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Re:
West Mojave Plan

I am a volunteer race official with a decade of experience in Off-road racing. I have spent countless weekends in the desert regions of Southern California, Southern Nevada, as well as the entire Baja Penninsula.

The dollar amount generated by the recreational vehicle industry in California is immeasurable, but it is clearly in the billions of dollars. The immediate effect on the local economies is easy to see. On race day, in a little town like Lucerne, Cal., every merchant profits from the influx of competitors bringing several generations of family to each event. We provide free entertainment to a low- to middle-income group of local spectators, including military personnel from the surrounding bases.

To say that we are affected by the Plan is an understatement. Ultimately the goal of the Plan is to safeguard the desert tortoise. The BLM has 1.15 million acres already locked up, designated another 6.4 million acres as critical habitat, and will eventually include over **9 million acres**. This is without question the largest amount of land ever reserved for a single species in the world. The suggestion to fence it off in any manner is simply not feasible. It makes the work of emergency crews more difficult to transport an injured rider to an ambulance, and it provides the ravens (who eat tortoise eggs) a perch while waiting for tortoises. We can spot fences off in the distance by looking for the rows of ravens. The post-event reports have confirmed that racers are not killing tortoises, but the introduction of nuisance birds like the raven have become the biggest deterrent to tortoise population growth. We would be supportive of a breeding grounds for the tortoises, along with a bounty for the raven species which is killing it off. Many of the families of off-road racers would be willing to volunteer to help staff a "head start" hatchery program for tortoises. We should encourage schools to bring children to see firsthand how these hardy little creatures breed and survive in the rugged desert climate. The future of these unique reptiles is in the hands of humans who must decide what is really necessary to allow them to repopulate. Nine million acres **is not** necessary for any species. The removal of their primary natural enemy (the raven), and the establishment of hatcheries which will allow controlled growth **is**.

Any public meetings regarding the Plan should have been arranged in the Los Angeles/ Orange County areas, where the millions of recreational users actually live. It is vitally important to get the input of the the taxpayers who will

be effected by this plan to come to a reasonable conclusion about the long-term uses of the last remaining open land in the West. Thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Willis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T".

Tom Willis
Staging- Start/Finish,
SCORE-International

West Mohave Plan
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA. 92553

I am writing this letter as a result of the brief 90-day comment period for the "WEMO" plan. I feel this period is far too short to receive complete and adequate input on a decision that has the potential to affect so many lives, not only present, but future as well.

Please consider an extension of the comment deadline, as I'm sure you will find an overwhelming number of others that will express my same sentiment.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Cox". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

Chris Cox
2480 Irvine Blvd
108
Tustin, CA 92782

West Mojave Plan
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

To Whom It May Concern:

Let me start by saying that I'm currently stationed at Edwards AFB, and have eighteen years in the service. Out of those 18, 12 have been spent overseas. What upsets me is to see that the West Mojave plan is being considered with very few facts or an environmental study.

1. The comment period of 90 days is too short. All of us work other jobs, tend to our children, deal with life problems/issues; oh by the way, a major closing is being considered. Read this huge plan and find out that a lot of what is proposed is off guesses that were done maybe back in the day of S21?
2. No public meetings were held in the L.A. basin where most recreational users of the West Mojave reside. I know I attended the Barstow meeting it started at 6pm. We expect people from L.A. to attend a meeting at 6pm when driving from L.A? Not only does the time frame need to be longer than 90 days, it needs to include the L.A. Basin with multiple meeting areas. You know the traffic jams you see on the 14 and 15 freeways every Friday evening, it's these people that need a chance at home to review the WEMO.
3. It all boils down to the Desert tortoise! Why not begin a head-start program of captive breeding to replenish the tortoise population at Fremont Valley. Every dead tortoise shell I have ever seen has been on it's back. A natural occurrence as the big males will fight and one of the drawbacks is that includes ending up on their back dead. I've never seen a shell run over by vehicles or motorcycles. These things need help and captive breeding is a real good start, as natural conflict between the males isn't helping.
4. Another reason for the captive breeding is the Raven problem. At Barstow I learned that the Raven population has been growing unchecked. A 70% increase in ten years is insane. A bounty on the Raven is required to bring them under control and to give young hatchlings a chance.
5. The study of Economic Impacts, pgs 4-97 greatly underestimates the economic benefits derived from motorized recreation. The motorcycle industry estimates motorized recreation contributes six billion dollars annually to the California economy. This is important to estimate the

impact on local and state economies due to diminished recreational opportunity. I know I've invested a total of \$50,000 into this hobby and resale value if this WEMO proceeds will be minimal.

So, I come back from overseas with two teenage kids. Due to mismanagement of the tortoise population my kids are facing more closure of the desert. The desert that has been closed hasn't fixed the problem. What we need are new fresh ideas, like captive breeding, Raven bounty, and a coyote bounty also if they prey on the tortoise. (Please have the sense of not releasing young tortoises in an already infected tortoise population.) Bottom line, we need fresh ideas, not the same old ideas that haven't worked.

Sincerely,



Ken Hansing
1415 Frost Street
Edwards, CA 93523

To:
West Mojave Plan
22835 Calle San Juan DeLos Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

From:
Ken Payne
15676 Rolling Ridge Dr.
Chino Hills, CA 91709-2990

To who is also concerned;

As a resident of the Sate of California for over 40 years and of San Bernardino for over 20 years now, I must admit nothing surprises me much any more. I am an avid worker and enjoy a wide range of individual participation sports that include hiking, mountain biking, dual sport riding and surfing to name just a few. I also consider my self a somewhat a clean freak when come to public land and always find myself picking up after others whom are less considerate.

However, when I found out about a new plan for our state's 3.2 million acres of public lands I was floored to I heard we only have until September 12, 2003 to comment. This is a thirty-year plan a more time should be allowed for the public to become aware, informed and comment on such a matter. If it were not for my interest in motorcycles, I would have never even known about this opportunity to respond on how I would like this asset to be used. I am not a member of the AMA and I do not have the alternatives A through G to select from so I will just provide general comments for your information to assist you in your selection for us.

1. Ninety days for comments a thirty-year plan is not enough time for a working man to analyze and verify information of this significance. Please consider the full public's interest and not a select few that are standing in your hallways.
2. More money should be spent on informing the public of this type plan than after the fact fencing and signage. All routes should be considered open unless posted closed and these should be held to a minimum because this is public land not for a selected few.
3. The full public is entitled to be provided a complete survey the twenty-three sub regions being consider by this plan. After all, fifteen-year-old data would not be good enough for other government agencies that is why we have censuses are taken every ten years.
4. Limiting the number of routes in area to one does not serve the public if the different directions and the degrees of difficulty are not considered also. I believe this is already part of the NEPA's intent and the DEIR/S appears to violation in this matter.
5. Using desert tortoise as the indicator of environmental impact seems very limited to me. Surely other factor need to be considered. The need for connecting corridors for the public should not be restricted based on such a narrow study and non-supported conclusions. Please consider at least limited use of such corridors and study the full results.

Thank you for taking the time to appraise my comments. In addition, I want to state I do agree and support the AMA's District 37 Off-Road posted comments. In closing I am requesting to please be included on the BLM's mailing list so I can assist in informing other members of the public of pending matters in the future.

Best Regards,

Ken Payne
Concerned Taxpayer

September 10, 2003

West Mojave Plan
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

Dear Administrators,

"We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness"

Yes, you are right; it's from the Declaration of Independence.

The Pursuit of Happiness, it sounds so wonderful in our Founding Fathers words. Why would any government body want to restrict a person's happiness? More to the point, why would your agency want to restrict my happiness and tens of thousands of off-road enthusiasts like me?

Well, you have a plan you say, and in your plan my Pursuit of Happiness is going to be discounted for environmental reasons. Is it sound science? I subscribe to Science magazine, have for years, and I know that there is tremendous debate on a multitude of environmental issues. Are you sure you are right? You are proposing what I understand to be the LARGEST land use plan ever written. Do you think in your hearts that you are ready to undertake that responsibility at this juncture? Do you think that just maybe the public should be allowed a little longer time to digest the plan and comment on it?

I live in Orange County and travel hundreds of miles on some weekends to enjoy the desert with my family and friends. Does restricting the desert even more so that I have to drive further, pollute more, and risk my life for more minutes/hours on the freeways justify a "Grand Plan"?

When Ross Perot was running for President (I didn't vote for him) he was always talking about health care. He said "Why don't we let different areas/states/ etc. try different plans and see which ones actually work. It made sense to me then and it still does. Perot wasn't elected, President Clinton was. The Clinton's had a "Grand Plan" for health care. Rather than the Perot approach they summoned all the brilliant ones in the health care field and designed a plan. Do you know anybody living under that plan today? Of course not, it was too big and unwieldy to work. Is yours? Or are you going to be eternally adjusting it. The Soviet Union had some fantastic "Grand Plans", sounded fantastic on paper, unfortunately again they just didn't work.

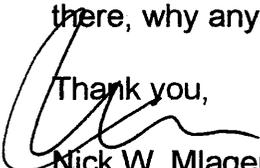
I can remember in the 1970's when CalTrans had a "Grand Plan" for the freeway system. Instead of upgrading them the idea was to coerce us into rapid

transit and reduce the use of freeways for environmental reasons. It failed and it failed because the people of this state didn't agree with the visionaries. I took us years to start upgrading the freeway system, and today, every time you are stuck in traffic you can go back and place some of the blame on Caltran's "Grand Plan".

Trim your plans, postpone implementation, give me the right to pursue my happiness as I see fit while you rethink what is just too big a plan to be properly implemented. Do what you need to do on a smaller scale. Do some honest comparative research, side by side with open spaces and closed spaces.

The MAJORITY of people using the desert and living in the desert are AGAINST your plan. Reconsider....My son has said several times in the desert "This has been the best day of my life"and I get to share that with him, it's a family recreation that you are trying to limit. We get an ineffable feeling riding out there, why anybody would want to take that away from someone is beyond me.

Thank you,



Nick W. Mlagenovich

John Thornton
6721 Zuma Place
Riverside, CA 92509
(909) 685-4637

Bureau of Land Management
West Mojave Plan
22835 Calle San Juan de Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

My name is John Thornton I am a father of two children and husband to their mother. I am also President of the Viewfinders Motorcycle Club. I represent about 100 members and their families. We recreate in the desert most weekends in the winter. We love the desert and all that is in it. We like the freedom to camp where we want and go where we want on our public land. I see what a positive effect these experiences have on my family and friends.

