



Trail Whispers

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Website: www.bchc.com/cds

UNIT BOARD / CHAIRS

Co-President/ State Director
 Darrah Glynn (858) 442 0789
daraglynn@2by2.net

Co-President/ Editor:
 Nola Michel (858) 278 9088
trlrider@san.rr.com

Vice President/Webmaster:
 Linda Eskin (619) 441 7675
lseskin@cox.net

Treasurer:
 Mary Randall (619) 561 6764
sdrmule@cox.net

Secretary:
 Tauri Cornell (619) 575 3355
roadappleranch@hotmail.com

Member at Large:
 Sharon Haynesworth (858) 279 8518

Public Liaison Chair:
 Kathleen Hayden (760) 782 9053
prknride@znet.com

Education Chair - OPEN

Reports / Data:
 Steve Randall (619) 561 6764
sdrmule@cox.net

Insurance / Events:
 Tauri Cornell (619) 575 3355
roadappleranch@hotmail.com

Public Relations:
 Mike Ellison (619) 575 3355
roadappleranch@hotmail.com

Service / Work Chair: Position Open

Ride Coordinator OPEN
Equipment Manager: OPEN

Historian / Parade Chair:
 Sharon Haynesworth (858) 279 8518

Hostess: Mary Randall 619 561 6764

President's Message

By Darrah Glynn

As I read and hear what Public Lands is up to I am always amazed. Amazed that the Public Land's Chairs keep up the fight. It is mind-boggling trying to keep up with all the closures, not to mention the wild horse problem in Borrego. I have to take my hat off to Kathleen and the others that never give up and sit at their computers day after day, going to meetings, and calling everyone they can looking for supporters. Well to them I say, thank you. I know their job is the most frustrating one there and I believe, from what I hear at meetings, I speak for all of us when I say, "I am glad to be in a unit that supports their hard efforts."

I did hear a piece of good news the other night. Robert Coates spoke with the new ranger at Penasquitos Park and they are actually pleased to have a horse event at the park. They gave permission for us to use the old ranch house for our Poker Ride event and thought a poker ride was a good idea. Imagine that! Well I say celebrate the small victories, no matter how small they may seem. Otherwise, we will all get too discouraged to keep up the fight.

The officials who are sneaking around closing trails and parks are hoping that we will get too tired to fight their closures. They make them as numerous as possible so we spend our energy trying to keep up. That is why coalitions are so necessary. That way there are more people to spread out and keep up with the official's

underhanded tactics. And I believe they are underhanded. If the park closing officials were on the up and up we would be having more opportunity for the community to be informed and speak out.

So try to keep up with Public Lands if you can and watch for ways to support their efforts. It may only be a request to write a letter or make a phone call, but every little bit helps and shows those on the Public Lands Committee that they are not alone.

INSIDE

Presidents messages	Pg. 1
Minutes	Pg. 2
Notes from Nola	Pg. 2
Articles and letters on Wild Horses	Pg. 2 - 5
Bettle disaster areas	Pg. 6
Notes from Kat	Pg. 6
Sharing trails	Pg. 6
CETLC Comment	Pg. 7
Legisitive Alert	Pg. 8
BCHC Comment on ABDSP Plan and EIR	Pg.8 - 9
Open letter to BOS	Pg. 10
Horse Expo	Pg. 11
Calendar	Pg. 11
Directions to Meeting	Back Page

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

March 25th 2003

Taken by Michael Ellison in absence of Secretary Tauri Cornell

7:08 Call to order

Minutes from last meeting accepted as printed in Newsletter.

Treasurer's report: given.

Nola gave general report on **Rendezvous 2003:**

Next year all units will participate in the planning, with each unit taking on some responsibilities. . General discussion on what CdS input should be. Nola will contact Linda about doing the program.

Rendezvous Public lands meeting: Motion passed to support "Right To Ride" legislation. Motion passed to write a letter on the resolution to use mules in the wilderness.

The BCH Directory is on the website.

New Business:

Motion made by Dara to order youth pamphlets available from the BCHC Education Committee. Mary second. Motion passed.

The Horses were moved out of Coyote Canyon the previous Monday.

Motion made by Nola to help monitor and observe horses if returned. Mary second. Motion passed.

Newsletter Report

All members with email will have newsletter emailed and/or if email can't accommodate attachment, a prompt will be sent to look at it on the website.

Ride discussion:

Ride and Poker game at

Penasquitos. May 31 \$5.00 poker hands. Drinks and snacks provided. Horsetrader and Riding magazine to

be contacted for publicity. You may invite guests, they will have to sign a release.

April 22nd, Board Meeting at Randall's. Eat: BYOM and potluck to share 6pm. Meeting: 7pm. All members are welcome.

May 27th, General Meeting will include a presentation. BYOM and potluck beginning at 6 pm, Short meeting and program around 7 pm.

8:34 Meeting adjourned

OTES FROM NOLA

Well, by now you all know that the wild horses are out of Coyote Canyon. Our only wild herd in SD Co. is gone from here. The following letters and notes will tell you more of the picture. There has been some legal work done and we are trying to get them back. It may not be impossible. There is a bill in from the lawyer. If you want to help with this part, contact Les Levie with the Borrego Unit at 760 767 5252. We got the word that the removal was happening right after we finished the Board Meeting at Rendezvous. They were moving them in two days. The Union Tribune carried an article on it. You can read it at: http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/northcounty/20030315-9999_1mi15free.html Our unit Board voted to help with the monitoring and care, should we be successful in getting the herd back. Kathleen and Robert Hayden have been doing extensive work on this project, along with the Levies.

