



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Bureau of Land Management Report to the California State OHV Commission

Presentations will be given by:

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BLM NAMES VETERAN LAND MANAGER TO LEAD CALIFORNIA STATE OFFICE

SACRAMENTO – The Bureau of Land Management today announced that Karen Mouritsen has been named the new California State Director—a key leadership position based in Sacramento. As State Director, Mouritsen will direct a team that manages lands encompassing 15% of the Golden State’s total land mass.

Mouritsen, a 27-year career public servant, comes to the California post after serving the past three years as the State Director for the BLM Eastern States Office, which manages BLM lands and minerals in 22 states along and east of the Mississippi River. In addition, she served as a Regional Facilitator for the Department of Interior reorganization effort. Mouritsen will report to work in Sacramento in January.

“We are truly fortunate to have a professional with Karen Mouritsen’s passion and skill directing BLM-California. Karen is a strong communicator with extensive leadership

experience and her passion for America's public lands make her the right person to lead BLM-California as we move into the new decade," **said BLM Deputy Director for Policy and Programs William Perry Pendley.**

Over the course of her career, Mouritsen has spent time in Washington, D.C., serving in key leadership roles. These include senior level positions as the BLM Deputy Assistant Director for Energy, Minerals, and Realty Management, BLM Budget Officer and BLM liaison to the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management where she advised and briefed senior leadership on renewable energy, wildlife, wilderness, recreation, land use planning, and interagency cooperation with military partners. Mouritsen also worked as Acting State Director in Alaska and New Mexico, as well as Acting Associate District Manager in the BLM Southern Nevada District Office in Las Vegas and the Medford District Office in Oregon.

Prior to working for the BLM, Mouritsen served as an attorney advisor in the Interior Department's Office of the Solicitor for 10 years beginning in 1992. There she provided legal expertise on BLM issues, including endangered species, land use planning and forestry matters. Mouritsen—a native of Dallas—received her bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin College of Engineering in 1983. She earned her Juris Doctor degree at the University of Texas at Austin Law School in 1992 before launching her Federal career.

As BLM California State Director, Mouritsen will lead a team that administers 15 million acres of public lands and 42 million acres of minerals and energy resources in California, as well as 1.6 million surface acres in northwestern Nevada. BLM public lands extend across rangelands, forests, high mountains and deserts making California one of the most diverse states in the nation. The abundance of natural resources managed for multiple use by the BLM across California continues to support generations of families and local communities, providing important economic benefits to Californians and the nation.

Mouritsen takes over from Acting State Director Joe Stout, who will return to his post as BLM-California Associate State Director, where he will work closely with Mouritsen to ensure continuity of leadership.

BLM AND THE COMMUNITY OF LONE PINE CELEBRATE ALABAMA HILLS NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

Story by Jesse Plum, Public Affairs Specialist



The Alabama Hills Stewardship Group and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Bishop Field Office, along with dozens of stakeholder groups and the community of Lone Pine, gathered on Oct. 5 to celebrate the recent designation of the Alabama Hills National Scenic Area in Inyo County.

The designation was the culmination of a collaborative 10-year process led by the Alabama Hills Stewardship Group, who gathered input from over 30 stakeholders and 40 different user groups, including the Inyo County Board of Supervisors, Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Tribe, Friends of the Inyo, cattle ranchers, rock climbers, four-wheel drive groups, and other public land users. The designation is a rare example of a locally led grassroots effort, carried forward in federal legislation, with bipartisan leadership from Congressman Paul Cook and Senator Dianne Feinstein.

The Inyo County Board of Supervisors were also enthusiastic in their support behind the designation. “We are excited to see the cooperation and hard work of local stakeholders finally come to fruition,” Matt Kingsley, 5th District - Inyo County Supervisor said.

A decade long effort to explore federal designation for the Alabama Hills led to the designation of the 18,610-acre National Scenic Area, which will be managed by the BLM as part of the National Conservation Lands. The area is made up of rounded rocks and eroded hills set between the jagged peaks of the Sierra Nevada and the Owens Valley.

“For years, the Alabama Hills Stewardship Group has worked with us, the local Tribe and the Lone Pine community to promote a shared-stewardship approach towards management of the Hills,” BLM’s Bishop Field Manager Steve Nelson said. “I am very proud of the relationship we have with the stewardship group and the community. It’s important and it sets a good example for how we should approach management of public lands that we all use and enjoy - lands that

are worthy of a shared conservation commitment. It's not simple, but if you honor and respect the land and the people, you will get there."

The celebration included a ribbon cutting ceremony in the hills followed by a celebration at the nearby Museum of Western Film History in Lone Pine where participants enjoyed photo exhibitions and installations showcasing the hundreds of movies filmed in the Alabama Hills. People of all ages shared their Alabama Hills stories and lined up for signed photos from



acclaimed landscape photographer and early Alabama Hills advocate, David Muench.

The Alabama Hills attract tens of thousands of outdoor adventure seekers every year who come to hike around the famous natural arches, climb large granite boulders, ride through breath taking landscapes, camp near the boulder fields and soak in the natural

beauty of the scenic vistas.

However, the Alabama Hills story does not end there. Over the next year, the BLM and community partners will work together to formulate and implement a management plan to ensure that the Alabama Hill National Scenic Area remains an example for responsible recreation, adventure and conservation.

Nelson went on to say, "We look forward to building upon this community-based stakeholder effort as we begin to implement the conservation and public access goals established by this unique designation."

Did You Know?

-Over 400 movies have been filmed in at the Alabama Hills, including Tremors, Star Trek: Generations, Iron Man and Django Unchained.

-The rounded hills and jagged Sierra Nevada peaks are from the same granitic rock. Over millions of years, natural chemical weathering and wind erosion shaped the fantastic shapes we see today.