A lot of money is spent on programs aimed at keeping families together and youth out of trouble. All the programs put together cannot begin to do what the desert can. Some of us ride competitively others of us enjoy the solitude. These outings give our youth and ourselves something positive to look forward to and strive for. A competitive rider is occupied with so many details involving maintenance of their machines and bodies. This is after all school assignments and household chores are completed. I have seen a few sons and daughters watch everyone else ride or race while they contemplate their missed assignment. What a motivator! Drugs? No time or money for that. In order to compete, mind and body must be clear, plus parts and gear are expensive. The campfire at night is magic - the stars, great stories and no T.V. Up late? Rarely past 10:00 P.M. must rise early and rested the desert waits for no one. What about the quality time spent in the garage prepping and repairing with dad and various other experts who drop by for advice or help. Those lazy Sunday afternoons staring out across the desert observing the mountains, valleys and the wildlife such as the lizard, stink bug, snake and the lonely tortoise, PRICELESS.

Please do not close anymore desert. Most is closed to the public already between development, military, areas of critical concern, national monuments and preserves. That encompasses millions of acres closed to us - the public. Should areas be set aside to preserve what is there? Absolutely! The wildlife should have corridors connecting one area to another and we should be allowed to share with them. That is why I am in favor of Alternative "E" with some of Alternative "A" added. Connect all OHV areas together - Johnson Valley to Barstow, Barstow to Nevada, Johnson Valley to Arizona and El Mirage to Fremont Valley and Red Mountain and Red Mountain to Jawbone and Dove Springs. The Spangler Hills should be re-opened. This closure was supposed to be temporary, as well as Cuddeback Dry Lake and surrounding areas. The area East of Camp Rock Road (Finger Mountains) should be reopened.

BLM/West Mojave Plan
Page Two
September 10, 2003

All areas should be considered Open unless marked "Closed" as it has always been in the United States. Speaking of America, fences are downright un-American. Most of these closures are directly related to saving the Desert Tortoise. Lets work together to save them through education and responsible management – not closure. The best way to restore numbers is to stop development; eliminate the number one predator – an introduced species called the raven; discourage people harvesting them as food and/or pets; expand the captive breeding program. We as desert lovers will help as partners in keeping the tortoise and other animals healthy and viable.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this plan. I have not read the whole plan as time does not permit, but have reviewed material directly related to our interests. This voluminous plan is both encouraging, such as Alternative "E" and discouraging such as Alternatives B, C and D. Alternative G is not a viable option. Off-road use continues to increase and the riding areas need to increase as well. These riding areas are a part of our history for the last 60 years. Please use this opportunity to have a positive impact on a large segment of society in the next 3 generations to come. I have confidence you will do the right thing – Alternative E. Thank you.

Sincerely,



John Thornton & Family
Viewfinders MC President



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Wednesday, September 10, 2003

RE: WEST MOJAVE PLAN COMMENT

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this note as an individual citizen to express my concern regarding the current management of our **local public lands**. I truly believe that all sides wish to conserve our beautiful deserts. However, I strongly disagree with many (most) of the recent decisions to close off from the general public large portion of **PUBLIC LAND** based of fear of litigation and muddy science, as I see it.

It is clear these hasty decisions have only caused further complications in these very important and emotional matters such as increased lawsuits from all sides, eco-terrorism acts such as booby-traps on legal trails, illegal signage and harassments. At this time, there is much ill will between the many of the users of the Public Lands as the remaining open areas in the Deserts and Forests become smaller. I enjoy these lands with my children and my father did with his father. It is an important part of my life and I will continue to pass this love and knowledge on to my children.

As an American, I have a right to enjoy these **Public Lands** and a fair management philosophy. I understand that certain closures will be necessary, but these need to be completed on a case by case basis with legitimate and thorough scientific studies. I would also like to ask that you extend the comment period on the **WEMO** plan and hold meeting in the public arena where people live. Not 80 miles away from the LA Basin on a Wednesday night.

Its time to quit wasting time with litigation and poor decision making. Let's get to the facts and do the right thing for all. The OHV community has given in too much and too often in the past. The line has unfortunately been crossed. We have awakened a Giant!!

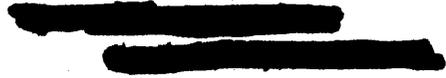
Sincerely,

Peter J. Cochran
Laguna Beach, Ca



Bureau of Land Management
West Mojave Plan
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

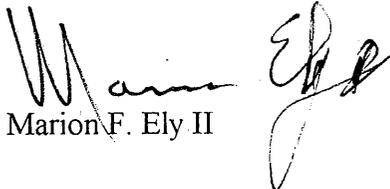
September 11, 2003
Marion F. Ely II



RE: Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report and Statement (Report) for the West Mojave Plan (WMP).

I've spent over two month's time in reviewing the Report, doing limited research and making notes; but unfortunately there's not enough time to transcribe them. If there's an extension of the comment period I will submit more. This is not a pleasant experience.

Sincerely,


Marion F. Ely II

General Comments

This is, with out a doubt the most complex and detailed document I have seen in nearly 40 years of reviewing federal reports of all types. Weighing in at 14 pounds and about 2000 pages, the two volume document is impressive.

Q.: How many federal man-hours and tax dollars did it take to produce it?

It is outrageous that such an important document, that has been in the making for about 14 years, is being limited to only 90 days for public review and comment. Its complexity and detail raises so many questions that within the short response time it is impossible to find and review the supporting documents cited within the time allotted. Especially in documents of this size, and lengthy production time, the review and comment period should be directly proportional to the time taken to produce the document.

Adding insult to injury is the 'reinventing government' procedure (bureaucracy friendly), requiring comments be received at the BLM office on the last day of the review process. This makes the "90 day review and comment period" a lie; assuming timely receipt in the first place, the review period is, in fact, reduced by at least two days if 'overnight' delivery systems are used, and even longer if the postal system is used. With a document of this size and import, that is a significant loss. The 'last day of postmark' (or equivalent) in effect for perhaps two centuries, assures that public responses would currently be received at government offices within a few days *after* the review and comment period ended. Instead, the burden is placed on the public to accommodate the bureaucracy. Perhaps congressional action is needed to reverse this situation. I would hope not, it should be a matter of common courtesy.

I participated in the WMP 'super group' and another tortoise related BLM project for roughly 12 years, yet I was astounded by what I read in the Report. During that 12 year period, it became apparent that little science was being used and was sorely needed to justify what was being proposed. Even when the federal and state listings only 'their decline' was the given as the reason. (It is interesting to note that the official in the Fish and Wildlife agency who listed the tortoise, is the same man who listed the Snail Darter. Will history repeat itself?)

Repeatedly, through the 12 years, among the many questions I asked was one that was never answered: "How many tortoise are there?" During the first years of that time, I asked the BLM "tortoise lady." Her response, "We don't want to get into the argument of how many are enough or more than enough. What is important is that they are declining." As recent as January at the Victorville meeting, among the questions I asked was that same one. After about ten minutes of exposition the BLM staffer finished his response without answering the question, when pressed he smiled and shrugged.

By the late 1990s everyone was asking about the science supporting the process. "Where is the science?" Finally we were told that the money had been found (?) and that more science was being done. The Report reveals it was. But not in the direction we'd asked for. Field biologists attended

some of the super group meetings and attempted to answer our questions. When asked THE question they explained that that was not what they were out there for and, in some instances said they were not supposed to do it. At one point they informed us that some surveys had been done, but ones not comprehensive of the WMP. When asked about the numbers they would smile (a ubiquitous reaction) and only say, "A lot."

One of the good things the Report does, is to, for the first time reveal the science accomplished and flirting with revealing hard population density data; but only a limited amount. Such data, with two small exceptions, is referred to by arcane methods; e.g. "tortoise sign, TCS, percentages sans numbers of live desert tortoise (DT), km², hectares, statistical nomenclature," et cetera. Although common terms in the literature, some of the public were perplexed in their reading of the Report. Clarity was lacking.

In any event some numbers can, with some effort, be obtained for slightly over 50% of the WMP; at the high end nearly 600,000 DT inhabit the WMP. Since this is only part of the DT range, again the listing and subsequent activity are called into question.

The Boarman USGS report, August 9, 2002 (Appendix J) reviewed the existing literature and found much of it lacking in scientific value.

Much of the DT literature is anecdotal, and as he noted, "The plural of anecdote is not data." There is much correlation of data within the literature but it is rare to find a causal relationship, basic to science: "cause and effect." The normal scientific criteria he relates were not used in a considerable portion of the DT literature. That has begun to change over the last few years.

Boarman also noted, "Reports by government biologists and bioconsultants are variable in quality. Although many are acceptable... others demonstrate a lack of knowledge of tortoise biology and common management practices; and fail to properly cite previous studies, *particularly when contrary to the conclusions and recommendations being made in the report* and make recommendations that are untested or unwarranted and which have not been peer reviewed." (emphasis added.) This also can be said of the Report (especially chapter three), which reflects the nature of the DT literature Boarman reviewed.

Much of the literature used to obtain the DT listings and perpetuate its study fail to meet most of the traditional and basic criteria of scientific methodology. If it had met these criteria we would be at a far different place in the process.

Chapter three of the Report should be re-written by someone else. There is obvious disagreement with Boarman's report and there seems to be a defense of the status quo rather than a review of DT knowledge. It is clearly biased and spins Boarman's report to support its status quo position. It is a sad commentary.

A list of authors, their affiliations and their involvement in the Report (i.e. what chapters or portions of the report did they write.) This is common practice in EIRs and EISs and in any government document. Anonymity is not approved for document transparency.

It is again an outrageous fact that an index is not provided for such a complex document. Even after it was repeatedly requested during previous public meetings, comments and WMP production. Word-processing programs are sophisticated enough that it is not all that difficult to produce. It would certainly make review of such a complex document both easier and faster. It should be a mandate for an index to be provided for any government document of more than a 20 pages. The lack of an index can be viewed as an attempt to impede document review or simply bureaucratic laziness.

What evidence or warranty is provided to argue the WMP will, in fact, end or reverse the declines implied?

If California Fish and Game and the federal Fish and Wildlife service do not buy off on the proposed project the WMP will not be able to provide the process 'streamlining' as advertized. Why was this agreement to cooperate not obtained before the enormous amount of money and time was expended?

Given the draconian measures to be put in place in implementing the WMP, if it fails to achieve its goals, what mitigation and compensation will be given to the residents caught within the WMP borders and forced to pay additional fees and taxes?

If the declines continue, what, if any, land release procedures from the WMP will be implemented?

What responsibility and accountability do the proponents and bureaucracy have if they are wrong in this proposal?

Chapter Three

As mentioned above, this chapter appears to be a defense of the status quo against the salient comments and points made by both Krzysik (Appendix K) and Boarman (Appendix J). The unknown author of chapter three is biased, and, although at times quotes verbatim both authors, spins their conclusions and meanings. The chapter should be re-written by someone else who can be more objective. Examples that follow set forth the point.

The text states that according to Krzysik, tortoise sign "positively correlated to incidence of tortoises." (3-79)

This is a misstatement. Krzysik, in his statistical analysis of tortoise sign (burrows, scat and TCS

(Total Corrected Sign)) found that only burrows have a high correlation.

