

# Mono County Collaborative Planning Team

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## DRAFT MEETING NOTES

October 26, 2017

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Members present: Stacy Corless, Mono Supervisors; Cleland Hoff, Mammoth Town Council; Brandon Fitt, Caltrans; Dale Johnson, BLM; Margie DeRose, USFS/Inyo; Doug Power, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center

Members absent: Deanna Dulen, Devils Postpile National Monument; Jeremy Marshall, USFS/Humboldt-Toiyabe; Heidi Calvert & Alisa Ellsworth, CDFW; Erin Nordin, USFWS/Reno; Kathleen Morse, Yosemite National Park; Rana Saulque, Benton Paiutes; Jay Hall, Bridgeport Indian Colony

Staff present: Scott Burns, Gerry Le Francois, Wendy Sugimura, Jake Suppa, Michael Draper, CD Ritter

Guests present: Sandra Moberly, Joel Rathje & Haislip Hayes, Town of Mammoth Lakes; Mark Drew, CalTrout

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ATTENDEE INTRODUCTIONS

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Mark Drew, CalTrout, has been working with MMSA (Mammoth Mountain Ski Area) on grant funding to remove dead, bug-infested trees at June Mountain. Additional funding? CalTrout has couple hundred thousand dollars, needs partners to provide match.

**3. MEETING NOTES:** Defer draft meeting notes from July 27, 2017, to Jan. 25, 2018

**4. COUNTY RECREATION TASK FORCE UPDATE:** Tony Dublino noted BOS directed in July that stakeholders and elected officials engage Mono in wider recreation needs. Group met, spoke of mission, recommended BOS hire single point of contact for all things recreation, including planning, marketing, economic development, assisting agencies with existing assets. During budget hearing, approved set-aside of \$50,000 for position. Work with partners to secure more funding for full-time position. Internal discussions on how position would work best, but not much progress on what to bring back to BOS to consider. Leslie Chapman met in Bishop with agencies, lots of interest out there. Nobody quite certain how position is structured, how it will fit into Mono organization. Dublino focused on springtime 2018 when snow melts, hope to have assistance at that time. Midyear budget in January, maybe.

Corless cited meetings with Chapman and Town for possible partnership, also USFS Washington, DC, office. Nothing definitive yet. Exciting to think could work with USFS on totally new local government partnership. BLM's Dale Johnson attended first task force meeting, first time Mono officially expressed intention on public lands. Thanked land management agencies for ideas. Emphasized focus on what's on ground now, current needs. Trail planning efforts under way. Mayor Wentworth had discussion with national recreation officer, who heard what's going on. Mono immediately said include Humboldt-Toiyabe and other land management agencies. Hope something can be ready in springtime. Thanked Caltrans.

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

**6. MAMMOTH LAKES TRAIL SYSTEM UPDATE/LOOKING AHEAD:** Joel Rathje. Mammoth trail coordinator, creates trails focused on fun. Primal single-track experience. Rolling contour trail. Steeper

trails turn into ditches, costly/difficult to maintain. Just too steep. People travel many miles to have trail experience in beautiful place. Snowcreek looks at amenity of Sherwins. University of Oregon tracked Oakridge, OR, which had increased economy with trails. Susanville has trail access from town, with 65 single-track miles in area. Consensus: County's biggest asset was outdoor recreation and trails. Mammoth lacks non-motorized trails. Pin flags outline trail to be sustainable.

Classic rolling contour trail in Sherwins. Trail design process is fun and important. Inmate crews clear brush and split rocks with wedges and feathers, rock drill. No dynamite. No machines, all by hand. Maintenance: fallen trees, sign damage, drifts. Trail Wisdom workshop in July, presenter Woody shared experience. Invest money through education to show sustainable trail. User-created trails not built properly. Five bootleg trails around Mammoth. Trail dozers specifically built for trails. Stewardship days of new trail construction. Several ribbon cuttings held for trails; young people showed up. Trails can be ridden uphill, not too steep. Biologist Jim Paulus helping mitigate by avoidance. 150 pounds of trash at lakes, Styrofoam worm containers. Work with local shops to educate, as trash was directly related to fishing.

Sierra Responsible Riders has nonprofit status, working with USFS/Inyo to expand single track. Not asking for new roads, just single track. Currently 38 trail counters for data on where to put resources. Map for Sherwins, with NEPA and CEQA, use municipal funding on federal land. Informational signs for backcountry winter, check avalanche devices. Redeploy this season. Shady Rest Park had winter grooming by Nordoni once snow compressed. Saturday last winter heavy equipment by Ormat cut. Timing was odd, as lots of families, snowmobilers, xc skiers, snowshoers, dogs are out. Giant machinery despite solid mitigation measures. Phone call might have been enough to alert public by signage or staff presence. Supposed to mitigate impacts to recreation facilities. Collecting data north of Mammoth Lakes, non-wilderness area toward Inyo Craters. Enhance motorized trail system with better signage. Safer, more fun, responsible projects based on good data. Most responsible projects on high/dry areas, enhance and expand facilities. Water presents cultural and biological issues. Interested in collaborating with Mono, beyond town boundaries. Small county communities watching what Mammoth is doing, trail users in Crowley Lake and Bridgeport want more opportunities. Find common denominators. Deer are using trails instead of walking through sagebrush.

