

Mono Basin Regional Planning Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 12, 2022, 6:30pm
remote/virtual meeting via Zoom/conference call

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

Members absent: Ronda Kauk.

Public: Mono County: Bob Gardner, Bentley Regehr, Wendy Sugimura. Public: Grace Anderson, Margaret Eissler, Stephanie Heller (USFS), Chuck King (Hawthorne Army Depot), Amy Lewis, John Ljung, Ilene Mandelbaum, Matt Paruolo (SCE).

1. Call to order & pledge of allegiance: 6:35pm

2. Public comment: Amy Lewis, Mono City resident: Commend the Forest Service on the reduction in illegal camping in Lee Vining Canyon this past summer, maybe a 90% reduction east of the Yosemite park entrance.

Matt Paruolo, SCE: Power outage this weekend from October 15 at 10:00pm to October 16 at 6:00am affecting the Cain Ranch and Tioga circuits. Maintenance outage to replace a transformer at the substation as it gets brought up to speed. Intending to restore the double-track road that comes into the substation at the completion of the project. Matt is SCE's Government Relations Manager, a liaison with local government and communities for Mono, Inyo, Tuolumne counties. Contact Matt if you need to speak with someone at SCE: (760) 851-4031.

3. Review minutes from September 14, 2022: Molly moved to approve the minutes as presented, Lisa seconded, unanimous approval with Duncan abstaining.

4. Inyo National Forest update (Stephanie Heller): Visitor Center closing October 17. CalRecycle will be at the VC closing down the project for the winter. USFS was on a prescribed burn pause for last nine months to conduct a national review of policies; hopefully will soon be able to restart prescribed burns. Mono City fire break: piece of equipment needed to mow has been on order for a couple years and now been delayed for another two months, will get the breaks mowed before bird breeding season next spring. Trees up Lundy Road: firefighters doing the work got called away, trees that were not marked but were cut are because tree cutters need clearance around large trees to be cut so others near them were cut, decision to pause the project came after the initial cutting, debris will be moved away after staff come back. Over the winter USFS engineers will be working to get a smaller bathroom that still meets ADA and snow load requirements. "Undocumented Categorical Exclusion" was the designation of the project, it's used all the time for road maintenance, everyday work, etc. Clause in it says if there are unusual circumstances or public interest above the norm you should go to a regular Categorical Exclusion, once Stephanie realized the public interest was high she stopped the project, if it happens again would be a regular CE unless it's a small toilet and a UCE would work.

5. Discussion on Hawthorne detonations (Hawthorne Army Depot): Chuck King, Director of Base Operations, and Kenneth Kyle, Chief of Quality Assurance attended via phone. Hawthorne Depot was established in 1929 as a naval installation; army took over in 1977 as a single manager for munitions. Since 1980 has been government-owned, contractor-operated. Government staff oversee 600 contract

employees for the receipt and demilitarization of munitions. Recycle 90% of them; 10% are deemed unsafe or too dangerous to demilitarize and must be detonated. Strictly regulated by Nevada, weather, weight. There are ten blast pits at “New Bomb,” six miles from NV/CA border, 25–30 miles away from Lee Vining; each pit can handle 10,000 pounds of net explosive weight. Detonate Monday–Thursday, Friday is cleanup day. Ship the munitions the day of detonation; detonations usually occur between 10:00am and 3:00pm. With cloud cover the blasts are more pronounced (one of the restrictions – more than 50% cloud cover is not allowed). Haven’t blasted in a while as new contractor took over but they have started again; it’s not seasonal. No consideration to move the site farther away; get complaints maybe three times a year. [Hawthorne Army Depot Facebook page](#) can provide some information but they don’t always know what time of the day a detonation will happen. Public at the meeting expressed interest in knowing ahead of time when detonations will happen to be prepared for scared dogs/rattling windows/to leave the area. Chuck will discuss with supervisor and security folks and let RPAC know.

6. Discussion on a Mono City leash law: Bob received a letter from a Mono City resident that felt the Lee Vining leash law covers Mono City but it does not. Put this on the RPAC agenda to get a sense from the community about establishing a leash law ordinance; have heard fear and anxiety from community members in Mono City. Bartshe: Would like those who believe it’s an issue to come to RPAC and speak up so we can get a handle on it if the RPAC is being asked to do something. Duncan: Heard from four sets of neighbors in Mono City east who would welcome a leash law. Jake: Wondering about the boundary and whether it would include community areas in Lundy Canyon/Conway/etc. Lisa: Not as simple as dogs leashed or off leash; another subset of dogs off leashes with owner and under control. Bob: Drawbacks to using a County ordinance for what is essentially a neighbor-to-neighbor situation; have only one or two animal control officers for whole County. Molly: This may be partly a function of a larger population than used to be in Mono City. Lisa: Person who calls about a loose dog may still have to speak to their neighbor because of no enforcement. Elin: Before/if RPAC will be asked to do anything would like to hear from many more Mono City community members. Bob: RPAC is not obligated to do anything since it is primarily involved in land use/planning issues. If there’s a specific dog/owner people are concerned about, encourage someone to call Bob or Malinda directly to contact that owner.

