



OFF-ROAD BUSINESS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER—FALL 2003

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NEW ORBA BOARD MEMBER

ORBA's Board of Directors, in accordance with ORBA's Bylaws, has elected a new Director to replace Jim McGarvie, who left the Board to become the Executive Vice President of ORBA. Loren Snyder of ProComp Suspension (AKA Explorer ProComp) has graciously agreed to fill the remainder of McGarvie's term. After attending his first Board meeting, Loren believes he will be able to work very well with other ORBA Board members to help direct ORBA's operations and assure that his industry's interests are well represented.

ORBA PRES. ON ISDRA TRT

The Technical Review Team (TRT) for the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA) has been re-constituted. ORBA's President Denner has been re-appointed by the BLM's Desert Advisory Council to be the Council's representative on the ISDRA TRT. The primary function of the TRT is to advise the El Centro BLM office on the utilization of fees collected for camping at the ISDRA.

ISDRA BUSINESS PLAN

Guess what? Just like any other business, it takes money to keep the doors open at the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area. With a war on, and after 9/11, Federal allocations are being cut to all agencies. Our State Green Sticker program is currently run by an anti-access majority that has cut funding for operation and maintenance

to the ISDRA. The only other source of funding for the ISDRA is user fees. A study by an independent contractor suggests that a fee of \$25 per weekend and \$90 per season will be necessary to recover the cost to run this important recreation area. The actual amount necessary will be dependent on compliance by users (how many users actually pay). The current fee is based on 50% compliance. Better compliance can lead to lower fees next season. For more information visit ORBA's website at:

www.ORBA.biz.

LOW COST OFFICE SUPPLIES!

ORBA has entered into an Association Buying Agreement with Office Depot. **DISCOUNTED PRICES ON OFFICE SUPPLIES AND FREE SHIPMENT IS AVAILABLE TO ORBA MEMBERS!** To register your company and receive a product catalog, contact Doug Kearnaghan at (858) 642-2331 or email him at dkearnaghan@officedepot.com. With almost 300 members, ORBA is actively looking for group purchase opportunities to save money for members.

ORBA AND SEMA

ORBA's President Roy Denner hosted SEMA's President Chris Kersting and VP Peter MacGillivray on a tour of the Off Road Expo in Pomona. Many SEMA members, many of whom are also ORBA members, were exhibitors at the Off Road Expo, clearly demonstrating the membership overlap between the two business-oriented organizations. The August/September issue of SEMA NEWS addresses ORBA's participation in the upcoming SEMA show in Las Vegas and SEMA's intent to work with ORBA. It also mentions ORBA's efforts with legislators in Sacramento.

ORBA AT SEMA SHOW

Ken and Jeff Yoder from Race Car Dynamics (RCD) called for a meeting of suspension manufacturers prior to the SEMA show in Las Vegas. ORBA President Roy Denner attended. The attendees, all exhibitors at the show (and mostly ORBA members) discussed their mutual concerns about problems in the suspension industry. New and pending legislation that addresses the lifting of vehicles may have a major impact on this industry. It was agreed that companies that deal with suspension products need to get organized and work to prevent negative impacts to their marketplace. Denner offered to provide ORBA resources to support this effort.

ORBA AND NAMRC

ORBA participated in the semi-annual meeting of the North American Motorized Recreation Council (NAMRC) held in Las Vegas before the SEMA show. Representatives from OHV, snowmobile and 4-wheel drive organizations from across the U.S. attended. Land use issues and political involvement were the main topics discussed. ORBA was the only business-oriented trade association participating and ORBA's accomplishments within its short life span were praised by several grass-roots organizations.

PARTNERSHIP FOR THE WEST

ORBA participated in a conference held on September 26 in Denver, Colorado entitled "Take Back the West." The conference was sponsored by a new coalition known as the "Partnership For the West." Jim Sims, a veteran of coalition building and issue advocacy at state and federal levels, formed this coalition. Jim served as President George W. Bush's Director of Communications for the National Energy Policy Development Group. He also served in senior staff positions in the U.S. Senate.

