

APPENDIX B

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS AND KEY POINTS VARIOUS DATES, APRIL 2010 – JULY 2010

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

ISSUE	ORGANIZATION	REPRESENTATIVE
Land Use Planning and Management	Caltrans	Jacob Armstrong Leila Ibrahim
Land Use Planning and Management	San Diego County Airports Administration	Cynthia Curtis
Land Use Planning and Management	Imperial County Planning Department	Angie Havens
OHV Interests	Drifters Jeep Club & California Association of 4-Wheel Drive Clubs	Joe Morrison
OHV Interests	California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA)	Steve Hewitt Rick Fisher
OHV Interests	Tierra Del Sol	Sam Merten
OHV Interests	California Association of 4-Wheel Drive Clubs (CA4WDC)	John Stewart

ISSUE	ORGANIZATION	REPRESENTATIVE
OHV Interests	Off-Road Business Association (ORBA)	Meg Grossglass
OHV Interests	San Diego Off-Road Coalition	Scott Hillier
OHV Interests	Early Broncos Ltd.	Russ Meskell
OHV Interests	S&S Off Road Magazine	Sherri Kukla Steve Kukla
Public Safety	West Shore Ambulance	Danny Lopez Chris Herring
Public Safety	REACH Air	Don Wharton
Public Safety	U.S. Border Patrol	Eric Ford
Public Safety	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE)	Patrick Walker
Public Safety	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE)	John Butz

ISSUE	ORGANIZATION	REPRESENTATIVE
Public Safety	Salton Community Services District Fire (SCSD Fire)	Ronald Merton Steve Farenbaugh
Conservation	Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association	Betsy Knaak
Conservation	California Department of Fish and Game	David Lawhead
Conservation	Desert Protective Council	Terry Weiner
Adjacent Communities	Resident: Northeast Area of OWSVRA	Todd Deshler
Adjacent Communities	Borrego Springs Community Sponsor Group	Abbey King
Social and Civic Organizations/ Local Businesses/Volunteers	Friends of Ocotillo Wells San Diego Off-Road Coalition	Charles Chaney
Social and Civic Organizations/ Local Businesses/Volunteers	West Shores Chamber of Commerce	John Kamotis LaVon Jaksch Imari Kariotis
Social and Civic Organizations/ Local Businesses/Volunteers	Leapin' Lizard R.V. Ranch Owner	Deborah Traviss

ISSUE	ORGANIZATION	REPRESENTATIVE
Social and Civic Organizations/ Local Businesses/Volunteers	No Affiliation Provided	John Buss
Social and Civic Organizations/ Local Businesses/Volunteers	Desert Ironwoods Resort	Susan Hipchen Bob Hipchen
Social and Civic Organizations/ Local Businesses/Volunteers	Store Owner	Randy Rynearson
Air Quality	San Diego County Air Pollution Control District	Andy Hamilton Gary Hartnett
Air Quality	Imperial County Air Pollution Control District	Brad Poiriez Reyes Romero Monica Soucier
Cultural Resources	Native American Heritage Commission	Dave Singleton
Cultural Resources	Native American Advocate	Carmen Lucas

KEY POINTS FROM STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

BEST FEATURES

- Holmes Camp, Hidden Valley, and Holly Road are the most popular camping areas
- Varied terrain (washes, mudhills, high speed areas) allows riders to do a little bit of everything
- No fees (fees elsewhere pushed people here)
- No boundary fence
- Volunteer clean-ups are effective, maybe need one or two more per year for visitors to give back
- Rules such as no alcohol in camps, no glass bottles, no burning pallets
- New interpretive programs
- Hikes for kids would help combat childhood obesity – identify things on foot
- Places and routes: Gas Domes, Artesian Wells, southeast washes, new oil wells, Superstition Mountain, Placer City, Imperial Sand Dunes
- “Jewel of SVRA system”: variety of equipment; variety of terrain; least managed
- Family atmosphere – big and safe compared to other areas and offers variety for different interests
- Destination recreation spot for large geographic areas (San Diego, Riverside, Imperial, LA counties, Phoenix and Las Vegas)
- Easy access – running events for fun, can be used for off-road training
- Open space and freedom to explore
- Easier to get permits for events (streamlined process) than at other areas
- Diverse recreational options
- Hosted events: San Diego Off-Road Coalition (SDORC) – Lost Lizard; DPR – Roughneck Rendezvous; California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA) – Truckhaven; Tierra Del Sol (TDS) – Desert Safari and Robbie Runner event
- Improved safety conditions with new management (as opposed to before it was an SVRA)
- Wonderful historic and natural features need to be protected: Pumpkin Patch
- Good roads that are marked
- Have seen a lot of improvements (info desk, public safety)
- Facilities: showers, toilets
- People want “wide open, get away from it all” experience

