

MBCA BOARD MEETING **APPROVED** MINUTES
Thursday March 11, 2021 / 5:00 – 7:00 pm Via Zoom

Black Bold Italics = Board vote *Blue Italics = action commitment*

Regular Meeting Call to Order: 5:09 pm

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Bardwell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brian Hammer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Arch McCulloch
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Fick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Janet Johnston	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruth Rieman
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pat Flanagan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Kennington	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Laraine Turk
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meg Foley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Lipsitz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cathy Zarakov

Social media consultants: Aimee Buyea Stacy Doolittle

Introduction of Guests and Board Directors

No guests present.

Agenda approval

Meg asked to add item #5 under conservation issues regarding information about Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. The revised agenda was unanimously approved.

Minutes from February, 2021 BOD meeting

Steve requested one change (\$5500 instead of \$5000 for the Sall donation). **Meg moved to approve the revised February 11, 2021 Minutes. Sarah seconded and all were in favor. (12-0)**

Treasurer's Report

Cathy sent monthly financial documents to us prior to the meeting. Marina met with Cathy to begin training her in Treasurer processes. Cathy had several questions concerning recent credit card transactions that were answered. Steve has some receipts he will send to Cathy. Marina will provide a 1099 for Aimee. Our cash on hand is \$56,129.16, and the CD is \$22,757.72. The Treasurer's report was accepted unanimously.

Presentation by Columba Quintero of the Native American Land Conservancy -
Columba was not able to attend today.

Capacity Building & Organizational Issues

1) *50th book:* - pdf on website distribution list – LT, ML

Stacy has created a link on the [History page](#) to the "Issuu" program to view our book as a flipbook, and *we will add a PDF view/download option*. There are now 2 subpages to the History page, one [about Susan Luckie Reilly](#) and the other Susan's history of [the first 25 years](#) of MBCA.

We will continue sending books to new members twice a month (Laraine notifies Sarah of the addresses), and Steve hopes we'll get some new members after tomorrow's radio show interview. We have so many books, we should consider mailing multiple copies to members and ask them to share.

2) *mbconservation.org / Social Media update– Stacy and Aimee*

Aimee reported we've reached 1100 accounts in Instagram and continue to draw younger demographics on IG. Stacy and Aimee have worked together to plan a timeline to publish a variety of general content on social media over the year.

Website appearance – LT, SK

Laraine reported on the recent Web Team meeting and listed several improvements that have been made, including Aimee's reworking of the Denison Scholarship home page slider and Stacy developing a new Desert Landscaping page to include a plant spotlight, DWL Tour links, list of nurseries and public desert-wise gardens to tour, and plant lists. *We agreed to get a few people together to decide on the plant spotlights.* We're grateful for Stacy's work on this website enhancement. Pat suggested we find out if the "Let's Go Native" poster/brochure that we helped create some years ago has a digital version. We might also link the recordings of Mike Branning's weekly show on KCDZ 107.7 radio. Arch added that CNPS is beginning to implement a plan for a native garden at the Hi Desert Nature Museum in the area surrounding the museum parking lot.

Laraine asked *Janet, Cathy and Brian to send a "biography" and photo for the Board of Directors page.*

Comment letter history – LT, ML, SK

Laraine reported that Nora suggested we *organize the comment letters into a page called "MBCA Takes a Stand."* This was very positively received. We might also create a page on the "track record" of the issues we've taken a stand on, as a future website project.

