

Bureau of Land Management
Quarterly Report
June 30, 2017

1. Route Monitoring and Compliance

a. Monitoring Compliance with Route Closures at a Statistically Significant Level – Update from March 2017 Quarterly Report

Pursuant to the WEMO OHV Monitoring Protocol, for the third quarter of Year 1 of the second 3-year monitoring cycle commencing August 2016, BLM completed field inspection and data recordation on 38 miles of field sample routes (Table 1).

Table 1. Routes Field Monitored Since March 2017			
Subregion	Routes Monitored		
Afton Canyon	AC8828		
Cronese Lake	CL8255	CL8125	
Coolgardie	CG7216	CG7230	
Fremont Peak	FP5345		
Calico Mountains	CM7620	CM7645	CM7634
Mitchel Mountains	MM7188		
Black Mountain	BM7152	BM6381	BM6381A
Ord Mountains	OM6621		
Stoddard Valley	SV2665		
El Mirage	EM4680		
Kramer Hills	KH6160	KH5239	

b. Summary of Monitoring/Enforcement Effort – Update from March 2017 Quarterly Report

BLM law enforcement (LE) Rangers conducted 204 compliance checks (*e.g.*, wilderness, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, cultural sites) and 214 enforcement contacts within the WEMO planning area. Of these 214 enforcement contacts, 54 pertained directly to off-route (43 CFR 8341.1(b)), closed area (43 CFR 8341.1(c), CA VC 38301(b)), wilderness (43 CFR 6302.20(d)), National Scenic Trail (43 CFR 8351.1-1(a)), or other motor vehicle violations. Written reports were prepared for some of these violations as part of the Incident Management and Response System (IMARS) in support of pending investigations. Table 2 provides an overview of LE actions by patrol sector within the WEMO planning area.

Table 2. Overview Of Law Enforcement Actions By Patrol Sector Within The West Mojave Planning Area Since March 2017 Quarterly Report					
Patrol Sector	Compliance Checks	Federal Violation Notice	State/Local Citation	Written Warning	Written Report Filed
<i>Barstow</i>					
81	9	11	0	3	0
82	28	17	0	41	6
83	11	1	0	5	6
84	7	21	0	37	0
85	7	0	0	8	0
86	8	0	0	0	0
<i>Ridgecrest</i>					
1	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	1
3	20	0	0	6	8
4	29	1	1	2	3
5	7	0	0	0	0
6	25	0	1	9	14
7	37	1	0	3	5
<i>Needles</i>					
92	4	0	0	0	2
<i>Palm Springs</i>					
2	12	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	204	52	2	114	46

c. Maintenance and Restoration Actions – Update from March 2017 Quarterly Report

Over this past quarter, BLM staff: repaired management area fencing within the Afton Canyon, Coolgardie, and Juniper Flats Subregions; installed route signs in the North Searles, South Searles, Darwin, Red Mountain, Rands, Cronese Lake, Newberry/Rodman, Coolgardie, and Ord Mountain Subregions; installed closed (red route) signs in the Coolgardie, Ord Mountain, and Juniper Flats Subregions; and installed Limited Use Area signs in the Afton Canyon, Rattlesnake Canyon, and Calico Mountains Subregions.

BLM staff hosted a restoration workshop on April 8, 2017. Participants were instructed on desert restoration practices and restored one incursion site in the Juniper Flats Subregion.

At the end of May, the two American Conservation Experience (ACE) desert restoration crews completed their eight month stay in the Ridgecrest area. During these eight months, the crews completed restoration of 90 sites (33,024 square meters) within the Rands Subregion, 76 sites

(36,540 square meters) within the Red Mountain Subregion, and installed barriers on the perimeter of two staging areas to prevent expansion.

The Friends of Jawbone staff continued to perform daily monitoring and rehabilitation of unauthorized routes on BLM-managed lands within the Jawbone Subregion, as well as ground operation and maintenance work, including signing, grading roads, and repairing structures that have been vandalized within the El Paso, Red Mountain, Rand Mountain, Jawbone, and Middle Knob Subregions.

2. Kiosks – Update from March 2017 Quarterly Report

BLM continued to perform regular and ongoing maintenance of the information kiosks in the Ridgecrest, Red Mountain, El Paso, Afton Canyon, Broadwell Lake, Kramer Hills, Stoddard Valley, and Juniper Flats Subregions. These efforts included the replacement of Subregion maps, posting of notices, painting, plexi-glass replacement, and placement of “You Are Here” stickers on the Subregion maps.

3. Status of Planning – Update from March 2017 Quarterly Report

Since its last report, BLM completed Phase I analysis (aerial map GIS review) for establishment of the ground-disturbance baseline for the WEMO planning area as described in the Record of Decision for the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan which was issued on September 14, 2016. In this past quarter, BLM continued its Phase II analysis (field verification) for establishment of the ground-disturbance baseline.

BLM continues to ground-truth the Archaeological Predictive Model. The current inventory effort consists of gathering on-the-ground archaeological data to cycle back into the model which is planned to be updated by the end of the fiscal year. For Fiscal Year 2017, the cultural resource inventory crews have surveyed more than 2,000 acres of previously unsurveyed routes. Additionally, site records from the cultural resource inventory for Fiscal Year 2016 were finalized, including completion of eligibility determinations pursuant to the National Register of Historic Places. A summary report of the Fiscal Year 2016 sample survey and proposed eligibility determinations was transmitted to the Consulting Parties and other interested parties on April 27, 2017.

