

APPROVED May 10, 2018

MBCA DRAFT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 12, 2018

5:00 – 7:00 PM

YVCC Mesquite Room

Regular Meeting Call to Order:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Bardwell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruth Rieman
<input type="checkbox"/> David Fick (prior notice)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Claudia Sall
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pat Flanagan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seth Shteir
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meg Foley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Laraine Turk
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Kennington	<input type="checkbox"/> Marina West (prior notice)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Lipsitz	

Meeting called to order at 5:05 pm

Laraine will take minutes in Marina's absence.

Introduction of Guests and Board Directors

Guests: Sheara Cohen (The Wilderness Society/TWS); local resident Miriam Seger; YVHS students Jade Arnhold, Kyley Sims, Morgan Novak, Audrey Mae Moncada, Luke Jones; Kerry Pukett of Pioneertown Mountains Preserve, Rick Hamburg (?) of COW

Agenda Input

- *Consensus agreement to Sarah's request that Sheara be allowed to make a presentation of about half an hour related to WEMO.*
- *Consensus agreement to TABLE non-critical items because of time needed for Sheara and Pat's presentations.*
- *Claudia is leaving MBCA at the end of the year to focus on CDC, but will still serve on the DWL committee.*
- *There was consensus to approve the amended agenda.*

Approval of Minutes from March 8, 2018

- ***Ruth moved to approve the March minutes, Steve seconded, and all agreed.***

Treasurer's Report

Steve gave a very brief report.

Steve moved that we approve up to \$300 in expenses for Pat Flanagan to attend the Desert Symposium in Zzyzx. Sarah seconded and all approved.

Capacity Building & Organizational Issues

1) Finance Committee report

Funding Native American travel: new policy – **TABLED** - Steve and Pat working on

2) Grant status: **TABLED**

- “Indigenous Place” – Rose Foundation:
- Book has been received, publication from gathering of tribes. Additional copies to come, and hopefully digitized.
- DWL- Edison & AWAC

3) Events Committee reports:

- DWL Landscape Tour (April 28-29, 2018); Sunday’s pre tour event excellent. Suggestion has come up to give docents a gift; a suggestion was made that the nice event at Claudia’s was really a gift. Consensus this is better than a “gift.”
- Ruth has sent Press Releases to all 40 news outlets. Needs contact for Basinwide foundation. Laraine will provide one.
- Explained the Tour to the guests.
- *Earth Day assignments were discussed.*
- MBCA’s 50th Anniversary / 2019 - **TABLED**

4) Susan Luckie Reilly MBCA-related files - MF, DF, LT - **TABLED**

5) Caltrans Adopted-highway report – DF - **TABLED**

Conservation Issues

1) WEMO Draft Land Use Plan Amendment to CDCAP

- Sheara Cohen, TWC re. tool to examine BLM’s online interactive WEMO maps
- BLM Open House / April 25th – 5-7PM – JTCC / will take public comments
- Comment period deadline: May 10th (*later noted to be June 14*)

Sheara said her goal was to get input from us on possible mapping tools to help generate good, specific comments. TWS and COW, chapters of Sierra Club, and others have sued BLM in last 15 years or so in response to developments in the WEMO plan. Some success in pointing out problems, but each subsequent iteration brings more problems. Illegal trails keep increasing; there’s more and more damage.

Eric gave some history: original plan in 2006 had 5000 miles of routes. A lawsuit alleged that BLM's method was illegal, but the next iteration was even larger, 10,000 miles of trails. Other frustrating delays occurred, but this time the Plan has about 6300 miles in the preferred scenario (out of 4 alternatives). OHV community feels they have 'LOST' Route mileage and are voicing this to BLM. DRECP will have an effect, even if not large. So OHV community is in favor of reopening DRECP.

It now seems that BLM is not asking for justification to keep routes, but asking justification for eliminating routes. BLM admits that they have much more contact with OHV community members than other stakeholders.

Numbers matter; route specific comments are needed, both in crown jewel landscapes and also small tract act landscapes. Protected quiet recreation is in conflict with OHV.

Sheara suggested we need 3 types of comments: 1) Specific statements that "this should be closed." 2) Point to the larger picture, principles and legitimacy of quiet recreation. 3) Propose alternate vision e.g. crown jewel lands – "we want this specific area to be a safe quiet recreation area." (Blend 2 and 3).

TWS will be holding some meetings to help people prepare comments.

BLM has provided maps, but they didn't report any substantive information on comments from the last comment period and many of their changes don't make sense. TWC is trying to get BLM to produce details to explain their rationale for the changes. We can then have a better sense of how their prior comments were or weren't effective.

There is a new BLM mapping comment tool; TWS is trying to enhance the comment mechanism.

Seth noted that we should also challenge them on monitoring – if monitoring is planned why isn't it funded?

We discussed the County position; it doesn't appear that the County has weighed in. CS noted there are County easements on the roads.

Miriam heard law enforcement and BLM representatives say it's impossible to enforce on checkerboard lands. Why aren't they closed if they can't be enforced?

