

Mono Basin Regional Planning Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 13, 2022, 6:30pm
remote/virtual meeting via Zoom/conference call

Members present: Lisa Cutting, Molly DesBaillets, Elin Ljung, Bartshe Miller, Jake Suppa. **Members absent:** Ronda Kauk, Duncan King.

Public attendees & presenters: Mono County: Bob Gardner, Bentley Regehr, Wendy Sugimura. SCE: Joseph Johnson, Matthew Paruolo, Ray Pok. USFS: Stephanie Heller. Public: Sam Davidson, Margaret Eissler, Jora Fogg, Ruth Garland, Cole Hawkins, Mike Light, Ilene Mandelbaum, Dave Marquart, Gary Nelson, John Trammell (The Wildlands Conservancy), Margy Verba, (760) 709-1608, (760) 209-3018.

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

2. Public comment: none

3. Review minutes from June 8, 2022: Jake moved to approve the minutes as presented, Elin seconded, unanimous approval with Molly recused.

4. Inyo National Forest update (Stephanie Heller): Assistant Recreation Officer Eric Rios Bertado started this week; he'll be helping Jameisha develop the recreation program; they're interested in volunteer programs and getting programs back up and running. Inyo has secured funding for wild horse management but it won't come through until later in the year; figuring out what management will look like. Working with Yosemite to increase law enforcement roles in Lee Vining Canyon to deal with dispersed camping. Feeling pretty successful at Grant Lake Reservoir; lots of people camping above the high water mark but good compliance with people not driving in the lakebed. Fire season is ramping up so dealing with those impacts. Jake: Any completion date for Lundy restrooms? USFS in negotiation with the contractor who overextended themselves due to Great American Outdoors Act; trying to get on their schedule; also have to do some brush removal first. Ilene: How is staffing of fire crews going? Still not able to fully staff fire crews; ideally we'd have 4 staffed engines in the Mono Basin but engine captains took other positions; can't fill engine captain positions and can't hire full crews; have 2 understaffed engines total and have coverage engines coming to help as they can.

5. Updates from Southern California Edison (Ray Pok): Joseph Johnson and Matt Paruolo joined Ray. Matt will be taking over for Cal Rossi as the SCE representative for the Eastern Sierra. Substation update: Have to test new equipment and after that's done will start decommissioning old equipment and start site restoration. Particular interest in the road that goes through the site to the Pumice Plant; once work is done and perimeter fencing is removed access should be restored to that road; won't put a physical barrier across the road but do need to mark where SCE property starts for safety. It's unusual to have public access to a substation; will retain fence around equip for safety purposes. Will remove temporary transformer up by Pumice Plant.

6. Approval of a letter of support for a Bodie Hills National Conservation Area: Lisa drafted a letter that all RPAC members supported sending (with Molly recusing herself). Members of the public Ilene, Margy, John, and Ruth expressed support for the letter. Jora expressed thanks to the RPAC for considering this letter; it strikes a good balance of supporting either a National Conservation Area designation or another

permanent protection designation; good to have flexibility with a new Congressional representative and possible different options in the future. Discussion about whether to include a sentence about permanent protection benefiting Tribes; send the letter to the Tribes to build the coalition. Jake moved to approve the letter as presented, Elin seconded, unanimous approval with Molly recused.

7. Mono Basin Fire Safe Council: Bentley will email the June meeting minutes out to the RPAC list. Lisa highlighted that the group is doing good, important work in the throes of fire season; encouraged people to join the meetings, spread the word about the Council's work, and invite more people to join the effort. Next meeting is Wednesday, July 20 at 5:00pm.

8. Mono Basin Housing Committee: At the meeting last night the group continued to refine the housing survey and discussed forming a community housing trust. Next meeting is August 9, 2022 at 7:00pm.

9. Mono Basin Bear Committee: Bear committee is made up of Margaret Eissler, Paul McFarland, Duncan King. Finalizing text for a postcard for boxholder mailing to Lee Vining and June Lake with simple suggestions for how to live better with bears and QR codes for more information. The DeChambeau Creek Foundation is working to provide financial assistance to people for bear-resistant trash cans. Bartshe: Could an ordinance be crafted that would allow people who do not store their food/trash properly to be cited? Bob: Paul has talked to Bob about it, need to look at other ordinances and see if current ones are appropriate, coordinate with other agencies. Molly: Consider low-income community members in the citation structure; offer an option to correct the storage without expense to them. Lisa: DeChambeau Creek Foundation is working on that to make sure everyone has tools to do the right thing first and then citations would be the next level. Please report all bear incidents to <https://apps.wildlife.ca.gov/wir>; these reports go straight to Dan Taylor with DFW.