"Burrows had the highest correlation with tortoises, while scats had the lowest correlation." (I, p.26)
"Statistically, scats and TCS did not contribute significant information to the regression [analysis."
(I, p.27) "...burrows were more consistent and reliable." (III, p. 27)

The text states, "Dr. Krzysik found that (a) tortoise are closely associated with their signs (i.e., burrow and scats; there is a highly significant correlation if live tortoise with burrows, scat, and TCS;(b) transects associated with live tortoises are typically also associated with appreciable sign counts..."(p.3-84)

Krzysik found that, "...scat counts are relative numbers at best, and cannot be used as density estimates." (I, p. 30); and, "...scat counts and TCS were inconsistent and unreliable [for tortoise counts]." II, p.16

The text states, "...there has been a proportional decline in the abundance of *tortoise signs* ... indicating a decline in the abundance of *tortoises* between 1980 and 2002" (Emphasis in the original, p. 3-85)

Since Krzysik gives burrows the highest credibility and scat and TCS the lowest, the latter have little significance at all. In addition to the waste of time with scat and TCS, the author of chapter three appears to be attempting to preserve the all inclusive tortoise 'sign counts' in the face of Krzysik's conclusions, in part since 'sign counts' are used to validate and support various positions already taken before the release of the Boarman report. His report came out months before the WMP Report and was obviously read by the chapter three author who apparently did not or could not agree with his conclusions. It appears to be an attempt to preserve the usage of 'sign' rather than the specific case noted by Krzysik, i.e burrows are the indicator of choice.

Although important, is rarely found as to when surveys and study were performed. Season is important in DT and other critters lives.

In the interest of brevity a few examples of points made by Boarman that are ignored or spun in chapter three.

Military use in the Mojave is 23% of what it was during WWII. (J-39) This should show the resilience (a word not found in DT literature) of the desert biosphere in what is widely believed to be the most brutal assault on the environment possible, short of nuclear detonations.

"Most raven predation occurs April-May, their breeding season...not all ravens nesting within tortoise habitat actually eat tortoise..." (p. J-56).

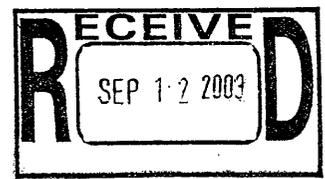
"The fact that [some] ravens do kill some tortoises does not alone indicate the losses are serious enough to warrant management action." (p. J-52)

The upper respiratory tract disease (URTD) is put forth as a factor in DT decline but the 2.3-2.8% of tortoise affected is not mentioned. Cutaneous dyskeratosis (CD) is also mentioned as a factor but not the fact that only one case is found in the literature. Boarman concludes, "There is no evidence to suggest that any of these diseases are at this time widespread, threatening population stability, or hindering population recovery." (p. J-17)



CITY OF RIDGECREST

PHONE 760-371-3700
100 WEST CALIFORNIA AVENUE • RIDGECREST, CALIFORNIA 93555-4054



September 10, 2003

West Mojave Plan
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The City of Ridgecrest continues to have grave concerns over the fairness, incomplete data collection methods, reliance on old outdated data, proper methods of accountability, and scope of quality work for the West Mojave Management Plan as affected by the Endangered Species Act. The West Mojave Plan is a 9.5 million acre HCP, (Habitat Conservation Plan), brought forward with inadequate ground information and mapping, biological conjecture, (also known as the best available science), differing expert opinion, quality assurance impossible to meet deadlines, and lack of funding among other things, that has been force fed to us through the BLM brought on by lawsuit from the Center for Biological, Sierra Club, and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility. The BLM has maintained its' best available science and information mantra, but the science in most cases is outdated and based only on human presence, and has been disproved easily with existing USGS map information that shows many routes existing as early as the late 1800's that were left off route network maps enforcing our concerns over the quality of fair, complete, and impartial work performed. Another easy example to note is that within the Western Mojave Desert Off Road Vehicle Designation Project Environmental Assessment and Draft CDCA Plan Amendment document dated March 2003, that the entire Red Mountain MAZ - 1 & 2 Route Designation Access Table was published incorrectly for public review and comment.

Under lawsuit for Endangered Species Act measures, ill-advised settlement agreements through the BLM have closed off so called "emergency areas" to appease court appointed dates, and have led to the projected closing in our estimation of over 70% of the total current route designations throughout the planning area. Thousands and thousands of BLM acres designated for "management" are being locked up at an alarming rate. Mitigation stipulations are being used as a guise to stop development on private property, include costly measures for mining, prohibit grazing, not allow for adequate recreational activities, and even add costs for desert communities to build within their own city borders. These mitigation fees are to be used for further purchase of land within the planning area for BLM management, which at this time to the City of Ridgecrest means further non-availability of land for public use. For the West Mohave Plan, the promise to cities and counties from the BLM is that once enacted a streamlined process for permits

will be in place to move along projects that now can take years to move forward due in part to the ESA. That promise is only as good as the next lawsuit filed, wilderness or park area proposed, or now the possibility of Tribal exception as proposed by California SB-18 through the Native American Heritage Commission. What is not promised is that continued multiple use of the desert will be maintained at any given guaranteed level. An example of this is within the Decision Record CDCA Plan Amendment Western Mojave Desert Off Road Vehicle Designation Project dated June 2003, PPA.2.2.2 Designation Project EA and Amendment Errata, wherein a large number of routes within the Superior Route Network were closed due only to the Lane Mountain Milkvetch. If seventeen different routes can be closed or limited by one specific species, what statement does that make over the entire planning area given the enormous amount of species listed within the plan!

The use of the Endangered Species Act is spiraling out of control. False statements by environmental activist organizations such as "up to 1000 miles of new roads for off-road vehicle enthusiasts across 3.2 million acres desert tortoise and other wildlife habitat in Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside, Kern and Inyo Counties" (Center for Biological Diversity Website), with requests to send money for lobbying efforts to exert political pressures, (boiler plate letters), when in reality these routes already exist on the ground today but are not recognized by these groups. Wildly overstated and misleading articles, websites, and documents such as "Off Road To Ruin" paint unflattering images of mass destruction to species and habitat to elicit an emotional response from those who have no real basis to believe otherwise. BLM employees who are members of the Sierra Club, biologists and so called experts on plant and animal species who cannot agree on what is truly an effective method of species and habitat conservation, fall back on the ESA and their interpretation to fit their needs. Burro "adoption" (eradication) programs, invasive plant species elimination, raven control, disease control, drought mitigation affects, manmade or maintained water guzzlers, OHV, equestrian, rock hounding, all can be "fixed" by someone's account through the ESA or methods provided by the ESA. Where does it all end?

Another area of great concern is the silence of the California Department of Fish and Game, and the United States Department of Fish and Wildlife. The City of Ridgecrest understands that these two organizations must agree to the West Mojave Plan and the protections it provides in regard to the Endangered Species Act. Over the course of many years these two organizations were involved in scoping and planning meetings, but have not been openly active participants lately. The City of Ridgecrest fears that an end run may be possible. Ray Bransfield, Department of Fish and Wildlife, stated in one meeting that if the Mojave Ground Squirrel, (State threatened species), was delisted at the State level, that Fish and Wildlife would immediately file for Federal protection! Each agency seems to have their own idea of what the Endangered Species Act means and that directly affects what level and means they would use to adjudicate it.

The City of Ridgecrest has not forgotten the lessons learned from the Mojave Tui Chub. This "endangered species" was transplanted to the Ridgecrest area and now its "habitat" is protected in effluent from our wastewater treatment plant to ensure its survival. This

species was not native to our area, but has attained protected status in a created habitat that has attained legal status. We cannot allow this to happen again, and in many ways the West Mojave Plan parallels in legal status the creation of an area that will control the City of Ridgecrest in a negative way for decades to come.

The City of Ridgecrest has determined therefore that a process of "no net loss" must be included in any further HCP process involving issues related to the Endangered Species Act like the West Mojave Plan to gain the approval from the City of Ridgecrest. The ability to provide for multiple use in the California desert is paramount to our way of life, and to the life of every desert community. The government has what is called a "no surprises" policy in place which has already been challenged by environmental group. (Exhibit A, from Forestry Association Weekly Bulletin for June 24, 2003). This chilling scenario reaffirms our fear that environmental groups will not stop filing lawsuits and continue to extend the Endangered Species Act to other plants and animals until all BLM land holdings are void of human use and private land holdings are no longer able to provide for any viable human use. The "No Surprises" assurances are not worth the paper they are printed on. Reading within the Draft Environmental Impact Report and Statement for the West Mojave Plan, A Habitat Conservation Plan and California Desert Conservation Area Plan Amendment Vol. 1, dated May 2003, pages 2-41 and 2-42 states "'No Surprises" assurances can be issued for unlisted species. Providing that the HCP is being properly implemented and the species was adequately covered by the conservation plan....." This and other open ended statements within this section provide no relief or guarantee from further litigation or closure, and does not provide the "bullet proof" feature discussed by leading BLM staff throughout this process that the City of Ridgecrest requires. There is no evidence that there is any end to the lawsuits or any end to the capturing of lands until there is no land remaining. Other documentation is attached to further this point. Therefore, the City of Ridgecrest has no choice but to fight for an additional clause maintaining some balance of effort to provide for our citizens, the human species real meaningful, guaranteed access to the desert. The City of Ridgecrest has brought up the "No Net Loss" concept in discussion after discussion for access and recreational use, and finds no effort within the documentation provided to address that issue.

The City of Ridgecrest continues to state that we do not dispute the need for protecting species and habitat, but we do question how much is enough and when will that amount be determined. The CDCA, (Californian Desert Conservation Act), the West Mojave Habitat Conservation Plan, NEMO, United States Senator Boxer's resubmitted Wilderness Plan, (which the City of Ridgecrest also opposes), and other measures and lawsuits brought on in some part by the Endangered Species Act are swallowing up millions of acres of land. In a nutshell we have: no expansion of any open areas, approximately 70% route closures, created large habitat "no person" zones, land fees that will be used for purchase of more habitat areas, and desert communities like Ridgecrest being blockaded from use as if we were a colony of lepers. No one seems to understand that there is a cumulative effect that is not being measured or given any great regard as far as the human element is concerned other than the continued environmental cry of people are bad, keep them out.

In California City, the Desert Tortoise Conservation Area (a habitat with ESA connections), has been a failure with approximately 80% of the tortoise population within the area deceased. This “no person, no use” zone expressly dedicated for the Desert Tortoise does not lead the City of Ridgecrest to believe that a 3.2 million acre Desert Tortoise DWMA (Desert Wildlife Management Area), will be any more successful given this fact of “the best available science”. One thing is sure though, and that is that multiple use will be greatly reduced in this area. The City of Ridgecrest believes that given past experience it will only be a matter of time before environmental interests, will through litigation attempt to close all OHV use within this area.