## 7. UPDATE ON INITIATIVES

A. **Conway Ranch:** Tony Dublino reported BOS approved cattle grazing. Sheep issues exist, so BOS not renew grazing/lease on property. Looking for conservation-minded proposal. Some comments from interested parties. When come in, engage with agencies as appropriate/necessary to understand potential environmental impacts, sufficient mitigation. After operator out there to take care of irrigation, open opportunity for next steps in aquaculture long term.

Advisory committee decade ago looking at management at Conway? Dublino recalled work done at that time, unsure of formal or legal basis and longevity. At this time no active Conway Ranch group to provide advice and direction.

Scott Burns recalled Mono pursued grants, but timing caused shut off.

Stacy Corless noted BOS mentioned RFP results, have workshop. Maybe BLM participate (range specialists on staff)? Dublino indicated BLM owns parts of Conway, so clearly involved.

Corless noted Jeremy Marshall from Humboldt-Toiyabe spoke of grazing turning from sheep to cattle. Southwest Range project. Phase 1 now, scoping in March. Maybe Marshall could provide more information at January meeting, also Mono process.

B. **Wildlife crossing subcommittee report:** Convened with Tim Taylor chairing. Agreed to focus on south county areas between Mammoth Lakes and McGee. The FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) deemed Town's airport fence necessary, so what can be done about it? Options have hefty price tags. Meet again in November. Find funding for PSR (Project Study Review) document to design one or more options to implement wildlife crossing. Corless indicated Joe Pesci is interested.

Expand to Inyo? Brandon Fitt noted biggest issues are in Mono, but affect Inyo. Herd moves from Round Valley to Mammoth Lakes.

Haislip Hayes would be happy to participate in process, already provides regular updates at LTC. Fence design is completed: 8', no barbed wire. FAA is funding 91%, pressuring Town to get it done. Working on preferred alternative, but do have to build fence. Hayes indicated deer already migrate around airport, so fence should not have impact.

Brandon Fitt mentioned Caltrans is collecting data on casualties for baseline. CDFW says could potentially impact deer.

--- Cookie Break 10:18 – 10:35 ---

**C. Mono County Cannabis policies:** Wendy Mono moving forward with regulations and General Plan (GP) changes. Separate tracks: Planning Commission approved GP policy recommendations to BOS to set framework. Regulatory pieces on setbacks, height, visuals come later. Recognize federal illegality. Caltrans questioned accidents or spills. Town also working on cannabis. Commercial activities can be taxed by local jurisdiction, earliest tax measure November 2018. State has delayed regulations to Nov, possibly December. Figure how Mono's fits with State's. Distributed six-page policy doc.

Sandra Moberly cited moratorium in effect. Sugimura indicated moratorium expires soon, could extend one year or be lifted.

Cleland Hoff thought it was harder for Mono. Giving 10 months to work on something can mean waiting 10 months to start.

Sugimura noted real challenge, as it was completely illegal before. Upper-level guidance vacuum exists. Moving timelines, moving regulations, trying to match. It's complicated to try to match with multiple jurisdictions. BOS (Board of Supervisors) is under pressure from prospective growers, especially Antelope Valley. Continue planning process anyway. Antelope Valley wants to neither lose growing season nor make mistakes can't undo.

Sugimura noted that luckily. Mono and Town do not have huge existing illegal grows. Mono can consider how to set up regulatory program. Corless saw low private land base as fortunate.

**D. Sustainable Groundwater Management:** Wendy Sugimura noted State law passed, prioritized basins. Need plan by 2022. Maybe JPA (Joint Powers Authority). 13 entities eligible to form JPA, 11 of 13 have signed on initially. Major decision points coming up. BLM in Tri-Valley identified. State opened grant funding opportunity, deadline Nov. 13.

**E. Mono County Sustainable Agricultural Land Strategy:** Grant related to GHG (Greenhouse Gas) funds for plan to support sustainable agriculture (ag) in open space and ag lands, reduce GHG. Working on identifying highest-productivity ag lands threatened by conversion to non-ag uses. Jake Suppa noted lot sizes, ability to subdivide, conservation easements, Williamson Act contracts, and development credits. Grouse, bighorn, yellow frog, etc. Inyo Mono Ag Economic Analysis focus on lease dependency. Direct economic output provides further stimulus, secondary tier industries. Multiplier effects. Employment and taxes. Room for growth. Business model has been same since 1850s. Looking for opportunities like agri-tourism (brewery tasting, cannabis). Transfer development rights and coordinate into farmworker housing help. About 2% of private land in alfalfa production. Soil enrichment could help with highly intensive nitrogen plants like alfalfa. Farmers markets create hub at central location. No state funding for Williamson Act contracts.

**8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:** 1) Housing; 2) Scenic Byway; 3) Local Hazard Mitigation Plan; 4) Inyo Forest Plan update; 5) Humboldt-Toiyabe conversion from sheep to cattle grazing, also Conway; 6) Recreation position update

**9. ADJOURN** at 11:45 am to Thursday, Jan. 25, 2018, at 9 am

*Prepared by CD Ritter, CPT secretary*