American Sand Association Inc.
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American Sand Association
"IN THE DUNES"

Volume 10 Issue 2
May 2010

Unite, Inform, and Mobilize

THE DRAFT IMPERIAL SAND DUNES RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

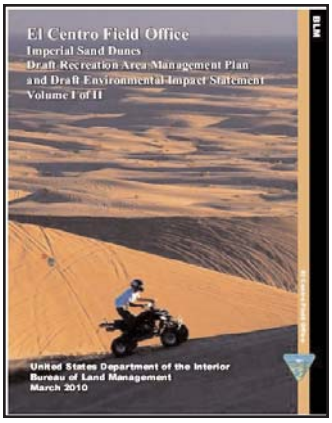
ASA Response to the BLM DRAMP

The draft Recreation Area Management Plan (DRAMP) for the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA) has been released to the public for review and comments. This RAMP is the document that will drive the management of the dunes for the foreseeable future. The last RAMP was completed in 1987. A replacement RAMP was proposed in year 2003 but was invalidated by the court and the BLM was told to redo the document and this DRAMP is the result.

The complete documents can be viewed on the BLM web site at:

http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/elcentro/recreation/ohvs/isdra/dunesinfo/docs/isdramp.html

The ASA will host an information meeting in the Los Angeles area in May and the BLM will participate and allow questions from visitors that aren't able to attend the meetings held in San Diego, Phoenix or El Centro. Verbal comments will only be accepted in the official capacity at the BLM meetings; however, you can submit your written comments by June 24, 2010.



This process is the next step toward the completion of the RAMP. You have the option of responding with comments on this draft and your comments will help the BLM either pick one of the existing alternatives or modify one of the alternatives based on the public's comments. **(see page 14 for the details)**

To support this process the ASA has engaged professionals to review the documents, in their area of expertise, and submit comments. The ASA legal counsel will also review the documents and prepare a response from a legal perspective. The ASA will make these comments available so that all our members can see what their position is.

Members of the ASA Board of Directors (BOD) will also prepare comments based on their individual perspectives and make these comments available to our members so they can have a template for how to prepare comments. (please keep your email address up to date, see page 12)

While there are eight alternatives they each affect the ISDRA in different ways. Some alternatives propose closing select areas where camping has always been allowed, while others open areas that have been closed to recreation for the last ten years. There are alternatives that propose opening some existing temporary closures and the permanent closing of other areas that are currently open.

Obviously each of these alternatives will affect each visitor in a different way. This is your opportunity to make your voice heard in the planning for the management of the dunes for the foreseeable future.

The ASA is not in a position to identify a preferred alternative until all the professionals have had a chance to evaluate all the possible consequences of each option. In reality, it is likely that none of the current alternatives will be the final result. Hopefully the BLM will take into account the comments that the public extends and come up with a final alternative that best fits the will of the visitors.

Please attend the ASA info meeting to get some of your questions answered. If you were not able to attend one of the BLM meetings, then you'll need to submit your comments in writing. This is your opportunity to let the BLM know how you want your recreation managed.

The ASA is holding a DRAMP informational meeting at Buckshot Racing in La Habra, CA on Saturday, May 15th starting at 10:00am. Buckshot Racing is located at : 1721 E. Lambert Road, Unit • B, La Habra, CA 90631 (562) 691-5308.

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February - May
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President's Message

By Bob Mason

"We Can't Do It Without You"

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recently published eight alternative plans for the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA). The eight alternatives range from massive closure of the dunes to no closure at all. The public comment period will end June 24, 2010.

How can you prepare? **Start by reviewing the Draft Recreation Area Management Plan (DRAMP) that can be viewed on the BLM web site. (see page 1.)**

What will ASA do? **ASA will conduct info meetings and provide assistance to its members and others in preparing comments to BLM. Let's start early and be prepared. Please plan to attend the ASA RAMP information meetings - you will get all the facts, directions for making useful comments, and be able to ask questions. We will alert you by emails as the meetings are scheduled.**

The ASA will also engage professionals to write comments in their area of expertise. Our lawyer will also be submitting comments on behalf of the ASA and our partners in Ecologic.

What is the RAMP? **It becomes the "Bible", or handbook, used by BLM to manage the ISDRA while fulfilling their assigned responsibilities under various federal laws. This is the document that directs future managers' actions for years, if not decades, to come.**

Why is the RAMP important to the ISDRA visitors? **The RAMP will determine (1) Where you can or cannot ride, (2) Where your fees will be spent, (3) What facilities will be developed, (4) The level of law enforcement, (5) Where you can or cannot camp, etc.**

Why do you have an interest in this document? **Once it is written and placed into effect, further changes to it are all but impossible. We cannot get major changes instituted until the next revision which will be years at best.**

Those in opposition to our chosen form of family recreation will be prepared and will make a huge effort to influence this document: this consistently happens. Doing nothing allows them to have an unbalanced amount of influence. We must make our voices heard in order for the BLM to produce a balanced document. Your participation is vital to this effort. If there is a single-most important action that we must take, this is it.

We understand that your time is valuable and that you may be waiting for your effort to have the most impact - this is that opportunity.

DUNING COULD CHANGE Forever!

Now is the time to Learn and Be Heard!

As Always, thanks for your support,

President

Director's Report

By Nicole Nicholas Gilles

ARE YOU PREPARED?!

I was sitting at my parent's house just south of El Centro for Easter dinner when the 7.2 earthquake hit. Having been through the 1979 earthquake that was a 6.5, I've witnessed my fair share of temblors. The only way to describe this event was SCARY. Earthquakes always take one by surprise, but that doesn't mean that you don't need to be prepared. Most of us duners live in earthquake country and we know we need to be prepared, but are we really?

It isn't all that different than planning for your trip to the dunes. When camping, you always make sure to have adequate food, water and essentials like medicine and toiletries. After the quake, we had no electricity and because my parents live in the country, no running water. We went into town to try and get some water and all of the stores were closed. If my parent's had been ready for their "camping trip" they would've already had an ample supply of food & water ready to go.

Many homes and businesses in Imperial County sustained damage from the earthquake. Even the BLM's El Centro Field Office had to close until they were able to repair some of the damage they sustained. Both, the Cahuilla and Buttercup Ranger Stations fared well and are fully operational.

One of my camping tubs has now been converted into my emergency kit. I highly recommend that you all do the same. After more than 100 aftershocks, all will eventually be well in Imperial County. I'll be happy when the only thing left rattling are my nerves!

