

JUNE

10–11 Escondido, CA – Palomar Annual Gem, Mineral and Jewelry Show

Sponsor: Palomar Gem and Mineral Club

Venue: The Convention Center at the California Center for the Arts – 340 North Escondido Blvd, Escondido CA 92025

Hours: Sat 10AM – 5PM; Sun 10AM – 4PM

Contact: tonifloyd41615@gmail.com

Web: www.palomargem.org

Artisans selling handmade silver, gold, beaded and fabricated jewelry, antique and vintage jewelry, commercial quality gold and silver faceted stone jewelry, handmade specialty cabochons, mineral specimens, gem trees, other

lapidary decorative items and rough rock from Africa, Australia and the USA.

23-25 Lodi, CA – CFMS Show and Convention

Venue: Lodi Grape Festival Grounds, 413 E. Lockefort St., Lodi, CA 95240

Hours: Fri & Sat 10AM – 5PM; Sun 10AM – 4PM

Admission: Adults \$6, Kids 12 & under Free; Free to Military Active, Veterans and their Dependents with valid Military ID card.

Contact: rocksbob@sbcglobal.net

Contact (dealer info): slchaisson@yahoo.com
Educational exhibits, speakers.

**BLM To Host Three Opens Houses (plus one Virtual Mtg)
Public invited to give input on what should go into
drafting the Mojave Trails Natl Monument Plan**

1. Wed, May 24 at 6 PM PDT – Virtual meeting via Zoom

Register to attend [here](#) (or short URL: <https://bit.ly/3pliZKC>)

Participants will receive a confirmation email containing a unique link to join the meeting

2. Tue, May 30 at 6 PM – Comfort Suites (Conference room)

2571 Fisher Blvd., Barstow, CA 92311

3. Wed, May 31 at 6 PM – Twentynine Palms Historical Society Founder’s Hall

6760 National Park Dr., Twentynine Palms, CA 92277

4. Thurs, June 1 at 6 PM – El Garces Harvey House

950 Front St., Needles, CA 92363

Substantive written comments may also be submitted anytime through June 20, via mail at:

ATTN: Mojave Trails National Monument Manager

Nicole Glines-Bovio

1303 US-95, Needles, CA 92363

The BLM will consider all substantive public comments in preparation of the analysis, which will be made available for public review on the BLM's National NEPA Register website at:

<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2022347/510>

Public Lands

BLM to Host Three Open Houses May 30, 31 & June 1, 2023

Public invited to give input on Mojave Trails

by Lisbet Thoresen, SDMG public lands representative

IT WILL BE IMPORTANT for Rockhounds to show up at one or more of the Open Houses that the **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)** is hosting on May 30 (Barstow), 31 (Twentynine Palms), and June 1 (Needles). A virtual meeting is also scheduled for May 24. The public input that the BLM takes away from those meetings is sure to be consequential for how it decides to draft a Monument Management Plan (MMP) for **Mojave Trails National Monument (MTNM)**. *See Open House details on page 19.*

The Open Houses may provide to the public some idea of how the BLM is already thinking about amending the **California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan** to be consistent with the language of the monument proclamation and address environmental impacts identified during the scoping period. No doubt, they have gotten a great deal of input already.

Attending the Open Houses also may afford some insight into how the BLM and other Stakeholders currently perceive hobby collecting in relation to their own concerns, especially areas designated as **Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)** within the monument, notably in the Cady Mountains (see map, p. 22). How the BLM is going to balance competing interests among Stakeholders remains to be seen, but this is an opportunity for Rockhounds to listen and learn and show the BLM that we are engaged in this process.

