolution maps, please contact the BLM El Centro Field Office at (760) 337-4400.*

\* Map - Alternative 1 (2.5Mb)

\* Map - Alternative 2 (2.6Mb)

\* Map - Alternative 3 (2.6Mb)

\* Map - Alternative 4 (2.6Mb)

\* Map - Alternative 5 (2.6Mb)

\* Map - Alternative 6 (2.6Mb)

\* Map - Alternative 7 (2.5Mb)

*Sep.  
2008*

\* Imperial Sand Dunes Scoping Report

*Apr.  
2008*

\* Map - Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (4/17/08)

\* Map - Imperial Sand Dunes Biological Communities (4/17/08)

\* Map - Imperial Sand Dunes Peirson's Milkvetch Critical Habitat (4/17/08)

\* Map - Imperial Sand Dunes Land Status (4/17/08)

\* BLM Planning Process Flowchart

News Release - Public Meetings Scheduled for Revised Dunes Management Plan (4/4/08)

*Mar.* Federal Register - Notice of Intent to Amend CDCA Plan and RAMP for  
*2008* Imperial Sand Dunes (3/18/08)





## Attachment 1

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

# News Release

---

**For Immediate Release:** March 30, 2009

CA-SO-09-10

**Contacts:** John Dearing 916-978-4622 or Jan Bedrosian 916-978-4616

---

### **President Signs Legislation that Enhances Protection for Public Lands in California**

President Obama today (Monday, March 30) signed into law an omnibus lands bill that enhances protection for public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management across the West, including California.

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar hailed the bill as a “milestone for the stewardship of America’s natural wonders. This legislation is the product of years of work in hundreds of communities across America, where citizens, elected officials, stakeholders and land managers have forged wise protections for our treasured landscapes that will boost local economies while protecting traditional ways of life. The conservation areas, wild lands, and open spaces protected through this landmark legislation will be a proud legacy for generations to come.”

The BLM land designations include wilderness areas in California, Colorado, Idaho, New Mexico, Oregon, and Utah; four new national conservation areas in Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah; one new national monument in New Mexico; and new wild and scenic rivers in Idaho, California, and Utah.

The legislation, cleared for the president’s signature after passage by the U.S. House on a 285-140 vote last week, also codifies the BLM’s administratively created National Landscape Conservation System, which consists of 850 federally recognized areas covering 27 million acres of BLM-managed land.

In California, the act designates more than 34,000 acres of BLM-managed land as the Granite Mountain Wilderness in the Eastern Sierra and another 23,000 acres to expand the White Mountain Wilderness administered in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service. BLM and the U.S. Forest Service are also authorized to transfer jurisdiction in this area to consolidate and improve management.

The act also designates 26 miles of the Amargosa River, often called the "Crown Jewel of the Mojave Desert," as a wild and scenic river. The Amargosa is the only free-flowing river in the Death Valley region of the Mojave, providing a rare and lush riparian area in the desert.

In Riverside County, the bill designates approximately 84,000 acres of BLM-managed lands as wilderness including two new wilderness areas, Beauty Mountain and Pinto Mountain, as well as

additions to five areas previously designated by Congress. The bill also directs approximately 66 acres of BLM-managed land be taken into trust for the Me-Wuk Indians of the Tuolumne Rancheria.

“This landmark legislation represents years of grass-roots efforts involving all segments of the public in the regions,” said Jim Abbott, acting California state director for BLM. “Thanks to these groups and the strong bi-partisan support from the sponsors, these outstanding landscapes will offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation for current and future generations.”

– BLM –