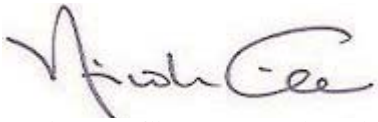
Now onto business… The ASA was able to secure a special promotion from Rocky Mountain ATV/MC. All you have to do is sign up as a Supporting Member or renew your Supporting Membership and we'll send you a $25 gift card for Rocky Mountain ATV/MC. What a deal? Your Supporting Membership pays for itself! **(see page 15 for more details)**

The Bureau of Land Management asked the ASA to help secure drivers for the Desert Advisory Council Field Tour that took place in the Buttercup area on March 26th. We received a huge response from members wanting to help us out. One came from as far away as Indianapolis! I'd like to thank those volunteers again for stepping up to the plate. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Our next Info Meeting is scheduled to take place at Buckshot Racing on Saturday, May 15th. Representatives from the Bureau of Land Management have been invited to attend. Since they didn't hold a meeting in the Los Angeles area to discuss the Draft Recreation Area Management Plan, this will be your chance to talk to officials and get some of your questions answered. Please plan to attend and bring a friend!

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by calling 760-996-8983 or you can always email me at ngilles@asasand.org

Thank you for your support.



Nicole Nicholas Gilles - Executive Director

WHAT IS THE ASA?

The ASA is the lead organization fighting to keep the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA) open to OHV use. We are a nonprofit California corporation under the IRS Tax Code known as 501(c)(4). Leaders of the ASA are volunteers.

The ASA has joined with the Off Road Business Association (ORBA), San Diego Off-Road Coalition (SDORC), American Motorcycle Associaton (AMA District 37) to fund EcoLogic Partners Inc. Ecologic has filed lawsuits against the Bureau of Land Management and the Fish and Wildlife Service and has standing in other lawsuits affecting the ISDRA. We stand poised to oppose any legal actions brought by any anti-access groups that would prevent the new Recreation Area Management Plan from being implemented. This plan would remove some of the closures entirely and grant conditional access to others.

In addition to our legal actions, we filed a precedent-setting delisting petition to remove the Peirson's Milk Vetch from the Endangered Species List. This plant was used to create the closures put in place in 2000. These closures total over 49,000 acres of sand dunes and are located south of Highway 78, south of Highway 8, and at Mammoth Wash.

Our delisting petition's were based on good, solid science derived from biological studies paid for by the ASA, ORBA, and SDORC. However our petition's were not successful and other avenues are being planned to address the potential for delisting of the PMV. We have two lobbyists that we work with one in Washington D.C. and the other in Sacramento.

We have made several trips to Washington D.C. and Sacramento to present our case and plan to make several more. Our Public Safety and Education makes us known as a group that is not only interested in a World Class duning experience, but Stewards of the land and its resources: a very good connection with the current administration.

The ASA has received the US Dept. of Interior's 4C's Award, recognizing our organization's commitment to working with the Bureau and others to enhance recreational conservation on public lands in Southern California.

REACH FOR SAFETY – REACH FOR DISCOUNTS – REACH FOR LIFE

The ASA is pleased to announce a partnership with REACH Air Medical Services. We realize the importance of emergency medical air transportation and the valuable resource REACH provides at the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area.

We invite you to join the REACH for Life membership program, which protects you from out-of-pocket expenses and costs of an emergency air transport by REACH. Membership covers the gap between your medical insurance (if any) and the cost of emergency air transport by REACH. (We recommend that you explore and join other air ambulance providers serving areas where you live, work and play, as membership with REACHdoes not always guarantee transport by REACH.)

For a limited time, REACH and the American Sand Association are offering ASA Supporting Members a substantial discount on a REACH for Life membership! From May 15– 30, 2010, ASA supporting members can join REACH for Life for just $25 per year for a family (regularly $45).

You can join Reach for Life online at: https://www.reachair.com/membership/enroll_form.html or call 866-767-3224 using promo code: "ASA_SM." Non-supporting ASA members may upgrade to a Supporting Member status and take advantage of this limited time offer. (see page 15) If you are not an ASA Supporting Member, you can still get a discount membership for $40 by using promo code: "ASA".

REACH Service Areas - this is NOT only about the dunes.

REACH Air Medical Services operates bases throughout California, as well as in Oregon and Texas. REACH provides air medical transport services utilizing helicopters and airplanes regionally and nationally. When your life depends on getting to a medical facility as quickly as possible, REACH is awaiting the call. With a REACH for Life membership, you pay nothing for an emergency air medical transport provided by REACH. This allows you or your family member to focus on getting well instead of worrying about the expense of your injury or illness.

Don Wharton of REACH and BLM's Kynan Barrios

REACH trailer was donated by Warrior LifeStyles

"CAN YOU HELP?"

The ASA dual sport raffle car has been on display at several locations so far this season. ASA Business Sponsors have displayed the Banning Motorsports car at their vending operation in the dunes. Broken Bikes in the south dunes and Freedom Rentals at Glamis over President' Day. The car also was displayed at the AZ Sand and Dirt Expo, at the Phoenix NASCAR fall race and at the Parker 425 off-road race.

The raffle car represents the ASA's primary source of revenue to carry out its mission. The cost and benefit of each of these display opportunities must be carefully evaluated. Banning Motorsports has transported the car to and from all of the events so far this season saving the ASA the transportation expense. Ticket sales have been reasonable.

"How Can You Help?" Volunteers are needed to sell tickets and to sign up members. Contact Raffle Chairman Chuck Hattaway at chuck15@cox.net or 619-890-9093 to help.

Support the ASA

Win this amazing "Dual Sport" car by BANNING MOTORSPORTS

This fully equipped car comes complete with sand tires and wheels in addition to the off-road tire and wheel package shown

GRAND PRIZE!

Drawing will be held at the
Sand Sports Super Show
September 19th, 2010

Thanks to these generous sponsors!

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All proceeds to benefit the ASA General Fund

*Visit the ASA website at **www.asasand.com** for more information*

Ad design by dla design concepts

Tickets are $20 each
Must be 18 years of age to enter and win
Purchaser of ticket subject to all terms and conditions of raffle

For mail orders send check or money order to:

Banning Motorsports Buggy Raffle, P.O. Box 1872, Canyon Country, CA 91386

Or Call: 888-540-SAND

Winners need not be present!

