

EQUESTRIAN LAND USE PETITION

Joshua Tree - Bureau of Land Management Section 6

- 1) We the undersigned are equestrian users of Bureau of Land Management Section 6 in Joshua Tree or individuals whom sympathize with their concerns. Correspondence with the "County Special District" staff informs us that the County of San Bernardino, through "County Service Area - 20" or "CSA-20", currently manages this land for the federal government. There are issues involving this land that are of serious concern to equestrians and other users of such lands.
2) Recently, the CSA-20, in written correspondence with a local Joshua Tree equestrian group, clarified their position on equestrian land use of "BLM Section 6" as follows: "We are asking that riding be kept to established roadbeds not on trails or through vegetation."

We the undersigned find the CSA-20 request OUTRAGEOUS - as many of these established trails have been used for decades and such a regulatory change appears to have been done without public hearings or comment. We further believe that forcing equestrian users off the trails and asking us to share the roads with motorist, pedestrians and other vehicle traffic is not only dangerous, it is just plain stupid!

- 3) Joshua Tree Municipal Advisory Committee or "MAC" is a "quasi-public" entity that is attempting to exert influence over this land. They recently hosted a public meeting at a public facility meeting to discuss plans for "Section 6 - The Desert Conservation Area", as the BLM land was described in the public invitation. While we the undersigned agree that conservation is clearly an important land use management concern, the MAC, or a subcommittee thereof, is trying to make "Bureau of Land Management Section 6" something it is not, nor can it be. Such a name obscures the true owner of the land - the federal government - and implies that the land is some sort of nature preserve, which it is not. Our concerns go far beyond the mere choice of name. Their efforts to develop this federal open space as a "conservation area" at the expense of equestrians is troublesome indeed. However, what is more troublesome than the cavalier manner in which equestrian concerns are addressed is the way in which they use the "quasi-public" status of the MAC and CSA-20 staff to promote a private agenda that is adverse to our interest and other forms of "mixed use".

- 4) We respectfully request that the County of San Bernardino Board of Supervisors immediately do the following:
a. Instruct the CSA-20 to continue to honor equestrian land use of "BLM Section 6" in the manner consistent with historical use,
b. Intercede and take steps that prevent people from using the quasi-official appearance of the MAC and "color of law" to promote their "private interests" at expense (and safety) of equestrian users and other legitimate users of "BLM Section 6",
c. Inform the county's legal and "risk management" departments that the CSA-20 is potentially creating serious hazards for all land users and potential liability to the county by attempting to "force all equestrians" to use the dirt roads that are shared by vehicle traffic,
d. Instruct CSA-20 that if they want to change existing equestrian use in "BLM Section 6" they need to conduct "real" "Public Meetings" outside the MAC process so that the legitimate concerns of equestrians can be addressed in a manner consistent with law governing such rule making.
e. Request that the CSA-20 immediately disclose to the equestrian community the basis for their legal authority as we believe that it is more likely than not that the real regulatory authority to manage this land lies with the federal government and not with a special purpose entity created by the board of supervisors to spend local taxes assessments on maintaining parks, street lights, and a fire stations.
f. To determine if money and effort spent by CSA-20 staff on "BLM Section 6" is within the scope of the CSA's enabling ordinance (Board of Supervisor resolution 93-22 dated February 1, 1993), which was very specific regarding as on what project the locally collected assessment could be expended.

- 5) Furthermore, we respectfully request that the federal government to do the following:
a. Require the county to demonstrate that it is committed to "due process" and to the other constitutional, statutory, and administrative protections to which all users on public land are entitled.
b. Should they fail to do so, to reassert your responsibility for managing "BLM Section 6"

Signature

Print Name & Address (e-mail & phone # optional)

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