BLM REOPENS PANOCHÉ AND TUMEY HILLS TO VEHICLE ACCESS, THOUGH AREAS STILL UNDER FIRE RESTRICTIONS

MARINA, Calif. – The Bureau of Land Management Central Coast Field Office will reopen the Panoche and Tumeý hills recreation areas to vehicle access on Tuesday, Oct. 15. Outdoor enthusiasts are reminded that BLM-managed public lands in Fresno, Monterey and San Benito counties, which include the recreation areas, are still under fire restrictions that temporarily prohibit all target shooting due to high fire risk. The restrictions do not apply to the use of firearms for hunting.



The fire restrictions also ban campfires, barbecues or open fires outside of a developed campground. Portable stoves with gas, jelled petroleum, or pressurized liquid fuel are authorized with a valid California campfire permit, which is available for free at all BLM, CAL FIRE and Forest Service offices and online at <http://www.preventwildfireca.org/Permits>.

Other restrictions for the areas include no motorized vehicles allowed off established roads or trails and no smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, or at a developed recreation site, or other designated areas.

It is estimated that nearly 90 percent of wildland fires in the United States are caused by humans. For the last decade, BLM records show that target shooting is the leading cause of fire starts on public lands managed by the Central Coast Field Office. Individuals who spark wildland fires, intentionally or unintentionally, may be held responsible for fire suppression and repair costs. The public is advised to be extremely careful when recreating outdoors and do the following: carry a shovel and water at all times, and check weather forecasts and fire danger ratings before leaving home.

The Panoche and Tumeý hills were once covered by a vast inland sea. Today, marine fossils of fish and turtles can be found and some of the light porous rocks contain tiny, bleached and shell-like skeletons of sea algae. The 2,500 feet high hilltops offer scenic vistas of the lush San Joaquin Valley and spectacular Sierra Nevada. Both areas offer day-use facilities with parking areas, shade structures, picnic benches, vault toilets and interpretive kiosks showing maps and information.

For information, please visit the BLM Central Coast Field Office webpage at <https://www.blm.gov/office/central-coast-field-office>.



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News Release

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BLM facilitates recreational opportunities on public lands for electric bikes

Secretary's Order 3376 encourages e-bikes on BLM trails

WASHINGTON – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced today its strategy to implement [Secretary's Order 3376](#), *Increasing Recreational Opportunities Through the Use of Electric Bikes*, a recently signed order by Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt that is designed to make it easier for more Americans to recreate on and experience their public lands.

Secretary's Order 3376 directs Department of the Interior (DOI) bureaus to begin the longer term process of obtaining public input on new regulations that will clarify that low-speed e-bikes should enjoy the same access as conventional bicycles, consistent with other federal and state laws. Public land managers will have the ability in the short term to utilize the flexibility they have under current regulations to accommodate this new technology that assists riders as they pedal in a way that allows them to enjoy the bicycling experience.

The guidance enables visitors to use these bicycles with a small electric motor (less than 1 horsepower) power assist in the same manner as traditional bicycles. The operator of an e-bike may only use the small electric motor to assist pedal propulsion. The motor may not be used to propel an e-bike without the rider also pedaling, except in locations open to public motor vehicle traffic.

“Our goal is always to make the BLM’s public lands more accessible to all Americans. Allowing the use of e-bikes will open more of our public lands to people with disabilities, families, and older Americans, while promoting a healthy outdoor lifestyle for everyone,” **said BLM Deputy Director for Policy and Programs William Perry Pendley**. “This new policy provides consistent guidance to our land managers nationwide to ensure the broadest possible usage on BLM-managed lands.”

A majority of states have adopted e-bike policies, most following model legislation that allows for the three classes of e-bikes to have access to bicycle trails. The Department of the Interior e-bike guidance seeks to provide consistency with the state and local rules where possible.

Given their use of a small (less than one horsepower) electric motor, the BLM currently manages e-bikes as off-highway vehicles. Secretary's Order 3376, with a view towards the rapid changes in e-bike technology, directs the BLM and other Department of the Interior agencies to begin the longer term process of amending existing regulations to exempt many e-bikes from that classification.

The guidance to field managers across the BLM for the short-term is to utilize flexibility in BLM’s current regulations to exclude certain classes of e-bikes from the definition of off-highway vehicle to authorize their use on BLM-managed roads and trails where appropriate. The guidance is consistent with the Secretary’s priority of moving decision-making to the field level, where local trail conditions and user needs can better be considered.

The BLM will now permit visitors to use low-speed e-bikes on BLM roads, trails and designated areas where traditional bikes are allowed.

Similar to traditional bicycles, e-bikes are not allowed in designated wilderness areas and may not be appropriate for back-country trails. The focus of the Department of the Interior's guidance is on expanding the traditional bicycling experience to those who enjoy the reduction of effort provided by this new e-bike technology. Park superintendents and local refuge and land managers will limit, restrict, or impose conditions on bicycle use and e-bike use where necessary to manage visitor use conflicts and ensure visitor safety and resource protection.

E-bikes make bicycle travel easier and more efficient, because they allow bicyclists to travel farther with less effort. When used as an alternative to gasoline- or diesel-powered modes of transportation, e-bikes can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel consumption, improve air quality, and support active modes of transportation for visitors. Similar to traditional bicycles, e-bikes can decrease traffic congestion, reduce the demand for vehicle parking spaces, and increase the number and visibility of cyclists on the road. For more information, visit blm.gov/ebikes.

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The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land located primarily in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. In fiscal year 2018, the diverse activities authorized on BLM-managed lands generated \$105 billion in economic output across the country. This economic activity supported 471,000 jobs and contributed substantial revenue to the U.S. Treasury and state governments, mostly through royalties on minerals.