

Carrizo Plain National Monument Advisory Committee

MINUTES OF OCTOBER 4, 2003 MEETING

Meeting opened at 9:24am by Neil Havlik, Advisory Committee Chairperson.

Members of Advisory Council present:

- Neil Havlik
- Ellen Cypher
- Bob Binnewies
- Bill Vanherweg
- Kirk Brettschneider
- Michael Khus-Zarate
- Dale Kuhnle

County Supervisor Ray Watson and Mike Ryan were absent.

John Skibinski, Acting Field Office Manager, BLM, began with orientation and went over objectives:

- Review developing perspectives of Advisory Committee members regarding management of the Monument.
- Discuss Wilderness, Painted Rock, Route Designations and Grazing Alternatives for consideration in Management Plan
- Decide upon next steps and meeting schedule

Neil Havlik, Advisory Committee Chair, opened with his idea of “Expansion of the Monument Boundaries”. He provided a handout for future discussion at another meeting.

Marlene Braun, BLM Monument Manager, began discussion of new issues.

1. New Visitor Center

There has been interest in consideration of a new Visitor Center in nearby communities to meet demand for outreach. This will be included in the Resource Management Plan.

Anne McMahon, The Nature Conservancy - Would there be a review and public meetings, etc. if this is being planned?

Marlene Braun – Yes, if this became a viable option, then the BLM would go forward with study, reviews and public meetings.

2. Monument Expansion

Neil Havlik – He would like the Monument boundaries to be expanded to include the following areas:

West - to connect the Monument and CDF&G lands with the Los Padres National Forest

North – interest by the California Native Plant Society in vernal pools in the California Valley area next to Soda Lake Road.

East/South – Temblor Man. area bordering Taft and the Midway-Sunset Oil Field.

Bob Binnewies – Thanked Neil for his study, time and effort.

Pilulaw Khus Zarate – Elder of the Chumash Nation and member of the public, asked if the minutes could be mailed to the Native American Council for the Monument.

Marlene B. – Assured Pilulaw that the minutes would be sent to the council.

3. Recreation Fee Demonstration Program

Alternatives to Federal Funding with user fees possibly to include the following:

Tour fees for Painted Rock, Wildflowers, and San Andreas Fault

Campground fees – use of an “Iron Ranger”

Discussion will be included in the RMP.

Anne McMahon, TNC – An example of the Fee Demonstration is the “Adventure Pass” implemented by the Forest Service. It was not accepted by the public very well. The public had trouble finding places to purchase the pass, implementation of the program was a problem, and enforcement was difficult.

Cal French, Sierra Club – He is not supportive of entrance fees.

Alice Koch, CDF&G – Los Padres National Forest lost their revenue from the pass sales to the Southern California forests.

John Skibinski, BLM – BLM has been able to keep fees at the local level.

Bob Binneweis – A non-profit association could be responsible for this program.

Marlene introduced members of the Friends of Carrizo Plain that are present at the meeting:

Jon Cooper

Kirk Brettschneider

Cindy Brettschneider

Jon Cooper announced that the “Friends” group is taking over management of the Goodwin Education Center sales.

Ellen Cypher - The Central California Resource Advisory Council has studied this and could be contacted share what has worked in the past and what didn't.

Pilulaw Khus-Zarate - When entrance fees to the Los Padres NF were enacted the Native Americans and local public families were upset about having to pay entrance fees for simple recreating. Maybe another way to generate this revenue would be for TNC or “Friends” to have big fundraising events such as barbeques, fancy dinners, etc.

Neil H. – Does the committee want to make a statement on this issue at this time?

Mike Khus-Zarate – We need more information and to check with the Central CA RAC. Maybe simply ask the staff to continue their study of this aspect.

Bill Vanherweg – Fundraisers should be included in the Plan

Neil H. –Would like evaluation of other federal agencies and their programs.

Kirk B. – Would like Pilulaw's suggestion to be included in future possibilities in the Plan.

4. Carrizo Plain Proposed National Historic Landmark

Duane Christian, BLM Archaeologist –

- Will include National Historic Register District already established.
- Painted Rock is the biggest pictograph site in California.
- Process is cumbersome; through the National Park Service and then back to Washington D.C. At any time this can be denied.

