

Mono County Collaborative Planning Team

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DRAFT MINUTES July 26, 2018

Members present: Stacy Corless, Mono Supervisors; Cleland Hoff, Mammoth Town Council; Mark Heckman & Jill Batchelder, Caltrans; Steve Nelson, BLM; Margie DeRose, USFS/Inyo; Jan Cutts, USFS/Humboldt/Toiyabe; Steve Abele, USFWS-Reno (via phone)

Members absent: Deanna Dulen, Devils Postpile National Monument; Alisa Ellsworth, CDFW; Mike Grahek, LADWP; Heidi Calvert, CDFW; Doug Power, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center; Erin Nordin, USFWS/Reno; Kathleen Morse, Yosemite National Park; Tina Braithwaite, Benton Paiutes; Jay Hall, Bridgeport Indian Colony

Staff present: Wendy Sugimura, CD Ritter

Guests present: Don Morton, Mono County Fisheries & Wildlife; Jora Fogg, Friends of the Inyo; Lynn Boulton, Sierra Club; Jack Benham, The Sheet; Jessica Strickland, Trout Unlimited

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ATTENDEE INTRODUCTIONS: Acting Chair Stacy Corless called the meeting to order at 9:13 a.m. in the Town/County Conference Room, Minaret Village Mall, Mammoth Lakes.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: Items

3. MINUTES:

MOTION: Adopt draft minutes of May 10, 2018, as submitted (consensus to adopt).

4. AGENCY ROUNDTABLE: Agencies discussed planning issues & pending projects.

5. MONO COUNTY FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN: Don Morton preferred term best-practices plan over management plan. Independent stakeholders have different agendas. CDFW will develop simplified fishing regulations. How to address Mono-specific districts: Crowley/Mono and cutthroat region. Stock fishing very important, but not at odds with protecting wild self-sustaining populations of trout or other recreational uses. New attitude, new philosophy. As volunteer, wants Mono assistance. CDFW, BOS. Big step approaching LADWP, actually committed local biologist Ross Taylor. Specific agenda, but lot to give. MLC, Trout Unlimited, CalTrout (transition period).

Strickland: Stock-reproducing fish, no native fisheries. Opportunities to consider restoration. Pull together players on how to manage waters with state regulations. Biggest piece is funding. What Mono funds go to stocking, switch up a bit.

Morton: Stock funding decreasing. Four years to protect spawning brown trout in Rush Creek. Get more people on board.

Nelson: A fisheries piece and a recreation piece. Not all biologists, recreation people too. Timing is good for funding.

Morton: Mono has potential of world-class fishery. Crowley and Bridgeport reservoirs managed. Potential needs political will. State regulations create issues. Fishery south of Pleasant Valley dam possibly compromised by bass.

Corless: Funding request: Mono spends \$100,000/yr stocking fish. Not a lot of excess general fund revenue. BOS spends five or six hours discussing fish, but not likely to devote more money to fisheries. Budget decisions in September. One-time project money, not core services. Lot of demands on money. Recreation identified as a priority. Consider other revenue sources.

6. EASTERN SIERRA RECREATION PARTNERSHIP: Corless: Agreement signed, advertising for position garnered 60 applicants, closes end of July. Position housed at Mammoth Lakes Recreation. Establish priorities, grant funding for planning, implementation of projects. Integrate clean water, fuels reduction to make positive recreation experience. Balance of recreation and wildlife.

DeRose: managing money, relationships, technical skill. Keep item on agenda.

--- Break till 10:30 ---

7. LADWP LONG VALLEY DE-WATERING: Wendy Sugimura noted Mono BOS public forum Aug. 7 for points of view, efforts pursued, LADWP and agencies invited. On/off couple years. Real push from ranchers with no water allocations this year. Lots of differing interests involved. For 25 years supply was 22,000 acre-feet/yr, 73% long-term runoff. No approvals, just conversations. Lek 2 biggest sage grouse lek.

Abele: Nothing to add. Try to understand potential changes/ramifications.

Nelson: No agency recommendations, trying to understand. Allowed access/monitoring by BLM.

Corless: LADWP claims signed off on policies. Zero irrigation is its plan.

