



# United States Department of the Interior



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## **Bureau of Land Management California State Office Report to the California State OHV Commission**

### **United States Department of Navy (DoN), Marine Corps/Johnson Valley Update**

The Record of Decision (ROD) for the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, CA was signed by the Secretary of the Navy on February 11, 2013. The ROD recommends that Congress implement Alternative 6, with some modifications, for the Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment at Twentynine Palms. The Record of Decision does not authorize the proposed withdrawal expansion. Only Congress has the authority to approve the withdrawal, as well as the terms and conditions specific to the withdrawal.

The BLM continues to work with the Department of Defense and Marines on their proposal to expand the Twentynine Palms Marine Corp Base, and is committed to supporting the military mission and training needs while protecting public land natural resources and continuing to provide public use, access and recreational opportunities on public lands in the Johnson Valley. The BLM has identified impacts the proposed expansion will have on the public and off-highway vehicle (OHV) enthusiasts in the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area. The BLM and the Marines have jointly explored options that could provide both military training and public recreation. Those options are discussed in the ROD.

The DoN, in consultation with BLM, developed draft legislation that would withdraw and reserve the subject public lands for military training and recreational purposes. The draft legislation is currently under interagency review, and, upon completion of the review, a final Administration Legislative Proposal will be transmitted to Congress for further action.

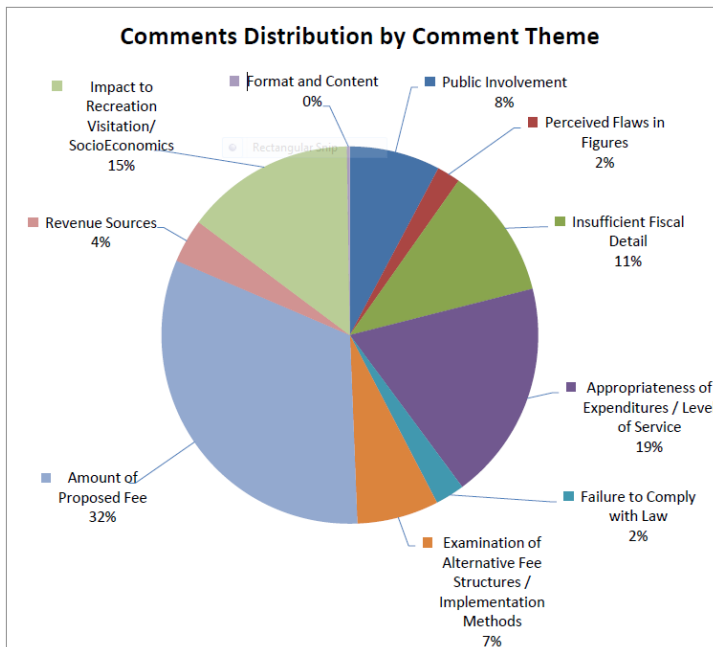
### 2012 Draft Business Plan Update for California’s Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA).

The Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA) 2012 Draft Business Plan updates the 2003 ISDRA Business Plan. The update is required to address gaps between agency objectives, customer needs, and management capacity. Without a modification to the fee program, drastic changes may occur to the ISDRA recreation program as a result of declining Federal budgets and reduced opportunities for outside funding. These changes may include but are not limited to, cuts in emergency medical services (EMS), search and rescue (SAR), maintenance of roads and camping areas, education efforts, and law enforcement.

The public participation process for the Business Plan began August 31, 2010, at an ISDRA Desert Advisory Council (DAC) subgroup meeting. Subsequent public meetings and outreach efforts to garner additional ideas and provide information updates occurred over the course of the next two years until the release of the 2012 Draft Business Plan on October 18, 2012. This release coincided with notification of a public comment period, which although originally scheduled to end on November 5, 2012, was extended until November 30, 2012. Although the comment period officially closed, comments continued to be received and were included in the document until January 15, 2013.

Comment letters received ranged from opposition to fee increases, deficiencies in the document, and recommendations to improve both the document and the proposed structure, as well as the method of fee implementation. A total of 236 written comments (formal letters and emails) were received during the comment period. Of these, 13 are considered to be a form letter (i.e., the same basic letter sent from different people). Overall, commenter affiliations were fairly wide-ranging and included local governments, businesses, organizations representing groups of businesses, stakeholder/user groups, and individual ISDRA visitors.

The 236 letters contained 400 distinct comments that have been parsed out into ten themes that group and summarize like comments. The following graphic identifies the distribution of comments across these themes and is presented as a tool to understand the breadth of comments received.



Public comment is an important part of public lands management. The comments submitted, and this content analysis, now provides the basis to move forward with the development of the Final ISDRA Business Plan. Although the BLM will not formally respond to the comments, the themes presented above, along with many of the specific questions, details, and ideas provided, will be answered and included in the final document.

The closure of the comment period, and this document do not however, mark the conclusion of the public process. Additional opportunities to engage in development of the business plan and overall management of the ISDRA, including those formally provided through consultation with the Recreation Resource Advisory Committee and Desert Advisory Council.