It is unclear what form the BLM's invitation to the public to provide input will be presented. It is possible that the three in-person Open Houses scheduled for later this month may feature a paper and pencil questionnaire (yes, really) similar to the one BLM distributed at the in-person Envisioning Sessions for MTNM in the summer of 2016. While few people may remember the Envisioning Sessions from seven

Comment Period Open for Mojave Trails Natl Monument Public scoping

**Public comment deadline:
June 20, 2023**

Visit the BLM website for more info:
bit.ly/mtnm-mmp-rmp-ea

The BLM intends to prepare a Monument Management Plan (MMP) for the Mojave Trails National Monument (MTNM), through amendments to the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) land use plan and an environmental assessment (EA). The BLM needs to modify some of the existing CDCA land use plan decisions and make implementation-level decisions for the MTNM.

years ago, much less the questionnaire, as it turns out, that questionnaire proved to be a critical document in the life cycle of monument planning up to now. (Who knew?) How BLM interpreted the input from the 2016 questionnaire only appeared in a report in April 2022. Why it proved to be so important for Rockhounds was discussed in my May 2022 article in *The Pegmatite*, see: <https://bit.ly/BLM-2016-Envisioning-Report>.) If indeed there is another questionnaire awaiting visitors to the BLM Open Houses later this month, it may be just as important as the last one was. In case it is, let's get ready to give constructive input. I certainly plan on arriving better prepared this time. Please join me in giving some thought ahead of time to what BLM might ask. (Here's the 2016 questionnaire with my responses transcribed and typed: <https://bit.ly/BLM-2016-EnvisioningA>.)

Below are some thoughts on some of the values and definitions related to rockhounding that I think should be reflected in the management plan. I will be bringing these notes with me, in case the questionnaire – if there is one – asks for input on prioritizing top-level goals of the plan (they asked in 2016, they may ask again). The formal comment period comes later, but we need to be preparing now what to articulate so that values shared in the Rockhound community will be reflected in BLM’s proposed management plan for MTNM.

General comments for BLM about what to include in the MMP

BLM made a commitment to the public regarding its vision for Mojave Trails when the ROD was published in 2016. According to BLM, a monument management plan for Mojave Trails would serve as a model for other monument management plans in the future. Rockhounds were assured the plan for MTNM would accommodate uses that have been disallowed elsewhere in the past, notably hobby collecting. Please stay true to the original intent for Mojave Trails.

Include explicit language stating that amateur rock collecting/rockhounding is a permissible activity within the monument.

Define terms/synonyms for rock collecting (e.g., hobby, casual, or amateur collecting, rockhounding) as a low-impact recreational activity.

Rockhounding is not mining and should not be administered according to the same criteria. It is not archaeology, nor is it a wantonly destructive activity. A final rule for the **Paleontological Resources Act (PRPA)** is a useful model for some of the same issues BLM will confront in drafting a plan for MTNM. The final PRPA rule (August 2, 2022) provides constructive reference that the Bureau itself recognized as reasonable guidance for defining collecting activities and processes, e.g., the type of tools and how they are used. They may be reasonably extended to amateur collecting of rocks

Mojave Trails National Monument Countdown to a Final Management Plan

National monuments belong to everyone in the U.S. We welcome Rockhounds everywhere to get involved. **Got questions? Want to help?** Contact Lisbet at editor@sdmg.org.

Join SDMG’s mailing list to stay abreast of public lands-related news. Longform articles and reports appear in the monthly bulletin (September – June).

Check the topics that interest you, including “public lands” to receive public lands-specific updates. If you would like to join a comment letter on the current public scoping for Mojave Trails, check the box for “Mojave Trails Natl Monument” – we’ll let you know when a draft letter is ready for review, probably by June 8.