The economic and quality of life issues to communities like the City of Ridgecrest are not being adequately addressed or considered. This is of no surprise to those of us who live in the affected areas. It is obvious to us that outside groups and organizations through lawsuit are rolling over the BLM and preventing them from doing their job by continually “beating” on them and keeping them in court instead of out in the field doing their work. If you held a hearing in the City of Ridgecrest you would find that the majority of the people within the community, and the area as a whole, do not agree or support the continued closing of the desert for public use. I have included a letter written on behalf of the Ridgecrest City Council on the Western Mojave Desert Off Road Vehicle Designation Project, (Exhibit B), and the response from the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C. (Exhibit C) Specifically, I am referring to the economic impact statement made by the City and the response by BLM. The BLM response makes reference to a table that acknowledges recreation contribution dollars to local economies, but provides no information other than “this contribution is unlikely to be diminished by approval of the Designation Project”. However, the letter goes on to reference Chapter 4, page 20 of the EA document. This chart within the EA document on page 23 lists the Red Mountain region which states “Route closure plan will reduce recreation opportunity for motorcycles at Cuddeback lake, High 4WD interest will be moderately impacted by closures, Moderate equestrian closures will lead to moderate impacts, Moderate impact to hunting, and Moderate levels of impact to rock hounding. Put this together and you see a strong case for economic impacts, which the BLM letter states “no negative economic recreation impacts were identified”. In Chapter 4, page 23, the EA states, “Recreationists who cannot participate in their desired activity in one location may seek an alternate site elsewhere”. The City of Ridgecrest believes that this statement also warrants recognition of economic impacts.

I would like to address the El Paso Collaborative Access Planning Area, addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report and Statement for the West Mojave Plan, A Habitat Conservation Plan and California Desert Conservation Area Plan Amendment, Vol. 1, dated May 2003, pages 2-142 and 2-143 paragraph 2.2.6.6. Paragraph three states “The process would be conducted subject to certain biological and cultural resource criteria.....These “sideboards” to the process are listed below:

- * Adequate protection of raptor nests, particularly golden eagle and prairie falcon
- * Adequate protection of the Red Rock poppy and Red Rock tarplant, two species

- endemic to the El Paso Mountains
- * Protection of riparian habitat adjoining significant roosts for Townsend's big-eared bat (if any roost sites are located).
- * Full compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, and the cultural resources element of the California Desert Conservation Area Plan.
- * Protection of significant cultural resources, including those listed in the National Register of Historic Places or within the boundaries of the Last Chance Canyon National Register District and Area of Critical Environmental Concern
- * Protection of unevaluated cultural resources until their significance has been determined through formal evaluation
- * Protection of the cultural landscape within the El Paso Mountains
- * Protection of significant fossil-bearing units within the El Paso Mountains"

I guarantee you that none of this was discussed when it was agreed to take this area out of the West Mojave Planning Area to deal with separately. Has this scope of work been required and documented throughout the entire 9.5 million acres of the plan? Just how much of the area mentioned could not be refuted by lawsuit under just one of these conditions, and how long do you believe the judicial process would take? Page 2-142 states: "A motorized vehicle access network would be designed for the El Paso CAPA through the collaboration of the BLM with local jurisdictions (including the City of Ridgecrest and the County of Kern) and the general public." Obviously this group possesses all of the qualifications required to meet the limiting demands required by the aforementioned "sideboards". I cannot in good conscious ask the citizens who have poured their blood, sweat, and tears into this process, who are demoralized and angry already, to put effort into a process that is heavily weighted toward closure, absent of measurable guidelines, or defensible to the obvious slew of lawsuits that shall come when the work is completed.

I would like to give some examples, some parallels, to what is occurring in the California desert. Take for example Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. The parallel to the desert situation would be something like only allowing visitors to utilize the entire park area Monday through Friday from 9 am to 5 pm. There is still "use", but for most users it is not adequate. The weekends are needed for habitat conservation measures, and don't forget that during certain times of the year access would be denied because of animal activity (the limited access clause). Another example would be the public use of California beaches. The parallel to the desert situation would be something like not allowing use during the summer months. These months are protected for the activity of endangered or threatened species within the habitat. It doesn't matter that the species may not occur now at the beaches, it only matters that at some point and time there was activity and that the habitat exists.

If you live in Ridgecrest, or any other desert community affected by the West Mojave Plan and the guidelines therein of the Endangered Species Act, this is the world you now live in. Public use of the desert is rapidly diminishing. The majority of the citizens of Ridgecrest want equal protection for fair multiple use. The environmental lobby is using the ESA to close off multiple use of the desert without regard to those who work, live,

and recreate there. If this is the way the BLM, Fish and Wildlife, Fish and Game, and the environmental movement through lawsuit after lawsuit continue to move, then the City of Ridgecrest has a request of its own. We respectfully request that the California Aqueduct system be removed and that the natural habitat created by the Owens River be reinstated rather than being used to fill swimming pools and water parks in the Southern California area. We request that all cargo shipping cease within the San Francisco Bay for habitat conservation. In other words, we want the same consideration given to those who use the desert as to those who live in "Cities by the Bay", or who transport Sierra Nevada Mountain water to millions in the Los Angeles area. Most of all, we request that a provision that provides protection for use in the desert against more closures, species designations, and compensation of open areas for environmental "taking" by lawsuit, or "No Net Loss", be provided for.

The City of Ridgecrest has taken action honestly and participated in good faith within the guidelines presented by the West Mojave Plan, but finds that the tree bears withered, bitter, and undesirable fruit. There must be a creditable and equitable change within these guidelines that guarantees a "no net loss" process for human recreational access within the desert. Simply put, if access is denied in one area, it must be increased in another. The Ridgecrest City Council agrees with the majority of its citizens, who rely on the quality and quantity of access to the desert for our recreational and quality of life issues, that it is time that mitigation for the continued loss of desert access to the human species be equal in value to the mitigation placed on the animals and plants stated within the Endangered Species Act. Without changes, the Ridgecrest City Council joins with a majority of its citizens and must reject the current process of continued loss of access whose ultimate path leads to very inadequate or no access at all.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ronald H. Carter, Mayor
for the Ridgecrest City Council

Marshall "Chip" Holloway, Mayor Pro Tem
Richard "Duke" Martin, Vice Mayor
Steven P. Morgan, Council Member
Dan Clark, Council Member

210

mailed Sept 8, 2003
received Sept 15, 2003

FORT CADY MINERALS CORPORATION

September 8, 2003

West Mojave Plan
22835 Calle San Jaun Des Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

RE: Comments on the Draft Plan and EIR/S of the West Mojave Plan

Dear Sir:

Upon studying the draft plan it was noticed that the **Pisgah Crater Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)** as depicted on Map 2-11, also on page 4-110 and numerous other areas of Volume I encompass all of the Fort Cady Minerals Corporation (FCMC) in situ borate leach operation.

As your records will indicate the Fort Cady deposit was first discovered in 1964 and work has been continuing on this project since that discovery with ore body delineation, extensive testing and commercial permitting. All commercial permits for this mining operation were approved by mid 1995. We are therefore, understandably, very concerned with finding this mining operation now located in a proposed ACEC

We also believe that the area depicted does not meet the criteria of a new ACEC and in any case be a poor candidate for the following reasons.

1. Four high voltage transmission lines transect the proposed Pisgah Crater ACEC from north east to southwest. Ongoing disturbance occurs with transmission line patrols and maintenance. Given the demand for more and more electricity use it is quite possible additional lines will be added in the future.
2. At least three active mines including borate, aggregate and clay production are located in this proposed ACEC. The potential for additional mines in this area is quite high as well.
3. Our data and surveys indicate that the area that should be protected is located to the East and North of the currently proposed ACEC location.
4. Fort Cady's tortoise surveys indicated that desert tortoise density is low over most of this proposed ACEC.

5. A proposed military corridor will bisect this proposed ACEC from northwest to southeast from 29 Palms to Fort Irwin.

6. Fort Cady owns approximately 640 private acres within the proposed ACEC. In addition at least three other organizations hold substantial private land positions, as well, in this proposed ACEC.

For the above reasons, Fort Cady respectfully suggests that the ACEC Western Boundary be just east of the Fort Cady approved project boundary which includes the approved BLM right-of-way for the railroad spur to the mine's processing center. See attached map for your convenience.

Thank you for considering these aspects of location of the proposed Pisgah Crater ACEC detailed in the West Mojave Plan and we sincerely appreciate the opportunity to contribute to a final plan that accommodates all concerned.

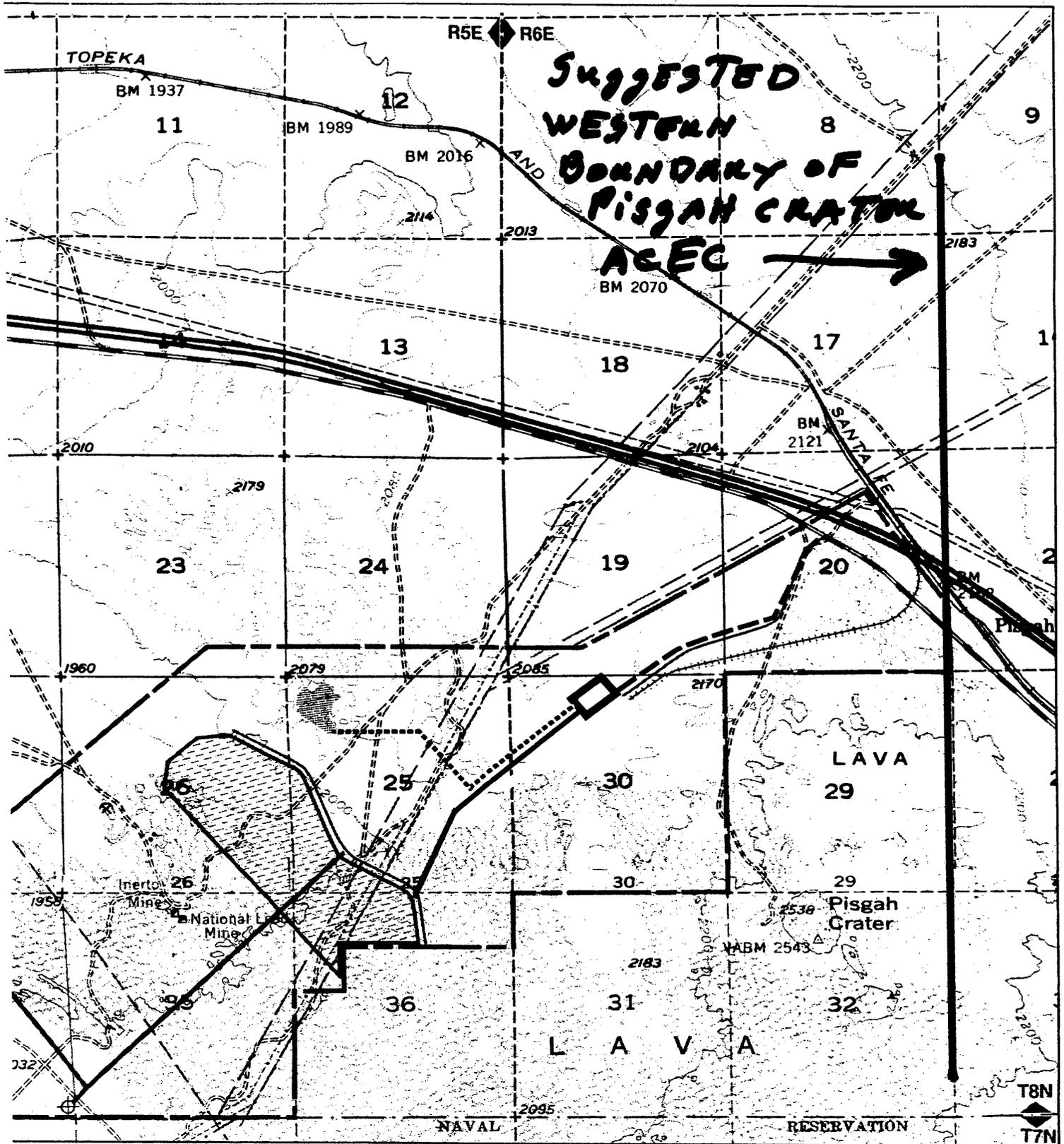
If any questions occur please call the phone number listed on the letter head of this letter.