LAW ENFORCEMENT AT THE DUNES

Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area, BLM El Centro Field Office Report

Visitation in the desert has decreased but law enforcement has been steady. The winter months saw a steady number of visitors present in the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA). As of the President's Day Weekend, our main holiday events for the season have concluded. During these four events, the participating Rangers issued 2,757 citations (1,824 fewer than the previous year) and made 47 arrests for driving under the influence of alcohol (two more than last year). One unlawful assembly was declared at the base of Oldsmobile Hill during the Halloween Event. Visitor Information Stations were set up in strategic areas of the ISDRA. Information about rules and regulations was distributed emphasizing youth rider safety.

Information Stations proved to be an excellent tool to manage evening activity at Oldsmobile Hill. A family oriented visitation pattern was noticed throughout the ISDRA. Resource damage has significantly decreased on both sides of Ted Kipf Road probably due to the closure of access to the area via the Wash 10 undercrossing by Union Pacific Railroad. There is an increase in the number of Off-Highway Vehicles unlawfully driving on Ted Kipf Road. These vehicles are accessing the road by unlawfully crossing the railroad tracks at State Highway 78. Mammoth Wash continues to see steady use by north Imperial County residents and hunters.

The U.S. Forest Service and the San Diego Sheriff's Office were not invited to participate in the events this year due to budget reductions. The number of Rangers requested for the events was reduced from 50 to 40 for each event also due to budget reductions. The present number of Rangers is believed to be adequate to meet area management objectives as long as the Imperial County Sheriff's Office is able to augment BLM Rangers during the Halloween, Thanksgiving, New Year's and President's Day Weekend events, and throughout the season. Additionally, the shift in the visitor use pattern to a predominately family oriented recreation environment must be maintained through education and proactive enforcement of the existing laws, rules, and regulations.

RAML NAMED CALIFORNIA DESERT DISTRICT MANAGER FOR BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Teresa A. Raml has been selected as the new California Desert District (CDD) manager for the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) vast, 10.5 million-acre desert district in Southern California. Acting BLM State Director Jim Abbott announced the appointment of Raml January 12th in Sacramento.

"Teri's diverse experience on the national, state and local levels will help us further the collaborative efforts in addressing the many challenges facing the BLM in the California Desert District," said Abbott. "Her demonstrated ability in team building will lend greatly to managing the vast Southern California public lands, where partnerships are the basic foundation of our management efforts in this complex region."

Raml is currently working in the BLM Arizona State Office as the program manager for the Restoration Design Energy Project, a pilot program funded by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 to identify previously disturbed lands that are suitable for renewable energy development. Previous to taking on the pilot project, she was the BLM Phoenix District Manager.

Raml received a degree in wildlife biology from Colorado State University in 1979 and shortly after, began her government career with the U.S. Forest Service as the first wildlife biologist for the Fall River Ranger District in the Nebraska National Forest. She was also the wildlife biologist at the Black Hills National Forest before becoming the program assistant for the national threatened, endangered and sensitive species program in Washington, D.C. Other Forest Service positions Raml has held include appeal coordinator, endangered species program coordinator, legislative assistant, information manager, biological scientist, adaptive management area coordinator and district ranger.

In 1999, Raml transferred to the BLM to become the field manager for the Klamath Falls Resource Area in Oregon. She became the BLM Phoenix District Manager in 2003.

Raml is scheduled to assume her CDD manager duties within the next two months. She replaces Steven Borchard, who retired.

The desert district comprises public lands in the lower third of California, including the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA), created by Congress in 1976 to protect the desert's special values. The CDD also includes 300,000 acres of scattered parcels in the south coast area.

US BORDER PATROL AND THE DUNES

Ben Vik, Supervisory Border Patrol Agent - U.S. Border Patrol, Yuma Sector

The first thing you will notice about every U.S. Border Patrol agent you talk to, no matter where you meet them, is our fundamental love of the desert we all share. The only difference between our perceptions is that to an agent, the desert is not only our playground, but also our office! Going to work, for us, means getting to play every day in the same areas that everyone else only gets to visit on the weekends. Doesn't that sound like the greatest job on earth? We think so; and the history of how it started is just as exciting as the day-to-day work we do.

The U.S. Border Patrol's relationship with our desert began right around the turn of the century. In 1904, about 75 Inspectors of the U.S. Bureau of Immigration, operating out of El Paso, Texas, patrolled the U.S./Mexico border. These men sometimes rode as far west as California in order to enforce laws restricting the flow of Chinese immigration at that time. In the 1920's, the U.S. Government passed two pieces of legislation which were fundamental to the history of the U.S. Border Patrol as we know it today: The 18th Amendment to the Constitution (Prohibition of Import, Sale, Manufacture and Possession of Alcohol), and the Immigration Act of 1924, which imposed stricter limits on the amount of people that could legally immigrate to the United States.

On May 28, 1924, Congress passed the Labor Appropriation Act of 1924, officially establishing the U.S. Border Patrol for the purpose of securing the borders between the established Immigration/Customs border inspection stations. 450 Inspectors were issued a badge and a revolver, given oats and hay to feed their horses, and assigned to U.S. Border Patrol Stations all along our nation's southern and northern borders. Until the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, much of our enforcement activity focused on combating liquor smuggling. This was a very dangerous business, and the U.S. Border Patrol experienced our highest number of line-of-duty deaths during this time.

In 1933, the Bureau of Immigration became the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and the following year the first-ever U.S. Border Patrol Academy class graduated. Prior to that time, all of our training was acquired on the job! Although some of the new recruits patrolled in trucks and automobiles, horses were still the preferred mode of transportation, and the U.S. Border Patrol still prefers to patrol on horses in various areas along the border today.

In 1940, the U.S. Border Patrol became part of the Department of Justice. The following year, Pearl Harbor was attacked, and the United States entered World War 2. The U.S. Border Patrol assisted the war effort by guarding diplomats, internment camps, and patrolling with the Coast Guard (as well as continuing regular patrol duties) in an effort to keep the War from reaching our continental boundaries.

The U.S. Border Patrol remained with the Department of Justice until 2003, when the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was formed in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The INS was completely dissolved, and each of its former components became separate bureaus within the DHS. The U.S. Border Patrol joined with the U.S. Customs Service to form the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP), but we each fulfill many of our legacy roles within our separate Offices. Please visit our website at www.cbp.gov to find out more!

