



NEVADA LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS
(Nevada Revised Statutes [NRS] 218E.510)

SUMMARY MINUTES

The second meeting of the Legislative Committee on Public Lands for the 2017–2018 Interim was held on Friday, April 06, 2018, at 9 a.m. at the Regional Government Center, 101 Civic Way, Laughlin, Nevada.

The agenda, minutes, meeting materials, and audio recording of the meeting are available on the Committee's [meeting page](#). In addition, copies of the audio record are available through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (e-mail: publications@lcb.state.nv.us; telephone: 775/684-6835) and may also be available at <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Granicus/>.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN LAUGHLIN:

Assemblywoman Heidi Swank, Chair
Senator Julia Ratti, Vice Chair
Senator Pete Goicoechea
Senator Donald (Don) G. Gustavson
Senator David R. Parks
Assemblyman John C. Ellison
Assemblyman Al Kramer
Assemblyman William McCurdy II

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

Debra March, Mayor, City of Henderson

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Alysa M. Keller, Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division
Heidi Chlarson, Senior Principal Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division
Erin Sturdivant, Senior Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division
Natalie J. Pieretti, Research Policy Assistant, Research Division
Jeff Loflin, Unit Chief, Broadcast and Production Services (BPS), Administrative Division
Ryan Dombrowski, Technical Communication Systems Specialist II, BPS, Administrative Division
Dean Reynolds, Officer, Legislative Police, Administrative Division
Mark Sharp, Officer, Legislative Police, Administrative Division

Items taken out of sequence during the meeting have been placed in agenda order.

AGENDA ITEM I—OPENING REMARKS

Chair Swank welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the Legislative Committee on Public Lands.

AGENDA ITEM II—PUBLIC COMMENT

Bruce L. Woodbury, retired commissioner, Clark County Board of Commissioners, welcomed the Committee on behalf of Assemblywoman Melissa Woodbury and joined her in thanking the Committee for focusing on the important issues of the community.

Lindsey Dalley, Member, Board of Directors, Moapa Valley Water District, and Chair, Partners in Conservation, voiced concerns with rights-of-way issues on Bureau of Land Management (BLM), United States Department of the Interior (DOI), land and the BLM Resource Management Plan (RMP). He requested a future agenda item on this issue.

Senator Goicoechea mentioned he had received comments from the Partners in Conservation that he would submit for the record ([Agenda Item II A-1](#)) ([Agenda Item II A-2](#)).

Glen Leavitt, private citizen, conveyed Senator Joseph (Joe) P. Hardy, M.D.'s wishes that Laughlin's growth and prosperity continue.

Patrick Donnelly, Nevada State Director, Center for Biological Diversity, opposed the expansion of the Nevada Test and Training Range within the Desert National Wildlife Refuge.

AGENDA ITEM III—APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 12, 2018.

MOTION: Vice Chair Ratti moved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on January 12, 2018. The motion was seconded by Senator Goicoechea and passed.

AGENDA ITEM IV—OVERVIEW OF IMPACTS OF PUBLIC LANDS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN LAUGHLIN

A. Robert P. Bilbray, Strategic Development Advisor, Laughlin Economic Development Corporation

Robert P. Bilbray, President, Bilbray Industries, commented Laughlin is a unique model for public and private partnerships and noted challenges associated with growth. He pointed to the following documents and discussed impacts to economic development in Laughlin: (1) Opportunity Map; (2) 9,000 Acres Property Overview; (3) BLM Las Vegas Field Office (LVFO) RMP Revision Comments for Chapter 2; (4) Mohave Generating Station (MOGS) Property Overview; (5) Emerald River Property Information; and (6) Laughlin Lagoon Dredging

and Maintenance Overview ([Agenda Item IV A-1](#)) ([Agenda Item IV A-2](#)) ([Agenda Item IV A-3](#)) ([Agenda Item IV A-4](#)) ([Agenda Item IV A-5](#)) ([Agenda Item IV A-6](#)).

Committee members and Mr. Bilbray conversed on the following items:

- The MOGS and future use of the MOGS site;
- Solar power expansion; and
- Gas tax.

Mr. Bilbray reiterated that the MOGS, transmission lines, and infrastructure in transporting renewable energy are Laughlin's greatest resources.