<http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/elcentro/recreation/ohvs/isdra/dunesinfo/docs/isdrabp.html>

**HIGHLIGHTS****EL CENTRO FIELD OFFICE****February 28, 2013**

The El Centro Field Office has received applications for ten AMA District 38 races within the Plaster City and Superstition Open OHV areas: one for a quad drag race within the Imperial Sand Dunes; one for a 4X4 touring event; and three for “rock crawling” events for the Devil’s Canyon trail. All events that occurred since September were successful and no serious safety issues were noted.

**Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA)**

**Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan** - Three protests are currently being addressed at the Washington Office. Once protests have been successfully resolved, a Record of Decision will be released to the public.



Figure 1 - Oldsmobile Hill, 2013

**YTD FY 2013 visitation is 544,687 at ISDRA**, annual fee financial report has been posted at [http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/elcentro/recreation/ohvs/isdra/dunesinfo/fees\\_at\\_work.html](http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/elcentro/recreation/ohvs/isdra/dunesinfo/fees_at_work.html).

**BLM has responded to 201 calls for rescue service.**

**OHV grant projects in progress:** Closure signing continuing, trash collection, providing EMS / Rescue, law enforcement, restoration.

BLM continues to receive positive anecdotal comments from visitor contacts regarding the improved family atmosphere and cleanliness of the restrooms.

**ISDRA Facebook launched at** [www.facebook.com/blmimperialsanddunes](http://www.facebook.com/blmimperialsanddunes).

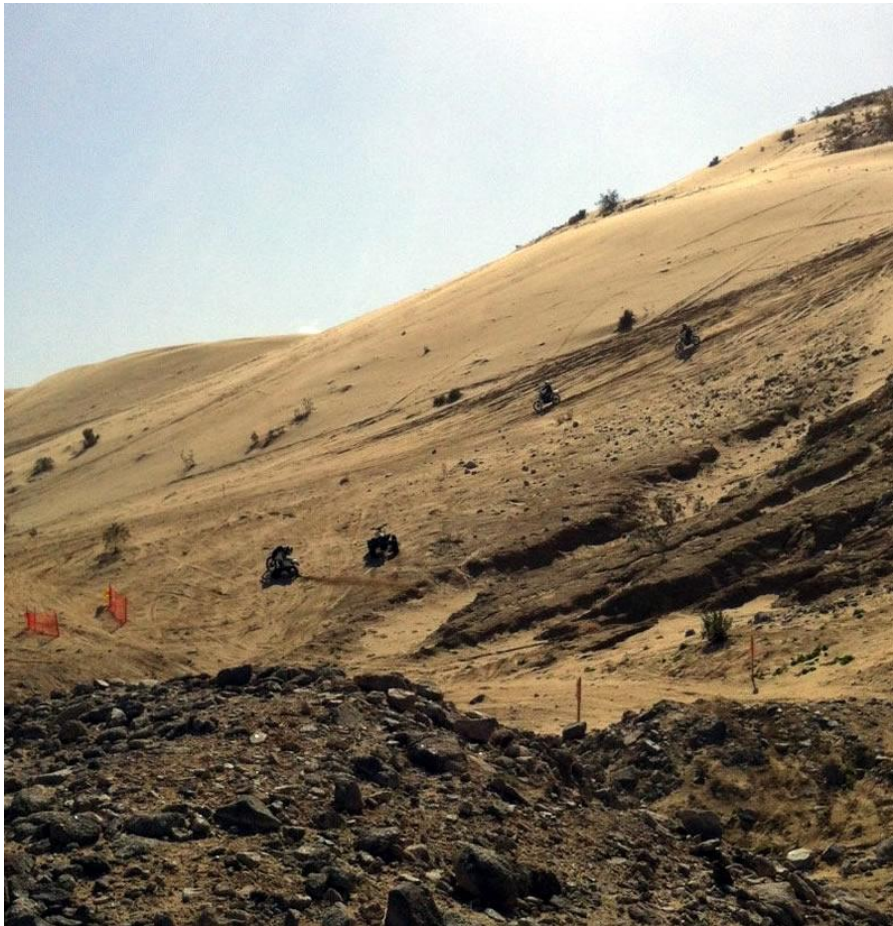
## Superstition Mountain at Full Throttle!

More than 150 spectators turned out to watch 72 riders compete in the “Full Throttle 100” at Superstition Mountain OHV Open Area on Saturday, February 9, 2013. The challenging course took riders through mixed terrain that varied from hard pack dirt, sand, rocks and the flats. Five laps around the 20-mile course completed the race.

The crowd saw plenty of action as both All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV) and motorcycles competed. A particularly rough climb through a rocky gully proved problematic for some bikes, however most riders finished the race. The mostly sunny and windy day ended on a high note, with the crowd in an upbeat mood.

BLM’s El Centro staff monitored the event to ensure spectator safety, as well as compliance with the permit. BLM-California’s Strategic Framework provides an avenue for this type of activity on public lands by encouraging recreation and providing for public safety in America’s Great Outdoors.

For more information on the Superstition Mountain OHV Open Area, please call the El Cento Field Office at 760-337-4400 or visit our web page at [www.blm.gov/ca/elcentro](http://www.blm.gov/ca/elcentro).



A section of the race took the riders through the dunes. Photo: BLM/E. Tanori

- Joya Szalwinski, interpretive park ranger, BLM El Centro Field Office (February 2013)