The objective of the Partnership is to restore a common sense balance to economic growth and

conservation in the western states. The conference was attended by Senators and Congressional Representatives from all of the western states as well as the Governor of Colorado. These officials agreed with the scores of industry and land use representatives in attendance that it is time to modify the Endangered Species Act to bring about a more balanced use of public lands. ORBA has joined the Partnership and ORBA's President will be serving on one or more Committees that will address public access to public lands. More information can be obtained at the Partnership's website:

www.partnershipforthewest.org

WEBSITE LINKS

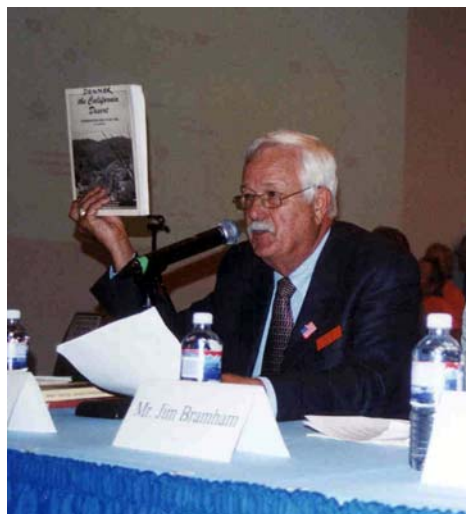
If you haven't visited ORBA's website lately, please check it out at your first opportunity. Jim McGarvie has added links on our "Members" page to member companies who have asked to have links. By simply clicking on a member company name the viewer is taken directly to that company's website.

MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT GROUP

ORBA Vice President Jim McGarvie attended a meeting of the Desert Tortoise Management Oversight Group (MOG) in September. The meeting was held in Las Vegas, but the only gambling McGarvie did was eating lunch in the hotel cafeteria.

The MOG consists of desert land managers focused upon the effort to recover the Desert Tortoise. The bulk of the meeting was a progress report by the Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan Assessment Committee (DTRPAC).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service initiated a two-step process to revise the 1994 Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan (DTRP). Step 1 involves the review and assessment of new research and information gathered on many aspects of desert tortoise ecology, threats, conservation biology, monitoring and recovery actions. This step is the assignment of DTRPAC, and they are nearly finished. Their



ORBA President Roy Denner testifying at Pombo hearing

CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

After ORBA's President—with the help of our lobbyist Pete Conaty—led several delegations to Washington, DC, Congressman Richard Pombo, Chairman of the House Resources Committee, agreed to hold a Congressional Hearing in California. The purpose of the Hearing was to take input regarding access issues in the Mojave Desert with a special emphasis on the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area. Testimony was provided by representatives from a variety of desert interest groups—all of whom agreed that the closure of public lands to public use in the name of protecting the environment, without supporting science, has got to stop! Shortly after the Hearing, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Agency announced that it is moving ahead with its consideration of removing the Peirson's MilkVetch Plant from its Endangered Species List. For more information, visit ORBA's website at:

www.ORBA.biz

A second hearing in California at Lake Arrowhead addressed the forest health issue. At ORBA's President's request, Eddie Phillips, from Americans for Forest Access, was invited to testify. Eddie did a great job of showing how trail closures in the forests are impacting the ability of agencies to provide fire protection within forests full of dead trees devastated by a beetle infestation.

next and final meeting will be Nov 6-7 in Las Vegas, and they will complete their Draft report in January of next year.

Step 2 will involve the revision of the recovery plan by a newly established recovery team of scientists, agency resource specialists and stakeholders. This team will be assembled in March to revise the recovery plan—a process that is expected to take 10-12 months.

DESERT MANAGERS GROUP

In October, McGarvie attended a meeting of the Desert Managers Group (DMG) in Death Valley, California. The DMG is composed of managers from the BLM, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife, National Park Service, US Geological Survey, California Fish and Game, California State Parks, representatives of the various military services and others with responsibility for managing land in the desert.

The DMG addresses many issues related to the desert: illegal dumping, protection of archeological and paleontological sites, etc. But far and away the biggest single issue facing the DMG at this time is the survival of the Mojave Desert Tortoise. Discussion of this topic consumed most of the two-day meeting.

The DMG and members of the public heard presentations by members of DTRPAC regarding their progress. It was similar to the presentation by DTRPAC at the MOG meeting in September (see previous article).

It is apparent and somewhat encouraging that considerable money and expertise is involved in this effort. Nevertheless, it is frustrating that the process is so time-consuming. The 1994 DTRP itself recommends that it "should be reassessed every three to five years or at any time it becomes apparent that the plan is not fulfilling its function to guide recovery." However, that review has never occurred, and it appears it will be several more months before a team is even picked to conduct the review.