So, the next time you see a U.S. Border Patrol agent, I hope that you now have a little bit more of an insight into the work we are continuing to do! When you see that blue and gold patch on the shoulder of our ATV agent's uniforms, you are looking at the same patch worn on the woolen coats of men who hunted smugglers on horseback in the days before the invention of frozen vegetables, ball-point pens, and nylon stockings! Interestingly, we still utilize the same fundamental tracking skills today that we were using back then to detect illegal activity.

When you see us out there, don't be afraid to stop and say "hi!" Our agents are proud of the jobs they do, and (unless duty intervenes) we are happy to chat with you about any questions you have. Our BORSTAR (Border Patrol Search, Trauma, and Rescue) agents, who are all Emergency Medical Technicians, will always ensure that speedy medical aid will be rendered whenever necessary, and they are always happy to talk to you about this job we love. Every agent you speak to will be sure to remind you as well about the danger of entering the Enforcement/Safety zone, which extends to about 100 feet north of the Patrol Road along the border fence. Please make your family's safety a priority!

Thanks for taking the time to learn about us, and we hope to see you on the sand!

REMEMBER

If you see suspicious activity occurring, please give the U.S. Border Patrol a call at 1-866-999-8727. Your anonymity will be protected.

BLM PAD MAINTAINANCE ANNOUNCEMENT

The BLM will be working on the wash road and the camping pads along Gecko road during the next few weeks.

They will be adding another layer to the new wash road and widening it in some of the narrow areas. They will also be rebuilding some of the Gecko road pads by removing the loose sand and adding another layer of base material.

Normally this type of work would be done later in the summer but the El Centro Field Office is taking advantage of the availability of BLM heavy equipment operators that would not be available later in the summer fire season.

If they are working on your favorite pad please help them out by moving to an area where you will not be in their way. This will assist in expediting the work for completion in a more timely manner.

ASA PARTICIPATES IN DAC FIELD TOUR

Recently, the ASA was involved in a field tour of the Buttercup Area by members of the BLM's Desert Advisory Council (DAC). For some, this was their first trip to the dunes.

In addition to touring the area, those in attendance enjoyed lunch at Duner's Diner while listening to presentations by ASA President Bob Mason and Imperial County Supervisor Wally Leimgruber. Charla Teeters from the United Desert Gateway also talked about the importance of partnerships, as did BLM Dunes Manager Neil Hamada. As tour members arrived at Duner's Diner, a REACH Air Ambulance helicopter landed on site so that DAC members could learn more about the valuable partnership between REACH and the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area.

We would like to thank all of the drivers who dedicated their time to help with the Desert Advisory Council Field Tour. Without your help, this tour would not have been possible. The ASA really appreciates your support.

ASA POSITION ON S2921 - THE CALIFORNIA DESERT PROTECTION ACT OF 2010

The ASA Board of Directors has reviewed the Ecologic Partners recommendation regarding S 2921. Ecologic Partners is the legal arm of the ASA. It consists of ASA, Off Road Business Association (ORBA), San Diego Off Road Coalition (SDROC) and AMA District 37 Off Road. The mission statement of Ecologic Partners is "The mission of Ecologic Partners, Inc. is to advance land use policies that conserve natural resources while providing responsible outdoor recreation for American families."

The ASA Board authorized Dick Holliday, Ecologic Board member to support the following:

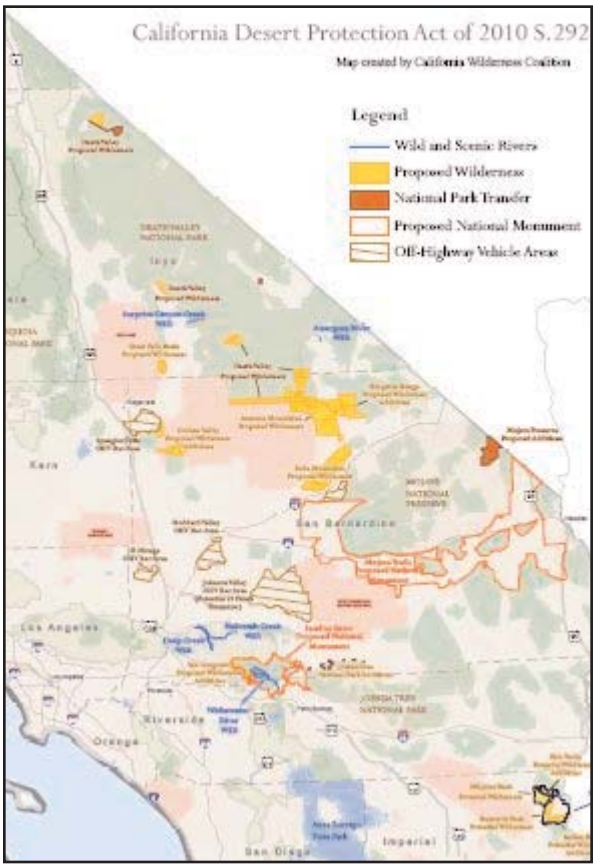
On December 21, 2009 U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein introduced S.2921 the California Desert Protection Act of 2010. After careful analysis of all aspects of this bill Ecologic Partners are going on record as supporting the bill in its current form. Any changes or amendments that will be proposed through the committee process of approving this legislation will require a through review of the ability of the Ecologic Partners to continue to support this legislation. This legislation creates two new National Monuments, new Wilderness areas, and establishes guidelines for renewable energy projects and gives five BLM open areas in San Bernardino County, CA official Congressional designations as OHV areas.

Both ORBA and AMA D37 organizations worked closely with the Senator's staff to ensure that within the proposed Monuments OHV use on designated trails will continue. They also secured language that would protect organized OHV events that currently occur in these locations. In the proposed Wilderness areas the Senator's staff worked with many individuals and OHV organizations to exclude from the wilderness areas some of the high value trails therefore keeping them open in perpetuity.

Rasor OHV Area, Stoddard Wells OHV Area, El Mirage OHV Area, Spangler Hills OHV Area, and a portion of the Johnson Valley OHV Area, are all slated to receive a congressional designation as OHV areas. These proposed designations signify that the senator respects the rights of California families to recreate responsibly on public lands and that she is aware of the significant impact that OHV recreation has on the California economy.

The monuments proposed in this bill are the Sand to Snow Monument, which is located in northern Riverside County and the Mojave Trails National Monument, which follows segments of Historic Route 66 and also covers portions of the Central and Eastern Mojave Desert, will remain under the management of the BLM.

We appreciate Senator Feinstein and her staff for taking a collaborative approach on this legislation. A variety of stakeholders including off-roaders, environmentalists and local residents were consulted early on in the process. This bill protects long standing recreation areas, sensitive desert lands and allows for responsible renewable energy development.



