

Mono County Collaborative Planning Team

PO Box 347
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
760-924-1800 phone, 924-1801 fax

PO Box 8
Bridgeport, CA 93517
760-932-5420 phone, 932-5431 fax
www.monocounty.ca.gov

DRAFT MEETING NOTES April 25, 2013

Members Present: Byng Hunt, Mono Supervisors; Jon Regelbrugge, USFS/Inyo; Brad Mettam, Caltrans; John Eastman, Town of Mammoth Lakes; Mike Crawley, USFS/Humboldt-Toiyabe; Doug Power, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center; Deanna Dulen, Devils Postpile National Monument; Carl Benz, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service/Ventura (by phone)

Members Absent: Bernadette Lovato, BLM; Mike Gauthier, Yosemite National Park; Justin Nalder, Bridgeport Indian Colony; Chris Plakos, LADWP; Debra Hawk, CDFW; Adora Saulque, Benton Paiutes

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

Guests Present: Danna Stroud, Sierra Nevada Conservancy; Katie Vane, *The Sheet*

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS: Chair Byng Hunt called the meeting to order at 9:13 a.m. and John Eastman led the pledge of allegiance. Attendees introduced themselves. Due to late arrival of several team members, agenda sequence was changed. Notes shown below are in the original sequence.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

3. MEETING NOTES:

MOTION: Approve meeting notes from February 28, 2013. (*Mettam/Eastman. Ayes: All.*)

4. AGENCY ROUNDTABLE: Members presented agency planning issues & pending projects.

5. INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT PLANNING: Tony Dublino, Mono County solid waste supervisor who presented by phone, stated planning is preliminary. Long-term scenarios need direction from Mono Supervisors on many moving parts and ideas being explored. Current focus centers on closing Benton Crossing landfill, but significant obstacles exist with funding and alternate site. LADWP would let Mono remain on site if not collecting materials. Siting new landfill does not have majority support of Mono Supervisors (BOS). Processing facilities for construction waste still is needed.

Mono's notion to get out of "garbage business" puts it in position of engaging larger land agencies, especially LADWP. Sage grouse issue has arisen, with increasing importance to land-management agencies. Landfill activities attract ravens and gulls, which are grouse predators. A desire exists to minimize impacts as much as feasible. Opportunity for agency help includes land, partnering to find funding for closure of Benton Crossing, agency feedback on goals and policies on future solid waste, and BMPs for dealing with sage grouse. Mono hopes to engage in discussion with agencies and to avoid miscommunication and pitfalls.

Jon Regelbrugge identified himself as the USFS/Inyo contact in the Mammoth area and would set up a meeting on its role in long-term solutions.

Brad Mettam asked whether "not remain in garbage business" meant not doing it, or not providing it. Dublino thought BOS likely had not thought it through. Start exploring options. Mono operates transfer stations, contracts out, and landfills most of Mono's garbage. "Getting out" might be privatizing transfer stations, hauling waste away.

Byng Hunt stated Mono does not want to just drop the ball. Service must be provided, and Mono likely would be involved in some way. It might mean new alternatives, more environmentally sensitive options, and negotiations with Town on needs over time.

Regelbrugge suggested looking at history. Civilized societies deal with waste, and California relies on counties or municipalities. USFS has interest that society's waste is disposed of efficiently. Illegal dumping on public or undeveloped lands does occur. USFS has policy on what it can/can't authorize. Bring options to table, such as transfer stations, land exchanges, or processing facilities. Processes occur slowly with USFS, so start early.

Mike Crawley asked if waste processing could combine with biomass efforts. Sugimura listed two ways: 1) municipal solid waste into energy (emerging technology). This is different from incineration permitting, so would require pioneering new procedures with California Air Resources Board (CARB) to regulate emissions and permit facilities. 2) Sort out organics and clean wood waste to provide to biomass facility. Depends on biomass technology selected. Regelbrugge noted land exchanges to site multiple facilities could be one exchange process.

Hunt thought "regionality" would play a role long term.

6. US 395 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS BETWEEN ROUTES 15 & 58: Brad Mettam, Caltrans, announced his promotion to Deputy District Director at District 1 in Eureka.

