

**Mono Basin Regional Planning Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, April 14, 2021, 6:30pm**  
**remote/virtual meeting via Zoom/conference call**

**Members present:** Duncan King, Lisa Cutting, Elin Ljung, Bartshe Miller

**Public attendees & presenters:** Bob Gardner, Wendy Sugimura, Bentley Regehr, Gerry LeFrancois, Grace Anderson, Paul Ashby, Lynn Boulton, Kevin Brown, Margaret Eissler, Ruth Garland, Mike Light, John Lum, Ilene Mandelbaum, Phil Moores, Megan Mullowney, David Rosky, Margy Verba, (415) 516-5929, (714) 656-5710, (760) 616-4584

**1. Call to order & pledge of allegiance:** 6:31pm

**2. Public comment:**

David Rosky: Communicated with Caltrans about opening the Tioga Road earlier. Caltrans' Emily Mullin said they are trying to leverage the growing economic trend and in theory they can open the road earlier than they do but have to be able to close it quickly in the case of a storm so people don't encounter locked gates.

Lynn Boulton: Kore Mining wants to drill 14 exploratory sites immediately north of Hot Creek. The project is called the Long Valley Exploratory Drilling Project and the comment period is open until May 6 (extended until May 13); comment at this link: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=59294>. Range of Light Sierra Club chapter will be commenting to ask for an environmental assessment to be done.

**3. Review minutes from March 10, 2021:** Lisa moved to approve the minutes, Bartshe seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**4. Supervisor Gardner's report:** Attended a call with Sheriff Braun about motorized recreation in the Mono Basin; residents shared concerns and it was the start of a good dialogue. NPS will begin plowing Tioga Road tomorrow; Caltrans has already punched through to the park gate. Dispersed camping subcommittee leaders are meeting tomorrow to discuss tangible actions for this summer. On Monday June Lake community will have a Zoom call with SCE to go over a few issues like Rush Creek dam system relicensing/helicopter flights to Gem Lake/vegetation management/streetlight issues; a Mono Basin community call with SCE separate from RPAC meetings could happen if there's interest. Attended an agency call about feral horses and impacts to Mono Lake shore habitat; 400 horses were counted in the Mono Basin and there's evidence of them between South Tufa and Navy Beach. Starting May 21 Yosemite will have a reservation system like last year but will allow more visitation; residents from local zip codes can drive straight through. Attended a YARTS meeting; their financial challenges are manifesting in route changes; on the east side they're talking about cutting back service from October 15 to September 15, which wouldn't go into effect this year but would in the future.

**5. Chair's report:** Thanks to Lisa for running the March meeting while Duncan was gone. Part of the dispersed camping stewardship subcommittee. Lots of parallels between motorized recreation issues and dispersed camping issues. Earth Day event on April 22 at the Hess Park solar pavilion.

## **6. Members' reports:**

**Elin:** Attending and/or watching recordings of Board of Supervisors meetings, LDTAC meetings, etc. Watched the recording of the motorized recreation call.

**Lisa:** Attended motorized recreation call. Attended Fire Commissioners meeting on April 6. Regarding the Tioga Road, it's great that communication is opening up; Caltrans employees say it's not as simple as once the road is plowed you can open it—there's rock clearing, slope stabilization to get big rocks down, berm creation, etc.

**Bartshe:** Lee Vining Creek Trail cleanup on April 24 from 8:00am to noon. Mono Lake Committee submitted a \$250K grant application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for rehabilitation of DeChambeau Ponds water conveyance infrastructure; partnership with the Inyo National Forest, DeChambeau Creek Foundation, community members, and Mono County wrote a letter of support. Lundy Lake has been at a 20-year low because SCE is been doing gate and valve maintenance; work is now done. It's a dry year: Mono Basin runoff is between 52% and 56% of average; Mono Lake will drop a foot this year and next April 1 DWP's diversions may be curtailed depending on the lake level.

**7. Inyo National Forest update (Megan Mullowney):** Hired a new Recreation Officer who will be based in Lee Vining. Megan is working in the Ranger Station in person; don't hesitate to contact Megan with concerns or to meet. A few campgrounds may open in time for fishing opener. Mono Basin Visitor Center: ESIA intends to open the bookstore April 29 and Mono Lake Volunteers will staff a table outside starting in late May; no word on when the visitor center can open to the public. A military helicopter made an unpermitted emergency landing on Pahoia Island that they did not notify the Inyo about.