Rendezvous was a good one, apart from the concern for our wild herd. Dara was unable to attend so I filled her shoes by being Alternate Director this meeting. Our next State Board Meeting will be in Santa Nella Oct 17 -19 2003. The next Rendezvous will be in Santa Maria, March 11 - 14

2004. The hosting will be like it was last year with every unit pitching in and doing a job. Think about what our unit could do a good job of and then be willing to help! I hope a lot more of us will be able to attend next year with it being somewhat closer. It was good to see Candi Ricks there, we definaly needed her voice at Public Lands. What a gal. Good to have her a little closer in Utah rather than Minnesota.

In the Public Lands arena, passed by the board were the following items:

- Resolution to support the "Right to Ride Resoulution"
- Letter of Support to SEKI supporting the move of the Wolverton Pack Station within the park
- Resoulotion / letter on using mules in the park wilderness to do work in the Wilderness.
- Information was given on a lawsuit filed on a procedural issue on the 3 Willderness Plan
- In the Sequoia Management Plan option #6 was supported
- A letter to be written on the ABDSP Plan on the violation of CEQA and qualified support for alternative # 2 of the Plan (see the letter Pg. 8 -9)

In the area of Education :

- Passed a Wilderness Rider Conduct Code
- Stock Camping Manuel available - \$45.00
- Youth Manual for starting a BCHC Youth Group - \$15.00
- Wilderness Rider Training will be June 21 - 29, 2003 in the Shasta Trinity area
- Committee working on a new award to follow the Silver Gentle Use pin
- Most of our BCHC Liturature can be downloaded from the web-pages www.bchc.com

YOUR STATE NEWSLETTER SHOULD BE OUT IN THIS FIRST WEEK OF APRIL. PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU DON'T GET IT.

Re: **REMOVAL OF WILD HORSES FROM COYOTE CANYON**

March 11, 2003

To: Matt Fuzi and Mark Jorgensen
From: The Backcountry Horsemen, Borrego Valley Unit

It has come to our attention that you have made immediate plans to remove the thirty-four wild horses from Coyote Canyon. These horses are as much a part of the Borrego valley's heritage as any other wild animal and are assets belonging to the American Public. [A goal of the Backcountry Horsemen Borrego Unit](#) is to preserve and protect. This includes saving these horses in their native environment, since these animals have occupied the Canyon for ninety-three years. To ship them to a northern range in the Dakotas may well be a death sentence.

These horses continue to generate respect, admiration and awe on the part of the fortunate individuals who have had the opportunity to observe them, and even those who don't actually observe them. These horses have become an irreplaceable asset to our heritage.

Recent reports on the equine health does not justify the removal of these animals. The reports indicated the condition of some of the horses. In turn, this points to the lack of responsibility on the part of the park officials to administer their duties to care for all wild animals, including the wild horses.

Rather than remove the horses, if the Park cannot manage the care of these animals, we propose a coalition that will take over their management. The Backcountry Horsemen of California, California State Horsemen's Association, along with The Return to Freedom rescue and care organization, and The Sea to Sea Trail Foundation, along with a myriad of other concerned agencies and individuals are willing to assist in this endeavor.

On March 1, 2003, Dr. Sandra Thorpe spoke to the camp hosts at Vern Whitaker horse camp who were delighted to have been able to observe all three bands of wild horses in the canyon. They specifically reported that only one group appeared in need of

medical assistance. Please review the photo taken on November 3, 2002 of three wild Horses in Alder Canyon. The hosts also remarked that they were certainly glad to have been able to see the horses before the park removed them. This came as a surprise since Dr. Thorpe was not aware that they were to be removed.

The *San Diego Union Tribune* of May 27, 2001, reported that Tom Marshall, a resident of Fallbrook, stated, "I'm really concerned their days are numbered. I think there's been an unwritten plan [to remove the horses] for quite some time. It's really a shame. They're kind of a treasure." Here we are two years later and this appears to be true. There are certainly lots more people who would love to be able to have a similar encounter to that of the Vern Whitaker Camp Hosts. Backcountry Horsemen are in a position to make this happen.

Huge amounts of Prop 40 Park Bonds and other public moneys were used to purchase habitat for species along the Great Overland Stage route. Much of this was ranching land and is currently fenced, has stock water facilities, ample forage, and is within this band of wild horses climatic environment. The rationale given by the PARK Staff that these lands belong to Fish and Game is unacceptable.