3) Events Committee reports: 2021 virtual landscape tour

After reviewing the videographer proposals, Steve moved to accept Cole Gibson's proposal ("Half Circle G Productions") for a financial commitment of \$8300, with 50% due in advance and 50% after completion. Sarah seconded, and all were in favor. (12-0)

Steve will reach out to both who submitted proposals and connect Cole with Stacy to plan production. Steve and Cathy will work with Marina to get a check written. *Ruth reported that 6 sites have been agreed to and confirmed; she will send the list to everyone.* The hosts are Perry & Cathy DeRouen in Morongo Valley, Robin Maxwell & Max Thomas in Pioneertown, Judy & Bob Wold in Joshua Tree, the Mendoza's in Twentynine Palms, Scot McKone in Yucca Valley, and Mike Lipsitz in Landers. *Stacy will scout all locations with Cole and discuss the timing of filming with the landowners.*

4) Denison Scholarship – SB, LT, PF

Laraine reported that 53 emails were sent announcing the scholarship (including Board members); 23 were opened, and 13 of those were school or media people. *Steve and Laraine will be sure to mention the scholarship on their Z107.7 radio interview tomorrow and Laraine will send out a follow-up email soon.* Janet sent the information to some seniors she knows. We'll be considering a different scholarship program next year.

Conservation Issues

1) JT listing as candidacy for threatened – SB,PF,LT

The only news is that San Bernardino County is not accepting the 2084 Take regulation that was available. They're fighting it all the way and are taking a rigid stance. We have publicized that MDLT has a very detailed "how to" page on their website with details on the regulations by location. Yucca Valley's Planning Commission talked about it at their meeting last night; they accepted the 2084 take process during the candidacy year.

2) *Air Quality Monitoring: Location of Purple Air units – SK, AM – Nothing new.*

3) *Dark Sky ordinance update –SB*

Partner with Sky's the Limit or SCDVA for virtual night viewing.

Steve hasn't had any updates from the County after the Planning Commission requested a "workshop" on the proposed ordinance. Steve talked with retired JTNP Branch Chief Physical Scientist Luke Sabala who has volunteered to help and has some action ideas. Code Enforcement's role needs to be clarified and Land Use Services needs to step up to implement Andy Wingert's significant effort on this ordinance.

Steve reported that the Pioneertown Postmaster is intending to put motion detection lights around their building because of mailbox break-ins. There are issues of County and federal jurisdiction over the implementation, but if done right it could be a demonstration project. Steve will talk with Mark Lundquist about this and also to see if he can arrange a meeting with LUS.

Pat said that the 29 Palms Post Office had the same problem and resolved it in a dark sky-conscious way. *Pat will try to find someone knowledgeable at the PO about what they did and how to best communicate with government agencies.* Maybe we should try working through new Congressman Obernolte.

4) *Carbon sequestration in the desert. – PF*

Pat is working on a paper with Robin Kobaly in response to a California Energy Commission report that essentially dismisses desert carbon sequestration. An earlier report by Michael Allen that addressed the issue is no longer on their website. The latest Desert Climate Change report doesn't mention it either. Suzy Boyd at MDLT is also working on a response related to the 30/30 plan in the desert.

Brian put together a map and an Excel spreadsheet of 188 solar projects, the majority of which are on intact desert despite the latest report by the California Energy Commission that most projects are on old agricultural land. Pat researched the 188 projects and determined that 54,720 acres of these projects are on intact desert and only 9,187 acres are on ag land. She continues to pursue this and hopes to connect with a national level group and also UCR. Sarah asked if this was overlooked, or misrepresented. Pat responded she looked for the obvious keywords about desert carbon sequestration in numerous major reports and documents and it's just not referenced at all.

Steve asked Brian if we could post the list and map he created. *Brian said his sources were all public domain, and he'd like another review and check-in with Pat before releasing it.* There's a Google file that can be posted for people to download and zoom in and out. Sarah suggested we might contact Angelina Galiteva.

Steve noted that one of the letters we recently signed on to was to encourage and promote rooftop solar and fight for improved net metering. Pat agreed we should keep pushing the Governor on net metering, and provide information on the website. Pat has hopes for getting national attention to the issue.

ADDED: 5) Meg regarding BMCP.

Meg reported that the front acreage of BMCP has been owned by the County and "managed" by BLM, which has created many management challenges. The MOU is old and outdated and there's been a holdup related to insurance and land transfer;

legislative action is needed. San Bernardino County signed off in January and Chad Mayes introduced [AB 1190](#) that will help convey the County land to BLM. This will help management-wise, and hopefully the change in management will offer funding opportunities (e.g. GAO Act / LWCF) for much-needed improvements.

