

Mono County Collaborative Planning Team

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DRAFT MEETING NOTES July 30, 2015

Members present: Tim Fesko, Mono Supervisors; Jon Regelbrugge, USFS/Inyo; Gayle Rosander, Caltrans; Jeff Ulrich, USFS/Humboldt-Toiyabe; Steve Nelson & Collin Reinhardt, BLM; John Wentworth, Mammoth Town Council; Alisa Ellsworth & Jonathan Fusaro, CDFW; Erin Nordin, USFWS; Deanna Dulen, Devils Postpile National Monument

Members absent: Justin Nalder, Bridgeport Indian Colony; Adora Saulque, Benton Paiutes; Doug Power, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center

Staff present: Scott Burns, Wendy Sugimura, C.D. Ritter

Guests present: Bernadette Johnson, NPS/Manzanar; Jeremy Mitchell, Cal Fire

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS: Chair Tim Fesko called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. at the Town/County Conference Room at Minaret Village Mall in Mammoth Lakes. Attendees recited the pledge of allegiance and members introduced themselves.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: Rich Boccia, director of Mammoth Lakes Parks & Recreation, noted strategic plan on projects, partners, and resources for regional district (Joel Rathje starts Aug. 4 as trails coordinator).

3. MEETING NOTES:

MOTION: Approve draft meeting notes from April 30, 2015, as amended: 1) Schweizer, not Schweitzer; and 2) add to ... grant from National Forest Foundation. (*Regelbrugge/Rosander. Ayes: All.*)

4. AGENCY ROUNDTABLE: Agencies reported on planning issues & pending projects.

5. MESOCARNIVORE WORK IN THE EASTERN SIERRA: Jonathan Fusaro, CDFW, presented a PowerPoint on Region 6 out of Bishop, where harvested and non-harvested species are managed. He mentioned land use practices, invasive species, habitat, and climate change. Obtain basic distribution data: detectability; percent occupied; and abundance for rare and harvested species. Trend data for long-term monitoring.

Elusive creatures are difficult to actually see. Remote trail cameras are used around world to monitor species. No light or sound, hidden from public within landscape. Hair-snares identify species at rub stations. Prey surveys monitor what's changing in populations. Trapping and pellet counts, spotlight surveys. Primary focus on Sierra Nevada red fox and bobcat (harvested species). Non-harvested species include wolverine, Pacific fisher, coyote, badger, ringtail, Pacific marten, skunk, raccoon, weasel, mink, and river otter. Hair-snares also get bear, mountain lion, and roadrunner. Animal detection highest February to May. Hexagons in surveys give less bias than a square. Can actually determine individual bobcats. Radio collaring looks at den sites, health, spatial and resource use. Cage traps capture animals for collaring. Monitoring species funding comes from hunter funds.

Did CDFW work with Mountain Warfare Training Center? Fusaro: Will work with them.

Public land only? Fusaro: Surveying private land is difficult, but successful with LADWP.

Anything west of Sierra divide? Fusaro: Deciding how to choose cells. Dulen noted DEPO has equipment, so maybe work together.

ID on Long Valley red fox? Fusaro: Could be pushed out of high country. Fox tracks above 11,000 ft.

6. FIRE SAFE REGULATIONS UPDATE:

Jeremy Mitchell, Cal Fire, noted road width standards changed. Burns: Highlights of additional requirements on private land: driveway width and turnarounds, surface, gates, hydrants, lettering, green belts, and water tank on property. Make sure meet standard.

Burns noted a subdivision approved for 60 lots came back through. Firesafe regulations were a challenge, so ultimately reduced to 10 lots. Lots of influence on private land development. Crosses federal land. Regulations take effect Jan. 1, 2016.

Regelbrugge thought it would affect private structures. Phase retro or just new projects? Mitchell: New. Swall Meadows on same footprint is OK; couldn't build bigger than previous structure. If expand, must comply with new standards.

Towns and cities affected? Mitchell: Local responsibility, so Mammoth Lakes is not subject to new regulations.

7. 2015 INTERREGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIC PLAN:

Gayle Rosander, Caltrans, distributed handouts defining high-priority routes eligible for funding. Looking for rail connectivity, goods movement via truck. Worried 395/14 might be cut. Livelihood depends on tourism. Final now to California Transportation Commission, vote on Aug. 27. North 395 dropped because it parallels corridors 99 and 5.

With Tesla plant, will US 6 have more traffic? Rosander: Looking at freight trips, not as pronounced as Central Valley. The MOUs with collaborative efforts helped keep 395/14. Break ground on Olancho/Cartago next year.

8. CD-IV GROUNDWATER MONITORING PLAN UPDATE:

Collin Reinhardt, BLM geologist, decision July 2012 required groundwater monitoring plan as condition of project approval. Since then working with Ormat, USGS, MCWD. Many meetings since – gone forward, gone backward. Reached monumental milestone with groundwater monitoring stations. Lots of progress, but still not there yet.

Third well near hospital? Reinhardt: Not in BLM jurisdiction. Surface leases are USFS. Just talk on third well, not on lease.

Nelson cited a point of discussion, considered third location.

NEPA deadlines? Nelson: No proposed action out there. BLM is done. Regelbrugge awaits full proposal for all-season access for clear understanding, then start NEPA for road use. Who's responsible for well monitoring, access, etc.?

