

FIELD REPORT from Chief BLM Ranger Patrick Chassie , Barstow Field Office, Dec. 1, 2014 via email – 760.252-6070

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During this holiday weekend, BLM experienced high OHV use within the Barstow Field Office. Law Enforcement Rangers conducted over 1000 contacts and reported above average holiday use in Johnson Valley, Stoddard Valley, El Mirage, Dumont Dunes, and Razor OHV areas. The Barstow Field office estimates OHV visitor use at 33,300 this holiday weekend based on vehicle count.

Law Enforcement also experienced incursions into several wilderness areas and DWMA's that contain sensitive sites and cultural resources. Law Enforcement Rangers cited OHV users in the Cleghorn Wilderness and discovered off route incursions into limited use areas. Sunfair dry lake was estimated at 300 people on private and public lands riding OHV's and or conducting other recreational activities. Wonder Valley was estimated at 150 OHV users. Post Homestead saw off route travel. Giant Rock and the Marine Corp expansion area also saw heavy illegal OHV use.

Evidence suggest the 29 Palms MCLB expansion with associated reduction of Johnson Valley OHV area, has lead to an increase of OHV use into other non-traditional riding areas to include sensitive biological and cultural sites. Based on the increased OHV use within the areas mentioned above and the limited law enforcement resources available, Barstow BLM Law Enforcement needs to adjust the placement of law enforcement Rangers to balance the protection of natural resources and public safety. Barstow BLM has WEMO enforcement strategies that place biological and cultural resources as a high priority. As BLM Law Enforcement Rangers are available, BLM Barstow will focus our enforcement to address biological and culturally sensitive areas.

BLM's primary mission is resource protection. BLM law enforcement can enforce Federal rules and regulations. We do not currently have peace officer authority to enforce county laws, rules or regulations. This poses some difficulties when attempting to enforce OHV use in urban interface environments like Wonder Valley or Sunfair Dry Lake. The BLM, CHP and San Bernardino County continue to coordinate and develop law enforcement strategies to address OHV use. This coordination is critical in addressing the OHV use with in the urban interface environment. Continued cooperation is expected and necessary to balance enforcement within the areas mentioned above. Respectfully, Patrick