Yours very truly,
Les Levie
President BCHC/BV

COYOTE CANON'S WILD HORSES

Robert Hayden's report on the last day of the herd of the Coyote Canyon wild horses March 18, 2003

I just got a call this minute from the Borrego Sun that the horses were shipped a little while ago to a holding area in Nevada. Our Attorney Dan Clifford talked with Dave Van Cleve of the Anza Borrego Park Monday AM and tried to work something out to no avail. At that conversation Dan was told by Van Cleve, the horses would not be shipped till Thursday or Friday. We had been in contact with John Keys and were working on the TRO and about ready to go. It is a sad day for all of us, and the horses. I looked at the horses this morning and they looked great, as good as our own fat horses. The press release that they were starving and would not make it through the summer was a down right lie. There is going to be a bumper crop of feed and flowers this year in the park. I asked Roy Stearns Deputy Director of Communication if he felt bad about writing something that was not true and he said something to the effect " what if we have another drought this year?". The picture they showed in their flyer was of a yearling that did not look good at the end of last summer, the worst drought in 100 years and all wildlife suffered.

I am sure that anyone who had



negative evaluations because of how the horses looked after the drought would have changed their mind after seeing the horses today. I had a chance to talk to Stacey Ostermann a UC Davis doctoral student who observed the horses throughout the summer and fall. I asked her if she had talked to the BLM- her answer, no, she had tried to contact Tom Pogacnik but did not get an answer. She had only observed the horses since last summer under drought conditions. Asked her if any had died and she said two were missing out of about 34. Asked her if she knew about finding horsehair in the lion scat. She said yes. Asked her if the park had told her BCHC Borrego Valley Unit had offered to adopt the horses and BLM would give whatever help that was needed, her answer no. Asked her if inbreeding was a problem, her answer was horses have a large gene pool and in the future, it could be with this small herd. Asked her personally how she felt about the horses being moved. Her answer was she was really sad but did not want to see the horses like they were last summer. I told her it was not only Borrego but also all wild horses in the west had a hard time according to Tom Pogacnik of the BLM. She was happy to show me all the horses and what names she had given them, and which ones were her favorites. At one point, she had tears in her eyes and I gave her a hug.

I then talked with Walter Boyce from the Wildlife Health Center that was asked last year by State Parks to study the small band of wild horses that lived in the Canyon. He is a vet with a doctoral degree in parasitology and had extensive experience studying the wildlife and ecosystem of the Anza Borrego and Cuyamaca Parks studying lions and sheep. I asked if he had contacted the BLM to discuss horses, no. Had he done any studies on any other small horse herds, no. Had he ever studied any other wild horses, he said no. I asked him if because these horses were in the mild Anza Borrego winter all their life how would they make it in the Dakota winter. His answer was whatever

triggers the horses coats should do more so in the colder climate. Asked him if there was any studies or proof of that, he said he did not know.

As I was leaving with Roy Stearns driving me back to my truck, he made a comment that at least when the horses were gone we could still ride our horses in the canyon. I had to tell him how BCHC units in the south had built the windbreak at camp and how each year all the effort and work parties to keep the trail open and how we were losing other trails in the park. How I thought we were working on the update plan to work out issues like the horses and trails, but the park has their own agenda, goes out, does their homework, and sets up the data they want to justify moving the horses. However, no one from Parks or study group talks to the BLM who are the experts on wild horses, but we did. BLM was overjoyed that someone like BCH would want to adopt the small herd but it was their policy not to interfere with other agencies. They were glad to hear we have an MOU

with the BLM. Almost all of the points State Park was using to get rid of the horses were refuted by the BLM Wild Horse Specialist Tom Pogacnik who oversees Wyoming, Nevada, and California and also has a degree in Biology, his wife in archeology. He also is well acquainted with Dr. Wayne Burkhart who testified for the Ranchers in Barstow over the Desert Tortoise issue. Tom said if we could come to terms with the Anza Borrego State Park and adopt the horses, they would supply BCH with Vets or whatever help we needed to manage the horses.

Attached is a picture of the horses taken by the park. The news release on Mar 16 by Roy Stearns states, "This emergency action is underway due to the extremely poor health of the animals caused by the continuing drought and low food availability and the expectation that the animals will not live through another hot desert summer". You do not need to be a Vet from Davis to look at the pictures and make your opinion.



NOTES TO JOAN EMBRY

Joan

My name is Robert Coates. I am President of the California State Horsemen's Association, Region 8, a group of 35,000 horsemen statewide. As you know, the state park has moved the horses out of Anza Borrego Park. They did this without public meetings and with the input of a few "horse experts", you included. They wrote a release with your comments and gave it to the press.

Please look at the BLM photos enclosed taken at the time of round-up. These horses are almost all overweight. Walter Boyce, of the Wildlife Health Center said they put on 50 pounds because of last month's rains and new grass. Dr. Adam Seery, of Manna Feeds said there is no way that a horse can put on that kind of weight in a month on grass. If horses could put on that weight, we would bag it and become very rich. I think you and your sister, the horse trainer, know that 50 pounds weight gain on grass is almost impossible.

Sharon Saare, PhD, a world-famous woman who works for BLM in Colorado in the 80's, did the the herd culling and selection of the wild horses, wrote the BLM guidelines on wild horses, said after seeing many photos of the Borrego horses at round up, said these are some of the healthiest wild horses she has ever seen. She stated there has been a drought in the western United States and all the wild horses have suffered. She stated all wild horses go through this drought cycle and is amazed how well the Anza Borrego horses came through the drought.

I feel the State Parks has used you for their own ends. If you are going to be used as an wild horse authority, I suggest you talk to the wild horse experts at BLM, who are shocked at what has been done by State Parks. People look up to you for guidance on animals, so I'm hoping you will look further into this issue.