B. Nancy A. Amundsen, Director, Clark County Department of Comprehensive Planning

Nancy A. Amundsen, previously identified, briefly touched on the following areas of interest: (1) the allocation of 4,000 acres for solar energy in south Laughlin; (2) lack of proposals for land brought before the county commissioners; (3) disposal of BLM land; (4) Laughlin checkerboard area development; (5) costs associated with nominating lands for auction; (6) increase in housing numbers; and (7) Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's progress with the MOGS site.

Senator Parks and Ms. Amundsen discussed the creation of a second bridge across the Colorado River into Bullhead City, Arizona.

AGENDA ITEM V—PRESENTATION REGARDING IMPACTS OF PUBLIC LANDS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN NEVADA COMMUNITIES

Buddy Borden, Economic Development Specialist, Community Development, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, gave a presentation on the effects of public lands on rural communities and economies in southern Nevada. He described the following areas: (1) western states land ownership; (2) percentage of county public lands; (3) Lincoln County public land dependent industries economic statistics; (4) Lincoln County government sector trends—public land dependent; (5) Lincoln County economic development efforts on public lands; and (6) public land statewide program ([Agenda Item V](#)).

There was discussion between members and Mr. Borden on the following:

- Lands percentage ownership in Nevada;
- Matching funds for federal economic development;
- Tourism;
- Infrastructure assistance;

- Grants; and
- Enforcement regarding motorized vehicles on mountain biking trails.

AGENDA ITEM VI—OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, IN SOUTHERN NEVADA

Genevieve Johnson, Acting Resource Management Chief, Lower Colorado Region, Bureau of Reclamation, DOI, gave a presentation on the following four areas: (1) overview of reclamation; (2) managing the Colorado River; (3) state of the drought; and (4) drought response ([Agenda Item VI](#)).

Assemblyman McCurdy II and Ms. Johnson discussed the possibility of the Colorado River reaching below the 1,075-foot elevation mark in 2019.

Upon questioning by Senator Goicoechea as to how much of the existing 20 feet of additional elevation is owed to Mexico, Ms. Johnson offered to provide further information and added that there has been a collaborative effort with Mexico to reduce the risk of reaching critically low Lake Mead elevations.

Assemblyman McCurdy II asked whether treaties have been revisited.

Ms. Johnson replied that Minute 323 (“Extension of Cooperative Measures and Adoption of Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan in the Colorado River Basin” approved in 2017) negotiations are part of ongoing discussions and agreements between the U.S. and Mexico.

AGENDA ITEM VII—UPDATE ON PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE

Victor Rodriguez, Jr., Community Partnership Director, 99th Air Base Wing Complex, Nellis Air Force Base (NAFB), Creech Air Force Base (CAFB), Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR), described how NAFB is vital to current and future national security. He said training accommodations are made for over fifty nations, and he provided an example of a three-week training event for visiting worldwide fighter pilots to conduct a real-world theater scenario over the NTTR ([Agenda Item VII](#)).

Turning his presentation to CAFB, Mr. Rodriguez testified that sixty percent of unmanned aerial vehicles are flown out of CAFB. He relayed the pressure is to build the program to become more sophisticated and capable.

Mr. Rodriguez contributed further presentation on: (1) the 99th Air Base Wing; (2) NTTR’s mission; (3) 2021 land withdrawal—requested lands; (4) proposed alternatives; (5) key takeaways; and (6) worldwide deployment of personnel.

Several members and Mr. Rodriguez discussed:

- Training scenarios in other countries;
- Compensation by other countries training at NAFB;
- Flying elevation;
- Economic input;
- Growing needs of the NTTR;
- NAFB complex operations;
- Public comments in opposition to NTTR expansion; and
- Fallon Naval Air Station expansion.

AGENDA ITEM VIII—OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, IN SOUTHERN NEVADA

Susan E. Cooper, Deputy Field Supervisor, Southern Nevada Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), DOI, and Kevin J. DesRoberts, Deputy Project Leader, Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex, USFWS, DOI, gave a joint presentation on programs and activities of the USFWS including: (1) conservation and recovery of listed species; (2) Mojave Desert ecosystem and landscape conservation; (3) Mojave Desert Tortoise conservation and recovery; (4) habitat conservation plans; (5) renewable energy; (6) aquatic ecosystems; (7) USFWS partners; (8) recovery and listing updates; (9) Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge; (10) Desert National Wildlife Refuge; (11) Pahrangat National Wildlife Refuge; and (12) Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge ([Agenda Item VIII](#)).