Nelson stated groundwater monitoring plan is not point of litigation. Great Basin Air Pollution Control District did not have authority to require it, didn't believe one was needed. CEQA didn't show any impact. Federal decision took different approach. Not litigated by anybody. State appeal kicked back, MCWD hasn't appealed, nor have unions. Monitoring plan needed because Town was worried. Challenge, but really close. Exercise guidance to get it done. Decision allows for deep well. Ormat and MCWD likely go to CA Energy Commission for grant to fund deep well. Unclear if third well is needed.

When will project move forward? Regelbrugge stated a ruling on administrative appeal is needed.

Nelson noted appellants requested a stay that was not granted. Ormat showed interest in being good neighbor; could have been working on plant location. Showed restraint. Respect for approach taken despite background noise.

Reinhardt announced first well starts drilling to groundwater Aug. 1 for eight days, around 600 ft. Twelve days at second site, go 1,000 ft till hit 100-degree Fahrenheit water.

Regelbrugge wanted to accommodate year-round road access to minimize disruption to over-snow trail. Maybe new alignment. Get well in, be clear on access needed. Road may be required.

Nelson said once well is in, contract footprint due to no continual use.

Reinhardt noted huge equipment is needed to sample wells.

Regelbrugge thought access simple with no snow. Lots of different uses on same piece of ground in Mammoth.

9. EASTERN SIERRA VISITOR CENTER & MANZANAR: Bernadette Johnson, NPS, chair of Interagency Visitor Center. History with Owens Valley Committee in 1960s, one of few examples of true interagency cooperation from all entities. It's unique, be proud of it. New energy on Board comprised of NPS, BLM, Caltrans, CDFW, INF, ESCIA, Inyo, Mono, and LADWP; great agency representation; meets second Thursday of month every other month. Think of it as gateway to Eastern Sierra, so now called Eastern Sierra Visitor Center (ESVC).

Operates on \$400,000/yr. Cash donations from agencies, \$32,000 from LADWP, \$18,000-\$20,000 contributions from others. Hosts 250,000 people, no distinct season. July 4 issued 200 permits within couple hours. Getting information about rest of area. Intent is to market everything from Lone Pine to Topaz. New short survey by Alicia Vennos asks destination when people pass through. Action plan with short-, mid- and long-term actions. Link interpretive programs to center.

Draft design for larger sign with all logos. Buying billboard space was discussed.

Johnson has been at Manzanar for a year. Until then, didn't understand what happened there as dark part of history. Square mile has seen forced relocation. Connect with personal story. 67,000 visitors to best free museum. Needs NPS arrowhead on sign and word "free." Centennial coming up next year. Park visitation up 20%; last month Manzanar up 39%. Tracking well due to 70th anniversary of end of WWII. Ten confinement camps in place then. People in their 80s and 90s want to make one last trip back. Ready to talk about, not a big secret. Highlight centenarians, tell personal stories. Not NPS telling story, but people's memories and recollections. Have over 500 oral histories, opened new exhibits in barracks, cry at personal histories. Births, deaths, and happy times.

New brochure coming out in February. General management plan exists. Public meetings in September.

Boccia announced Tournament of Roses theme is "Find Adventure in 2016." Johnson mentioned that Manzanar will have mounted patrols.

Johnson mentioned ESVC and agencies are talking about fourth-grade yearly park pass. Opportunities for 8th and 11th graders as well. See about more than just fourth-graders. Many kids haven't visited a national park; kids just don't go anymore. Have WiFi. Interactive visit at Manzanar in next year or so. Active Facebook page, looking to Twitter.

10. MONO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN & REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATES: Scott Burns introduced notice of completion of RTP/General Plan update and EIR. Funded through grants during budget crisis. Not many major policy changes, mostly refinement. Wendy Sugimura was team leader, got money, delivered end product.

General Plan Update, which reflects work with agency partners, has six elements plus other items:

1) Housing Element was adopted 2014.

2) Land Use Element: Regulates land uses, also serves as zoning code. Mono is only jurisdiction in CA that integrates zoning into General Plan. Updates to Area Plans are based on RPAC review. Conway Ranch Specific Plan repealed, 155 acres re-designated as open space plus three single-family residences. Resource Efficiency Plan designed to reduce impacts and consumption of resources. Multi-modal policies.

3) Circulation Element: New policies related to D-395. Regional Transportation Plan: Largely focuses on multi-modal transportation, transit, pieces underway long time such as where growth should occur, trails system, bike transportation plan.

4) Safety Element: Legal updates, new fire regulations.

5) Noise Element: Legal updates plus noise regulations.

6) Conservation/Open Space Element: Contract biologist did assessment of specific areas where growth likely would occur. Understanding of basic biological resource, including water policies, wetlands, and riparian corridors.

7) Appendices: Land Ownership Adjustment project report; Design Guidelines; and Low-Impact Development. New interactive map set online. Hope to convert entire General Plan to online version after approval process.

8) Outside the update is Integrated Waste Management Plan by Tony Dublino. Draft EIR covers impacts. Public outreach meetings with communities prior to public hearings will formulate fact sheets, synopses, etc.

Burns announced comments are due by Sept. 29, with LTC adoption in December.

11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: 1) Draft State of the Parks Report for Devils Postpile (DEPO) & DEPO Centennial, Deanna Dulen; 2) Inyo Forest Plan revision update; 3) CA Transportation Plan; 4) CA wildlife action plan; 4) NRCS grant funding opportunities.

12. ADJOURN at 11:28 a.m. to Thursday, October 29, 2015, at 9 a.m.

Prepared by C.D. Ritter, CPT secretary