Mettam presented a PowerPoint on corridor improvements. Adelanto population is increasing at higher rate than elsewhere in state. Levels of service range from "fast as you can go" to "gridlock." Proposal to connect Adelanto to Kramer Junction. LA County is taking on Palmdale corridor. Issues from Kramer Junction north to Johannesburg could be addressed by options such as no-passing zones, but are on hold now. Volumes are not high enough, so need more traffic or a safety issue. Freeman Gulch split into three parts, could fund construction, Inyo and Mono paid Kern's part. The 40%-40%-10%-10% is in place. Kern County does not want a hit this cycle.

Mettam has invested 10-12 years in MOUs. Scott Burns commended his behind-the-scenes pushing an MOU strategy, quite a success, signature project.

Carl Benz (by phone) requested a printout of PowerPoint for his files.

John Eastman noted trucks in Victorville area. Driving 395 south of Little Lake he saw nighttime ¾ truck-trailer rigs. Mettam noted mix changes significantly at different hours. Trucks head to LA when docks open, and at night, vehicular traffic drops while trucks keep on trucking. Traffic Index (TI) is designed for percentage of trucks.

Burns inquired about Origin & Destination study. Caltrans relied on count stations, but some were not operational. Person in charge didn't check stations to be sure they were functioning. Need 24/7 counts along with short counts.

Eastman asked about widening 395. Caltrans could add shoulders and rumble strips for inattentive driver using road to right or impatient driver who drifts to left and passes where shouldn't.

7. BIOMASS UTILIZATION FEASIBILITY STUDY: Wendy Sugimura, Mono County, said biomass has been discussed a long time. Lots of agencies have their own interests, but overlap allows getting something done. Peripheral involvement has been shown by school districts, hospital, MMSA, SCE, and private sector. Interest in reducing wildfires has been expressed. Sometimes biomass goes to landfills or is burned on site, creating air-quality issues. Biomass utilization could help protect health and safety, promoting job growth in higher-wage jobs in generating renewable local energy. The effort needed a consultant to conduct a feasibility study on meeting environmental standards. Highly technical questions are involved.

Grant funding was received, and Requests for Proposals (RFPs) were issued. Six high-quality proposals arrived, but out of price range. Next step is to see if price could come down, or go with those within price range. Facility could be on line in about two years if all goes smoothly.

Placer County worked on its biomass last five to six years and got technology through environmental standards, but not noise standards. New technologies from biomass-generation facilities have high standards, so need to find right technology and location for Mono. No opposition yet, just agency and public support... till site selection. Byng Hunt noted biomass is an emerging technology, so do it right, efficiently and effectively.

Sugimura noted changes in State law support small bioenergy facilities, especially with woody waste from fuel-hazard projects. Previously biomass did not compete very well against solar, wind and other large-scale standardized renewable energy. Allow projects to compete against themselves, not against large-scale.

Danna Stroud indicated Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is watching projects on west side, including Placer and five others in various stages. Strong emphasis exists through State's bioenergy plan. SNC has devoted staff to this on variety of levels, looking for additional funding. It appears to be a natural for our region. Take lessons learned, apply here. Sugimura cited SNC's helpful centralized knowledge base.

Byng Hunt indicated resource sustainability is an issue on the east side.

Mike Crawley noted transportation costs and access to materials. In Utah the issue was getting to stuff, cost to truck it to a plant. Bigger issues exist here than a plant.

Sugimura stated transportation costs can make or break. Devils Postpile blowdown and June Lake beetle infested trees could be involved now.

Brad Mettam noted geothermal sidewalk clearing involved runoff that would refreeze. Eastman cited drainage to Main Street.

8. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

A. Land Adjustment Subcommittee: Mike Crawley, USFS/Humboldt-Toiyabe, presented notes from Bernadette Lovato, who is advancing to a new BLM position in Carson City. MMSA land swap has been reintroduced to Congress. Jon Regelbrugge cited 20 acres of National Forest (NF) land in Main Lodge facility into private ownership, NF to acquire parcels. USFS wants properties in Inyo (White Mountain ranger station compound – owns part, wants other part), interagency visitor center at Lone Pine (both sites owned by LADWP with reduced tax value). Value at Main Lodge parcel would exceed value of other parcels, so need cash equalization payment beyond 25%. Rep. Paul Cook reintroduced legislation for additional land acquisitions in California. “Value consultation” (light appraisal) is usually done to lock in value when transaction is close. Timeline? *Exchanges typically take three to five years. Need specific authority in legislation, another wildcard.*

MWTC: Crawley noted Secretary Vilsack signed document on base property in early March, and Department of Navy already signed it for Department of Defense. After 62 years, MWTC would acquire the property. Finalize about May 1. Notification period, but not up for vote. After 45 days, it would be published in federal register and finalized. The 346 acres involved include buildings and airfield. Training occurs on 63,000 acres. Brad Mettam acknowledged it as the oldest expeditionary airfield.