Robert Coates



Re: Wild horses in Coyote Canyon

Dear Joan,

I read your comments and believe you have been misled. The studies done on this herd were premeditated for a specific result. They were not done by BLM Wild Horse experts and are inconsistent with other herd studies. This herd was part of our cultural heritage and a historical resource protected by law. State Parks did not act in the horses' best interest nor for the People of Ca. BLM offered BCHC technical assistance so that we could adopt that herd and maintain them in their own natural environment. Equis fossils were discovered in Coyote Canyon. All wild horses today are feral, they are none the less wild under the Congressional Act and should be protected as any other species. It wasn't their fault they lost BLM protection when the land transferred jurisdictions. They should be as dear to the Park as Bighorn Sheep. They certainly are as dear to us.

Yours very truly,

Kathleen Hayden

PL Chair, Backcountry Horsemen of Ca. (Caballeros del Sol unit)



NOTES FROM KATHLEEN'S DESK (and mind!)

Now can we add our Coyote Canyon and other historic routes into the wild horse equation using the following??

Excerpts From the Summer 2000 Anza Borrego Desert State Park Resource Inventory page 11.

History and Historical Sites and structures:

"Extensive research was conducted"... " and thorough discussions with local specialists in order to document sites where past land uses" "historic trails or roads, agricultural efforts, long term research facilities and military activities occurred. Thorough recordation of 200 sites has been completed. The documentation provides accounts of men, some single women and families who struggled against the harsh realities of desert life while trying to make a living. Significant historic routes include the Butterfield State Route with remnant remains of adobe state stations and the trail blazed by Juan Bautista de Anza in an effort to discover a route between Arizona and Los Angeles. The historic rail line through the Carrizo Gorge is recognized for its engineering excellence and is a route some San Diegans are interested in resurrecting. These very American experiences lure visitors into exploration of Anza Borrego. This data will assist staff in providing materials for educating the public about the many land uses and significant contributions early settlers made in defining the dessert landscape and in developing the desert towns we see today.

Now refer back to the CCPUP legal citations 3. 50193 "the purpose of state parks shall be to preserve outstanding natural scenic and cultural values."

page 16 "F. Cultural Resources:

"The major cultural resources in the canyon are Native American sites, the remains of early pioneer

settlement and the Juan Bautista de Anza Trail, a National Historic Trail. Currently, much of the trail through the canyon is used by hikers, equestrians and motor vehicles".

"Page 23 (1). Recreation Resources. Coyote Canyon has extensive backcountry wilderness recreation opportunities. There are over 30 miles of unpaved jeep roads and 40 miles of trails for hikers and equestrians." [*much much more WHO DID THE INVENTORY*] "The canyon is within the designated 100,000 acres of state wilderness"

Relevant Laws and Policies. The California Wilderness Act established State Wilderness Areas...including the stipulation that roads and motor vehicles are excluded from the official boundaries by **creating the twenty foot wide corridors noted above.** [Did any of this park ever meet wilderness requisites???)

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Establishes the State Historic Preservation office to inventory and protect historic resources.

The Governors executive Order W-26 -92 Directs state agencies to administer and protect all cultural and historic resources within the State. (Routes have been identified as Historical and Cultural Resources)

Query: Does the San Diego County July 2002 RS2477 Assertion qualify as a formal resolution under cc 15:66???

(Star and Miller cc 15:66 (84) However, a city or county is not liable for the maintenance of any road unless and until it has been accepted as a public road by a formal resolution by the appropriate governing body.... (Parks Brochure states "all roads paved or dirt are State Highways)

Kat editors note; brackets [] , bold and underlined are Kathleen's comments

WE NEED TO ALL COME TOGETHER..... SHARING TRAILS

Bonnie Davis

Just wanted to jump in here — as an equestrian who has trail ridden and horsecamped for more than 40 years, I feel like I've spent more than half of those years in meetings protecting trails, multi-use trails.

There are very FEW single track trails anymore. As a horseman I have to ride with all users if I'm to ride a trail at all. I live in the San Francisco Bay Area and we have about 1200 miles of trails but every day we fight to keep all those trails not for just us but hikers, bikers (including mountain bikes), hang gliders, wind-sailers, skateboarders, ADA folks, you name it.

All organizations (except breed organizations) — CSHA, BCHC, BCHA, NATRC, AERC and so on — know that to keep horses on trails they are multi-use trails. As a free lance writer, I'm always explaining to folks and when giving "Horsecamping" lectures at expos, conferences, conventions I stress the fact that for us to have trails to keep our horses' hooves on — we have to share. Trails are multi-use which means multi-users. We either share 'em — or we lose 'em.

The unfortunate part of all this is that there are some horsemen who do not agree. They want single trek trails which is the same with some hikers and bikers and other trail users too. I've gone to many a meeting where the politicians sit there (and smile) as they watch the trail users haggle among themselves about WHO should be allowed on the trail. The hikers don't want the horseman because they don't want the horse manure. The bikers don't want the horseman because they complain about the hoof prints. The bikers and hikers and horseman don't want the mountain biker and the bikers, hikers, horseman and mountain bikers don't want the ORV or sail boarders. There is always some group that doesn't want any other group because in their

eyes — their trail use is the only trail use.