BLM ESTABLISHES AVENUE TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Recently the ASA met with BLM El Centro Field Office officials to discuss issues pertaining to the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area. Acting Assistant Field Manager and Chief Ranger Kynan Barrios shared a letter currently being used by BLM rangers to provide public land visitors guidance for submitting comments regarding encounters with BLM Rangers. The purpose of the letter is to provide users with an avenue to provide feedback, whether it is positive or negative, to the BLM about the quality of their service.

If you feel a BLM Law Enforcement Ranger acted in a commendable manner or has acted improperly, please send a written letter providing details of your commendation or concern to the BLM El Centro Field Office. 1661 South Fourth Street, El Centro, CA 92243. If you do not wish to write a letter you may contact the commendation/complaint hotline at 760-337-4471 or visit the BLM El Centro Field Office web site at http://www.ca.blm.gov/elcentro and click contact us to send an e-mail commendation/concern. Or you can go to the ASA web site and fill in an online form.

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BLM EL CENTRO FIELD OFFICE DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORT

Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA) - BLM El Centro Field Office Report - April 2010

All major visitation spikes during the season have occurred and visitation will be decreasing for the rest of the season except for a small increase during spring break. Year to date visitation is at 888,186 which is a 13% decrease compared to last season. Although visitation has steadily decreased about 5% over the last few years, we saw increases during holiday visitation during the 2009/2010 season. Total ISDRA visitation is expected to be 1.1 to 1.2 million by September 30th, 2010.

Partnerships:

Volunteer clean up events have occurred monthly and the last event for this season will occur on March 20th, 2010. These events are organized by the United Desert Gateway and are funded by a combination of federal funds and private / corporate donations. The largest annual clean up day occurred during the Martin Luther King Weekend on January 16th, 2010. The successful event drew 1,458 individuals who volunteered a total of 4,222 hours.

BLM continues to coordinate with the American Desert Foundation (ADF) in order to offer American Safety Institute, ATV Classes in the ISDRA. 18 full classes have occurred and over 100 students have been trained this season in safe ATV riding principles and Tread Lightly! ethics. BLM is coordinating with the ADF to apply for OHV grant funds to expand the program next year.

BLM continues to partner and expand the Kris "Chili Dog" Frick (KCDF) organization to provide expanded Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in the ISDRA. This year, Reach Air Medical and ADF will be added to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Through KCDF, the BLM has expanded medical responses to include paramedic services in the Dunes and medical helicopter services to injured rider with response times as little as four minutes.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) - BLM is in the process of installing 18 new vault toilets in the Greys Well Road / Buttercup area in the southern portion of the dunes funded by ARRA. This project will pay for the pumping, demolition, and removal of the old dilapidated units and the installation newly engineered units that reduce smell and will be installed to meet accessibility laws. Some units are being relocated to increase access to the units and increase visitor safety.

Buttercup Ranger Station – Construction is in the final phase of this long term project. Funding from Federal Highway Administration is completing the rear parking area and constructing two storage facilities to house emergency rescue vehicles. The station is staffed by a combination of volunteers, contractors, and BLM staff.

Ogilby Road – BLM received visitor complaints about the remote access road to the Ogilby area early during the visitation season. In response, BLM built a new gravel road surface, funded by fees, while maintaining the primitive character of the area. This road serves to provide access to approximately 50,000 visitors per year.

Wash Road – The new road built by BLM and volunteers held up well over the season and has maintained access to the dunes for over 219,000 visitors so far. BLM plans to conduct a major maintenance project on this road during the spring and has already begun the pre-work in the gravel pit.

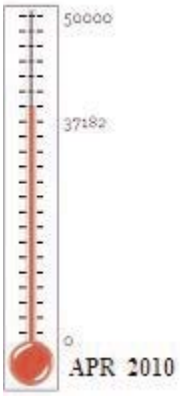
Emergency Medical Services – The BLM has responded to a total of 365 calls in the ISDRA this season. Over 40% of these incidents were minor injuries and five were OHV related fatalities. Over the years, medical incidents have significantly reduced due to education and law enforcement efforts.

As the visitation tapers off for the rest of the season, BLM will begin laying off Seasonal EMS Park Rangers in the ISDRA. BLM staffs commensurate with visitation needs in order to use fee and grant dollars in the most efficient and effective manner.

RAMP: The BLM has released the Draft Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) and EIS as an amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area Plan. The Draft RAMP is now accepting comments until June 24th.

Fee Collection – Between October 2009 and the end of February 2010, the BLM has collected $2,197,216 in the Dunes. Although this is a 15% drop when compared to this time last season fee compliance remains high at 91% (random check of 9,512 vehicles). Due to our differential on-site / off-site fee schedule, the off-site sales are at 66% ytd. These off-site sales, through vendors, have injected $166,265 into the local and regional economy and increase foot traffic in these retail outlets.

>>> *MEMBERSHIP NEWS* <<<



Did You Receive Our BLM Meeting Notices ?

If there is a pound sign (#) in front of your name on the mailing label of this newsletter then probably not. We tried to send you an email and it bounced or was returned as undeliverable. We send out a monthly email titled "What's New in the ASA" in each month we don't produce this newsletter. We also send out important information when we get it, like the BLM meeting notices.

We want to keep ALL our members INFORMED of the latest news concerning the ISDRA and to alert you to late breaking news but we need a valid email address to do that. Many long standing members may have changed email addresses over the years and no longer are able to receive our emails. To update your email address you can send it along with your name and address (for verification) to membership@asasand.com and we will update your membership information. Let us know if you would like to receive the newsletter via email instead of US Mail and it will save the ASA some money too.

Thank you for your support of the ASA in our fight to Keep Our Riding Areas Open
Dick Holliday - ASA Membership Director

We would like to welcome all the new and renewing Supporting Members that have signed up or renewed since our last newsletter. Their commitment goes a long way in supporting the fight to keep our riding areas open now and for our future. Thank You!

