Managing Director’s Report, January 2021

We start 2021 with a lot of issues on our plate:

 State Parks:

Carnegie - As Bruce B reported, the environmental groups have succeeded in one of their lawsuits against the certification of the Environmental Impact Report, but we haven't yet seen the ruling and the department is being very tight lipped about the issue. As background, this EIR was only released to the public after an additional year of analysis and numerous legal reviews. As far as CEQA is concerned, filing suit against an EIR isn't unusual, and oftentimes the issuing agency has to do some reevaluation to submit to the judge. The judge can tell State Parks to go back to the drawing board, but that will take years . Right now, the environmental lobby is using the court win to urge Governor Newsom to take action and take the property out of OHMVR ownership. I don't believe that is likely, given the other issues the governor is dealing with right now. Speaking with Parks State Director Quintero, he strongly believes in the planning process and I don't think he will be in favor of changing the designation.

SVRA's - CORVA has started quarterly meetings with the Division Chiefs for State Parks that are ultimately in charge of all operations at our SVRA's. This is a result of the report we presented last year at the OHMVR Commission meeting about abuses in the management of our SVRA's. The meeting with the Central District Chief went well, and we just had the meeting with the Southern District Chief, Brian Ketterer. Brian is in charge of 5 SVRA's, and Jared joined me on the call. We focus on 4 main topics - operations, law enforcement, education and interpretation and environmental compliance with SB249. These are areas of management that were taken away from the OHMVR Division after transformation, so it's really good that we are getting some management reports directly from the division chiefs. I have also met with the Northern District Chief, who only has Prairie City. CORVA will hold the district chiefs to account for their actions in our SVRA's, but we're also happy to announce that the position of SVRA Sector Superintendent will be returning to the management org chart. The sector superintendents will only have responsibility for SVRA's, and not have mixed district. This is something Diana, one of our past presidents really pushed at our last meeting with upper parks management, and it's great that they listened!

Hollister - Hollister Hills SVRA is closed due to San Benito County Health Department, but with the loosening of restrictions the governor announced today, we're hoping it will be reopened.

Ocotillo Wells - WE owe a big thanks to Ed S for his leadership in tackling issues with trespass around Anza Borrego State Park and around the railroad tracks. Ed has some great ideas and we're hoping to get signage and messaging out to the community.

Oceano Dunes - Bruce W and I have reviewed the Public Works Plan and identified 14 issues we will be identifying in the CORVA comments. We are also considering holding a Comments Project Workshop if there is enough interest.

Forest Service - we are making headway with both the Sustained Outdoor Recreation Coalition and the Northwest Forest Plan Revision Working Group. The working groups for the SORC is coming close to defining sustainable outdoor recreation  is a way that will not be detrimental to active forms of recreation, including off0road and mountain biking, which were both initially targeted. This definition should help us both succeed in local analyses and push back court challenges. For the Northwest Forest Plan Revisions I have put together a working groups of recreation enthusiasts and groups from Northern California to Oregon and Washington. Thanks to Jared for helping with the IG post, we really received a lot of good information from people.

BLM - We have 3 plans out now that we have to comment on and/or be involved with. The most important is the proposed amendment to the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan, and it is not good for anyone, either off-road enthusiast or environmentalist. The DRECP was a long collaborative process and Randy Banis represented CORVA and the OHV community. We stand to lose in the proposed amendment.

Alabama Hills - there is a new draft Management Plan for Alabama Hills that seems largely to represent the will of the community groups that worked together for a number of years. There isn't much OHV access in Alabama Hills, but there is some, and there is also camping. I contacted the Eastern Sierra 4WD Club in Bishop for their help, and we will file comments. The Berryessa Snow National Monument is holding a public meeting this Thursday evening that we also posted on IG, so we can get as many interested off-roaders involved as possible. This is a joint BLM/Forest Service effort. There is significant OHV access in the new national monument and the proclamation that granted national monument status did allow OHV access, but put it as the last consideration for any management analysis. That's not a strong position for OHV recreation, so we have to be involved.

As of this meeting, I will be posting my reports together with the meeting minutes for each monthly BOD meeting so our members can have access.

Amy