Members, Ms. Cooper, and Mr. DesRoberts held discussion regarding:

- Economic development and impact on communities with land withdrawals and mitigation for the Desert Tortoise;
- Endangered species relocation;
- The NTTR expansion;
- Challenges faced with working around the NTTR training schedule on the refuge; and
- The visitor center.

AGENDA ITEM IX—UPDATE ON THE SOUTHERN NEVADA LAND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1998, GOLD BUTTE NATIONAL MONUMENT, BASIN AND RANGE NATIONAL MONUMENT, AND OTHER PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, IN SOUTHERN NEVADA

Timothy Z. Smith, District Manager, Southern Nevada District Office, BLM, DOI, identified the following six major uses under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976: (1) livestock grazing; (2) timber resources; (3) mineral development; (4) wildlife habitat; (5) lands; and (6) recreation. He discussed the Secretary of the Interior's priorities and orders to restore BLM's multiple use mandates, and provided information on special legislation specific to Nevada ([Agenda Item IX](#)).

His presentation continued with discussion on: (1) mining and abandoned mine lands; (2) the range program; (3) wild horses and burros; (4) fire and aviation; (5) national monuments, conservation areas, and wilderness; (6) renewable energy; (7) solar power; (8) resource advisory councils; (9) Las Vegas Resource Management Plan; (10) LVFO RMP; (11) Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998; and (12) Basin and Range National Monument (BRNM) and Gold Butte National Monument (GBNM).

There was discussion between members and Mr. Smith on:

- The RMP for GBNM and BRNM; and
- The NTTR expansion.

AGENDA ITEM X—UPDATE ON PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF FRIENDS OF GOLD BUTTE AND FRIENDS OF BASIN AND RANGE NATIONAL MONUMENTS

Jim Boone, Ph.D., Ecologist, Desert Wildlife Consultants, LLC, focused his testimony on the following topics of discussion for the GBNM and the BRNM: (1) events; (2) stewardship; (3) recreation; and (4) economic benefits and challenges ([Agenda Item X A-1](#)) ([Agenda Item X A-2](#)).

AGENDA ITEM XI—OVERVIEW OF BOATING SAFETY AND ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM, RAPTOR RESEARCH PROGRAM, AND OTHER PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF NEVADA'S DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE IN SOUTHERN NEVADA

Tyler Turnipseed, Chief Game Warden, Division of Law Enforcement, Nevada's Department of Wildlife (NDOW), gave a presentation on boating safety enforcement on the Colorado River. He highlighted major trauma accidents and education, along with public outreach, advertising and marketing, as well as mandatory boating safety classes to ensure boater safety ([Agenda Item XI A](#)).

Senator Goicoechea, Warden Turnipseed, and Brady Phillips, Game Warden, NDOW, discussed the boating class, with Warden Phillips reporting on California's recent adoption of a corresponding education law.

Joseph G. Barnes, Southern Region Supervising Biologist, Wildlife Diversity Division, NDOW, contributed information regarding peregrine falcon and golden eagle studies in Nevada ([Agenda Item XI B](#)).

He reported the species are highly dependent on public lands and described the nesting, breeding, and preying habits of the raptors, and addressed mercury contamination concerns for the peregrine falcon.

Mr. Barnes concluded by providing survival numbers for the golden eagle, noting higher percentage rates occur after the third year of life.

AGENDA ITEM XII—UPDATE ON PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE VIRGIN VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

Kevin Brown, General Manager, Virgin Valley Water District (VVWD), offered a presentation on the programs and activities of the Virgin Valley Water District, which include: (1) Groundwater Basin 222; (2) Colorado River water basin; (3) consultants, vendors, and contractors; (4) maintenance and repair; (5) water system and water rights; (6) well production; (7) service area; (8) active groundwater and precipitation monitoring plan; (9) financial position; (10) challenges; and (11) GBNM boundary issue ([Agenda Item XII](#)).