Outreach & Communications

1) MBCA press coverage – SB, LT, JJ

There's been a lot of media-related action and outreach lately.

- Janet and Steve presented to the Joshua Tree Rotary last month for 6-7 people. They could be a partner for our future youth field trip plans.
- Janet also talked with Tami at County Parks & Recreation in support of a grant application for the Desert View Conservation Area (Section 6), a likely site for our future youth field trips.
- Steve received a request for an opinion on several hi desert issues from a writer for the *Desert Sun* who lives in 29 Palms. The questions dealt with growth and land use and AutoCamp. Steve's responses emphasized how little attention has been paid to desert conservation in the AutoCamp development (solar, shade, native plants, etc.).
- Steve and Laraine are scheduled to be on KCDZ's "Up Close" show this Friday, March 13, at 10 AM.
- Matt Beurois of Yucca Valley TV sent a request to the website for an interview about the Denison Scholarship. Laraine has responded but has had no reply yet.
- Steve was recorded on YVTV last month about the Virtual Landscape Tour.

2) MAC - SB, PF

The 2021 MAC members were sworn in last Monday at the first meeting in quite a while. Steve is disappointed that it is now scheduled to meet every other month because first responders felt it was a burden to report monthly. Steve made extensive comments at the MAC about problems with the Pioneertown Motel development and other growth issues. David mentioned that the new Joshua Tree MAC member Glen Harris, who has been a fundraiser for Dawn Rowe, appears to be development-oriented.

3) Countywide Plan, Housing Element update, CAGs, - SB, JJ, PF

Janet and Steve attended a webinar with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research and learned that the annual progress report on SB County's General Plan has not been done recently. There's also a Housing Element report due every 8 years but on a separate stream from the General Plan, which they have to update this year. Janet will look into past progress reports on SB County's Housing element. They were disappointed to learn that the Governor's Planning Office has great resources but no authority over the County, so there's no action if they haven't turned in progress report.

However, there seems to be more authority over the Housing element review. This is important about dealing with vacation rentals and what has been taken out of the housing stock, and zoning issues. These aren't issues required in the reporting, so citizens will have to push the issues. At the webinar it was agreed that litigation or legislation is usually needed. *Janet and Steve will continue to work on this.* Among the arguments will be that the County is supposed to take care of residents first, not people from LA making money on rentals here. There are issues of scale and balance and environmental effects. Steve noted it's very important to quantify things, so they will try to work with homeless advocate Wayne Hamilton, the water districts, and

school districts to gather data. Volunteers walking neighborhoods is another possibility.

4) *Request from Jen Kolm of JTNP for possible assistance – PF*

There's been no follow-up yet regarding assistance for exhibit information in Project Phoenix.

5) *Support Friends of the Inyo re: [Conglomerate Mesa](#)*

There was some discussion on the value of petitions vs. comment letters. *Steve will send out information and ask the letter writing committee to decide how to respond.*

6) UCR Climate activist report – LT

Laraine presented two projects from the UC Climate Change Steward course. The first was a citizen scientist-type “Resilient Landscaping Evaluation.” The second was a proposal for a program to engage and train local residents to make public comments and write letters to decision-makers about how government can help with local climate change resilience.

There was further discussion on climate change and the need to press SB County. *Sarah reported that the City of San Diego City has identified their areas most impacted by climate change; she will share that information.* There were specific criteria to meet, and some resources are going into those communities. Understanding where the most vulnerable areas are is important. Sarah suggested we consider “scholarship” money for people to be involved. *We'll talk more about putting these ideas on the website.*

Adjournment: 7:03 PM

Letters signed onto :

MBCA letter in support of CSA 20 grant request for DVCA, [Save California Solar Coalition](#) NEM3.0

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, April 8, 2021

5:00 – 7:00 PM ZOOM **stay tuned!**