Ernest Alamillo	Marco Del Toro	Deron Horne	Ron Nordstrom	Cliff Sullivan
Dennis Allison	April Del Toro	Bill Humphreys	Eric Norquist	Donald Swenson
Lance Amatulli	Patrick Deuth	Doug Jenkins	Tim Nowak	Rick Tabor
Beverly Awana	Kathie Dike	Joseph Johnson	Lizz Nowak	Don Techen
Gerald Awana	Chris Dooley	James Karasek	Jeff Oldfield	Mike Teliska
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Candice Basso	Alan Dreher	Bryce Lindenberger	David Piper	Victor Torres
Norman Blackman	Jeff Dunn	James Lopshire	Robert Pobieglo	Michael Tudor
Marie Block	Kendall Ereth	Mark Lorenzana	Gerry Prendergast	Bryan Vas
Richard Block	Lena Fawson	Leon Lutrick	Gene Pugh	Louis Voss
Vern Bowen	Rick Fisher	Matt Lutrick	Michael Randolph	Ryan Waits
Patrick Bridges	Barry Frankel	Willie MacKewen	Arjun Reddy	Dana Watts
Jason Brooking	Linda Freeman	Daniel Mangaroni	Thomas Rutherford	William White
Jaydee Bullard	Mike Gates	Jon McCall	Jason Schmidt	James White
Lee Cahill	Victor Giles	Bob McCoy	Fred Schneider	Dean Williams
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Marci Clarke	Jim Green	Bruce Meyer	Mike Sherman	John Zettner
Kenny Colln	Brad Guske	Chris Michaud	John T. Signorelli	Louise Zettner
Jason Cross	Kyle Hadley	Allen Moehle	Michael Slaven	
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Cameron Dahl	Michael Henshaw	Wayne Myers	Steven St. Pierre	YOUR NAME HERE
Eric Danell	John Herring	Greg Nibbelink	Greg Stachura	
Anthony Dean	Elmer Hibbard	Jill Nordstrom	Roger Sugamele	

NOW SEEKING OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUALS

Nomination forms for the Jerry R. Seaver award are now available. If you know of someone who is an ASA member and has demonstrated exemplary service to help further the mission of the ASA, please nominate them for this coveted award.

http://files.americansandassociation.org/files/forms/2010_JRS_Nomination_Form.doc

Past award recipients are:

2004 Flo Haynes - Merchandise Operation
2005 Jim Colln - Membership, Business Sponsors
2006 Julie Krough - Recording Secretary
2007 Brian Trapp - ASA Sand Sport Super Show Organizer
2008 Tim Gantz - Partnership Facilitation
2009 Debbie DeRenard - Calendar Organization

BUTTERCUP RANGER STATION

by Charla Teeters, UDG

The United Desert Gateway (UDG), through its long-standing partnership with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), is proud to work for the betterment and improvement of facilities and programs at the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA). Through our assistance agreement with the BLM, the UDG was able to receive Department of Transportation Funds for the purpose of continued improvement of facilities and visitor access at the Buttercup Ranger station in the southern portion of the ISDRA (The Buttercup Ranger station is located just off of Interstate 8 at the Grey's Well exit).

In November of 2009, the UDG awarded the construction contract for the paving of the back parking lot and the construction of two 50x20 metal buildings to Castillo Construction.

These buildings, completed on March 31st, will provide essential storage of rescue and personnel vehicles, trailers, and operational equipment. They will also allow BLM personnel to work out of the harsh weather and help limit equipments exposure to the elements.

The United Desert Gateway is a non-profit, public benefit corporation comprised of the Chambers of Commerce of Brawley and El Centro, CA and Yuma, AZ. To learn more please visit our web site at:

www.uniteddesertgateway.org

ASA CHAIRMAN STEPS DOWN

It is with deep regret that we announce the departure of ASA Board of Directors Chairman Bill Jones. Jones has served on the ASA Board since mid-2006 and was instrumental in the formation of the American Desert Foundation (ADF). As Chairman of the ADF, Jones was involved in establishing the ATV rider certification classes in Glamis this season. He has also been responsible for several major projects above and beyond his leadership of ASA day to day activities. Jones will continue to serve as ADF Chairman. The ASA board would like to thank Bill for his generous contribution towards furthering the mission of the ASA. He will be greatly missed.

Effective February 2nd President Bob Mason has temporarily assumed the Chairman duties until the ASA board elects a replacement. Chuck Hattaway will take on the responsibility of chairing the Raffle Car Committee.

>>> ASA STORE SPECIALS <<<

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Ad Size:	(1 issue)	(4 issues)
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Three Quarter Page	$350	$1300
Half Page	$250	$1000
Quarter Page	$200	$700
Business Card	$100	$300

Contact Us : Newsletters@AmericanSandAssociation.org OR call 888-540-SAND

>>> UPCOMING EVENTS <<<

EXTREME MOTORSPORTS EXPO - MAY 21-23 - COSTA MESA - FAIRGROUNDS
www.extrememotorsportsexpo.com

OCOTILLO WELLS 4th of JULY ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT, OCOTILLO WELLS, CA
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WHERE TO SEND YOUR COMMENTS ON THE DRAMP

Copies of the DRAMP are available upon request in both book and CD-ROM format from the field manager;

El Centro Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
1661 S. 4th Street
El Centro, CA 92243

or from the BLM California State Office at: 2800 Cottage Way, Suite W 1834, Sacramento, CA 95825

Comments can be provided via email to: caisdrmp@ca.blm.gov or by mail to the El Centro address above, mail to the attention of: Carrie Simmons. For further information, please contact Erin Dreyfuss, RAMP team leader at (916) 978-4642. Members of the public are strongly encouraged to submit their comments in writing.

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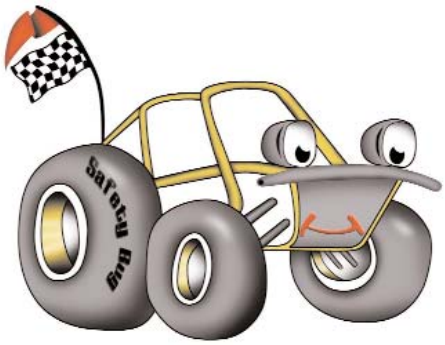

The SAFETY BUG says,

As the summer months arrive remember to write down those items that need attention, do maintainance before you start duning again.

The Safety Bug is the official mascot of the public safety and educational program embraced by many organizations and businesses.

FOR MORE INFO. PLEASE CHECK OUR *ONLINE VERSION* AT: WWW.ASASAND.ORG

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A READER WRITES….

My impressions of the El Centro DRAMP Meeting by Rusty Massie

Last evening I attended the DRAMP meeting in El Centro. There were about 35 people in attendance, including BLM employees and rangers. The meeting was very peaceful and everyone was well mannered. I believe that there was a general consensus that OHV enthusiasts would prefer Alternative 1, but that the preferred alternative was the most likely to be adopted. Several people spoke of changes that they would like to see.