Best regards,

FORT CADY MINERALS CORPORATION

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "George Hartman", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

George Hartman
General Manager



ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Fort Cady EIS/EIR
 Fort Cady Minerals Corporation
 Newberry Springs, California

**GEAR GRINDERS 4WD CLUB, INC.**

P.O. Box 32
Ridgecrest, CA 93556

September 12, 2003

Bureau of Land Management
22835 Calle San Juan de Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

RE: WEST MOJAVE PLAN

To Who It May Concern,

We would like the following comments to be entered into the official public record regarding the West Mojave Plan (WEMO). These comments represent the thoughts and feeling of 52 families who practice the "Tread Lightly" program, and recreate responsibly on our public lands, and need to have vehicle access to our public lands for 4 wheeling on existing roads and trails, which is the main activity of the Gear Grinders 4WD Club. However, we also enjoy many other types of vehicle-based outdoor activities, including family picnics, photography, rock hounding, hunting, rock climbing, viewing wild flowers and wildlife, to name just a few. So the impacts on our life-style, living and recreating in the deserts surrounding Ridgecrest, will be severe.

First off, we feel the comment period should be extended for another 90 days, to give everyone concerned, i.e., the public, county and city governments, and other agencies, a more reasonable time frame to review this 11 pound document, and to then be able to write more meaningful comments. Also, to have more time out on the ground reviewing routes, where they go, for what use, etc. when the temperatures will return to a more comfortable level.

In addition;

- We feel that WEMO is based on obsolete desert tortoise plans and not based on good scientific research. With little emphasis on the most devastating causes of death among the desert tortoise, namely the upper respiratory disease and predation by ravens and other predators, how can true recovery of the desert tortoise become a reality?
- We feel that the "head-start" program should be a major part of the recovery plan for the desert tortoise.
- The cost of the recovery program is not defined and with no ceiling on spending, the burden on tax payers could become unbearable.
- This plan was to be for the recovery of the desert tortoise, but along the way, there has been an inclusion of "species of concern", which was not in the original scope or the intent of the plan.
- Water sources that wildlife depend on are not recognized as important to be kept maintained, and which need to have vehicle access.

Page 2, Gear Grinders 4WD Club, Inc. WEMO comments

In regards to the existing routes on the ground;

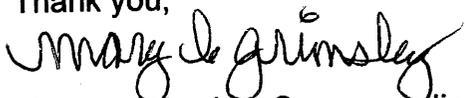
- RS2477 routes of travel need to be asserted, documented, and recognized by the BLM.
- Route closures based on the obsolete '85-'87 route designations, which was most likely incomplete at that time. I do believe these designations were widely – if at all, available for review by the public. To date, you still have an inadequate inventory of existing roads and trails.
- OHV recreation has been wrongly targeted as the main cause of the demise of the desert tortoise. Within the Desert Tortoise Natural Area (DTNA), where no vehicles have been allowed for many years, there has been no increase in desert tortoise's noted.
- Historical use of routes and trails must be accounted for, and be a part of any route designation process.
- What will be the cumulative impacts of the closures on the public in the future, and will this really help in the recovery of the desert tortoise?
- Will roads & trails be reopened if there is no significant increase in the population of the desert tortoise?
- Is the net loss of roads closed within the WEMO area, being mitigated with opening of new trails in other areas?
- ALL trails should be marked whether they are either "Open" or "Closed". It is too easy for signs to disappear, which then essentially closes a trail.

With the BLM having a limited budget as we speak, where will the money come from to implement any part of this plan, from route inventories and designations, having the tortoise upper respiratory disease studied, head-starting desert tortoises, monitoring the recovery area, to signing and patrolling the routes? As was said before, this is a tax burden that will eventually could bring us to our knees.

This plan may have been in production for over 11 years, but it still leaves a lot to be desired and does not address way too many questions and problems. You need to go back, ask yourselves what will be accomplished, really, if any one of the alternatives is approved? Will the desert tortoise really recover? Should be continue with a monstrosity that may not solve the problems of the desert tortoise?

No one wants to see the extinction of this creature, but on the other hand, how much are we willing spend to try to prevent the inevitable? Have you heard of natural extinction?

Thank you,



Mary L. Grimsley, Corresponding Secretary
Gear Grinders 4WD Club, Inc.

CC: California Association of 4WD Clubs, Inc.
High Desert Multiple-Use Coalition, Inc.
Congressman Bill Thomas

212

61996 Sunburst Circle Joshua Tree CA 92252 (760) 366-9895

12 September 2003

Bill Haigh
Bureau of Land Management
22835 San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley CA 92553

FAXED TO (909) 697-5296

Dear Bill Haigh:

The West Mojave Plan is much more complicated than I anticipated to review and I am unable to complete my comments by today's deadline. Doran Sanchez suggested I fax you my most pressing concerns today, the ones that I wish the BLM to address and consider, and follow up with my comments on the alternatives next week.

1. I am a longtime Joshua Tree resident - such a longtime resident that I remember tortoises so thick in the Morongo Basin that annual Turtle Races were held in the Spring (much to my current shame).

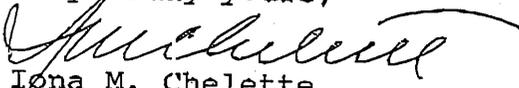
The historical presence of tortoise throughout the Morongo Basin, and particularly Joshua Tree, dictates a complete survey of the area for tortoise presence. No land should be set aside from the requirement of at least an initial survey, and probably periodic surveys in future.

Recent conversations with people working in the field who describe tortoise population migrations in recent years support this recommendation.

2. The use of motorized off-road vehicles should be restricted to well-defined areas and prohibited on pristine public lands. Non-motorized off-road vehicles should be restricted to a trail system in pristine public lands.

More next week -

Very truly yours,


Iona M. Chelette
Joshua Tree Community Advocates

also received via FAX
Sept 12, 2003

213

September 12, 2003

Mr. William Haigh, West Mojave Plan Project Leader
Bureau of Land Management
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

03 SEP 17 PM 12:24

UPPER MERIDIAN DISTRICT
RIVERSIDE, CA.

Via facsimile transmission to (909) 697-5296 and registered U.S. mail

Subj.: WEMO Extention Request

The West Mojave Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement is the largest Habitat Conservation Plan ever attempted. The planning area involves 9,359,070 acres of private, state, BLM administered public land and military lands. The BLM has worked on this plan for over 11 years and the final decisions will result in far-reaching permanent effects on local communities, ingress and egress of private property, pre-existing rights of utility and Cal Trans rights of way, and amendment of the many desert actions including FLPMA and the California Desert Conservation Act.

I have written many letters requesting more information and have not received responses to my questions. To basically sum them up:

Biggest Habitat Conservation Plan ever.

BLM has not completed all inventories that are needed for this document.

Road Ground Proofing has not been completed.

No desert tortoise recovery plan.

No plan to monitor tortoise.

No predation or disease plan for tortoise.

No Non-action Plan. (Plan will either invalidate or validate many desert roads that are used for transportation and safety in the desert communities.)

Has not been accepted by all counties and cities that fall within the HCP.

No financial cumulative statistics showing mining, filming, recreation-vehicle use and hunting on the public lands that are critical to the county's economy and important financially to the people that live there.

Fish and Game Department have not signed off on document regarding the sensitive species and in fact has officially asked for an extension to validate/invalidate the HCP.

If this is truly a habitat conservation plan for the tortoise, how can you not have a plan for predation, recovery or monitoring? To expect the public to provide meaningful comments on this two-volume 11-pound document within a 90-day comment period is absurd. Many lesser plans have been afforded extensions of the associated comment period and I believe that a 90-day extension is certainly warranted for the West Mojave Plan.

Sincerely,



Sophia Anne Merk (SAM)
2062 Mike's Trail Road
Ridgecrest, California 93555

CC: Mike Pool, California State Director, Bureau of Land Management
Linda Hansen, Director, California Desert District, Bureau of Land Management
Elected officials



Estelle Delgado
<ebd29@juno.com>

08/30/03 05:40 PM

To: wmojave@ca.blm.gov
cc:
Subject: WEMO Comments

Dear BLM:

1. The proposal to sign only "open" routes and apply active reclamation to selected areas will leave large areas of the desert with hundreds of "closed" routes with no evidence on the ground that the route is "closed". This will clearly invite the continued use of these "closed" routes.
2. An enforceable (funded) system for OHV route violations must be put in place to protect both public and private land. Persons cited should be publicly identified and repeat violators should be tracked and appropriate action taken.
3. Cattle grazing needs to be restricted. Vegetation standards are not strong enough to protect the land and plants. Permit holders must pay the true cost of grazing and not be subsidized by the taxpayer.
4. Sheep grazing needs to be ended. The process of desertification is happening as sheep eat plants down to the roots.
5. Major increases in biologists and rangers are required to allow this plan to be successful. The plan does not adequately provide staff for the job to be done.
6. New funding is required for the success of this plan. A detailed plan demonstrating the ability to generate the needed funds is required.

Thank you,

Estelle Delgado
14123 Liberty Way
Victorville, CA 92392

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
22935 CALLE SAN JUAN DE LOS RIOS
MORENO VALLEY, CA 92553

TOM & JEANNE WETTERMAN
50404 BUCKLEIN DR
NEWBERRY SPRINGS, CA 92365

COMMENTS ON WEST MOJAVE PLAN DRAFT:

I BELIEVE THE WEST MOJAVE PLAN TO BE A HORRENDOUS SCAM ON THE PEOPLE OF THE COMMUNITIES INVOLVED. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUCH A PLAN COULD NEVER BE ACHIEVED WITH THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME. THE KNOWLEDGE AND REASONING FOR SUCH A PLAN IS BASED ON VERY BIASED AND UNFOUNDED TRUTHS BY A SELECT FEW WHO MAKE A VERY NICE PAYCHECK WITH GUESSES, MAYBES, AND SUPPOSSES. THE DECLINE OF THE TORTOISE IS MOST NOTABLE IN THE PROTECTED AREAS. THE SO-CALLED DECLINE OF OTHER NUMEROUS SPECIES ARE NUMBERS PULLED FROM A HAT ILLUSTRATING POOR STUDIES AND WASTING A WHOLE LOT MORE GOVT MONEY.