It gets back to what I said before — if we don't share and learn to live with each other's individual trail use, we ALL lose. Like ducks on a pond we get picked off one at a time — one group will swim off to let the others fend for themselves thinking I've got it made because 'they' like me only to suddenly discover that 'they' have an axe behind their back. We either fly, swim and stand together, or we fall apart. And keeping everyone flying, swimming and standing together is the real key to having a successful organization to protect public lands and access.....

CETLC COMMENT ON MONTANA DEL ORO STATE PARK BEACH CLOSURES

California Equestrian Trails & Lands
Coalition

February 13, 2003

To: Greg Smith, Park Superintendent
California State Parks

1150 Laurel Lane, Suite 190

San Luis Obispo, Ca. 93401

Subject: Closure of Montana De Oro
State Park Beach area to equestrian
riders.

Mr. Smith,

The California Equestrian Trails &
Lands Coalition (CET&LC) has been
informed by one of our local groups of
your intended closure of the Montana
De Oro State Park "Sand Spit" beach
area to horses/mules because of the
Snowy Plover sensitive specie listing.

Our organization represents the
pleasure horse community (trail riders)
of California with collectively
46,000 members. Our purpose is to
work with various governmental
agencies, State and Federal to reach
reasonable accommodations for
continuation of our historical eques-
trian use of California's trails. Mon-
tana De Oro falls in this category.
Many of our member organizations
ride at Montana De Oro and ride the
beach area.

We may not have all the details

behind your decision to limit or close
the beach area of Montana De Oro but
based on what we do know we would
like for you to consider the following
points.

1. We recognize that the a portion
of the sand spit/beach area hosts a
very viable Snowy Plover breeding
ground which is important to the
survival of the specie. This area has been
ridden by horses for 10's of years
and the specie is still healthy and thriving in
that area. Where are the studies
that show equestrians riding the
area have contributed to significant
harm?

Not just one or two incidents that
could be managed through educa-
tion and posting, but real harm.

2. The enabling statues for the
State Park system include the
following language (Public Resources Code
Sec. 5070.5): The legislature
hereby declares that it is the policy of the
state to....(b) ³encourage hiking,
horseback riding and bicycling as
important contributions to the health
and welfare of the state's popula-
tion." It is suggested that before you
close

the sand spit /beach area you reach
some alternative approaches to
closure of such a popular area

3. There is a posted order permit-
ting horses on designated trails
through and upon the Sand Spit ,Area
indicating quite clearly that a
determination was made in the past that "the
animals will not endanger the
values of the preserve."

California Administrative Code,
Title XIV, Div. 3, Ch. 2, sec. 4359(a)
provides, in part: No such designa-
tion [of a trail] shall be made in a
natural preserve until a finding is
made by the Department that the
presence of the animals will not
endanger the values of the pre-
serve.

Have you made such a finding

before you currently designated this
trail as closed to horses/mules? If
so would you please furnish such a
report to CET&LC for our member
organizations to evaluate?

4. In our review of the specifics,
horses historically have been ridden
on the beach, from the earliest days
of ranching to the present, and the
Snowy Plover population on the
Sand Spit Area has been and
remains nonetheless very healthy.
Why then is it necessary to close
the area with out other alternatives
considered that might lessen the
impact of closure and still reach
your goal of preservation of specie
habitat?

5. As we understand it, the State
Park wants to obtain a "blanket"
permit from the federal government for
doing routine maintenance work in
sensitive habitat areas. Currently, this work
has to be permitted on a job-to-job
basis and creates a lot of delays. To
acquire such a permit, a Habitat
Conservation Plan (HCP) must be
in place. The HCP must comply
with the Park rules and regulations.
We are suggesting that you recon-
sider your intent to close the Sand
Spit/Beach Area and try to work out
some reasonable accommodations
for such a historical equestrian
riding area.

6. Is there any intent to close the
area to hikers? Our review of
studies and reports of other species than
Snowy Plover show that when
species react to human presence, it
is much less disturbance by a rider
and horse than for an individual
alone. Has this study been done
and if so could we have a copy?

Summary:

The Montana De Oro State Park is
one of most popular riding areas in the
central coast area. It has been so for
many years. We question your
approach, without a thorough public
comment period noting various
alternatives, one being possible
closure. We respect your purpose and
the equestrian community is willing to
work with you in search of any mitiga-
ting measures that would avoid full or
partial closure of the Sand Spit Beach
area. Please keep us informed of your

**COMMENT ON THE ABDSP
GENERAL PLAN AND EIR
BACKCOUNTRY HORSEMEN
OF CALIFORNIA**

Barbara J. Ferguson
Vice President Public Lands
32352 Auberry Road
Auberry, CA 93602
Tel. & Fax: 559.855.2125
e-mail bjferguson@psnw.com

March 17, 2003
Environmental Coordinator
C/O Southern Service Center
California Department of Parks &
Recreation
8885 Rio San Diego Drive, Suite 270
San Diego, CA 92108

REGARDING: Anza-Borrego Desert
State Park General Plan/Draft EIR

Dear Sir or Madam:

By way of background, the Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) is a state-wide organization of over 4,000 members whose purpose is to improve and promote the use, care and development of California backcountry trails, campsites, streams and meadows and to keep the backcountry trails and forage areas open to horsemen on all public lands. We also have extensive educational programs and literature for our membership and the public on good trail manners and wise use of public lands. Our organization contributes significant labor to trail maintenance and other volunteer efforts on both federal and state public lands on an annual basis.