1. I asked about the change in closure size and was told that it would go from just less than 50,000 acres to about 12,000 acres. This is a step in the right direction! BLM also said that the Critical Habitat continues further north, but the area in the Glamis area was excluded, I believe due to economic considerations.

2. I asked if there would be any provision in the RAMP that would address opening the remaining closure if the Fish and Wildlife Service delisted the PMV. The answer was no. I believe that this should be somehow addressed in the RAMP and an expedited procedure to be specified.

3. It was suggested that there be corridors in the remaining closure to facilitate emergency access, general movement, and movement of towed vehicles. I hope they might consider this proposal.

4. There was discussion on the proposed closure of Dunebuggy Flats during high rain periods. BLM said they thought it might help the Pierson's Milkvetch. They admitted that there was no scientific basis to support this, and that the area is not included in the Critical Habitat for the PMV. Comments were made that the BLM should open camping areas to "make up" for this closure, and BLM said that they planned on opening additional camping in the Ogilby Road area. I suggested that while additional camping areas were a good idea, I didn't see how replacing one area with another would help the PMV.

5. There was discussion about the proposed closure of the washes to camping. The discussion was similar to the above; however, they sited problems with campers damaging the plants, etc. They specifically talked about gathering of firewood, (downed wood and living plants). When asked about their reference to wildfires, the BLM also said that they had had one earlier this year. I'm not sure that's enough to force a closure of this area. There was little or no discussion on the fact that this area is seldom used except during times of exceptionally high use. Thus only a few weeks of each year.

6. I noticed that the DRAMP mentions other visitors and their desire to visit the dunes and have it be a quiet, peaceful, and serene experience. One person did quickly mention that this should be addressed by the Wilderness Area, but BLM still seems to think that people walk way into the big dunes for the experience, but in 40 years of duning, I've never seen anyone do this. Maybe a few hundred yards, but not much more. Of course, the Wilderness Area isn't real convenient to the Interstate 8 corridor.

7. Two people, one from the Yuma area and one from the Valley requested a one day pass system for locals to visit the dunes. While this might be a nightmare to administer, if it could be done, I would support it. I have met quite a few people who drive through the area and wish to just see and experience the dunes on the way through. They have no desire to camp or drive vehicles. I commonly have visitors from El Centro who visit me for an evening just to have dinner or visit. They should have some economically feasible means to do so. Maybe the campground hosts could make this possible?

8. A couple of local people were quite emphatic in their concern about airborne contaminant issues. I made two suggestions that would help this problem and demonstrate that off-roaders are willing to work for what is needed. The first is for the BLM to immediately begin working to final grade and pave the east access road which would reduce much of the on-highway vehicle caused dust. The second would be to implement a "no-wake" zone in the flat ground and camping areas between the access road and the dunes. This zone would limit the speed of vehicles to something like 10 mph or less and would prohibit "brodies" and ATC tracks. While this would again be a difficult assignment for the LEO's to administer, the result could make a major contribution to reducing the dust. Also discussed was that the prevailing winds normally take any dust towards the east and not into the El Centro/Brawley/Imperial Valley areas.

ASA Accepting Donations in Memory of Jack Oakes

Donations are currently being accepted in memory of Jack Oakes who was an avid duner and ASA Supporter. In lieu of sending flowers, the family has asked that people donate to the ASA. Donations should be sent to:

American Sand Association

11419 Daybreak Trail

Moreno Valley, CA 92557-9907

If you prefer to donate online, please visit our website at: www.americansandassociation.org/home.php?cat=252. Please remember to indicate that your donation is being made "In the Memory of Jack Oakes". The family will be notified of your donation.

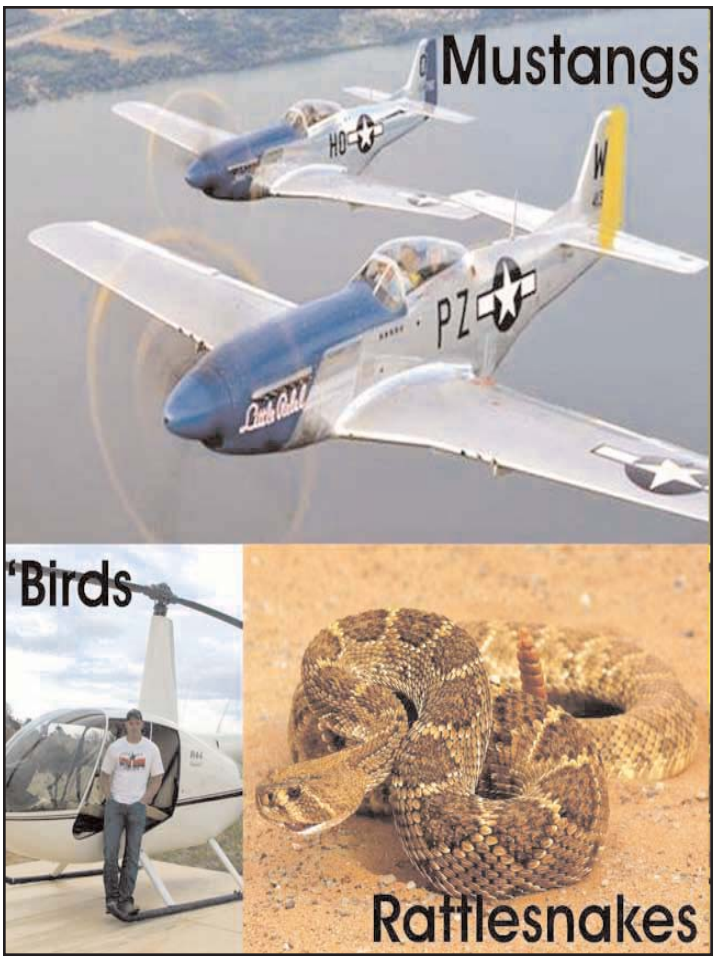
The ASA would like to thank the Oakes family for remembering us during this difficult time. We offer our condolences to Jack's family and friends.

Nicole Nicholas Gilles
Executive Director
American Sand Association

Mustangs, 'birds, and rattlesnakes

By Helen Barrett

Nothing will be at a standstill on the ground or in the air around The Little Sahara State Park and Waynoka on Saturday, April 10. That's the date of the annual Snake Hunt when more than 15,000 off-road sand enthusiasts are expected to visit the dunes.