Advantage – Raises protection and allows for increase in funding. National significance opens doors to grant monies.

Bill V. – Is this the whole Monument?

Duane C. – No.

- Saucito Rocks area
- Painted Rock area
- Area down around Washburn Ranch
- Request includes 89 sites.

Marlene – This opportunity to increase funding is so important.

Mike K.Z. – Will some of new sites be included in National Historic Landmark nomination? Will there be locational info on maps?

Duane C. – No detailed info available to public. This is for future preservation and protection of sensitive sites.

5. General Effects Matrix

Larry Saslaw, BLM Biologist and Chris Ryan, BLM Ecologist - This exercise was a brainstorming exercise to determine the preferred alternatives for use in the plan in the following areas of concern:

- Access and Transportation – Alternative #2
Current designations with the following changes:
 1. Close part of Padrone Canyon Road which runs down a wash, with an alternative route down the adjacent power line offering similar access to all but last one mile of original road.
 2. Change approx. 2 miles of open road to administrative use only in Temblor area having Wilderness Characteristics.
 3. Close additional miles of redundant or unnecessary roads, made up of short sections in several locations or convert to administrative use.
- Management of Areas with Wilderness Characteristics – Alternative #2
Add two new areas of “Wilderness Character” – one adjacent to Caliente WSA (20,000 new acres) and one in Temblor Mt. area (13,000 acres)
- Management of the Painted Rock Cultural Site – Alternative #1
No action – Site open for guided tours only from March 1-July 15th. Other times of the year the site is open to unsupervised visitation.
- Grazing and Vegetation Management – Alternative #3
Continue free-use grazing for the benefit of plants and animals, and convert traditional permits to free-use permits.

Discussion:

Access and Transportation – There was open discussion between Advisory Committee, managing partners, and public regarding:

- Access for hunters
- Wilderness Coalition request for roads analysis
- Cultural site protection
- Redundancy of roads
- Hierarchy of roads/specificity

After much discussion the Advisory Committee chose to support Alternative #2

Management of Areas with Wilderness Characteristics – Again there was much discussion of the recommended Alternative and the enlargement of the areas

designated to contain Wilderness Characteristics. Some of the points discussed were as follows:

- Why increase areas of designation? Why not add more areas?
- Wilderness Coalition recommendations.
- BLM's criteria for designation and reason for only choosing two of five recommended areas.
- What will be addressed on RMP....all five areas or just Alternative #2?
- All will be discussed in the RMP.

Bill Vanherweg had to leave before lunch and made a brief statement of concerns that will be discussed later.

Regarding grazing – “Please don't paint yourself into a corner without leaving room for flexibility. Many events can impact an area that may be listed as “no-grazing” that would require it being opened up to grazing to return it to a healthy state, i.e., devastating fire.”

Mike K.Z. – “How does Bill V. feel about my memo on cultural site closures, etc.?”

Bill V. – “I support your memo.”

Grazing and Vegetation Management – There was a great deal of discussion of this topic with good interaction between the public, BLM staff, Advisory Committee, and managing partners. This subject was also discussed at the June meeting of the Advisory Committee in great detail.

Points of discussion:

- Adaptive Management should be stressed no matter which Alternative is used.
- Is Alternative #3 supported by the impacted grazers?
- How many cattle graze the Monument annually?
- Can we set decision-making timelines?
- When would be a natural time to schedule making or changing decisions?
- Use of “Free-Use” and “Traditional Use” dollars?
- Comparative costs of using public lands vs. private lands?
- Has fire been dismissed as a management tool?
- Support of reintroducing Native grasses.
- Non-Native grasses are impacting endangered species.
- Protection of cultural sites of utmost importance before pastures can be reopened to grazing.
- Impact lessened to Brumley Pasture lessee if adjustments were made so as not to withdraw entire pasture from grazing.
- Consider raising mulch levels from 500 lbs./ac to a minimum of 750-1,000 lbs./ac
- Advisory Committee, BLM staff and managing partners agree that RDM's are changeable as more information is gathered.
- Could Advisory Committee receive photos displaying different Residual Dry Matter, (RDM's) examples?

The Advisory Committee supported Alternative #3 after a lengthy discussion.