7. Mono Basin Fire Safe Council: August minutes were distributed to the RPAC list; Elin will ask Robbie if it’s possible to get minutes a week earlier so most recent meeting’s minutes can be sent to the RPAC list. Next meeting is Wednesday, October 19 at 5:00pm.

8. Mono Basin Housing Committee: This month’s meeting was a field tour of three sites in Lee Vining where housing could be built: lot south of the Community Center, lot north of the high school, County yard lot. The idea is to work toward building something after getting community input. Bob: There’s money available now so could move on something soon; would like to see projects in every community. Next meeting is Monday, November 7 at 7:00pm on Zoom.

9. Mono Basin Bear Committee: Sent out 800 postcards to residents with art from Penny Otwell and message to live better with bears, plus QR codes to link to Fish & Wildlife reporting page and learn about a \$400 per household program to help with costs of bear-resistant trash cans. Got 20 unique scans from households, only received one request for financial support with trash can. Committee will be determining continued follow up. Dan Taylor will be presenting at the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, October 18; hoping Mono County can bring local wildlife ordinances up to par with other mountain counties like Tahoe. Please report all bear incidents at <https://apps.wildlife.ca.gov/wir>.

10. Supervisor Gardner's report: Final Citizens Wildfire Academy session of the year is Monday, October 17 at 6:00pm about fire insurance, fire safe councils, and fire departments in Mono and Inyo counties.

A press release went out about the Benton Crossing Landfill closure; there will be a lot more notification. Required by DWP to close the landfill on January 1, 2023 (already received an extension). Pumice Valley Landfill will receive construction waste; there will be no deposit of household trash at Pumice Valley; there may be transfers; these are approved uses from planning process years ago. There is concern about increase in trucks and traffic. A proposal from D&S Waste is in the works too.

Yesterday the Board of Supervisors discussed the reservation system in Yosemite National Park and whether it has affected Eastside tourism. Haven't spoken with any staff about that, haven't seen data. The system has been in effect for three years and has been tweaked each time. Need a system for people to give up their reservations if they're not going to use them. Pass-through system has caused consternation. Bob is attending the gateway meeting tomorrow in Yosemite Valley.

11. Chair's report: No report.

12. Member reports: No reports from Molly, Duncan, or Elin.

Jake: Did the Housing Committee walking tour. Commented on the CEQA analysis document for D&S Waste transfer station; interesting to see schematics. Talked with Nate Reed about industrial hemp.

Bartshe: Gull protection fence will be going up out on the landbridge this winter before nesting season begins in April. Will be identical to the fence that was put up in early 2017 the last time Mono Lake was this low: flexible, small, solar-powered stock fence. CEQA done by State Parks already. Gulls are long-lived and change behavior based on predation; likely that gulls in the San Francisco Bay Area are from 1970s/80s that left Mono due to coyote predation. Great Salt Lake nesting colonies are landbridged now, Bay Area colonies are landbridged too; Mono Lake nesting colony is critical.

13. Review and adopt resolution to meet virtually until October 12, 2022: Duncan moved to approve, Bartshe seconded, unanimous vote in favor of adopting the resolution with Jake abstaining.

14. Information items (planning staff): Pumice Valley Landfill: Justin Nalder will give an update next month. D&S Waste transfer station: Will go to Planning Commission on November 17, to Board of Supervisors in December. Yosemite Gateway Partners meeting is in person in Yosemite Valley tomorrow; asking NPS staff to attend a November 7 LTC meeting and have a meeting in Lee Vining on the same day. Frontier poles and power line: Application was accepted for a Director Review, no public comment taken that day, conditions for approval will come back before LDTAC, which will be the only time for public comment. Lisa: The line used to be underground, is that taken into consideration in the director review? In a nutshell, yes.

15. Upcoming agenda items: Pumice Valley Landfill update; D&S Waste update before Planning Commission meeting; 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. (Possibly skip December meeting.)

14. Adjourned to next meeting, November 9, 2022: 8:02pm