

## MBCA BOARD MEETING **APPROVED** MINUTES

Thursday, November 13, 2025 / 4:00 – 6:00 PM on Zoom

**Black Bold Italics = Board vote**    *Blue Italics = action commitment*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Bardwell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pat Flanagan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Kennington
<input type="checkbox"/> Stacy Doolittle (prior notice)	<input type="checkbox"/> Brian Hammer (prior notice)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Arch McCulloch
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Fick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Janet Johnston	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Wold

### Steve called the meeting to order at 4:01 PM

#### • **Introduction of Guests and Board Directors**

Steve welcomed Erin Flanagan, Kat Talley-Jones, Claudia Sall, Steve Gjerstad, Chance Wilcox (NPCA), Joani Tremblay, and Ted Stimpfel, and thanked them for attending.

#### • **Agenda approval**

**Steve moved to approve the amended agenda. Pat seconded, and all were in favor. (8-0). Amendment additions were Land Use 3. i,j,k,l,m.**

#### • **Approve Minutes from October 10, 2025 BOD meeting**

**Sarah moved to approve the October minutes. Bob seconded, and all were in favor. (8-0)**

#### • **Treasurer's Report – Budgeting**

Bob will send updated budget reports. October activities were minimal; \$2250 was paid to Cole Gibson, the first half for the fall video shoot. There were 6 new memberships. In early November two donations were received related to Sienna Solar opposition. Our current totals are \$40,605 across the 2 checking accounts and \$50,790 in the CD at Banc of California. New Banc of CA credit cards have been issued. The treasurer's report was accepted by consensus.

### **Outreach and Organizational Issues**

1. Update on committee Budgets and Mission Statements  
*Committees are to report budget needs to the Finance Committee before the December 11 meeting in support of presenting a 2026 budget January.*
2. Bring back the MAC – SB  
Steve communicated with three people interested in this topic and connected them for further discussion: Ryan Schneider from JT (Whispering Pines issue), Michelle Cicero (former MAC member, Landers), and Ray Kennedy (Morongo Valley).
3. Eco Summit at Harrison House - JJ  
Janet and Laraine determined it was best to wait until early in 2026.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **Board/Volunteer Recruitment**      SK

Sarah, Pat, Laraine, and Stacy form the Committee. There are 2 Board openings. Steve reported that Erin Flanagan has agreed to join the Board. The Committee will review possibilities for the additional position and will make a recommendation to be voted on at the December 11 meeting (per Bylaws).

Sarah further suggested how Committees can use Advisors and volunteers, both of which might evolve to Board members in the future. Advisors could be focused on specific projects or events, with volunteers more general, as in supporting the annual meeting or the Tour. Janet encouraged adding younger people and mentioned Levon Kazarian.

### **Finance Committee**

BW

As above, they are working on a Budget for 2026.

### **Land Use Conservation**

AM

#### 1. [Renewable Energy](#)

a. Sienna Solar appeal – SB in Brian’s absence  
MBCA and others have [appealed](#) the Calcite substation approval as well as the Sienna project. A key issue was that Hwy 247 had been designated as a State Scenic Highway, known before the Planning Commission meeting, but not included in the PC decision. The project location was moved and it has increased in size, so contrary to the developers’ stance, it is NOT the same project. Dust is a problem, and transmission lines are still undefined. MBCA and the other appellants will make a presentation to the Supervisors on a future assigned date. Developers are under a pressing deadline, especially due to the tax benefits rollback. Steve believes they would have to be online by April 2028 to benefit. If Supervisors do approve, it could be appealed.

b. Soda Mountain  
No news. Brian is keeping an eye on it.

#### 2. Water

##### a. MWA

Chance Wilcox from NPCA spoke about Cadiz and Castle Mountain. For Cadiz, the BLM approval of the northern pipeline is likely. Cadiz is beginning to work with Canadian company [EPCOR](#) to sell water to Arizona. NPCA is working with tribes, utilities, etc. to show there’s no benefit. Opposition is extensive, including California government. There’s hope but it may come down to litigation. The Fort Mojave and Chemehuevi tribes are involved and are contacting tribes in other states where Cadiz is seeking support.