There was a 45 minute lunch break taken during the previous topic of discussion.

Management of Cultural Sites: Saucito Rocks and Painted Rock –

Discussion:

Saucito Rocks:

- Leave status as is. Monitor for increased impacts from visitor usage and address it at that time.

Painted Rock:

- What visitor numbers are there during unsupervised time of year?
- Can we guarantee one tour a month if we choose Alternative #2-Complete closure except for guided tours?
- Visitation of a natural resource is a priority.
- Can we close the Rock later if visitor impacts increase?
- Under Alt. #1 the Rock would be open to unsupervised visitation for 7-1/2 months each year.
- Is the Rock completely closed during the bird nesting period?
- More funding needs to be directed to security.
- Native American Advisory Council supports Alt. #2 - Complete closure with tours.
- Ongoing quest to find best solution for all concerned.
- Funding problems with supplying year-round tour guides.
- Maybe Native Americans and Friends of the Carrizo Plain could supply tour guides.
- Could Indian Gaming Casino's be contacted to contribute funds for state of the art security system?
- Historically Indian Casinos have not participated in Carrizo events.
- Native American Heritage Association may be alternative financial support.
- Limited site access – during day light hours only with permits/tours.

The Advisory Council made their recommendations as follows:

Ellen C. – Alt. 2 with permits and tours.

Kirk B. – Same

Dale K. – With ranger presence there is much more protection than before. Supports Alt. 1

Neil H. – Alt. 2 with permits and tours.

Further discussion:

- "Friends" are implementing volunteer coordination and could possibly supply tour guides.
- Appropriate signage and communication will support a closure with permits.
- Gratitude expressed by Native American community for sincere interest and concern by AC and staff of this subject.
- Can we re-route the Selby Campground to protect the shortest access to the Rock?

Summation:

- No one alternative being recommended by Advisory Committee today.
- Can staff, through email, and the Native American Advisory Council come up with 3rd Alternative statement that includes all input heard today and notify everyone electronically?

6. Public Comments:

Cal French – Sierra Club

- Supports outlying visitor centers in nearby communities.

- Opposes building larger/greater Visitor Centers on the Monument.
- Opposes Fee Demo program.
- Using the Mission Statement, there must be a time that we can use our data on grazing and make a determination as to whether it's helping or not.
- Support anything that can be done to prevent future degradation of Painted Rock.
- In setting Wilderness designations, he would personally like to see Panorama sections that meet criteria included in Temblor designation. Caliente section is a positive move also.

Pilulaw Khus Zarate – Native American Advisory Council

- Management of special status plant and animal species. These must be given highest protection. Management needs to protect all life. Management needs to manage in larger scope.
- Is there certain things that public can pick up and take with them and some they can't? She feels there should be required to state the nothing should be able to be picked up or taken.

Discussion:

Duane C. – Monument Proclamation states which certain things can or can't be taken home.

Marlene B. – Good points. Policy in National Parks "Can't take anything." This is something we need to address in the RMP.

Neil H. – Future subject to discuss would be a Fire Preparedness Plan

7. Meeting Feedback from Advisory Committee

Dale K. – Against Fee Demo program. Private money is the way to go. Regarding Grazing data collection and a mandatory end date is questionable. The grazing community and BLM staff are just now putting together good grazing data. Don't put pressure on staff now when the data collection is working. Fire suppression and 18" of grass don't go together.

Kirk B. – Good points brought up today. Important that these things are addressed in the Plan.

Ellen C. – Great discussions.

Bob B. – Thank you to staff for support and preparedness. Decisions made today will affect public in 50-100 years. This will affect a very important part of California and we must be mindful of that.

Mike K.Z. – Thanks to Advisory Council members for genuine concern and interest in Cultural matters. Would like Neil H. to support and encourage and facilitate good electronic dialogue concerning the new Alternative Statement be created by BLM staff. Funding for Painted Rock is very emotional. Would like everyone to go forth and seriously seek funding anywhere. "Squeaky wheel gets the grease!" The Native Americans are now the squeaky wheel.

Neil H. – Impressed with discussion accomplished today. Applaud Advisory Committee, staff and public involvement.

8. Meeting Adjourned – 5:30 p.m.