CONCERNS

- Ocotillo Wells SVRA is becoming less attractive because of intrusiveness (fencing, closed off areas)
- Too many signs
- Will SVRA be closed eventually?
- Ocotillo Wells is public land and the public has a right to enjoy those lands
- Green sticker funds are intended for SVRAs – keep them open!
- Keep OW free and open: fences and fees will restrict access.
- OHV park should be mostly about riding and enjoyment
- Will environmental conservation be used as basis for loss of riding opportunities?
- Plan will be influenced by those who do not visit the area and do not ride OHVs
- Peculiar that there is no entry fee, could OW hire more people with a fee? More people come to OW because other areas charge; there are impacts on OW because it is free
- Riders cross into Anza-Borrego Desert State Park from The Cove and don't realize they are in park. Additional signage and/or boundary identifiers are needed
- Need facility for disposing of RV waste - what is being done about it?
- Need to expand OW
 - People will come to OW if other OHV areas are closed
- Need "Mapping" - process for naming and identifying trails and areas (wayfinding)
- Acknowledge that this is a SVRA, not a conservation area, use conservation as needed, but not more than needed
- Major weekend issues: bathroom use, trash, better ingress/egress, traffic circulation considerations, everybody goes to OW because other areas closed

AIR QUALITY

- Would watering be effective in controlling dust?
- Dry season self-regulates dust because there is little use in the summer dry season, when the SVRA is more prone to dust
- Can downwind air quality impacts be characterized (especially for events)?
- Thought put into limiting number of riders when air quality conditions are poor?
- Number of visitors increase on weekends...how does increased dust impact visitors and the county as a whole?

- AQ impacts increase in the fall when the number of visitors increase
- Days where you can't see very far ahead of you
- Near Blu Inn and Tarantula Wash there are more dust problems
- Acknowledge the role of wind in dust generation
- When thinking about EIR, think about dust because people living here don't want air quality degraded
 - Borrego Springs gets dust on busy weekends
- Rider concern: ability of environmental groups to go after SVRA because of dust
- Dust – huge concern
 - Consider options to keep it from getting more dusty
 - What is happening to soils?
 - How to mitigate dust?
 - Topsoil already disturbed

NATURAL RESOURCES

- How will impacts and mitigation be assessed under CEQA?
 - Set aside preserve areas to compensate
- Important to buffer impacts to Anza-Borrego Desert State Park
- What sensitive biological resources occur within the SVRA?
- Anza Borrego Desert State Park is 677,000 acres and protects many of same species that are present in Ocotillo Wells SVRA, so is there a process for mitigating the same species at Anza Borrego Desert State Park instead of Ocotillo Wells SVRA?
- Don't close natural resource areas in Ocotillo Wells SVRA to riding
- Protect and buffer water sources - avoid riding through or camping nearby
- Impacts to habitats require some level of mitigation
 - Potential for setting aside conservation areas (minimal to no road crossings to assure reduction of direct impact and noise and dust) in design
- As visitor numbers increase, more pressure on resources, more potential for impact
- Consider destination trail to camping areas – (limited riding for sensitive areas)
- Important to enforce designated trails only
 - Riders need training
- Interpretation as valuable tool for educating public

- Explain why areas are closed
- Dust issue /air pollution? What to do, and how does it affect habitats?
- Resources should be protected as well as recreational opportunities
 - Greatly concerned with impacts to cultural and biological resources
 - Would like to see no further degradation, and steps for restoration
- Flat-tail horned lizard
 - Some of only habitat left in Imperial County (some in Ocotillo Wells SVRA)
 - Protect good, occupied habitat from vehicles
- We need to be collaborative to address these issues. We need to share information and combine recreation with interpretation
- In planning process, identify areas to set aside for special areas/habitats (e.g. Pumpkin Patch and Bureau of Land Management lands south of Highway 78)
- How will water quality be assessed within the SVRA? Explain monitoring programs/protocols/thresholds early

CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Don't protect cultural resources on-site at Ocotillo Wells SVRA, do it at Anza Borrego Desert State Park instead since it is adjacent
- Will we lose more riding area to protection of natural and cultural resources?
- How are cultural resources at Ocotillo Wells SVRA being impacted by recreational uses?
 - Are unknown sacred sites and burial grounds being disrupted by recreation use?
- How are cultural resources being protected?
 - General sites?
 - Burial sites?
 - Need aggressive protection
- Need different types of management for different types of cultural resources
- Tap into each tribe's unique perspective and history to enhance education and interpretation
- Consider using tribal stewardship program where tribal steward is trained to monitor cultural resource sites
- SVRA management staff needs to understand importance of cultural resource issues to tribal members
- Get input from tribal representatives regarding whether or not the location of cultural resources should be identified
- Consider Anza Borrego Desert State Parks cultural preserves system when planning for cultural resources management at Ocotillo Wells SVRA

- Should some areas with cultural resources be closed to riding?
- Concern over theft and vandalism of cultural resources and potential grave disturbance
- There are sites within Ocotillo Wells SVRA that should be nominated for National Register status
- There are cremation sites within Ocotillo Wells SVRA that must be dealt with. Ocotillo Wells was jointly used by a number of different tribes.
- Many cultural resources have been destroyed or removed from Ocotillo Wells
- There will be cultural resources impacts within Ocotillo Wells related to geothermal, wind, and mineral exploration. California State Parks and Bureau of Land Management must address this
- Fencing for cultural resources protection in Ocotillo Wells SVRA has proven effective. There has been little damage or disrespect
- Areas should be developed for adventure while placing others off limits to recreation in order to preserve natural and cultural resources
- Native American stories should be shared through interpretive story telling

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Humans need freedom to get out into open areas without feeling overregulated
- Balance need for enforcement/regulation with visitors' desire for freedom to ride freely
 - Rangers shouldn't be overbearing
 - Rangers should not interfere if visitors are not violating rules
- Freedom is important to OW visitors, enforcement shouldn't impinge on feeling of freedom at OW
- Education regarding riding and safety and rules needed
- Shell Reef has a concentration of accidents (twice as many accidents as in other areas)
- Kids hang out around Main Street and Holmes Camp and Hidden Valley
 - Because popular camping areas – need to keep kids safe and ensure responsible riding in vicinity
- Lack of supervision for children is sometimes an issue, parents need to take more responsibility
 - Enforce existing rules
 - children must be accompanied by adult
 - permitting for young children
 - safety course
- Mandatory training for kids/greater enforcement check points
- Riding between Superstition and Blu Inn is a concern
- Concern over injuries, especially with children – know much is being done and not sure what more could be done

- Minimize accidents – outreach by OHV groups for safety training, etc.
- Need to educate about the safety of pallets and nails
- Single riders are worst accidents, usually due to excessive speed
- More staff to write tickets for unsafe riding
 - Even just presence of rangers helps slow people down
- Medical incident creates distraction from rangers being able to handle enforcement issue
- Drunk driving takes rangers away from enforcement because must travel with intoxicated driver
- Need to address emergency access to airport for airlifts
- Communications tower – to help locate people with call box
- Create emergency access road on west side of SVRA
 - On west side of Pumpkin Patch Road — north fork of Arroyo Salada and over to Holly Road

LAND USE

- Address carrying capacity
 - What could land sustain?
 - How much energy does it take to manage park?
 - Consider establishing entry fee and maximum number of visitors on weekends
 - Evaluate impacts of pulling public safety staff from other back country locations to staff high visitation periods
- BLM Land
 - According to MOU only designated routes are to be used; is it going to be enforced?
 - Need clearly marked boundaries for designated routes and open areas
- Streamline event process Don't want hypersensitivity to cultural resources
- Events affect roads/traffic
 - How to handle showers, restrooms – overloading services?
- The vast open spaces of Ocotillo Wells are a very important part of the experience. It is very valuable and should not be compromised
- Disperse users throughout park (one graded road for large vehicles) – i.e. improve south camping areas to encourage use there
- Riders love destination routes – add more destination points and events to disperse users/families into other areas
- OW Airport

- Within the SVRA
- An OWSVRA trail may infringe on airport land
- Ensure compatibility between ALUCP (Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan) and SVRA land use

CIRCULATION

- Establish easy access from highways (turn lanes) ingress/egress at major camping areas
- Maintain OHV access from nearby homes to the SVRA
 - Last, best place to own a home adjacent to unfenced OHV open areas
- Markings on roads need to be better so people don't get lost – signs disappear after severe weather events
 - Easy to get lost when new washes created
- State Route 78 is a high speed roadway and Recreational Vehicle (RV) turn offs create problems, especially when visibility is compromised by dust
 - There are potential needs for turn pockets
 - In traffic impact analysis, look at seasonal peak traffic
 - How many vehicles are entering the SVRA from State Route 78 and State Route 76?
- OHVs crossing State Route 22 and 86 is dangerous
- People riding on shoulders is dangerous
- OHVs and RVs cross the highway and cause accidents
- May need to have traffic control plan for special events
 - Caution signs or changeable message signs during peak weekends to warn about slower traffic, RVs, etc
- Need to control informal riding along highway
- People park on private properties outside the SVRA during big events

ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

- Continued viability as SVRA is important to Imperial County (important for local economy and merchants)
 - Plan should consider broadening economic benefit
- Explore partnerships with local organizations, such as Friends of the Library – opportunities to improve basic community services for the town of Ocotillo Wells
- Developments and facilities along State Route 22 could impact adjacent communities because of increased visitation and traffic

- Some local residents do not consider dust, noise, trespassing or irresponsible riders to be an issue

IMPROVEMENTS

- Acquire more land
 - Look at private property south of State Route 78
- Ocotillo Wells SVRA doesn't necessarily need improvements because people go out for rustic/outdoor/natural experience
- Any improvements should benefit OHV riding experience and funds should be devoted to this (don't forget the purpose of the SVRA)
- Good improvements that have been made include restrooms, shade ramadas, and picnic tables
- Bring the dump station back
- Foster cooperation between the SVRA and Anza Borrego Desert State Park – tours, explain mission, interpretation, cooperation
- More interpretation programs
- Washes go into Anza-Borrego Desert State Park – so easy to cross in without realizing it
- Need for better signage
- Need to allow group activities
- Grading/maintenance needed on Crossover Trail
- Establish different north/south corridor, don't grade because would ruin
- Camping areas access for RVs – grade periodically to improve access
 - Holly Road – road from State Route 22 into bathroom area not adequately maintained
- Second ranger station in north side of SVRA – off of State Route 22
- Make beginner's 4-wheel drive training area/obstacle course on north side
- More bathrooms (on north side) – near heavy camping areas
- Create primitive camp areas – ride-in camping for tent camping: with a pit toilet, fire ring, tent camping only
 - Remote feeling removed from popular areas
- Create RV/trailer camping close to State Route 22 – Holly Road camp area too far from State Route 22, people get stuck when it rains
- Involve organizations in obtaining additional funding for emergency responders and law enforcement on big weekends
- More facilities in northeast side (Holly Road)
 - Ranger station (helps with response time)
- Training track in northeast side for visitors in Salton City area

- Consider creating a maintained diagonal road that connects State Route 78 to State Route 86
- Want green sticker access to connect homes in Salton City
- Make sure SVRA trails are connected to adjacent riding opportunities

OPPORTUNITIES

- More collaboration with local Community Planning Groups on interpretive programs, collaborate so community sees benefits, opportunities for economic increase and tourism
- Opportunity for SVRA to become part of larger community with staff, budget and know-how
 - Emphasize education for kids in community
 - Consider internships for local community
- Consider partnership with Anza Borrego Foundation and Institute (ABFI)
- Communication between Salton City and SVRA to help publicize the SVRA
- Opportunities for concessions that don't compete with local businesses

INTERPRETATION & EDUCATION

- If areas are closed explain why through education and interpretation
- Interpretive exhibits should include rider education and safety training with staff other than naturalists and biologists
 - Invite famous riders
- Geocaching can be used to guide people where you want them to go
- Emphasis on family is good – should be continued
- Emphasis on education and protection

OCOTILLO WELLS NORTH STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS AND KEY POINTS VARIOUS DATES, MAY 2011

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

ISSUE	ORGANIZATION	REPRESENTATIVE
Public Safety	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE)	Patrick Walker
Public Safety	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE)	Jeffrey Foy
Public Safety	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE)	Chris Barco
Public Safety	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE)	Ron Merton
Public Safety	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE)	Dave Teter
Public Safety	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE)	Walt Holloway
Adjacent Communities	Community Member	Todd Deshler

ISSUE	ORGANIZATION	REPRESENTATIVE
Land Use Planning and Management	Imperial County Board of Supervisors	Gary Wyatt
Land Use Planning and Management	Imperial County Planning Department	Angelina Havens
Land Use Planning and Management	Imperial County Planning Department	Sean Moore
Public Safety	REACH Air Medical	Don Wharton
Land Use Planning and Management	California State Parks	Tina Robinson
Land Use Planning and Management	California State Parks	Kirk Shea
Land Use Planning and Management	California State Parks	Norb Ruhmke
Adjacent Communities	Torres Martinez Tribe	Roland Ferrer
OHV Interests	Treasure Trails	Shawna Dungey