THERE SEEMS TO BE A MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE DESERT. THIS WMP ASSUMES THAT YOU CAN SUM THE DESERT AND ITS SPECIES UP IN A NEAT LITTLE PAKKA THIS DESERTS CLIMATE IS VERY UNPREDICTABLE; MAKING SPECIES OF ALL TYPES UNPREDICTABLE. TO ASSUME

THAT YOU CAN IMPOSE DATES & AREAS TO LIVESTOCK GRAZING IS A SURE PLAN OF DESTRUCTION. WORKING WITH THE DESERT IS WHAT LIVESTOCK GRAZING IS ALL ABOUT; AND JUST THAT: WORKING WITH THE DESERT AND ITS CHANGES WHERE AND AS THEY COME.

THE LIVESTOCK GRAZING PROGRAM ON CADY Mtn AND GEORGE LAKES COVERS AN AREA OF APPROX 200,000 SQ MILES. THE NUMBER OF LIVESTOCK NEVER EXCEEDS 250 HEAD. COWS ARE DISPERSED THRU-OUT THE RANGELANDS SO THERE ARE NEVER MORE THAN 30-40 COWS IN ANY ONE AREA AT A TIME. PROPOSED UTILIZATION LEVELS WHICH ARE BASED ON 1

STUDY WHICH IS CONSIDERED THE "BEST SCIENTIFIC INFO AVAILABLE" ARE ILLOGICAL, UNREASONABLE & UNATTAINABLE

THE "BEST SCIENTIFIC INFO AVAILABLE" FOR CADY Mtn AND GEORGE LAKES IS: CADY Mtn & GEORGE LAKES. WE HAVE GOOD YEARS AND BAD YEARS. AT THE TIME OF THE ORIGINAL COCA PLAN WE WERE CONSIDERED FAIR TO POOR CONDITION. WE HAVE SINCE BEEN REPORTED IN GOOD CONDITION. LAST YEAR WE WERE IN FAIR CON THIS YEAR WE ARE IN EXCELLENT CONDITION. YOU WILL HAVE TO HAVE SOMEONE WHO CAN GIVE THE "BEST SCIENTIFIC INFO AVAILABLE" ON THESE ALLOTMENTS CONTINUOUSLY TO GIVE "PROPER" UTILIZATIONS LEVELS. IF WE ARE SET TO A SERIES OF DATES AND NUMBERS, THAT WILL CREATE MUCH MORE IMPACT: CATTLE MOVEMENT, PEOPLE AND VEHICLE IMPACT AND

BE MUCH MORE DEPRIMENTAL TO RANGE HEALTH. CADY Mtn AND CEDROSE LAKE ALLOTMENTS RANGE HEALTH AND CO-EXISTENCE OF CATTLE AND TORTOISE SPEAKS FOR ITSELF. USING THE "BEST SCIENTIFIC INFO AVAILABLE"; CATTLE HEALTH DEPENDS ON RANGE HEALTH; RANGE HEALTH DEPENDS ON NATURE AND RANGE MANAGEMENT. CATTLE HAVE BEEN ON THIS RANGELAND FOR OVER 100 YEARS AND THE RANGELANDS ARE GOOD TO EXCELLENT THIS YEAR. TORTOISE NUMBERS HAVE NO DECREASE IN TORTOISE/CATTLE AREAS. IN FACT, PERSONAL OBSERVATION OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS SHOWS INCREASE IN TORTOISE ACTIVITY IN SOME CATTLE OCCUPIED AREAS.

THE # OF COSTLY CHANGES NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN PROVE IT TO BE A SCAM. WHERE WILL ALL THE FUNDING COME FROM. THE TIME FRAMES GIVEN TO ACHIEVE OR MAKE CHANGES ARE IMPOSSIBLE TO MEET. WHAT "BEST SCIENTIFIC INFO AVAILABLE" WAS USED FOR POUND PER ACRE PRODUCTION & EPHEMERAL AUTHORIZATION USAGE INCREASE? AND HOW WILL THIS BE DETERMINED? AND HOW OFTEN WILL THIS DETERMINATION BE MADE?

HOW CAN YOU JUSTIFY USING STUDIES DONE IN THE EAST MOJAVE FOR "BEST SCIENTIFIC INFO AVAILABLE". THE WEST MOJAVE IS VERY DIFFERENT; ALTITUDE, TEMPERATURES, WEATHER PATTERNS & PEOPLE IMPACT. HOW CAN YOU IMPOSE SUCH AN ALTERING DOCUMENT AS THE WEST MOJAVE PLAN, BASED ON EAST MOJAVE STUDIES?

THE PROPOSED ACTION IN THIS PLAN APPEARS TO HAVE THE DETERMINATION TO HAVE A SUBSTANTIALLY NEGATIVE AFFECT ON THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF CATTLE OPERATIONS. THE "BEST SCIENTIFIC INFO AVAILABLE" FOR THE WEST MOJAVE IS WITHIN THE TORTOISE PROTECTION AREA IN THE WEST MOJAVE. THOSE STATISTICS SHOW A MARKED DECREASE IN TORTOISE NUMBERS OUTSIDE OF CATTLE OPERATIONS. THE BALANCE OF TORTOISE WITHIN CATTLE AREAS HAVE NO RELIABLE STUDIES SHOWING MARKED DECREASE IN TORTOISE NUMBERS DUE TO CATTLE.

I BELIEVE THE LIVESTOCK OPERATION ON CADYMAN & CEDROSE LAKES TO BE A VALUABLE RESOURCE TO THE DESERT AS WELL AS MY FAMILY. I FEEL THAT RESTRICTIONS PUT ON MY LIVESTOCK OPERATIONS FOR THE DIRECT INTENTION OF SHUTTING DOWN MY OPERATION IS A DETRIMENT TO RANGE AND SPECIES HEALTH. I KNOW THAT MY CONTRIBUTION AND CONTINUED MONITORING OF THIS PART OF THE WEST MOJAVE FAR OUTWEIGHS THIS 20 LB WEST MOJAVE PLAN.

BECAUSE OF THE AMBIGUOUS WAY THIS PLAN IS WRITTEN, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SUM UP ALL CONSIDERATION AND OPINIONS. MY SUMMATION WOULD BE THAT I FEEL THIS PLAN TO BE A DETRIMENT TO THE WEST MOJAVE DESERT, IT'S HEALTH & SPECIES, THE PEOPLE WHO OCCUPY IT, MY LIVELIHOOD AND LIFESTYLE, AND THE WORK AND CONSIDERATION ALREADY IN PLACE.

West Mojave Plan
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley CA. 92553

Dear Sirs;

The Draft of the West Mojave Plan lacks scientific justification for the conclusions that support such a plan and lacks fiscal responsibility for the items proposed in the Plan.

I am distressed by the removal of another family past time shared by my family of two children and three grandchildren and many other families that make desert adventures part of their life. Certainly the ones that have drafted the Plan have no idea of the impact on those of us who regularly use the desert.

The comment period must be extended and more public meetings must be held where the users reside. I have been riding the area for forty years and have knowledge of only a small portion of the plan you propose.

Specifically let me comment on several items:

You propose areas for the protection of a species based on arbitrary decisions. Go back and do the proper studies to define the reasons for decline if any. Once defined, assign priority to the threats. This is good science and common sense. The Plan does not address the threats as is now understood. Infection and Raven predation top a list way ahead of other causes.

Remove the fences and don't put up additional. You will be coming to the users asking for more funds to pay for unneeded/unwanted expenditures.

The Plan does not include a myriad of trails used as single track by motorcycles in specific. Re-survey all trails and include as open unless posted otherwise. This is convention as is commonly accepted. You see fit to go counter to convention.

The corridors that have been used for Barstow to Vegas and for the Check Chase should be listed as competition corridors and given specific language to that end. Just because you forgot to put the corridor for the largest off road event ever held in the country and

perhaps in the world into your plan does not and should not simply delete the competition corridor. Correct what you forgot. Place B to V in the route inventory.

Re establish routes in the Cinnamon Hills and in Spangler Hills that were closed "temporarily" – permanent is not temporary. Route closure is not supported by the documentation. In fact there is little if any scientific methodology to much of the proposed closures.

In conclusion; although I understand that much of the underlying work was done due to deadline and not to best supply the appropriate best solutions there is still is an opportunity to correct many of the errors in the findings before the draft of the plan is final. This will potentially keep many of the errors from being challenged in the courts. I urge that you do this now.

Thanks for your attention.

Karl Krohn
212 Delgada Avenue
Yucca Valley, Ca. 92284

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl Krohn', written over the typed name and address.

September 10, 2003

West Mojave Plan
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

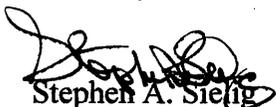
This is to express our concern regarding the Route Designation and Plan Amendment of the 1980 West Mojave Management Plan and the possible impacts it may have our family's use and enjoyment of the desert. We just recently learned of this matter and do hope our comments will reach you in time to be considered as we strongly feel the position of our family and those like us should be considered.

Over the past thirty years members of our family have been responsibly using and enjoying our desert areas for off-road riding, family camping and vacations. As our family has grown it now includes children, spouses, grandchildren and numerous friends. Our experiences have grown to include organized off-road sporting events.

It is our concern that the potential closures and restrictions have not been fully surveyed and studied and that all aspects have not been fully disclosed to the public.

Although we strongly support responsible use of public lands and wildlife protection, we do not believe the proposed plans have provided strong analysis or data to support the closures.

Sincerely,


Stephen A. Sielig
Quail Valley, California


Sandra R. Sielig


Phillip J. Dampier


Kathryn Sielig-Dampier


Micheal R. O'Hara
Castaic, California


Melinda K. O'Hara


Nikolas W. O'Hara


Drew O'Hara


Ryan O'Hara

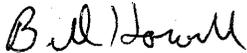
West Mojave Plan
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

Dear Sir: The following comments are submitted on behalf of Huntington Beach Motorcycle Club and myself. The members of HBMC use the West Mojave on a weekly basis for recreational purposes. Their activities include competitive motorcycle racing, dual sport riding, camping, hiking, hunting, rock hounding, and four wheel drive activities. With these activities in mind HBMC members are concerned with continued access to the public's land and multiple use management by the Bureau of Land Management.

After reviewing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, HBMC supports Alternative A with the following modifications.