In addition to the slithering rattlers that hunters have captured in gunny sacks and the roar of off-road vehicles racing through the hills, a new event is planned for this year.

Alva's Bob Baker will conduct a fly-over of the park with both of his P-51 Mustangs to honor the 250,000 motorized recreational tourists who travel to Woods County each year. Also returning in his "bird" will be Kevin Reed of Reed's Helicopters who will pilot a film crew to record the one-of-a-kind event. Thousands of park recreationists and their vehicles will line the tops of the many towering sand dunes along the flight path in anticipation for the flyover.

Reed Helicopters will provide park guests the opportunity to explore the 1,500 acre sand dune park from the air. Receiving the highest volume of motorized recreational traffic in the state, the Little Sahara State Park supports over 250,000 guests annually. Woods County Economic Development and Tourism is recognizably supported by the off-road industry and will be supporting this event. During the event the Tek-One Corporation will be introducing the 1st titanium hydrogen assist generator in the country for All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's) and the general off-road industry. The system will be available for purchase later this year.

This economical state of the art device will provide the motorized recreational industry with a cost effective way to increase fuel mileage and horse power while reducing emissions. The system is also available for standard automobiles and large tow vehicles.

9th Annual Glamis Poker Run

PRESENTED BY
ORANGE COUNTY ATV ASSOCIATION

When: Saturday, November 6th, 2010
Where: Vendor Flats (Behind Glamis Beach Store)
Start Time: 9:00am Registration Until 11:00am
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Donation: $20.00 Per Hand

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Imperial County dunes management plan critiqued at public comment meeting

By ELIZABETH VARIN, Staff Writer - ivpressonline.com
Wednesday, April 14, 2010 11:55 PM PDT

Brawley resident Kevin Hutchinson was concerned about fees, Susan Massey of Holtville doesn't want wind farms to impact the desert's beauty and Nicole Gilles with the American Sand Association was opposed to closing some camping down.

They were three of more than 40 who attended the Bureau of Land Management's dunes management plan forum Wednesday night to discuss issues about the plan that provides direction for the bureau to manage recreation land in Imperial County.

The two-part, 750-page plan includes resource protection, public safety, facility management and more for the 214,930 acres of the eastern Imperial County special recreation management area.

Eight alternatives were presented, which have varying levels of recreation and protection.

The bureau's preferred alternative includes almost 180,000 acres available for off-highway vehicles, said bureau Environment Protection Specialist Erin Dreyfuss. It's the second-highest level of recreation area open out of the eight alternatives.

Some present were critical of certain features of the alternative, like closing Dunebuggy Flats campground when a rain threshold is met.

"We all know it's pretty impacted as it is," said American Sand Association Executive Director Gilles.

The idea behind closing the campground during heavy rain is to reduce the impact on vegetation areas near there, said acting local field manager Daniel Steward. Camping has a much bigger effect on the land than off-highway vehicles, which will still be allowed during higher rain seasons.

Others were concerned about fees.

Brawley resident Hutchinson, who has been using the dunes since 1971, said that the fee structure has turned off some locals who don't use the dunes anymore.

"Myself and my family, we've pretty much stopped using the dunes over the last 20 years," he said.

Only having season passes doesn't gear itself toward local users, who may only want to go out for a day, Hutchinson said.

"You've shut out a lot of local people," he told the panel.

Another issue that a few people commented on was air quality and whether the plan deals with issues that face the county.

Bureau of Land Management Dunes Manager Neil Hamada (left) answers a question by Yuma resident Steve St. Pierre, who had problems with bureau closing a campsite if a certain threshold for rain is met. About 40 people attended the meeting in El Centro on Wednesday. ELIZABETH VARIN PHOTO

Luis Olmedo of Comite Civico del Valle said that it needs to be considered as part of the plan.

"It's a big concern," he said. "(The county) needs the help. We all have to contribute to that."

Few of the 40 spoke to the panel of four.

The last public comment meeting is scheduled for today in Phoenix. Comment can also be e-mailed to caisdrmp@ca.blm.gov or by mail to 1661 S. Fourth St. in El Centro, according to the press release. The public comment period will end June 24.

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Outdoor enthusiasts respond to fee hikes at Little Sahara complex

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JUAB COUNTY -- One of Utah's most popular recreation areas is heading for one of its busiest weekends next week -- just as higher fees are kicking in.

The increased costs at Little Sahara Recreation Area are drawing criticism from some sand dunes enthusiasts -- but not all.

The new fees take effect Thursday, just a day before Easter weekend is expected to draw tens of thousands of motor sports enthusiasts to Little Sahara. Federal managers hope higher fees will help balance the budget.

Many people love the speed and the thrills, but they do not love the increased fees.

"I don't think it's right that we should be paying this," says Larry Brown of Pleasant Grove.

The Bureau of Land Management is raising annual passes from $75 to $120. That's touched off a small frenzy of purchases.

"Went and bought my season pass ahead of time," says Gene Jackson of Tooele. "I'm still at last season's rate."

The BLM says the increase is necessary because it's losing $400,000 a year on staffing, maintenance and other operational expenses.

""The goal is for us to be as businesslike as we can and come close to breaking even for our expenses." -Glenn Carpenter "

"The goal is for us to be as businesslike as we can and come close to breaking even for our expenses," says Glenn Carpenter with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

Some outdoor enthusiasts are sympathetic.

"I think there should be an increase. I think like everything else, their overhead has probably gone up," says Mike Worthington of Tooele.

Originally, the BLM proposed eliminating the one-day $8 pass in favor of a two-day pass for $25. After fierce objections, they backed off slightly -- a two-day, one-night pass will be $18.

"That's $9 a day. Right now it's $8 a day. So that seems reasonable to me," Worthington says.

But the end of one-day passes is not going down easily for some.

Jackson says, "I've heard a lot of people say they'll go somewhere else."

Corey Brown of Pleasant Grove is worried the fee hike will limit his options. "I understand they need the money, but I'd like to have options too. If I come out for just a day I'd like to pay a day fee," he said.

The BLM says it did a comparative study with other sand dunes recreation areas around the country.

"We firmly believe that they're getting their money's worth. In fact they're getting a heck of a deal by comparison to some of the other locations," Carpenter says.

KSL heard complaints from some that the government spends too much on enforcing rules and regulations and not enough on basic maintenance.

The BLM claims it pushes hard for both, to assure safety and fun for 200,000 visitors a year.

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