

INTERGOVERNMENTAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (IEC) MINUTES
September 12, 2012

1. The IEC meeting was held on Wednesday, September 12, 2012, 4:00 p.m. at the Bureau of Land Management, 2555 Gila Ridge Road, Yuma, AZ.

2. BEC members/representatives present:

56th Range Management Office, (56 RMO), Luke AFB
Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD)
BLM, Yuma Field Office
Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge (CPNWR)
Customs and Border Protection
 Air & Marine (CBP A&M), Tucson Air Branch
Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS), Yuma
Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument (ORPI)
Southern Border Coordinator
 DOI Office of the Secretary
USBP Ajo
USBP Tucson PLLA
USBP Wellton Station Asst PAIC
USBP Yuma PAIC
USBP Yuma Sector PLLA

Jim Uken
Pat Barber
John MacDonald
Sid Slone
Lavon Duncan

Ron Pearce
Lee Baiza

Howard Huey
Jerry Renner
Joe Oliver
Wayne Preston
Justin Bristow
Bryon Strom

3. Absent:

BLM, Lower Sonoran Field Office
BLM, Phoenix District Office
BLM, Sonoran Desert National Monument (SDNM)
USFWS Ecological Services, Tucson

Emily Garber

Rich Hanson
Jean Calhoun

4. Other attendees:

56 RMO IEC Coordinator
56 RMO IEC Recording Secretary
56 RMO BMGR-E
Center for Biological Diversity
Desert Protectors
MCAS Yuma
Private Citizen
Private Citizen
Sierra Club
USBP Ajo Station Community Relations

Kevin O'Berry
Jan Faltisco
Dan Garcia
Cyndi Tuell
Fred Goodsell
Abigail Rosenberg
Dinah Bear
Jan Lawson
Dan Millis
Kelly Graham

5. Mr. Pearce chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone.

6. Mr. Uken will be retiring this month. He was presented a momento from member agencies in appreciation for his leadership and being a key player in the BEC and IEC for 12 ½ years.

7. Environmental Updates:

a. Range Enhancements Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Record of Decision (ROD) Update: The ROD was signed for 6 of the 10 proposals addressed in the final EIS for BMGR East Range Enhancements to improve training and operational effectiveness. The AF is now submitting a ROD for 3 of the 4 remaining proposals: 1) Establish streamlined procedures to target reconfigurations, 2) Conduct additional ground-based training for Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) and other small tactical teams with ground-based missions, and 3) Lower the flight altitude floor over a portion of the CPNWR from 1,500 feet above ground level (AGL) to 500 feet AGL. Cultural resources consultations are still being conducted on the last remaining proposal which is to establish a moving vehicle target within North TAC. This proposal would be a complicated process and would be expensive as well to address the cultural resources concerns there. Roads would have to be widened and there is one stretch of a road that passes through an archaeological site.

b. Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) 5-year Review:

(1) The INRMP for the BMGR was completed in 2007. The plan is combined for both the AF and MC portions of the range and lists separate projects for the BMGR East and BMGR West.

(2) The Sykes Act requires a review of the INRMP be conducted every five years to make sure the plan is current and relevant. There is also a separate requirement mandated by the Military Lands Withdrawal Act (MLWA) to prepare a public report. The public report will be done by the AF and MC in conjunction with the 5-year INRMP review. The last five years will be reviewed to see how the range has changed; natural resources and military training missions will be reviewed in addition to proposed projects for the next five years. The report requires a public review process along with a public meeting so meetings were conducted in July with Gila Bend and Yuma to obtain the public's input. The revised INRMP should be ready for signature by winter.

c. Burros and Cattle: Feral burros are causing problems around the Ajo area and there is a significant problem with burros in the town of Why. The animals are doing significant damage and there is concern for the growing population of burros. The burros are feral burros and not protected under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. In order to contain the burros and help resolve the burro problem, RMO is working with AZGFD to establish the distribution and abundance of burros in the area. AZGFD will capture 4-5 burros, put radio collars on them, and then track the burros for the next few years. The data gathered from the radio collars will provide a better understanding of how widespread the problem is. CPNWR has trapped 18 out of a group of 22 burros. More traps will be set out. Once the feral burros are caught, the Arizona Department of Agriculture (DoA) will pick them up and try to seek out the rightful owner. If no one claims the animal, it is then auctioned off. The AZ DoA is being encouraged to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Tohono O'odham Nation (TON) so that when burros are captured on TON land, the AZ DoA will be able to come on their land and take the animals away.

d. Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope Report:

(1) Forage Enhancements: Recent rains have made irrigation at the forage plots unnecessary.