It is our view that State Parks has done a disservice to those who wish to comment on this document. The development of the General Plan and the Draft EIR required two years of effort by State Parks, yet the public was to comment in only 45 days. CEQA section 15105 (a) states, "*The public review period for a draft EIR shall not be less than 30 days nor should it be longer than 60 days except under unusual circumstances.*" (My emphasis added.) This document is very lengthy. Furthermore, the cost of acquiring a printed version was prohibitive for most. Those who received the "CD" version

were not able to open the document. The maps on the CD version and the web version were inadequate in that only one map (the Preferred Alternative) was in color and all maps were too small, and the web version and the CD version were not printer friendly, requiring extensive time, paper and print cartridges to download and print. Given the above, it is clear that there are unusual circumstances that would justify a longer review period and we reserve our right to comment further on the Plan.

After careful review of all Alternatives, the BCHC offers a "qualified" support of Alternative 2 for the following reasons:

1. In contrast to the Preferred Alternative, the Focused Use Zones (FUZs), which total 5,200 acres, would allow for the development of recreational facilities, including equestrian campgrounds and staging areas, needed to accommodate increased visitation based on the projected population growth.
2. Currently, 68% of the ABDSP is designated as Wilderness. The Preferred Alternative would increase Wilderness to more than 77%. Significant new Wilderness areas would encapsulate existing State Highways. This is problematic because management of Wilderness presupposes no vehicle traffic. The largest proposed Wilderness addition is along the D'Anza Trail. The D'Anza Trail is an historic route and was the main access to Borrego Springs from Anza and because of this historic route, the area should remain as Backcountry.
3. To designate more Wilderness would restrict the access to the Park by requiring the decommissioning of roads.
4. In contrast to the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2 would have about 207,000 acres of Backcountry Zone. This Zone provides the visitor with the most freedom, with fewer camping restrictions.
5. As stated above, we are "qualifying" our support for Alternative 2. Below are problems that are common to all the Alternatives. We

request that you address the following and amend the General Plan and the Draft EIR.

6. The BCHC supports the rights of equestrians to access all roads, trails and washes and to ride "cross country".
7. The wild horses found in Coyote Canyon need to be preserved. In the Wild Horses and Burros Protection Act of 1971, Congress declared that "*wild free-roaming horses and burros are living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West...*" and "*It is the policy of the Congress that wild free-roaming horses and burros will be protected from capture, branding, harassment, or death; and to accomplish this they are to be considered in the area where presently found, as an integral part of the natural system of public lands.*" We believe that these wild horses enrich our lives and that they are an integral part of our enjoyment of the ABDSP.
8. The Summary in Chapter 4 does not fulfill the requirements of CEQA, section 15123. This section requires that each significant effect with proposed mitigation measures and alternatives to reduce or avoid the effect be identified. The Summary identifies only "potential" effects and refers to the Plan for "broad, park-wide environmental effects and mitigation measures."
9. The Plan states that the California State Parks (CSP) will "identify situations where State and Federal environmental legislation is not adequate to protect native biota and will be proactive when "the legislative process appears too slow, driven by economic or political interests..." and "California State Parks will treat as a listed species those that meet the criteria for listing, but are not, due to economic or political reasons." (See Pages 3-21 & 22) We question legal authority of CSP have to step out side of the establish regulations and to act independently of directives from responsible agencies regarding threatened or endangered species.
10. There is no data or resource information given in the Plan to

support the restriction of horses to roads and trails. To assert that "equestrian" traffic may erode habitat (see Page 2-43) is not a reflection of an existing condition. As such, assertions should not be used to support the restriction of an activity. The Goals and Guidelines in section 3.3 states that "*Land management actions will be based on sound scientific data...*" The statement "*Equestrian trails, staging areas, horse waste, and the associated spread of exotic vegetation are major issues involving montane habitats...*" is not quantified with any data. We request the data that supports your assertion that horse waste spreads exotic vegetation.

11. The purpose of Chapter 2 is to examine the existing conditions. There is very spotty information about equestrian uses in the Park. It appears that equestrian use is a very small portion of the visitor use in the Park. The only number given for equestrian visitors is on page 2-92 which cites 3,000 visitors (less than 1% of the total annual visitors) to the "horse camp".

12. The discussion of "Carrying Capacity" on page 3-36 skirts the requirements of PRC Section 5001.96 which states "Attendance at state park system units shall be held within limits established by carrying capacity determined in accordance with Section 5019.5." The General Plan establishes different "units" such as Backcountry, Wilderness and FUZ's. To defer the establishment of the appropriate number of visitors to an area as "visitor-use projects" are conceived is getting the cart before the horse.

13. The Existing Conditions Chapter, page 2-36, states, "*Highway-legal vehicles, equestrians, mountain bikes, hikers and campers are common in many washes.*" And, "*The long-term effect of this recreation on soil stability, vegetation, and wildlife communities is largely unknown.*" It further states, "*The desert washes and adjacent terraces are dynamic environments shaped by the scour of flood and wind.*" The existing use and the existing resource conditions need to

be determined now and used as a base line to measure future changes recognizing, as the Plan states, that uses and resources are not static but constantly changing.