10. Supervisor Gardner's report: Today at the Lee Vining Community Center had a successful Children's Summit with County departments, schools, non-profits to talk about children's wellbeing in the community. Will be a dashboard about children's wellbeing on the County website eventually. Thanks to Molly and others who planned the event.

Board approved a moratorium on short-term rentals for single-family residences in the County; in effect for up to two years. Bob asked the staff to come back with an exemption if people are going to build two or more workforce housing units.

Been working with Hawthorne Depot to get them here for a briefing about their detonation program.

Received \$150,000 in Sierra Nevada Conservancy funds for dispersed camping effort (dumpsters, restrooms, etc.). Thanks to Matt Paruolo and Paul McFarland for getting that funding; County will be backfilling Matt's position now that he's with SCE. Received \$100,000 from Caltrans for infrastructure on their right-of-way. Matt put in a grant for OHV signage and education; hoping to hear this fall.

July session of the Citizens Wildfire Academy is next Monday: Janet Hatfield will be presenting about the Mammoth Donut fuels reduction project. Sessions are recorded on website. August session will be about home hardening and defensible space.

Kutzadika'a Days starts soon; walking from Long Valley to Mono Lake with an event at County Park.

Covid update: Numbers are going up sharply, Public Health Director believes reported numbers are 1/3 or 1/2 of what's really out there. 70% of the cases are BA-5 variant with is yet more contagious. Have had

3-4 short-term hospitalizations the last two months. In a recommended mask situation for large gatherings indoors. Vaccinations and boosters help reduce the severity of Covid infections if you get them. Call/go by Public Health for more info, vaccinations, boosters, tests, etc.

Dirt road from near Visitor Center to Old Marina has been semi-repaired. Paul noticed that the Digital 395 cable was visible in that washout; company that manages Digital 395 went down and fixed it but didn't put a culvert in so another flood will wash it out. It's still on the County's list to put in a proper culvert. Company didn't tell USFS, didn't do it properly, now working with them to address the issues.

11. Chair's report: No report.

12. Member reports:

Molly: Thanks to Bob for spearheading the effort for the Children's Summit. There's a Peapod Play Group (ages prenatal to 5 years) that will be starting in Lee Vining this Friday; hosted by Zoraya Cruz (zcruz@monocoe.org) so please email her to get on the play group list; please encourage people to join.

Elin: No report.

Bartshe: Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control Board approved a letter to California State Water Board asking to schedule a hearing to check on Mono Lake's water levels as noted back in 1994 because PM-10 air quality violations are the worst in the country. Only way to solve the air quality problem is to raise Mono Lake. DWP has already responded to the letter saying it's not their fault, it's climate change; climate change is a factor but that conveniently leaves out the fact that they put the lake in this precarious place in the first place.

Jake: No report.

13. Review and adopt resolution to meet virtually until August 10, 2022 (planning staff): Molly moved to approve, Bartshe seconded, unanimous vote in favor of adopting the resolution.

14. Information items (planning staff): See the project updates chart here:

<https://monocounty.ca.gov/rpac-mono-basin/page/mono-basin-rpac-9>

HipCamp: Will be on the Planning Commission agenda for August 18; will be noticed ten days ahead of time in newspapers and online.

D&S Waste transfer station: Received a draft CEQA document from consultant; now working on proposals for a third-party consultant to review it; no public hearing date yet.

Pumice Valley Landfill: Justin Nalder will bring an update to the next RPAC meeting; aiming to have the CEQA addendum and the item at the first or second Board of Supervisors meeting in September.

CEQA public hearings and notices are announced here: <https://monocounty.ca.gov/community-development/page/cdd-public-hearing-ceqa-notices>

15. Upcoming agenda items: Hawthorne Depot update; Pumice Valley Landfill update; quarterly appearance of all land management agencies; discussion about the role of RPAC/meeting schedule; Lee Vining skate park; Lee Vining hydro relicensing at next public input stage. (Skip December meeting.)

17. Adjourned to next meeting, August 10, 2022: 8:11pm