A Notice of Intent to mine for gold has been filed for Castle Mountain Mine, next to the Castle Mountain National Monument. Concerns include water, road development, tortoise and other species. It will be subject to CEQA; a draft EIS required. Comment letters are due November 19; Chance will forward comment information.

##### b. JBWD

David reported the lobbyist firm Rojas Communications from Rancho Cucamonga is working on the Chromium 6 issue. The Board and staff are in discussion about the number of installations that would be needed within the district. The County is pushing for a sewer authority for the whole district, likely intended to spur more development.

### 3. Development Proposals

#### a. Recap Summit on dust 11-6-25

Arch attended a seminar on dust in the Salton Sea/Coachella Valley area and sent a summary to Directors. He hoped to gain information for Morongo Basin dust issues, but found that high desert problems are different. Wind driven sand is their largest source of dust. Arch also shared new insight on air pollution: “PM10 particles are mostly broken down from larger grains of dust. PM2.5 particles are mostly built up by accretion of gas molecules,” so are basically smog rather than dust.

#### b. Ofland lawsuit update

Kat thanked us for including their issue in our recent eblast. The Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) lawsuit against 29 Palms to reverse approval of the Ofland project is focused on a flawed MND without an EIR (including the mistake of counting tortoises in November). The lawsuit by Indian Cove Neighbors and CBD is to reverse the zoning change from rural living to commercial. The developers don't yet own the parcel; it is believed to be still in escrow. Kat thanked Pat for providing a wildlife corridor statement. ***Steve moved to allocate \$500 to Culture Space Foundation/Save Our Deserts/Indian Cove Neighbors for their legal expenses against the Ofland project. Pat seconded and the motion was approved. (8-0)***

#### c. Lovemore Ranch lawsuit update

Janet reported there was a recent awareness/fundraising event and that they are proceeding towards the court case.

#### d. Cactus Club Hotel in JT

Steve noted we wrote a [letter](#) and CBD will take them to court if the MND is approved ([CBD letter](#)). Fracturing of wildlife corridors is especially bad in this project.

#### e. Landers Lodge

Steve referenced discussions with biologist Ed LaRue, who said that tortoise rescue people are opposed to both Ofland and Landers Lodge. Steve also asked Ed about joining Sienna Solar opposition but Ed didn't think his company would have standing. *Steve will follow up with Pat.* Steve expressed his opinion that the Lodge project is actually a reasonably good project compared to others we've seen.

#### f. JT Resort PC hearing 10-23-25

David and Steve attended the PC meeting. David described it as a slipshod review. They excused flood zone problems because they're “putting in levees.” CBD sent a letter. The County Planner says it's just rezoning but it's clearly a specific project, yet no details of this “JT Resort” are provided in 140 pages of the rezoning study. It appears to be a 2-story 90-unit country club style project and it's in a flood zone which would send water into downtown JT.

#### g. AB98 PC hearing 10-23-25

Truck traffic is increasing on 247, but AB 98 doesn't apply to Hwy.