14. The designation of the San Felipe area as "Cultural Preserve" will severely impact the long established use of the area for the PCT staging area. Overnight camping is long established for those who drop off or pick up PCT users.

15. It is appropriate to conduct Visitor Survey's as in Appendix 5.4 but the value of these surveys is only for an assessment of "visitor experience." The visitation numbers cited in the Plan clearly indicates that vast areas of the ABDSP experience very low levels of visitor use. Most of the visitor use is concentrated in very few areas and for very short periods of time. This is another reason to support a very simplified, streamlined General Plan that addresses site-specific areas of concern, while monitoring the use levels and resource conditions in lower use areas.

16. The General Plan Draft EIR is a "programmatic" level planning document and as such should be general in nature and provide the basic backdrop for site-specific plans. This plan is an example of a bureaucracy run amuck. There are too many levels, too much emphasis on "preservation" issues applied Park wide that can be best addressed on a site-specific basis. All of the future (seven) additional plans seem to be directed toward determining what other limitations will be put on recreational users of the Park.

17. Alternative 3 was determined to be the most "environmentally superior" but was not chosen as the Preferred Alternative as it would significantly affect existing recreational activities and "*is not within the general public's level of acceptable change.*" (See Page 4-8) Then State Parks maintains that sensitive resources can be adequately protected through the site-specific management defined in the Preferred Alternate and furthermore that the subsequent planning efforts may

result in the establishment of additional preserves. In other words, the public's level of acceptance of recreational restrictions will be incrementally changed. This is an inappropriate way to eventually reduce the recreational use of the Park.

18. Table 6-7 indicates that "potentially significant" impacts can only be avoided, minimized and/or mitigated to a level below significance in the Preferred Alternative or Alternative 3. This is simply not true. All alternatives, even the no project alternative, allow for site-specific resource protection.

We urge the Park planners to simplify the plan, protect the recreational uses and users and to emphasize site-specific resource protection where needed based on sound data collection and sound science.

Sincerely,
Barbara J. Ferguson
Vice President, Public Lands

Cc: Senator William Morrow
Chairman of the Assembly
Resources Committee
Chairman of the Senate
Resources and Wildlife Committee
Ruth Coleman, Acting Director,
California State Parks
Sincerely,

Barbara J. Ferguson
Vice President, Public Lands

Cc: Senator William Morrow
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Resources and Wildlife Committee
Ruth Coleman, Acting Director,
California State Parks

OPEN LETTER TO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

This was a good chronology then based on today's events. Kat
4 October 2001

An Open Letter to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors.

California Dept. of Parks And Recreation Trail Plan Update and Anza Borrego Desert State Park Management Plan In 1864 President Lincoln signed an Act of Congress ceding Yosemite Valley to the State of California. Two years later certain rights of way were granted to the public under the Surface and Mining Act of 1866. This is now known as Revised Statute 2477. By 1927 California legislation was passed that created a state park system and commission through the efforts of the Sierra Club and Save the Redwoods League. Save the Redwoods League included representatives of all conservation organizations in the state and was given the title of Ca. State Parks Council. A 6 million dollar park bond was passed to obtain parklands for the state. By 1928 steps were taken which would create the Anza Borrego Desert State Park, the largest in the Nation. However, San Diego County Board of Supervisors opposed half of their county being placed in a park system. Despite the opposition, 416, 975.82 acres of BLM lands were transferred to the park in 1948. The park was dedicated to the memory of Anza and to all other explorers and pioneers of the desert region.

Meanwhile equestrians were increasingly concerned about the loss of trails. By 1944 the California State Horsemen's Association requested the legislature to establish a statewide trail plan. In 1945 Governor Earl Warren signed the California Riding and Hiking Trail Law. This provided for a loop trail around the State and was administered by State Parks. Equestrian camps were to be built 15-20 miles apart. Subsequent legislation made connections to and between communities and public lands possible. By 1978 State Parks contracted EDAA (a private land planning

company) to do the feasibility study and trail plan. The historic 1945 law was repealed and replaced by this California Recreational Trail Plan. State Parks had ceased their efforts on the CRHT and were quitclaiming easements. In the 1980's a lawsuit was filed against State Parks for deeding away the public interest. To satisfy an out-of-court settlement, State Parks ceased their quitclaim policy and practice. Only through the efforts of CRHT advocates has this historic trail survived State Parks efforts to obliterate the 1945 mandate. Now, State Parks is updating the State Recreational Trail Plan. In addition it is creating a management plan for the Anza Borrego Desert State Park, which affects access to many users, motorized, equestrians and disabled.

The 45-day public comment period for the State Recreation Plan began on Sept 8. The final public meeting for the Anza Borrego Desert State Park Management plan is Oct 17.

Despite objections from the public, including BCHC and the San Diego Board of Supervisors, State Parks closed the De Anza jeep trail in Coyote Canyon (1995). By 1999 State Parks closed several more historic routes to equestrians. Again the San Diego Board of Supervisors and equestrians protested to no avail. State Parks has also declined to sign a MOU partnership similar to those Backcountry Horsemen has with the National Park Service, USFS, and BLM.