(2) Wild Pronghorn: It is estimated that there are approximately 100 pronghorn currently in the wild. On the last telemetry flight, 16 fawns with 22 females were observed.

(3) Captive Breeding:

(a) The Cabeza Prieta Captive Breeding Pen currently has 78 pronghorn and all are doing well. The Cabeza pen received over 5 inches of rain during July in several rain storms. On July 21st, a storm dumped 2.5 inches of rain on the pen in just a couple of hours and caused all the washes to run, and the larger washes ran 3-4 feet high, knocked out several sections of the main fence, and destroyed large sections of the electric fence. The fence that divides the pen into north and south halves was also knocked down in several spots and irrigation pipelines were broken. The next morning, the pen crew in Ajo put up some temporary snow fence across the areas where the main fence was washed away and rebuilt the main fence across the washed out areas that day. Personnel from Yuma and ORPI came out to Ajo in the next several days to help remove debris, repair electric fences, and do other clean up. The collaborative effort proved successful. No pronghorn got out of the pen and there was no evidence of any predators getting into the pen. The Cabeza pen and Child's Valley is now very green from all the rain.

(b) The Kofa Captive Breeding Pen currently has 20 pronghorn and all are well. There are 9 fawns (4 females and 5 males) in the Kofa Pen that were born in 2012 and are from the original 11 that were put there last year. Kofa's pen did not get nearly as much rain as the Cabeza pen but did get nearly 0.5 inches of rain. A few small washes ran, but no damage occurred. Kofa's pen is starting to green up and the pronghorn are starting to use less alfalfa.

(4) Pronghorn Release: A pronghorn capture and release is being planned for the week of December 17th.

(5) Water Projects: The rain has added to or filled all of the pronghorn waters. The necessary National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/cultural resource processes are being worked to build 2 new waters for pronghorn this winter – one at the experimental 1B site on South TAC, and one at the site in Child's Valley.

8. Law Enforcement:

a. Operations Update

(1) USBP Tucson Sector: Apprehensions are down about 3% for this fiscal year. Marijuana is down 1%. There has been just a slight shift in traffic.

(2) USBP Yuma Sector: Apprehensions sector wide year-to-date are up. At this time last year-to-date there was 5,496 apprehensions sector wide; this year there are 6,276 apprehensions. This month last year there were 89 apprehensions versus this month this year at 107. Marijuana is down 94% this year, cocaine is up 100%, heroin is up 45%, and meth is up 45.3% sector wide in all three stations.

b. Tactical Infrastructure Maintenance and Repair (TIMR): MC has a draft BMGR West MOU with CBP headquarters. MC has provided updates to incorporate "Best Practices" on what road maintenance means and is waiting on CBP to identify the roads to be maintained. Once the MOU is signed with CBP, it will be passed to the MCAS real estate office who will then issue a license to carry out the road work. The MOU identifies which roads CBP will maintain in order to access their structure.

c. The subject of roads being widened by Border Patrol was discussed. Ms. Lawson remarked that a report with the evaluation of sites should be included in the INRMP but is not mentioned in the INRMP. She also said that archaeological sites on the BMGR-West have been destroyed by Border Patrol. Ms. Lawson asked what is the authority to keep border patrol in line and stated that reminding agents is not good enough and is unacceptable. Mr. Pearce stated that MC does not have authority to keep USBP in line. Ms. Lawson said that each site should have been identified and evaluated for the National Register and if it qualified, the site needs to be protected or mitigated and if it is gone, we need to know. Mr. Pearce said that MCAS has been surveying in accordance with Section 106 for the INRMP and the sites that were discovered were evaluated but a site evaluated three years ago might have been destroyed or impacted since then. Ms. Lawson asked if the roads that were supposed to be open according to the INRMP in 2007 were surveyed and said that the next step would have been an evaluation of the sites that were located. Once the sites were evaluated, MCAS has to protect, mitigate, or work out some agreement with the SHPO. Ms. Lawson said it has been three years. Mr. Pearce said it has been done but he can't say what the status of the site is today on 300 miles of road. Ms. Lawson asked if anyone is monitoring these sites. Mr. Pearce said not on a daily basis. Ms. Lawson said that maybe the Range Warden or somebody should be monitoring the sites. Ms. Lawson stated she doesn't think MCAS has that big of a problem and seriously doubts if there are any sites that qualify for the National Register anymore. Ron Pearce said he will provide whatever releasable information he has to Ms. Lawson.