1. Implement the Species Conservation Measures with respect to tortoise disease and predator control identified in Alt F.
2. Implement a consistent "Open unless posted closed" route/transportation policy within Alt A, Section 2.2.6, Public Land Motorized Vehicle Access Network.
3. Complete the unfinished route inventory and analysis prior to designating any routes as closed.
4. Eliminate the definitions (and designations) of Open Space Corridors, Biological Transition Areas, and Special Review Areas.
5. Implement the Land Use and Route Classification identified in 43CFR8340.
6. Implement the Recreation Program elements defined under Alt E; Section 2.6.4; (AE-4), (AE-5), (AE-6), (AE-7), and (AE-8).
7. Develop a financial management plan and schedule for implementing recommendations of the final Environmental Impact Statement.

Respectfully Submitted,



Bill Howell
9598 Meadow St.
Cucamonga, CA 91730

**PEDRO INDACOCHEA
INDACOCHEA SHEEP RANCH
23772 WATER STREET
PERRIS, CA 92570
(909) 314-6768**

September 10, 2003

West Mojave Planning Staff
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

Re: Draft West Mojave Plan-Shadow Mountain Road

West Mojave Planning Staff:

I have the ephemeral grazing lease for the Shadow Mountain Allotment. On August 8, 2003, I met with BLM staff in Bakersfield to discuss the Draft West Mojave Plan. During those discussions I discovered that the proposed Fremont-Kramer DWMA boundaries are proposed for expansion beyond the boundaries in the recovery plan. Since 1994 I have been restricted to grazing my sheep south of Shadow Mountain Road. The proposed DWMA boundaries would go south of Shadow Mountain Road and would eliminate an additional 8,000 acres of public and private land that I currently have authorization/permission to graze. If this boundary stays in place in the final plan, I will be forced to graze within the fenced boundary of the El Mirage Open Area.

Grazing in this fenced area would be both logistically difficult and very disruptive to my sheep operation. There are only a few gates for access, and I am unsure if BLM would have to be there when I move the camp trailers in or out. During the weekends my grazing operation would be subject to intense OHV use. I would literally have to compete for space with the OHV and the potential for accidents would increase. If the proposed line stays that far south in the final plan, I will have difficulty maintaining a viable ephemeral sheep operation in the desert.

I propose that the DWMA boundary be moved north to Shadow Mountain Road. That way there would be a physical boundary for the DWMA and you will have created a buffer between intense OHV use and no OHV use.

Sincerely, *Pedro M^e Indacochea*

Pedro Ma Indacochea

NEWBERRY SPRINGS - HARVARD REAL PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 176, Newberry Springs, CA 92365
(FAX: 760-257-0011)



"Let's pull together for the needs of this community"

President: Spike Lynch Phone 257-3371 Vice Pres: Hildamae Voght Phone 257-3350 Exec.
Dir: Ginger Hancock Phone (760) 257-3102

Sept. 9, 2003

WEST MOJAVE PLAN
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

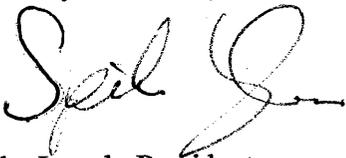
RE: West Mojave Plan, Draft Environmental Impact Report and Statement

After many years of being involved in this project, as members of the general public, as members of the "Super group" and members attending many public meeting, we still oppose many portions of this final Draft. The reasons, briefly are as follows, although we applaud the concept of a simplified governmental process for development, this plan creates a nightmare that its inception will only prove down the line detrimental to the public at large.

- The premise of the endangered tortoise is based on unscientific studies from the early 50s and 60s. After all the questioning of this "basis" for the prolific amount of tortoise, no one has been able to refute that the findings are generalized and narrowly based.
- The recent protection measures for the tortoise are not realizing any results. The protections are off-target and not addressing any of the real possible reasons for possible decline of tortoise.
- The additional measures for protecting tortoise, such as billions of dollars of tortoise fencing along existing freeways and new road right of ways, are not justified. We agree the tortoise fencing may protect an occasional tortoise, but seldom is this a major impact on tortoise populations. It does not justify the costs.
- Access road closures: Seldom does a vehicle on a secondary road run over a tortoise, especially intentionally. Most drivers on these rural type roads can easily avoid, and do, any tortoise, snake, or other desert critters. Road closures just close the desert to necessary public access.

- The West Mojave Plan exaggerates the abundance of roads and access to the desert. In a typical 'city' development one mile square of land, will contain over 34 miles of developed roads. In a typical 'desert' area one mile square of land will contain less than 0.48 miles of undeveloped roads. When these undeveloped roads fall into dis-use they fade into the landscape within years, whereas 'city' road seldom fade away.
- If the West Mojave Plan closes our desert roads, not only will we preserve desert 'treasures' we will more importantly put these "treasures" on shelves in archives, where they will be seldom seen or appreciated and soon be forgotten by the public at large, to whom they are truly entrusted.
- A final comment, it seems rather questionable that 'maps on disk' would comply with public notification requirements. Even with better-than-average computer skills, these maps are not available for review in field settings. Road maps are not really available for PUBLIC review or to take to the sites and actually see recommended closures.

Sincerely and briefly, since previous comments should be already documented,



Spike Lynch, President



Ginger Hancock, Executive Director

& in memory and cause : Hildamae Voght, past President, VP, Ex. Dir, & Secretary, NSRPOA
 Wise Use Advocate, Leader Johnny Horizon Desert Cleanup Campaign, and Californian for
 Outdoor Recreation League

Jean Garrett
296 Bronwood Ave.
Los Angeles, Ca. 90049

September 9, 2003

William Haigh
West Mojave Plan
Bureau of Land Management
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

RE: COMMENTS ON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND STATEMENT FOR THE WEST MOJAVE PLAN--2003

Dear Mr. Haigh:

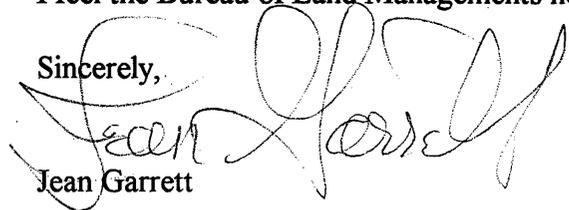
I want to discuss the Butterbredt Spring area located in the Butterbredt Canyon. It is only a small part of the Mojave Plan but it is a microcosm of the problems faced everywhere in the desert. The American Bird Conservancy has dedicated the area as an Important Bird Area (IBA). The purpose of labeling areas around the United States is to help organizations focus their efforts on habitats that most need attention.

The Santa Monica Bay Audubon chapter adopted the Butterbredt Spring because of the IBA STATUS. It is through the Audubon Chapter I was introduced to the area. In the summer of 1998 the springs were ravaged by a flash flood. The fences were demolished and water pipes to the trough outside the fence were ruined. The cattle needed water so the gates had to be left open. The cattle trampled and devoured the vegetation and polluted the water. The Santa Monica Bay Audubon chapter spent \$4,100.00 to repair the fence and fix the trough so the gates could be closed and the cattle could use the trough instead of the spring. I helped with the fund raising to insure the repair work so that the birds would have food, drink and shelter. Butterbredt Springs is one of the few sanctuaries for common and unusual migrant birds in the Mojave desert and it attracts bird watchers from all over the United States.

Non-designated trails need to be effectively closed. Motorcyclists open the gates to the sanctuary, drive through leaving the gates open for the cattle to come in. We have a cooperative agreement with the landowner that as long as the trough is functioning, the cattle are to be kept out. The motorcyclists defeat the arrangement by not staying on the designated trails.

I urge you to close these illegal trails. Boundary markers would help people locate the legal trails. I feel the Bureau of Land Managements needs to enforce its mandated regulations.

Sincerely,



Jean Garrett

September 8, 2003

WEMO
West Mojave Plan
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

Dear Sirs:

I am an off road enthusiast that has participated in organized off road events sponsored by District 37, the past six years. My family and I continue to enjoy weekend outings in the Mojave Desert. Recently I have become aware of some of the provisions detailed in the WEMO document. Upon reviewing it I have some concerns which I feel should be addressed. Briefly they are as follows:

I feel that ninety days is too short of a time period for the general public to evaluate and respond to the document. I would like to see the comment period extended.

The public meetings that have already been held were held in areas far from the metropolitan areas where most of the recreational users of the areas to be impacted reside. I would suggest more meetings be scheduled in the metropolitan areas.

All routes should be considered open routes unless posted closed. I feel it is important that the public can assume a route is open unless otherwise posted.

Do not implement the fencing proposals detailed in the DEIR/S. Not only is fencing a potential hazard to off road enthusiasts, but it could feasibly provide nesting perches for ravens, which are a natural enemy of the desert tortoise. The raven population must be controlled in order for the tortoise recovery program to be effective.

The corridor which has been traditionally referred to as the Barstow to Vegas corridor has been deleted simply because it was omitted in NEMO. I would like to see it placed back in the route inventory, thereby being included in WEMO.

The Fremont Recreation Area should be connected to the El Mirage and Spangler open areas by utilizing existing routes.

I feel that any closure or restriction on open riding areas in the Mojave would not only impact families that go to these areas for recreation, but it would surely affect businesses that rely heavily on these individuals buying dollars to survive.

The Johnson Valley to Parker Arizona, and Johnson Valley to Stoddard Wells, race corridors are shown as open routes. The DEIR/S proposal is that no competition be allowed outside of the open areas. Congress specifically allows for point to point events.

These events have been litigated in the past and have received court approval. Terminology should be included to allow the continued use of the corridors for competitive events.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ryan Purdy".

Ryan Purdy
27940 Beechnut Circle
Valencia CA 91354

C A L I F O R N I A

MINING ASSOCIATION

"The California Mining Association is dedicated to the advancement of responsible mining and the education of the public to the vital role of minerals and mining in our society."

September 5, 2003

West Mojave Plan
22835 Calle San Juan Des Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Draft Environmental Impact Report and Statement for the West Mojave Plan. The California Mining Association is supportive of the objectives of the plan and understands the complexity of crafting a document of this nature. The plan reflects the need of the BLM to adopt a master plan which accounts for multiple uses in the desert.

CMA is concerned that the proposed Pisgah Crater ACEC as described on Map 2-11 and page 4-110 of Volume 1 and numerous citations throughout the document does not meet those objectives. The plan proposes to change this area's multi use class designation from M to L, overlay the area with an ACEC, and implement a series of development restriction. The document does indicate that the designation would have an impact on mining and the economy and that mining may be encouraged to relocate from the area due to increased restrictions. The document, page 4-110, volume 1, implies the likely effect of the action is to relocate existing mines outside the ACEC. This would be a shame as within the ACEC exists a world class resource of hectorite clay currently being mined by Elementis Specialties, an outstanding deposit of cinder currently being mined by Rinker, and a permitted borate operation belonging to Fort Cady Minerals. In addition US Borax has been doing exploration within the area.