ISSUE	ORGANIZATION	REPRESENTATIVE
OHV Interests	Treasure Trails	Jan Gilson
OHV Interests	Treasure Trails	Sue Hall
Public Safety	United States Border Patrol	Nancy Weber
Public Safety	West Shore Ambulance	Chris Herring

KEY POINTS FROM STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

BEST FEATURES

- Terrain, diversity of geology
- Ability to develop appreciation for the desert
- Family recreation
- Sense of freedom
- Community atmosphere
- Open access
- Clay hills in back sections
- Notches
- Mud Arches
- Series of steep smooth hills that parallel the highway near Palm Wash

- Area is big enough to feel lost but not in danger
- Good area for novices
- OW North is good for business
- Fish traps

CONCERNS

- Permitting requirements for special events, would like renewable permits and pre-approved routes
- Don't want closed areas
- Illegal dumping off 86 East at the County line is a problem
- Don't want too much planning
- Don't want dune buggies
- Keeping area free access with no cost and no gates
- Preserve open area and open feel
- Don't want trail mapping or regulation
- Need to define designated vs. marked trails
- Rain and erosion causing trail destruction
- Want to keep planning lean so park won't be a target for budget cuts
- Right to use public land freely is endangered
- Traffic impacts
- Abandoned vehicles from trafficking in persons and drugs
- Recognition and protection of cultural artifacts

AIR QUALITY

- Regulations keep getting stricter
- Dust is a normal thing in the desert
- Stricter regulations will kill off-roading
- Grading on San Diego County side of the dry lake by the Marines makes a lot of dust, but paved facilities are available on other side of lake which makes grading on the other side unnecessary if Marines could move to paved side

- Impacts of OHV on air quality

NATURAL RESOURCES

- Some disturbed areas are protected, and some undisturbed areas that should be protected are not

CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Need to recognize Native American cremation sites
- Travertine Point is sacred to Native Americans in the vicinity
- Need to protect cultural resources from OHV activity
- Need a plan that is implemented for resource protection
- Would like some trails to be rerouted around resources because signs and fencing are not sufficient and/or not durable

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Tickets must be appealed through federal court, not local court—too hard
- Need more emergency staff available as popularity of site grows
- Need to coordinate law enforcement planning
- Illegal events and illegal boarding of RVs on vacant lots in surrounding towns
- Drug smuggling is a problem
- There are jurisdictional rules that make it hard to pursue law-breakers
- Visibility (dust) and high winds can make it difficult for safety responders to access the injured

LAND USE

- Some areas that were already disturbed became off limits when lines were drawn for the Desert Protection Act I
- Want public lands to be open and usable
- Want buffer between residential area and OHV use areas because there may be future conflicts
- Events that need permits are being held without the necessary permits

- Concerns about illegal mobile homes and squatting, especially near golf course
- Considering allowing camping on residential lots, which is currently illegal
- People flying Ultralight planes are using Salton City streets-this is a problem

CIRCULATION

- Don't break new trails
- How to make limits so that the area is still open but new and unnecessary trails aren't broken
- Need people to stick to designated routes on BLM land
- Palm Coral and Grave Wash should be trails only
- Best method to cross Highway 86 is a wash under the highway
- Important to access washes for exploring and to increase elevation, and hard to damage them

ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

- Need better Native American outreach
- Want to have Tribal seniors involved and kept current with information on the decision-making process.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Safety and warning signs for road crossings
- Add a turnaround at Tectonic Gorge near the TV tower
- Add a dumpster
- Add a vault toilet
- Allow more special events, including motorcycle races
- Improve S-22
- Add Border Patrol backup along Highway 86
- Use berms or buffers to mitigate noise between residential and recreational areas
- Want vendor areas established
- Add solar-powered emergency phone boxes or beacons in strategic locations to improve public safety

- Need better rescue vehicles for State Parks, but state procurement makes it very hard to get the best vehicles for the job
- Mark Pole Line Road with numbered markers
- Create a unified incident command post to allow for incident coordination between counties, BLM, state parks, etc.
- Want more rangers
- Want a repeater just for OW SVRA
- Want MOU for all public safety providers
- Put up general signs about importance of cultural resources but that do not identify sites

OPPORTUNITIES

- Trade offs for making already disturbed land open to off-road use and conservation of undisturbed lands
- Motorcycle racing and events that make economic contributions to the surrounding communities

INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION

- Special activities can allow people to become familiar with and appreciate the desert landscape
- Put up general signs about importance of cultural resources but that do not identify sites