9. 2012-2016 Border Patrol Strategic Plan was presented by Agent Joe Oliver as it applies to Arizona.

a. The strategic plan encompasses three key objectives and strategies concerning border security today. First, the plan supports national-level strategies, such as the President's strategy to combat transnational organized crime and the national drug control strategy. Second, it supports departmental strategies, in particular the DHS Quadrennial Homeland Security Review. Finally, it supports CBP-wide planning and integration efforts. It means being more effective and efficient in our operations to mitigate risks and also continued integration within CBP and working with federal, state, local, tribal, and international partners.

b. The plan involves a set of objectives, strategies, programs, and initiatives which apply information, integration, and rapid response to develop and deploy new and better tactics, techniques, and procedures to achieve its strategic objectives. The principal theme is to use information, integration, and rapid response to meet all threats. Information gathered from reconnaissance, community engagement, sign-cutting and technology together provide situational awareness and intelligence and helps us to best understand and assess the threats faced along our borders. Information and intelligence will empower Border Patrol leadership and front line agents to get ahead of the threat and be predictive and proactive. Integration denotes CBP corporate planning and execution of border security operations, while leveraging partnerships with other federal, state, local, tribal, and international organizations. Integration of effort with these organizations will ensure CBP brings all available capabilities and tools to bear in addressing threats. Through rapid response, CBP will deploy capabilities efficiently and effectively to meet and mitigate risks. Rapid response means the Border Patrol and its partners can quickly and appropriately respond to changing threats. Border Patrol will work with its federal, state, local, tribal, and international partners to secure America's borders using information, integration and rapid response in a risk-based manner. The objectives are to prevent terrorists and terrorist weapons from entering the United States, manage risk, disrupt and degrade transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), use a whole-of-Government approach, and increase community engagement. Border Patrol must also continue to mature, refine, and integrate its capabilities and techniques. In order to meet current and future operational and organizational requirements, it is essential to develop, deploy, and manage institutional capabilities within the Border Patrol. Border Patrol will strengthen its institutional capabilities by strengthening investment in people; supporting their employees; preserving organizational integrity; improving organization processes, systems, and doctrine; and enhancing the overall efficiency of the Border Patrol.

c. The public will see more agents, more technology, and will use their manpower with the infrastructure they already have to maintain operational control along the border.

d. MCAS Yuma will follow up with Border Patrol Yuma Sector to identify the zones of the roads to maintain.

e. Mr. Millis remarked that it would be beneficial to update the percentage of BORSTAR agents or provide Border Patrol agents a wilderness first responders training course.

10. Southwest Arizona Regional Road Network Map Book: This was a huge project and is the culmination of an extended effort by all partner agencies. The map book depicts existing road network, signage, place names, Border Patrol zones, and other relevant information. The gazetteer map books have been distributed to Border Patrol and the various agencies whose lands are depicted in the map book. The map book will make Border Patrol agents aware of the roads that they can and can't go on and where they are relative to hazardous activities being conducted on the BMGR. The next project will be to input all the data into a recreational grade GPS unit.

11. Agency Reports:

a. AZGFD: Hunting season is coming up and dove season is already underway. Quail season starts October 5th.

b. CPNWR:

(1) DHS Border Patrol and the Army Corps of Engineers met to discuss the 3 radio repeaters being proposed on the refuge. A rough draft will go out for internal review shortly.

(2) The Integrated Fixed Towers (IFT) are "on hold" indefinitely.

(3) A draft MOU, which includes Best Management Practices, is being worked with Border Patrol and is about 80% complete. There is a proposal to fix the roads at Las Playas and San Cristobal Wash because it is a mud hole when it rains and people go around and are making more tracks. The refuge is trying for all weather roads in 2-4 years. There is a question as to whether there are any additional NEPA requirements for the roads.

(4) The refuge has 8,000 miles of Class 1 to Class 4 tracks. The vast majority of tracks are single-tracks, but some are more significant, and most of the tracks are in wilderness areas. ORPI is taking the lead on developing an Environmental Assessment (EA) which will cover restoration work and invasive species work on ORPI, portions of the CPNWR up to the county line, and the southern half of the BLM land. It is all tied into the Secured Border Initiative (SBI) because that is the driver. The goal is to get this completed internally between NPS, BLM, and USFWS by the end of this month.

(5) The University of Arizona is doing a MC project with two part-time undergraduates digitizing the width of the roads. There was \$100K allocated for the project but only about half of that money was used. Ms. Rosenberg stated that she would like to compare MCAS Yuma road data to CPNWR road data.