Doug Power indicated aluminum matting at airfield is replaced every couple of years.

Mettam noted flashing lights when certain aircraft are coming in affects highway; e.g., trailer house curve. Driving wheels get unloaded, and it’s a five-hour exercise to get parts out.

Crawley noted that whenever improvements were sought, Marines had to go to Humboldt-Toiyabe to document whether heritage resources would be involved, and obtain permit for the activity. If this were done, could do bridges, sidewalks or buildings. Permits for training areas are still in place.

Tom’s Place: Looking for parcels to exchange.

Sage grouse: NRCS, ESLT are in partnership for conservation work. Several activities are under way for exchanges or purchase in general area that has wildlife habitat conservation.

Conway Ranch: Buy out lands for resource protection. ESLT. Mono/Caltrans MOU.

Future chair for subcommittee: Crawley is retiring in August after 37 years. He quipped that he has other things to do with his time than report to work every morning. Crawley clarified that he’s not retiring because he does not like what he does or people he works with. He would be happy to help with transition as acting or permanent, still stay in Sparks area. New forest supervisor is Bill Dunkelberger.

Byng Hunt noted land exchange opposition by June Lake group. Would a stand by Mono Supervisors affect exchange? *Might make more difference if reelection were imminent. Two different permits, each with its own merits. When USFS looked at Main Lodge exchange, it was determined to be in public interest, with large economic benefits to Mono. Cunningham parcel is key to conservation. Redevelopment of Main Lodge provides good opportunity to remove sewage treatment system, hook into Town system. Lots of USFS benefits. Frustration of June Lake and USFS with noncompliance is understandable*

B. Mono County General Plan Update: Wendy Sugimura, Mono County analyst, cited a parking ordinance for downtown communities because outdated standards don’t support businesses. Brent Calloway has taken the issue to RPACs, Planning Commission, and Mono Supervisors.

Brad Mettam suggested contacting Caltrans to avoid getting shut down later. Changeable-message signs could alert drivers to back-in-angle parking, which is better than nose-in parking. Community meetings with design team were held.

Decrease in accidents? *Safer when leaving, or loading cars; other outcomes unknown.*

Sugimura explained the main goal was reducing travel lanes to avoid misperception of a passing lane, which left huge amount of shoulder where people sometimes drove. Back-in-angle parking is safer to exit. Hope to widen bike lane with design changes on sidewalk. Also, change is hard. This progressive design is out there, but not in a lot of places. Bridgeport is the last place to expect a progressive parking design.

Scott Burns noted that if design is successful, amount of parking increases. Mettam noted off-highway RV parking was needed, as people would pull in along curb and take up six spaces. Crawley thought reduced

speeds are safer for drivers and pedestrians. Sugimura reminded the project is not yet complete. Notebooks have been set up at businesses to record public comments.

Danna Stroud asked if monitoring the new traffic was unfamiliar. *Yes. Caltrans will intercede if necessary. Have law enforcement on hand to explain different configuration.*

Burns noted community buy-in by the RPAC and serving as a conduit on parking responses. He described angle parking as big for Mono County. An earlier corridor study indicated opportunity for solutions for downtown main streets. Mettam added that Bridgeport will set the tone, so make sure it works. Crawley thought curb extensions would add a facelift for the town, making it more attractive.

Sugimura noted angle parking spans only a couple of blocks, with ends of community available for large vehicles. Help provide direction to drivers. She saw a huge benefit in the degree of community empowerment. Synergy and cooperation allows people to talk and make improvements, providing basis for discussion and taking action. Inquiries have come in about building façade upgrades and resurfacing County streets in Bridgeport. Momentum has built for improving infrastructure and aesthetics, not just 395.

Byng Hunt mentioned a possible civic center with agencies at former Buster's Market site.

9. Future Agenda Items: None mentioned.

10. Adjourn at 12:21 p.m. to Thursday, July 25, 2013, at 9 a.m.

Prepared by C.D. Ritter, CPT secretary