In reviewing the boundaries of the ACEC and the habitat/species it is designed to protect, CMA does not believe the ACEC as currently drawn is justified. Not only would it place increased burdens on important mining operations currently in the area, it would do so without capturing the plant/animal populations it is designed to protect. We believe this occurred because the lines of the ACEC are based on an early 1990's plan, which does not have the benefit of the information we have now. In reviewing the "South Central Bioregion" map plotted in 2002 by N. Pratini which depicts the proposed ACEC as well as the general regions the plants occur in it becomes clear the plants are to the east and northeast of the proposed ACEC mostly outside of it's boundaries. This information agrees with an informal assessment conducted by Elementis Specialties personnel in and around the area.

This is an extremely important issue as four mining operations are currently permitted or exploring within the area of the western half of the proposed ACEC, which based on our surveys and the map, contain extremely limited populations of target plants. Namely we identified one cluster of 4 crucifixion thorn which agree with a plot on the bioregion map.

In addition, we would like to note that the mining operations are largely on private lands which based on the US Code, Title 43, Section 1702(a) are not eligible to be included within ACEC's. [43 USC 1702] defines ACEC's as follows;

“The term "areas of critical environmental concern" means **areas within the public lands [Emphasis Added]** where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards.”

This definition clearly precludes the inclusion of private lands within an ACEC and thus precludes the inclusion of the 4,678 acres of private land within the proposed Pisgah ACEC.

The following points reflect our concerns.

- The western half of the proposed ACEC is presently dominated by active mining extending from the Pisgah cinder cone to the western boundary. Mining in the area is conducted by at least four separate mining companies. The area has been continuously mined since 1936.
- The ACEC designation would limit expansion of existing mining and increase mitigation requirements by five time previous compensation rates. The EIR/EIS does not consider the loss of resource potential, jobs or financial impact to the industry and local economy.
- The report fails to recognize the utility corridor that bisects the proposed ACEC or address potential impacts to maintenance and operations of those facilities.
- The report refers to the area as relatively high tortoise habitat when infact historic studies for the existing mine operations indicate the area to be low density habitat.
- Our investigation of the distribution of local plants and animals from the South-Central Bioregion map (2002) as well as an informal survey indicates the majority of the species of concern are located to the northeast outside the proposed ACEC boundary. The ACEC as proposed fails in its attempt to manage or protect the target species as they are not within the proposed boundary. Actual locations are not shown in comparison to the ACEC boundary. There is an undocumented assumption that species may benefit from the designation.
- We question the ability of the area to meet criteria for the establishment of an ACEC, particularly in the area of substantial significance and value. Research in the RNA should have indicated that the majority of sensitive plants reside outside the study boundary and that an ACEC designation would require a new boundary designation. Policy requiring conversion from RNA to ACEC was issued in 1996 and is believed to have been rescinded.

- The EIR/EIS does not assess the benefits to species derived by the proposed ACEC and it appears these would be minimal.
- The EIR/EIS does not compare the benefits of the ACEC's designation to the impacts on existing, historical mining operations.
- The EIR/EIS also does not compare the benefits to the impacts on future mining operations, nor the loss of those natural resources. It is not clear if the one percent development criteria relates to the total area of the ACEC or the cumulative total of all ACEC acreage within the plan. We assume from the document that future development within the Pisgah Crater ACEC would be limited to approximately 220 acres of undisturbed land.
- The proposed ACEC appears to include private lands contrary to statute.

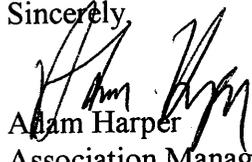
In addition, CMA would like to encourage the drafters of the Plan to include discussion of not only relevance criteria as described in BLM manual 1610 but of the importance criteria within BLM manual 1613 for all ACEC's within the plan. We believe this is necessary to ensure that the final plan is not susceptible to individual challenge by environmental groups or others asserting that the BLM failed to follow its own policies in this regard. We are supportive of the concept of the plan as a blueprint for the entire area. We have included a copy of the BLM manual 1613 with our comments.

Finally, we would appreciate it if you could clarify the 1% growth prescription, as it appears to be susceptible to at least two interpretations as stated above. This clarification will help prevent future misunderstandings.

As stated previously CMA supports the goals of the Plan, however we are opposed to the proposed Pisgah Crater ACEC as currently drafted. Based on the data available, it appears the ACEC if determined to be desirable should be redrafted to the east & northeast excluding the mining operations we have identified. This would seem to not only include a larger population of target species but also the lava tubes associated with the crater while not impacting private land or the mining operations existing within the area.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our concerns regarding the EIR/EIS. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Adam Harper

Association Manager
California Mining Association

September 9, 2003

Attn:

West Mojave Plan
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

Re: WEMO

Dear Sirs/Madams;

It has come to my attention that the Bureau of Land Management and officials representing the State of California are in the process of making public policy decisions that could affect my family's enjoyment of public land for the foreseeable future.

I am a 40-year-old senior executive with a Burbank, California based entertainment company. Literally thousands of hours of my youth were spent in recreation with my family in the Western Mojave Desert. Today I am married and my wife of 10 years and I have an 8 year old daughter with whom I look forward to sharing the natural wonder and rugged beauty of California's West Mojave Desert that I reveled in at her age as I still do today.

Indeed, my wife recently asked me in a reflective moment, "when am I happiest?" I responded by recounting a recent experience;

We were camped just North of Randsburg, California and it was a brisk night. I had spent the day with friends and family trail riding on motorcycles and quads. We had explored numerous canyons and savored several hilltop vistas. That evening, we sat around a campfire and talked about the rugged men and women who had first explored and settled in the area. We marveled at their industrious efforts to carve a living from the land; miners, shepherders, and dry farmers.

We played scrabble by firelight and periodically leaned back in our chairs to gaze at the explosion of sparkling stars that stretched across the heavens. We were accompanied at the campfire by honest men and women and their earnest children. People with whom we shared many common values and respect. The talk amongst us was sometimes lively and for brief moments non-existent as we contemplated our individual thoughts, the glories of the day spent together and undoubtedly the futures of our families. As the night grew late and the temperature on the desert floor grew cold, the fire crackled and we edged closer, warming our feet.

Surreptitiously a small gloved hand clasped mine and I glanced over to see my 8 year old daughter smile at me. My wife sat on the other side of me talking to one of the other wives in our group. Across from us I witnessed a 15 year old boy smiling and joking with his father. It was one of those rare moments of self-realization and I knew right then and there what made me happiest. I was blessed to recognize it in the moment and it has become my passion to replicate it whenever possible.

Self realization, core values, and indeed happiness sometimes are brought into clear focus when one escapes the hue and clamor of city life, the pressures of work, and the burdens of urban living. The West Mojave is our special place that allows us to slip off the beaten path, explore, challenge our skill and find the bonds of friendship, camaraderie and adventure. We are responsible users and stewards of these public lands. The form of our recreation requires skill and athleticism. It teaches our children responsibility and self reliance. It promotes knowledge

of physics, history, geography, and life science. I am concerned that proposed elements of the WEMO plan threaten to take these opportunities away from me and my family.

Some of the elements of the WEMO plan I am specifically opposed to include but are not limited to the following:

- 1.) 90 days is not enough time for the public to assess the validity of a plan of this magnitude. More time to assess its truths and fallacies is necessary.
- 2.) More public meetings are needed in metropolitan areas during hours that hard working folks can attend.
- 3.) Setting aside more protected habitat for the desert tortoise is a "Red Herring". The BLM needs to institute proactive measures including utilizing captive breeding to repopulate areas where the tortoise population is struggling despite long term closures. Furthermore, the Raven population needs to be greatly reduced as a non-native species. Education and sound science and research as opposed to the irrational mass closure of public lands is the answer. How can we expect our youth to value wildlife if their only opportunity to view are in text books and museums. My daughter has seen wild desert tortoises and my family has legally rescued and adopted tortoises. We care and we are opposed to the plan currently set forth!
- 4.) Trails and routes should be considered open unless marked closed.
- 5.) The Fremont recreation area should be connected to the Spangler and El Mirage areas by existing routes.
- 6.) The DEIR/S violates the National Environmental Policy Act by failing to "provide a clear basis for choice amongst options." Routes should not be closed until closures are determined on a case by case basis as determined by site specific analysis.

As the President of a family oriented Dirt Bike & ATV Club I represent the interest of 30 families like my own. Please include me on the BLM mailing list and keep me advised of any public meetings being held to discuss the foregoing matters.

Sincerely,



Thomas Guttry
Vice President, Business Affairs
Popular Arts Entertainment

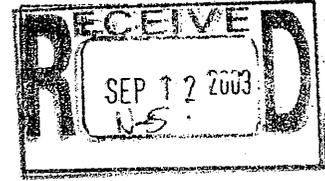
President
Rattlers MC
(Family Motorcycle & ATV Club)



VICTORVILLE INDUSTRIAL MINERALS, INC.

225

September 11, 2003



WEST MOJAVE PLAN
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

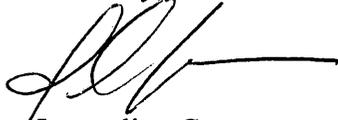
To Whom It May Concern:

The following is intended for public record:

1. Three months time to review West Mojave Plan is insufficient considering it took ten years to compile. I believe that five to six months would have been more reasonable.
2. I attended a meeting on July 22, 2003 at the San Bernardino County Museum in Redlands, California. At that time I Viewed a map labeled Brisbane Valley Disturbance Acreage Map and noted that Victorville Industrial Minerals was listed as not disturbed. I would like it duly noted that as stated in our mining plan # 97M-01 Victorville Industrial Minerals is in fact disturbed as shown on our mining plan map that was submitted to the BLM office in Moreno Valley per BLM's request for all mines to submit maps depicting disturbed and permitted lands for disturbance.
3. **Mojave Monkey Flower 2.2.4.10.13, page 2-101.** In regard to requesting that botanical surveys be performed in the years of sufficient rainfall, this may not be practical. For instance, if you wanted to start your repermitting process this year and then for the next three to four years we have low rainfall this would in turn delay the repermitting process for four to five years, eliminating the streamline process the West Mojave Plan intended in potentially closing down mines.
4. **Mojave Monkey Flower 2.2.4.10.13, page 2-101.** *Mining Area (paragraph 2)* In regard to "Any discretionary permit involving minor modification or variances within a Plan of Operations or Reclamation Plan which does not affect additional land with additional disturbance outside the originally permitted area would be exempt from new mitigation for the Mojave monkeyflower. The use of the word "minor" is not needed; any modification or variances within the Plan of Operations or Reclamation boundaries, which does not affect any lands outside the originally permitted lands, would be sufficient. As long as the modifications do not affect any additional land whether minor or not is irrelevant. In reference to "renewals of permits at the termination of the SMRA permit are exempt from mitigation if they do not involve

additional lands with additional disturbance". I would like to see it stated that only the additional land be required to do the mitigation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JC' with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jacqueline Campo
Mine Supervisor