Fogg: Based on sound science. Not want irreversible impacts to habitat. Diversity of stakeholders: recreation, ranchers, wildlife/vegetation interests. Potential threat to economy. History with LADWP public awareness campaigns. Pressure LADWP to reconsider.

Boulton: Loss of wetlands, meadows (shrinking across West). If more flooding and drought, want healthy landscape. Invasive species move in faster. Come up with science to back up what think would happen. Ecosystems could be heavily impacted. Mayor Garcetti's sustainability officer's intent is new contract with ranchers for zero water. Eliminate irrigation. Must do EIR to relate to new leases that say no more watering.

Corless: Easy to get caught up in one part of ecosystem. Will have significant impact on land, not confined to LADWP properties. Not just about ranching or sage grouse. Focus on larger, long-term impacts, urge LADWP to work with us. Climate change will affect water.

Strickland: LADWP villainizing ranchers who are part of lease agreement. Nonprofit step up. Petition part of public campaign.

Boulton: Can't suddenly restore large acreage overnight. Take 500 acres, give native species a chance. Plan to prepare soil, 10-yr project. Slowly cut off pieces of irrigation ditches. Restore the land.

Strickland: 500 acre-feet distributed too late (hot). Make good decisions about water, how/when it gets out there.

8. HIGHWAY KIOSKS THROUGHOUT MONO COUNTY: Jill Batchelder, Caltrans, noted project was originally done by CURES (Coalition of Unified Recreation in the Eastern Sierra),

supported by agencies. Have 23 locations along US 395. INF (Inyo National Forest) is permit holder. Only two sites had no people there. Way-finding signage issues exist. Maintenance needed: missing displays, cracking, ADA access, broken plexiglass, graffiti. Duplicates were made of signs. Encroachment permit from Caltrans originally. Sixteen of 23 located in Mono. Locations of kiosks are stunning, displays good.

Cutts: USFS/Inyo permit holder? Yes.

Heckman: Contact Nancy Upham on signs.

Request to establish a CPT subcommittee to identify a path forward in addressing highway kiosks: DeRose suggested Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association outreach instead of subcommittee.

Corless: Mono role = support. No funding, staff to be lead agency. Provide meeting space. Outside purview. Logistically support it.

Heckman: Concern with public perception that kiosks belong to Caltrans. For ADA, maintenance, encroachment, not know who to go to.

Cutts: CURES thought need/desire existed, so USFS stepped up. Benefits everyone. Safety issues, interest in telling story along highway. Will ask Nancy Upham or Bill Bramlette.

Heckman: CURES ended in 2002.

Cutts: More information gathering.

Heckman: Get backup panels. Sinnamon Ranch visited a lot, signs in shoulder area, safety issue.

Cutts: Keep sign, replace, ADA issue.

Heckman: One overlooking Mono Lake

Nelson: Mono role for recreation person, economic development/tourism?

Corless: Convene meeting of interested stakeholders.

Nelson: Get map of where Batchelder went, take a look. Not make sense for USFS to hold permit if on public land. Different agencies worked on different panels, shared vision, general guidelines.

Batchelder: New ADA colors, etc. need review.

Nelson: Look at info or just structure?

Batchelder: Verbiage good but maybe new or different information would be appropriate.

Boulton: Caltrans look at Hwy 167, widen shoulders, interpretative signs along way?

Heckman: At Caltrans ~20 years. SR 167 is one of straightest highways, very little traffic, so shoulder widening but not interpretative signs. Maybe allotted area for pullout. Look at opportunities for scenic vista pullouts. Get pushed into highway design manual, certain requirements. Caltrans not have enough maintenance people, short-staffed in Lee Vining. Mono Vista point accumulates trash. Restrooms encourage use.

Nelson: Good idea to put out there, but how to maintain kiosks? Some should stay, some should go.

9. DEVILS POSTPILE FUELS MANAGEMENT PLAN: On October 25 agenda.

10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: 1) Eastern Sierra Recreation Partnership; 2) kiosks; 3) DEPO; 4) Town wildfire planning; 5) wildlife crossing corridor (reconvene subcommittee)

11. ADJOURN at 11:36 a.m. to next meeting: Thursday, October 25, 2018, at 9 a.m.