(6) Mr. Slone is hoping to rewrite the Predator Control Plan to simplify the strategy and concentrate on coyotes and also finish the water EA next month and have both out in the fall.

c. AF

(1) The AF was approached by the MC to do some site surveys. The AF has some World War II auxiliary fields are not being used. Stoval Auxiliary Field and another aux field that is about 6 miles west of Gila Bend have been routinely used over the years. The request was denied because MC wanted to start operating Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) from the aux fields. Mr. Uken said, in his opinion, if MC were allowed to do the survey that would be giving MC approval, or an expectation, that they might be able to use the auxiliary fields for that purpose. The Air Force has not even allowed their own operators to use those auxiliary fields for UAV training, based on potential interference with the mission of traditional primary users of the range.

(2) Luke AFB was selected as the primary training facility for the F-35. The Record of Decision (ROD) arrived on August 1st and was filed in the Federal Register. Luke AFB will initially receive 72 F-35s starting between late 2013 to mid-2014, although exact timing will depend on production schedules. A decision will be made NLT December 2014 as to where the next 72 will be placed. All the work done for the environmental process allowed for up to 144 aircraft to be sited at one location. The F-35 will replace the legacy weapons systems and is expected to be around for the next 50 years.

d. ORPI:

(1) The Forward Operating Base (FOB) may be completed the week of the 19th and there is a possibility that Ajo will take that over but will not be fully staffed. A draft for a Special Use Permit (SUP) for FOB operation is being reviewed.

(2) The other DHS project and part of the IFT plan is the installation two 80' Remote Video Surveillance System (RVSS) towers; one on the east side and one on the west on ORPI along the border outside the wilderness. ORPI has provided comments on the final drawing so that should move forth quickly.

(3) ORPI had storm damage and all visitor access roads are closed. They probably won't get to the washed out roads for 1-1 ½ weeks. The administrative roads have all been impacted and ORPI will work the roads as they can.

(4) Mr. Baiza thanked the agencies who participated in risk analysis evaluation on a quarterly basis. About 50% of the park is open to the public.

(5) A microburst and 80 mph winds hit the Visitors Center a few weeks ago and lifted up half the roof of the main auditorium. Everything inside got flooded except for covered equipment. It so happened that a new roof contract had already been funded for this year.

e. MC

(1) The decision was made to place the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) at Yuma. Significant construction has been going on with several new hangers and a lot of utility infrastructure upgrades. Construction on an auxiliary landing field on the BMGR started this year.

(2) Since the last IEC, MC has moved forward with the mitigation for the flat-tail horned lizard. The standard mitigation was done for the required construction to build a lizard fence around the project site, which is about 320 acres, and 488 lizards were moved outside of it. MC paid and cooperated with the University of Arizona (UofA) to do a translocation study to determine the effectiveness of moving lizards to alternate habitat areas and UofA will provide the results. The lizards were tagged and some were radio collared. Mr. Pearce stated that he was not aware of any mortalities during capturing and tagging but some high numbers were already being seen.

(3) The semi-annual Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) Course is a major exercise and will go on for 6 weeks which will result in an increased level of military activity on the BMGR.

(4) MCAS Yuma contacted three tribes to initiate a treatment plan for Tinajas Altas. MCAS is scoping the contract for the treatment plan and hope to award it with the first quarter of next year's funds.

12. Mr. O'Berry stated that there were no action items to report. Ms. Rosenberg suggested that an action item be added for MC, AF, CPNWR, ORPI, and USBP to provide TIMR updates at the next IEC meeting.

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Pearce will provide a TIMR update at the next IEC meeting.

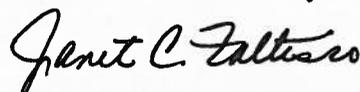
13. Mr. Millis commented that the IEC has great interagency collaboration. The IEC gives the public an opportunity to partake and the Sierra Club is happy to support this committee and its continuance.

14. At the last meeting, there were complaints about widening the road on CPNWR. As a result, Border Patrol has gone out to the areas twice since the last meeting. The areas were widened as part of the fence project that was done 4-5 years ago but there was no previous agreement to do the work. Border Patrol drag equipment can also cause the roads to widen if used too close to the road edges.

15. Mr. Bill Broyles and Ms. Gayle Hartmann co-authored a new book that has been released titled *Last Water on the Devil's Highway, a Cultural and Natural History of Tinajas Altas*.

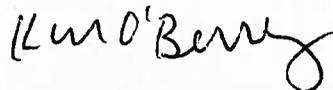
16. The next IEC meeting will convene on January 16, 2012, 5:30 p.m. at the Arizona Game and Fish Department, 555 N. Greasewood Road, Tucson, AZ.

17. The IEC meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.



JANET C. FALTISCO, GS-6, DAF
IEC Recording Secretary

Approved as written:



KEVIN M. O'BERRY, GS-13, DAF
IEC Coordinator