Several other Counties appear to have better multi-agency cooperation for enforcement than SB Co.

Deadline is June 14th for comments.

There are some success stories. One in an area near Lancaster-Palmdale – WEMO area with lots of damage. TWS, CalWild and backcountry horsemen proposed some areas for hiking, some OHV, and got exactly what they wanted. This latest BLM proposal looks very similar to what they requested.

We discussed the brochure that has an OHV map for the Morongo Basin and Johnson/Lucerne Valley areas. Sheara hadn't seen it. We believe the Sherriff is in agreement with the map.

Eric suggested we talk with the Sheriff to show that this regionally-accepted situation conflicts with the latest BLM proposal. There's a precedent; the Sheriff's shooting policy trumps BLM shooting policy. WEMO should just block out this area. County situations should translate into WEMO rather than conflict with. TWS sees better enforcement by Forest Service elsewhere in CA. They do a severe brief enforcement and then word of mouth results in fewer problems.

We should ask Supervisors to submit comments to WEMO and also suggest more signage, e.g. Yucca Valley's signs.

Sheara demonstrated their mapping tool. The most powerful function is that you can zoom to an area, click on a trail, and a link to comment form pops up. It goes into their database. Not effective for lots of small tract act bits, but this could especially be used for supporting one trail and objecting to others nearby or to connecting trails. They have also added categories e.g. very short segments or segments on slopes. TWS plans to search the prior map and then review this updated one and find every route that was switched from non-motorized to motorized; then ask BLM the rationale for each change.

Eric noted that COW will publicize what has changed and look for ways to facilitate comments. He likes the idea of contacting County people and point to the brochure and ask for supervisors' comments to BLM.

Eric just received an email from BLM concerning rationale for route changes that might be good news. (L: Did he say he'd share?)

We know that no oral comments will be taken at the upcoming WEMO meetings.

Eric noted that the BLM report labels if the comment was made with a COW form, so they're keeping track.

The MAC should make the request to the Supervisors first, then to Supervisor Ramos and maybe Lovingood. Get County shape files for the brochure map. Make a specific request that there should be no WEMO routes in the red area on the map.

Sheara suggests petitions via electronic forms relating to specific routes.

Sarah asked Sheara to let us know as the mapping tools are refined. We think they'll be helpful.

2) RECE: status w/LUS & BOS, delayed finding re. 4.10

- Agendized for Planning Commission
- Meeting rescheduled due to conflict with Donna Charpied's Memorial

Sarah explained the situation for guests. In sum, the Supervisors agreed to LUS pulling out the section that would have protected rural living areas in favor of development-friendly language. What LUS is doing is basically against the General Plan. RE is supposed to be used within the County but none of the developments are in that category. There aren't even benefits to the County with these external developments, only burdens because of unfunded maintenance etc. (See County response to draft DRECP in economic section.)

Our comments should be to keep the original language that protects RL areas with strong directive language. The BOS has a general responsibility for property values that they are not honoring if they let these projects in. They're basically setting up a negative declaration for the developers.

Pat added a sidebar on Daggett solar project of 5+ square miles. Noted that Newberry Springs area has stabilized dust, where property near the project is buried in dust.

We are unsure whether the Supervisors will need to approve after Planning Commission decision.

Pat is submitting to CARB, LUS, and other agencies an index of pictures of the wind event of April 6.

3) Solar Projects: Palen Solar Project, Ord Mountain, Newberry Springs, etc. **TABLED**

4) Air Quality Monitoring Stations – SK, PF -- 2018 goal: deploy 10 “Purple Air” units in MB for baseline data - **TABLED**

5) DRECP – MBCA comment letter submitted to BLM: PF’s latest and greatest!
Practically a dissertation!

6) Housing development project updates **TABLED**

- Alta Mira
- Paradise Valley – comment period extended – who will draft MBCA’s letter

Outreach & Communication

1) Minerva Hoyt Award winner announcement – SK

- Date set: May 8 at Twentynine Palms Inn on the lawn, 1 PM.

2) Communications: **TABLED**

- mbconservation.org
- YVHS Natl. Honors Soc. student, Mikaela Monical’s service project

3) Promotion: lobby card; 3-fold brochure; stickers **TABLED**

4) Memorial for Donna Charpied, Thurs., April 19, 2018, Eagle Mountain, LaRonna Jojoba Farm

Sarah: MBCA and Lucerne MACs (& others) Committee working on 247 Scenic Highway. Local CalTrans District 8 drove around with a staff member; encouraged to move forward. Karen Watkins of LUS was appointed to assist – told her of working with CalTrans. Wrote Karen to ask Supervisors to write Letter of Intent. Terri and Karen are working on a letter. Value of Scenic status; multi jurisdiction.

Community Reports

1) Memorial for Donna Charpied, Thurs., April 19, 2018, Eagle Mountain, LaRonna Jojoba Farm

Meeting Adjourned at 7:03 pm.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, May 10, 2018, 5:00PM
YV Community Center / Mesquite Room