Over this past quarter, BLM hosted three public open-house format meetings to gather public comments on a proposal to temporarily restrict use to street legal vehicles on 148 miles of routes within San Bernardino County that are maintained by the County of San Bernardino Public Works Department. This proposal to temporarily restrict the use of the route segments on public lands will allow BLM to analyze and determine if consistent management of these routes across the two jurisdictions is in the public interest. These public meetings had a total attendance of 102 people. The public involvement process yielded 23 written comments which BLM is

currently analyzing. The Environmental Assessment for this proposed action is currently being prepared with a decision anticipated to be issued before the end of the year.

The BLM interdisciplinary team continues work on the development of the draft supplemental environmental impact statement, including draft transportation management plans, which will be released for public review in January 2018.

4. Continuation of Terms and Conditions of Expiring Grazing Leases Under New Leases

Over the next two years, the Barstow and Ridgecrest Field Managers will be issuing 21 grazing leases under the authority of Section 402(c)(2) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), as amended.¹ These leases will to expire before completion of environmental assessment and documentation for new lease decisions required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and before the West Mojave (WEMO) Route Network Project Record of Decision (ROD) is scheduled to be issued in October 2019. The terms and conditions of the expiring leases will be continued under new leases while BLM completes the environmental assessment and documentation for the leases required under NEPA, and in any event will be reconsidered within six months of issuance of the WEMO ROD (under pertinent provisions of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan as amended—including the WEMO and the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan amendments to the CDCA Plan). As of the date on which BLM completes the processing of the leases under the environmental assessment required by NEPA, and carries out its reconsideration of the leases under the WEMO ROD, the leases may be canceled, suspended, or modified, in whole or in part. This action is consistent with Section 402(c)(2) of FLPMA and the 2011 WEMO Remedy Order that allowed “the current grazing decisions to remain in effect pending revisions of the FEIS and ROD during remand,” and ordered “that the grazing decisions be reconsidered within six months after the revised FEIS and ROD are adopted by the BLM.” The Barstow and Ridgecrest Field Managers will set priorities for completing the NEPA and other statutory requirements for fully processing grazing leases in accordance with BLM policy and taking into consideration funding, workload, and capability, as well as the direction of the Remedy Order that BLM reconsider grazing decisions within six months after adoption of the WEMO ROD.

¹ Pursuant to Section 402(c)(2) of FLPMA, the terms and conditions in a grazing lease that has expired shall be continued under a new lease until the date on which the BLM completes any environmental analysis and documentation for the lease required under the NEPA and other applicable laws. Leases issued in accordance with Section 402(c)(2) are nondiscretionary and are not protestable or appealable.

5. Chronology of Management Actions – Update from March 2017 Quarterly Report

March 14, 2017: BLM concluded test excavations of a cultural site identified during the Fiscal Year 2015 sample survey. The testing provided confirmation of subsurface deposits and facilitated the re-evaluation of the site's eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

April 8, 2017: BLM staff hosted a restoration workshop. Participants were instructed on desert restoration practices and restored one incursion site in the Juniper Flats Subregion.

April 13, April 21, May 1-3, May 15, May 23-24, May 30-31, June 12, and June 26, 2017: BLM interdisciplinary team conducted meetings for the development of the draft supplemental environmental impact statement and transportation management plans.

April 19-20 and May 3, 2017: BLM hosted three public open-house format meetings to gather public comment on a proposal to temporarily restrict use to street legal vehicles on 148 miles of routes located on public lands within San Bernardino County that are maintained by the County of San Bernardino Public Works Department. These public meetings had a total attendance of 102 people. The public involvement process yielded 23 written comments which BLM is currently analyzing.

April 27, 2017: Pursuant to Stipulation IV(B)(v) of the Programmatic Agreement, BLM transmitted a summary report of the Fiscal Year 2016 sample survey and proposed eligibility determinations to the Consulting Parties and other interested parties for their review and comment by June 2, 2017.

May 16, 2017: The Scope of Work and Request for Proposals regarding the Historic Trails Context, as identified in the Programmatic Agreement and Historic Properties Management Plan, was prepared and forwarded to the BLM California Desert District Archaeologist.

May 22, 2017: BLM cultural resources field crews participated in an equipment test with the programmer of the Archaeological Predictive Model. New equipment is scheduled for field implementation at the beginning of the Fiscal Year 2018 field season.

May 25, 2017: BLM hosted the second of three annual WEMO Consulting Parties meetings pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Programmatic Agreement. Topics included a planning status update on the WEMO planning process, a summary of the 2017 implementation activities, and an overview of the Fiscal Year 2016 sample survey and proposed eligibility determinations.

May 25, 2017: BLM received concurrence from San Manuel Band of Mission Indians for Fiscal Year 2015, National Register of Historic Places eligibility determinations.

June 2, 2017: BLM received concurrence from San Manuel Band of Mission Indians for Fiscal Year 2016, National Register of Historic Places eligibility determinations.

June 15, 2017: BLM and Plaintiffs participated in a telephone conference call concerning the BLM renewal process for grazing leases that will expire before the West Mojave Route Network Project land use plan amendment Record of Decision is issued in October 2019.

June 19, 2017: BLM received concurrence from Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians for Fiscal Year 2016, National Register of Historic Places eligibility determinations.