What can be done?

1. We can ask the San Diego Board of Supervisors to assert RS2477 rights.
2. We can request that our Board object to State Parks writing the Recreation Plan which may not maximize the public interest.
- 3 We can ask our Board to request EDAA or an independent company to update the management plan to insure continuity of a statewide trail plan.
4. Suspend the public comment period and Borrego Management Plan until these issues are resolved and trails are re-opened.

As you can see from the chronology, the State Parks' agenda was one of land acquisition for an environmental agenda. Access was provided through equestrian efforts but continue to be eroded through a STATE agenda that does not serve the public need. The time is ripe and right to take back our lands. They do not belong to government agencies. They belong to us, the public.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Hayden and
Nola Michel, trails advocates



FOR SALE

1973 F250 Ford Pick-Up for sale. It is running on only 7 cylinders and needs major engine work. Has @175,000 miles on the current engine, great tires, no back bumper but frame hitch receptacle, 390 engine. Make an offer. Call Mike or Tauri @ 619-575-3355.

HORSE EXPO SACRAMENTO, CA

Dear Fellow Equestrian;

The third annual Western States Horse Summit will be held in conjunction with the Western States Horse Expo, May 30, 31 and June 1 at the Cal Expo in Sacramento, California. The WSHS will be in the Olive Grove in front of the Main Market Place. There will be continuous speakers and exhibits all three days starting at 10:00 am – 5:00 pm each day. When you pay the entrance fee into the Expo it will include the Summit.

The WSHS purpose is to help protect, better inform, educate and assist in the distribution of data,

research and information for the continued use of and expansion to multi-use trails for and by equestrians.

Friday Morning there will be a panel of Park Representatives from our National, State, County and Local Parks. The main topic "Will our parks be closed during the fire season." They will also update us on trail closures and any current park rule changes. Saturday and Sunday morning there will be a panel of National, State and local horse organizations discussing current problems facing the equestrian industry. Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoon there will be presentations on "Environmental Aspects Of Horses On Trails," "Horse Camping," "Water Quality With Horse Manage-

ment," "Getting You And Your Horse Ready For The Trails."

You can find the WSHS agenda and list of speakers on the web page, www.horseexpo.com, click on Events then Summit. I hope you share this information with your fellow equestrian. If there are questions, do not hesitate to contact me as shown below.

Remember, together we can save trails.

Rita Schlim, Coordinator
Western States Horse Summit
2331 Jackson St, Fremont, Ca 94539
(510) 657-5827 e-mail
rschlim@juno.com

BCHC/CdS

CALENDAR 2003

BCHC sponsored activities are BOLD

Any BCHC activity may be attended by BCHC members from any unit, unless so noted. Call a board member for a contact phone number.

Other activities of interest are in italics (not sponsored by BCHC)

BCHC Caballeros del Sol Meetings:

Board meetings are the fourth Tuesday of each month.,

General Meeting will be held quarterly with a special attraction and Potluck or BBQ

Check the back of each newsletter for location and directions to the meetings

April 12 -13
California Trails Days

April 22nd
Board Meeting

Location is to be announced.

Check the Calendar in the Newsletter. All are welcome. May 31st Penasquitos Membership drive and Poker ride. This will be our first insurance-free event, which means you can invite your guest to ride with us

Trail Bosses: Steve and Mary Randall. Call to let them know how many are coming and if you can help!

May 27th
General Membership Meeting
BBQ & potluck with program

Will be Montijo Ranch and will be a special event. Watch this column for date and time! Plan to attend.

May 31st
Ride and Poker game at Penasquitos. \$5.00 poker hands. to be played after the ride. Drinks and snacks pro-

vided You may bring guests, they will have to sign a release.

June 24th
Board Meeting
Place: TBA

August 23rd:
Borderfield Beach Ride and BBQ.

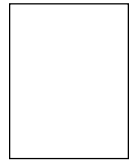
Hosts: Mike and Tauri Ellison. We will be inviting the public and other units to join us to get away from the heat for a fun day!

TRAIL TRIALS
Bonita Valley Horsemen is sponsoring a trail trial at Sweetwater Summit County Park on August 9. Contact is Ray or Diane at 619-470-3244 - dimanfarm@cox.net.

Oct 17 -19, 2003
State Board Meeting
Santa Nella

March 11 - 14, 2004
Rendezvous Santa Maria 11

Backcountry Horsemen of California
Caballeros del Sol Unit
P.O.Box 12311, El Cajon, CA 92022
(Return Address Requested)



April 2003

Label

NEXT BOARD MEETING

All Members Welcome

22 April 2003 Randall's Home
6149 Medill, El Cajon, CA 92021, Phone: 619 561 6764
POT LUCK! Bring your own BBQ meat and a dish to share
Eating 6 PM Meeting 7 PM

DIRECTIONS

Hiway 8, Exit: Los Coches Rd.
North to Aurora Dr., Left onto Aurora
Left onto Serenity, Go to top (end)
take the cement driveway at 11 o'clock
At the top, turn left in the dirt driveway (you are there)

Mailed courtesy of Morgan Stanley, Rancho Santa Fe