**8. Mono Basin Fire Safe Council:** Meetings have moved to the third Wednesday of the month; next meeting is April 21 at 5:00pm. Lisa attended Fire Commissioner meetings. Talked about dispersed camping, patrols, taking out fire rings. Mono City vegetation waste bin arrived today for green waste. Planning a Mono City cleanup day and a community summer barbeque. Dave Swisher submitted a letter about fire concerns about development projects on Highway 167. Mono City will soon be on water conservation measures due to the dry year. Next Mono City Fire Commission meeting is May 4.

**9. Workshop: Safety Element and Land Use Element Cleanup (Bentley Regehr):** See PDF at <https://monocounty.ca.gov/rpac-mono-basin/page/mono-basin-rpac-1>. Safety element: updating sections to be consistent with new elements and plans. Land use element: changes to short-term rentals in Wheeler Crest area, changes to camping, transient rentals, caretakers' units, RM language, etc. Prohibition on short-term rentals in Mono City is already part of the General Plan.

**10. Discussion on unmet transit needs (Gerry LeFrancois & Phil Moores, Eastern Sierra Transit Authority):** Doing outreach before allocating any state funding. Asking community if we know of transit-dependent populations, safety-dependent transit needs like doctor appointments; there's a list of criteria that the Local Transportation Commission (LTC) uses to determine if the needs are safety-related or more like wishes. LTC meets with the Social Services Transit Advisory Authority and Local Transportation Commission on May 10 at 9:05am on Zoom. June LTC meeting will make allocations to various transit needs.

**11. Staff presentation on public process for discretionary projects (Bentley Regehr):** See PowerPoint presentation at <https://monocounty.ca.gov/rpac-mono-basin/page/mono-basin-rpac-1>.

Land Use Designations (LUD) are always General Plan amendments because Mono County's entire zoning code is contained within the General Plan. LUD changes do not set precedent for other LUD proposals nearby. If LUDs were established to be appropriate at one time, what criteria are taken into consideration for changing them? Findings in General Plan amendments chapter have to be met.

Land Development Technical Advisory Committee (LDTAC) meetings are a good place to comment when projects are initially proposed. Community sometimes wants to get across to the County how concerned they are about a project and when people show up to LDTAC in large numbers it's an indication; the County does hear those comments and they can elevate a project's review process. It would be helpful if projects fill out full applications for LDTAC meetings; hard to understand projects without more detail.

County must apply standards fairly to all applicants so cannot impose additional public meetings or comment periods on a property owner without a legal or policy reason. Additional, non-required public meetings cannot be initiated by RPACs; must be ad hoc or people can call County staff individually for information. Bob offered to help facilitate meetings between applicants and the public.

Immediate neighbor of a current development project did not hear of it until now and would appreciate some kind of noticing. The best thing to do is to sign up for LDTAC emails because required noticing is later in the process than this group would probably like, but County can't require earlier noticing.

**12. Discussion on issues related to COVID-19:** Case numbers are improving and it's likely we will drop from the red tier to the orange tier next week. Businesses will be in better shape for fishing opener. Vaccinations are available to everyone over age 16. The few Johnson & Johnson vaccines that came to Mono County are on hold. Mask, wash, distance to keep us on the right track.

**13. Information items (Planning staff):** See the project updates chart here: <https://monocounty.ca.gov/rpac-mono-basin/page/mono-basin-rpac-1>. Notes on questions below:

- Tioga Inn: For the April 20 hearing at the Board of Supervisors, people can submit public comments to [cddcomments@mono.ca.gov](mailto:cddcomments@mono.ca.gov) and/or come to the public hearing at 1:00pm and comment when the Chair opens the comment opportunity. Clearing going on near Highway 120 is potentially for car chargers.
- Rea Ranch: ATV use on Cottonwood Canyon Road is not allowed per Sheriff Braun.
- Swiggum HipCamp: An addendum process was chosen because the scope/scale of proposal is small and much of it is existing already.
- Lundy Canyon yurt: LDTAC meeting video did not record.

**14. Upcoming agenda items:**

- Pumice Valley letter discussion onto May agenda, within a Mono Basin Community Plan discussion
- SCE – ask Cal Rossi to attend to discuss streetlights
- Conway Ranch – include an update on the project updates chart
- Discussion on the role of the RPAC
- Housing subcommittee
- ATVs in the Mono Basin

**15. Adjourned:** 9:06pm