247. However, Commissioners did seem to absorb the concerns.

- h. Sunfair42MX open house 11-17 & 11-24  
Steve reported we have filed a [letter](#) on this project on Sunfair in JT. It is operating as a motocross park in a Rural Living zone. They need to have a CUP and go through environmental analysis. Owners are sponsoring an open house Nov. 17 and 24 trying to get support.
  - i. [BLM off road routes – Steve Gjerstad](#)  
In the BLM’s designation of offroad routes in the West Mojave ([WEMO](#)), many routes cross private property. Steve found 49.5% of land owned by private land owners has routes placed indiscriminately across public and private land. CBD has filed appeals and a 2021 lawsuit. In fall 2024, a judge concluded that BLM designed the route and then reported how they applied minimization criteria, exactly the opposite of what was legally required. The case entered a “remedy” phase but nothing has happened. Last summer CBD filed a proposed remedy, and after additional filings from both sides, a hearing has been scheduled for November 21. Public lands are the main concern of CBD, whereas Steve’s concern is for private land, so he filed a motion to intervene. BLM and CBD will comment and then the court will decide if he can be a plaintiff. We will put his document on website. Could be limited by procedural issue but he could refile to address. Could be used as template by others.
  - j. [WJT Conservation Plan FAQs vs. Firewise](#)  
Arch reported that Morongo Valley is forming a Firewise group with Justin Moreno.
  - k. [IDWG Congressional Working Group \(Chuckwalla NM\)](#)  
The group will work to influence Obernolte and Calvert, with the goal of getting public statements to support Chuckwalla and oppose land sell-off. An economic roundtable is to be developed. Working with the business community is essential to have influence here.
  - l. [IDWG Priorities](#)  
For the Power in Nature website, the spreadsheet listing desert areas needing protection needs to be updated. *Arch and others are working on it but invite additional assistance.*
  - m. [Amargosa Basin NM Status](#)  
This is in an aspirational stage, but they are starting to get serious support including from the Timbisha Shoshone and other regional tribes. There is a study under Portland State for an ethnographic study of the Amargosa Basin, with the chambers of Lone Pine and Bishop, school districts, and county supervisors. Krystian Lahage will be providing a tutorial on public commenting.
4. WJT Conservation Plan [FAQs](#) vs Firewise -SB  
Keri Aley is working to get Firewise information into the Conservation Plan.

## **Housing and Community**

JJ

Janet reported a good Working Group meeting recently and thanks MBCA for room rental and food support. Twenty people attended including some new people. Janet created a list of food distribution in the MB in a calendar format including meal locations which Stacy published on FB and has been widely appreciated.

On the policy side (East Desert Regional Committee), issues include allocation of state grants. Government and non-profit balance is always an issue. Janet is concerned about an equitable distribution baseline for state grants, since larger regions in urban areas can accumulate more grants than rural areas like ours, and have contributions from larger cities. She stated she feels that the Continuum of Care Board (CoC) needs an independent Counsel. Currently, County Counsel attends the Board meetings as "CoC Counsel."

**DWL** SD – Steve, Bob, Sarah and Laraine in Stacy's absence

1. Annual Meeting **1-24-26** Topic Greywater  
Steve stopped at Building and Safety to find more about code limitations. Stacy has given Nicholas a deadline to provide a preliminary program.
2. Spring Landscape Tour planning update  
Bob, Cathy, and Sarah are working to narrow down possible sites. This year we especially want to do early vetting about water use.
3. Thanks to Stacy, Miriam and Cole for the great [Fall planting video](#) !!!

## **Web, Social Media Communications**

LT in Stacy's absence

1. Joani Trembley web site review  
Laraine thanked Joani for her extensive review and recommendations on improving our website, to bring it up to date and make it more visually attractive and more easily navigated. It will take a while but we've begun. Laraine also thanked Stacy for her extensive social media work this fall, which includes posting and cross-posting information to many other sites, cross posting events and information from sites in addition to our own news and events, and as a result greatly broadening our visibility.
- ~~2. Presentation on Strategies for advocacy –SD~~

## **Scholarships/Field Trips**

LT

May 20, 2026, Scholarships award night YUCCA VALLEY  
*Laraine is working to set a preliminary committee meeting.*

## **Partnership Advocacy**

SB

1. [Track](#) effect of Govt shutdown  
This ↑ linked Google form asks for personal reports about public lands effects you may have noticed or experienced.

2. AB 1083 to fix SB131 re: CEQA  
We were asked to sign on but felt we couldn't – the tone was accusatory rather than constructive.
3. [Public Lands Rule Recission](#)  
This is the effort to reverse the Biden administration ruling where conservation values are to be equal to resource extraction for BLM lands.  
  
Steve noticed a renewed CA bill mandating all EV's be bidirectional.  
Hopefully it will pass this time.

### **Director's Comments**

Pat briefly spoke of her recent trip to Namibia and Madagascar.

Laraine was impressed by a recent webinar presentation by the Union of Concerned Scientists and will send the [link](#) to Board members.

### **Adjourned at 6:04 PM**

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, December 11, 2025, 4:00 – 6:00 PM Zoom