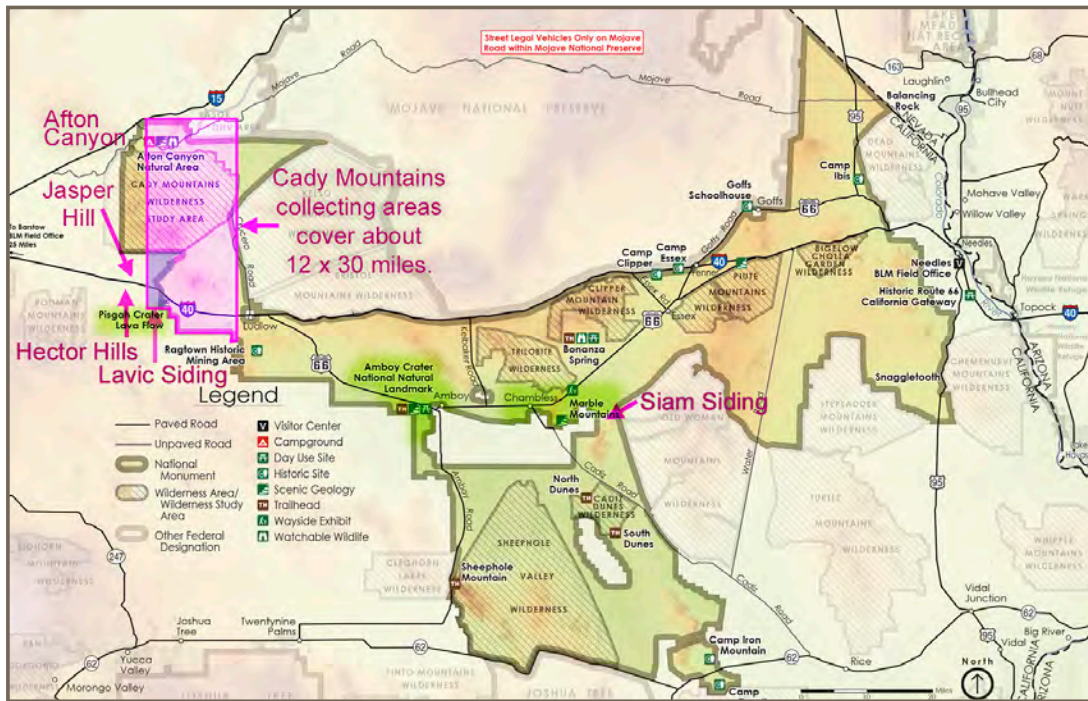
<http://bit.ly/sdmg-signup>

Planning Schedule for MTNM through ROD

Fall/Winter 2022	Notice of Intent
Summer 2023	Draft MMP / EA
Winter 2023	Proposed MMP / Final EA
Summer 2024	Approved MMP / ROD

and minerals, which are regarded as less fragile and less rare than non-vertebrate paleontological resources. (For a review of the PRPA rule and its potential implications for Rockhounds, see **A. Hoekstra’s** article from September 2022: https://bit.ly/PRPA-rule_202209. Consider the Bureau’s responses to public comments and changes the agency made to the Act as a result (34 pp.): <https://bit.ly/FR-PRPA-20220802>)

Hobby collecting is not a wantonly destructive activity. Hobby collecting is not incompatible with conservation values regarding habitat for flora and fauna.



Many longtime collecting areas are concentrated in the Cady Mountains (highlighted) in the Mojave Trails National Monument, but there are many other collecting areas elsewhere in the monument, e.g., Siam Siding. Others are located just outside but near the monument's boundaries. Source: BLM, with annotations by L. Thoresen.

Rockhounds enjoy the desert for its beauty, not only for its rocks. Responsible hobbyists adhere to the **AFMS code of ethics** (https://www.amfed.org/land_use_policy.htm).

Recognize the customs and culture of the land concerning rockhounding in the Mojave Desert.

Many rock collecting areas located within the footprint of the Desert District and which are now part of the monument have been popular dating back to the 1930s and '40s (earlier for some localities).

Incorporate language that codifies longstanding historical practice in the area between BLM and Rockhounds, which BLM has acknowledged exists.

Existing travelways including primary and secondary roads/trails, should be preserved. Access to collecting areas should not be restricted by gates and fences including secondary roads. Staging areas should be available. Access means that reaching a collecting site should not require hiking further than 1/4 mile from a staging/parking area.

Some of the historically most significant collecting areas are located in a 12 x 30 mile area in the North

Cady Mountains (see map above and a similar map at: https://sdmg.org/blmdocs/map_MTNM_N_Cady_Mts_collecting_areas.pdf).

For years, BLM has received copious input on routes and collecting destinations within the monument, especially in and around the Cady Mountains. These data should be considered in drafting the final management plan: they should not be overlooked or omitted, nor should they have to be resubmitted. Notably, data sets in BLM databases were input by former BLM geologist **Rob Waiwood** and by former DAC member **Kim Erb** (2011–2014), who coordinated the efforts of hundreds of rockhounds to collect data in the field.

Rockhounds need usable maps of the monument. We've been asking for years.

Rockhounds need reasonable notification about accessible and inaccessible areas. We need to know where we can go or cannot go before leaving home. Finding out upon arrival that a route is blocked with no explanation is unreasonable.