Assemblyman Ellison and Mr. Brown discussed the age of the infrastructure, noting a 40-year old system in certain areas, while other areas are less than 20 years old.

Mr. Brown explained that after meeting with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, the VVWD requested reduction of the GBNM boundary. He reported the VVWD is working with the BLM, but the request would remain until an agreement is reached.

AGENDA ITEM XIII—DISCUSSION OF SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Vice Chair Ratti announced the following schedule of meetings:

- May 18 in Hawthorne;
- June 29 in Pioche; and
- July 26 in Battle Mountain.

She explained conflicts with the August 3 work session date compels the chair to request permission from the Legislative Commission to extend the work session into September.

AGENDA ITEM XIV—PUBLIC COMMENT

Varlin Higbee, Commissioner, Lincoln County Board of Commissioners, testified on the following topics: (1) impacts of the BRNM to the county tax base; (2) wild horse and burro issue; (3) payments in lieu of tax funding; and (4) public land sales ([Agenda Item XIV](#)).

AGENDA ITEM XIV—ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Natalie J. Pieretti
Research Policy Assistant

Alysa M. Keller
Senior Policy Analyst

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Heidi Swank, Chair

Date: _____

MEETING MATERIALS

AGENDA ITEM	WITNESS/ENTITY	DESCRIPTION
<u>Agenda Item II A-1</u>	Partners in Conservation	Comments dated February 2, 2018
<u>Agenda Item II A-2</u>	Partners in Conservation	Comments dated March 23, 2018
<u>Agenda Item IV A-1</u>	Robert B. Bilbray, President, Bilbray Industries	Map
<u>Agenda Item IV A-2</u>	Robert B. Bilbray, President, Bilbray Industries	South Laughlin Property Overview
<u>Agenda Item IV A-3</u>	Robert B. Bilbray, President, Bilbray Industries	Revision Comments
<u>Agenda Item IV A-4</u>	Robert B. Bilbray, President, Bilbray Industries	Mohave Generating System Property Overview
<u>Agenda Item IV A-5</u>	Robert B. Bilbray, President, Bilbray Industries	Emerald River Property and Tower Overview
<u>Agenda Item IV A-6</u>	Robert B. Bilbray, President, Bilbray Industries	Laughlin Lagoon Dredging and Maintenance Overview
<u>Agenda Item V</u>	Buddy Borden, Economic Development Specialist, Community Development, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
<u>Agenda Item VI</u>	Genevieve Johnson, Acting Resource Management Chief, Lower Colorado Region, Bureau of Reclamation, Department of the Interior (DOI)	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
<u>Agenda Item VII</u>	Victor Rodriguez, Jr., Community Partnership Director, 99th Air Base Wing Complex, Nellis Air Force Base, Creech Air Force Base, Nevada Test and Training Range	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
<u>Agenda Item VIII</u>	Susan E. Cooper, Deputy Field Supervisor, Southern Nevada Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), DOI, and Kevin J. DesRoberts, Deputy Project Leader, Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex, USFWS, DOI	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
<u>Agenda Item IX</u>	Timothy Z. Smith, District Manager, Southern Nevada District Office, BLM, DOI	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
<u>Agenda Item X A-1</u>	Jim Boone, Ph.D., Ecologist, Desert Wildlife Consultants, LLC	Comments

Agenda Item X A-2	Jim Boone, Ph.D., Ecologist, Desert Wildlife Consultants, LLC	Comments
Agenda Item XI A	Tyler Turnipseed, Chief Game Warden, Division of Law Enforcement, Nevada's Department of Wildlife (NDOW)	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item XI B	Joseph G. Barnes, Southern Region Supervising Biologist, Wildlife Diversity Division, NDOW	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item XII	Kevin Brown, General Manager, Virgin Valley Water District	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item XIV	Varlin Higbee, Commissioner, Lincoln County Board of Commissioners on behalf of A. Paul Donohue, Chair, Lincoln County Board of Commissioners	Comments

The Summary Minutes are supplied as an informational service. Copies of all meeting materials are on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. You may contact the Library at www.leg.state.nv.us/lcb/research/library/feedbackmail.cfm or (775) 684-6827.