

Mono County Collaborative Planning Team

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MEETING NOTES

February 28, 2013

(Adopted April 25, 2013)

Members Present: Byng Hunt, Mono Supervisors; Bernadette Lovato, BLM; Jon Regelbrugge & Sarah Tomsky, USFS/Inyo; Brad Mettam, Caltrans; Justin Nalder, Bridgeport Indian Colony; Deanna Dulen, Devils Postpile National Monument; Carl Benz, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service/Ventura (by phone)

Members Absent: John Eastman, Town of Mammoth Lakes; Mike Gauthier, Yosemite National Park; Mike Crawley, USFS/Humboldt-Toiyabe; Doug Power, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center; Chris Plakos, LADWP; Debra Hawk, CDFW; Adora Saulque, Benton Paiutes

Staff Present: Scott Burns, Wendy Sugimura, Heather deBethizy, C.D. Ritter

Guest Present: Karen Ferrell-Ingram, Eastern Sierra Land Trust

- 1. CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / INTRODUCTIONS:** Chair Byng Hunt called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. and led the pledge of allegiance. Attendees introduced themselves.
- 2. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Karen Ferrell-Ingram, Eastern Sierra Land Trust, reported Sinnamon (correct spelling) Meadows, 1,240 acres of privately held parcel near Dunderberg Peak, under sheep grazing 150 years, now cattle grazing. The site has aspen groves, springs, rare plants, sage grouse and bighorn habitat. It's high priority for U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and BLM. ESLT secured 50% funding through Wildlife Conservation Board. Sierra Nevada Conservancy preliminary approval would cover another third. Out of 25 applicants, ESLT was one of five chosen for funding. Applied to NRCS for sage grouse habitat, the first grouse program funded. Hope to finish this year. Allow managed grazing, maintain grouse habitat, and open public access for fishing and camping.
- 3. MEETING NOTES:** Approve draft meeting notes from Oct. 25, 2012. (*Regelbrugge/Mettam. Ayes: All.*)
- 4. AGENCY ROUNDTABLE:** Agency planning issues & pending projects
- 5. TUOLUMNE RIVER PLAN:** Mike Yochim, Yosemite National Park, reviewed his PowerPoint printout via phone. Alternative 4 is preferred. Evidence of sheep grazing in 1800s is still visible today. Restoration program will remove unused culverts. Roadside parking would be eliminated in favor of designated parking areas. Meals-only service and wood stoves at Glen Aulin High Sierra Camp would be eliminated, along with commercial day rides (conflict between other parties). A new visitor contact station would have picnic tables, trail access, and parking (5% increase). Kinds and amounts of use allowed would be specified. Acres restored would be mostly riparian habitat. Total project cost of \$66 million would be raised by Yosemite Conservancy, none from Congressional appropriation. Shuttle service from Tuolumne to Olmsted Point would continue. YARTS experimented with more runs last year. Shuttles could alleviate parking issues, but increase in bus capacity must factor into user limit.

6. INYO NATIONAL FOREST TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PROPOSED RESTORATION PROJECTS:

Jon Regelbrugge presented a PowerPoint showing three projects, one with two parts. Restoration of unauthorized OHV routes and additional 1,000 road miles are included. USFS is determining need or type of restoration needed. Blocking or disguising roads is designed to prevent use. Restoration of routes already closed would resolve continuing resource impacts on routes not used by vehicles. Resource impacts could continue, even with no vehicle use; e.g., rilling could develop into a gully. Many routes are naturalizing. Light treatments include blocking entrances, conversion to non-motorized trail, decompaction and revegetation, water diversion for erosion control, outsloping so water would drain off instead of concentrating flows, and reshaping stream crossings. Summer 2013: finalize planning, implement. Public scoping comments would be most helpful if received by March 8. Ecological restoration ranks high on national priority list.

7. HUMBOLDT-TOIYABE NATIONAL FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT: Mike Crawley mentioned possible listing of Bi-State sage grouse in September. Current Forest Plan is 1986 vintage, doesn't address newest issues, including sage grouse, and hence an amendment is needed. Public comment period was extended, but comments will still be received. Objective is to display administrative controls. Goal is to convince USFWS not to list the bird. Amendment deals with federally managed lands. No indication of effects on private land. Controversy over roads exists, as vehicular travel seems not to be disruptive.

8. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

A. LAND ADJUSTMENT SUBCOMMITTEE: Bernadette Lovato, BLM, had nothing earth shattering to report. MMSA base exchange, Adobe Valley, Mono solid waste, and Pine Glade and Tom's Place (more in public interest) land exchanges. Mono has interest in non-federal lands, and its staff serves as intermediary. Proponents could be advised to deal with land trust, within California, resource value. Lovato announced her promotion to Carson Valley position in May, so will need to be replaced as subcommittee chair. Mono has received parcel map inquiries. Word should get out to property owners that they can't play agencies against each other.

B. MONO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE: Wendy Sugimura, Mono County, announced a formal initiation of General Plan update. Grant moneys are from CA. Policy work of interest includes Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), biomass feasibility, Bridgeport visitor center facilities at Buster's Market (issues has polarized community, so will present it at RPAC meeting), and sage grouse policies/biological resource assessment. Also included are greenhouse gas emission, watershed assessments, hazard mitigation plan, and solid waste issues, including siting.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: 1) SR 14/US 395 Kramer Junction project feasibility study; 2) landfill USFWS; 3) Mono leadership update; 4) sequestration update; and 5) land tenure liaison.

10. ADJOURN at 12:20 p.m. to Thursday, April 25, 2013.

Prepared by C.D. Ritter, CPT secretary