

COUNTY OF INYO NATURAL RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF DECEMBER 17, 2015 MEETING

MEMBERS:

DAVID GERMAN (VICE-CHAIR)
DOUG THOMPSON
TOM NOLAND
DANA JEFFRIES
WALTER SHARER (CHAIR)

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ALTERNATES:

JAEL HOFFMAN
EARL WILSON

STAFF:

JOSHUA HART, AICP
DIANE FORTNEY

PLANNING DIRECTOR
PROJECT COORDINATOR

The Inyo County Natural Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC) met on Wednesday December 17, 2015, at the Inyo County Board of Supervisors Room in the County Administrative Center in Independence, CA.

WALTER SHARER, Chair opened the meeting at 5:04 p.m.

ITEM 1: **ROLL CALL** – Members in attendance: David German, Walter Sharer, Alternate Earl Wilson. Mr. Wilson participated on the Committee as there were absences. Doug Thompson, Tom Noland and Alternate Jael Hoffman were absent.

Also present was Joshua Hart, Planning Director and Diane Fortney, Project Coordinator.

ITEM 2: **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

ITEM 3: **PUBLIC COMMENT** – This was the opportunity for anyone in the audience to address the Committee on any related subject that was not scheduled on the Agenda.

There was no one from the public wishing to address the Committee.

ITEM 4: **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Approval of Minutes from August 19, 2015.

MOTION: Moved by Committee-Vice Chair German to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Committee-member Sharer.

The Motion passed 3-1-2, with Committee-member Jeffries abstaining and Committee-members Doug Thompson and Tom Nolan, absent.

ITEM 5: NRAC MEMBER RECRUITMENT – Staff will provide an update on recruitment efforts.

Mr. Josh Hart, Planning Director provided update. Recruitment efforts resulted in received a letter from Mr. German to apply. Mr. Hart will contact other members for intent.

ITEM 6: OWENS VALLEY SOLAR ENERGY STUDY (OVSES) - As part of the Renewable Energy General Plan Amendment (REGPA) process the Owens Valley was removed as a Solar Energy Development Area and re-designated the Owens Valley Study Area (OVSA) to be evaluated separately. The County was awarded a grant from the California Energy Commission (CEC) to conduct this work. Beginning in June of 2015, county and consultant staff has been working on data collection and public and Tribal outreach to prepare a study of the Owens Valley. Staff will give a presentation on this process and study.

Mr. Josh Hart, Planning Director, provided staff report. Mr. Hart explained that input provided at public and tribal meetings resulted in creating an extensive data base. Data mapping was extended south of the OVSES area and into the DRECP area. The data collected will flow into the DRECP data base. Photographs have been included to provide visual reference. Using bird populations, deer migrations and similar key items culturally sensitivity mapped may be possible. Work is being done to see if local tribes are receptive to this type of mapping approach. At public request, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Land Management and the Water Agreement are to be included in the study.

Committee-member German asked how this phase rolled into a General Plan Amendment and how it differed from REGPA.

Mr. Hart explained this phase of the project was a study, not a plan. Data collected for the study can be used as a tool for project planning.

Committee-member Share commented that the solar project in Mojave was well done and recommended a field trip to the project.

Committee-member Jeffries commented that two large solar fields were being placed in the Red Rock Area.

Mr. Hart noted the draft study will be presented at Public Meetings on January 6 & 7, 2016 in Lone Pine and Bishop; to the Planning Commission in late January and to the County Board of Supervisors in March.

ITEM 7: DRECP - Governor Schwarzenegger ordered the development of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) for the Mojave and Colorado deserts to provide binding, long-term endangered species permit assurances and facilitate renewable energy project review and approvals. The DRECP planning area includes portions of Inyo County: roughly in the Owens Valley to just north of Independence, the Panamint Valley, Death Valley, and other southeast portions of the County. A Final Proposed Land Use Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement for the DRECP was recently released. Staff will present an overview of these documents and the County's response.

Mr. Joshua Hart, Planning Director presented an overview of the documents. The DRECP is a State and Federal effort to create a Renewable Energy Conservation Plan. The Environment Impact Study (EIS) is the federal component. Updated maps showing where developmental focus areas are identified were presented. Mapping data is available from the Data Basin website at www.databasin.org/DRECP. The focus areas identified do not always match the Inyo County REPGA solar energy development areas (SEDA's).

ITEM 8: FOREST PLAN UPDATE - The Inyo National Forest is drafting an updated Forest Plan. The County and the Forest Service have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) designating the County as a Cooperating Agency in developing the Plan. Staff will report on recent activities arising out of its responsibilities in regards thereto.

Mr. Joshua Hart, Planning Director presented the update. Committee-member German asked what the County's involvement is. Mr. Hart explained the Forest Service Planning Rule requires coordination. The MOU designates Inyo as a Cooperating Agency and allows for information to be shared and the County can provide input.

The proposed rules for the Yellow Legged Frog are included in the plan update. The County is working to minimize the social economic impacts to the County.

Public comment for Species of Conservation, Wild & Scenic Rivers and Wilderness are due by February 1, 2016. Species of Conservation look at plants and animals inside and outside of forest boundaries.

Committee-member Wilson commented that the Inyo National Forest has gone above and beyond for public outreach.

ITEM 9: PLANNING DIRECTORS REPORT

No report given.

ITEM 10: COMMITTEE MEMBER'S REPORT/COMMENTS

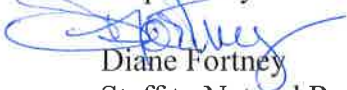
Committee-member Wilson reported on the Ridgecrest Public Lands Round Table concerning the DRECP-EIS supplemental. Due to changes a letter was sent from the group.

ITEM 9: SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING

The committee scheduled meeting on March 17, 2016.

The meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

Prepared by:



Diane Fortney

Staff to Natural Resource Advisory Committee

Minutes Approved July 14, 2016

MOTION: Moved by Alternate Committee-member Wilson to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Committee-member German.

The Motion passed 3-0-3, with Committee-members Nolan, Thompson, Jeffries abstaining.