



**MEETING MINUTES**  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF MONO  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Special Meeting  
October 6, 2011

June Lake Community Center  
90 West Granite Avenue  
June Lake, CA 93529

9:00 AM Meeting Called to Order by Supervisor Hazard, Chair  
Pledge of Allegiance led by Supervisor Hansen

**BOARD COMMENTS**

Supervisor Hazard: The Board needs to hold a special meeting on Friday (October 7) to consider and discuss a major roof problem at the Crowley Lake road shop.

- The Board agreed to meet on Friday, October 7, 2011, at 10:00 a.m. in the Mammoth Board of Supervisors meeting room.

Supervisor Hunt: A community blood drive is schedule in Mammoth Lakes on October 18, 19, 20 at the Mammoth Lakes Fire Station. People can call 760-914-0470 for more information.

**OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

Jeff Hansen: Comment about redistricting and the need to notify the public about changes in their supervisorial representation.

Supervisor Hazard: Asked the Clerk to prepare an announcement at the appropriate time in order to inform the public about changes in representation due to redistricting.

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

1a) Initial meeting of Tufa Reserve stakeholders to discuss issues concerning management of the Tufa Reserve.

**No Motion ACTION:** The Board directed staff to prepare an addendum to the October 11, 2011, Board meeting agenda in order to consider possible actions pertinent to this issue, such as appointing a subcommittee, potentially supporting a proposal that was presented to the State, and considering a standing agenda item.

**Staff Comments**

- **Stacey Simon**, Assistant County Counsel: Distributed copies of a memo she prepared pertaining to the Sheriff's Department's powers on Mono Lake. They have the same powers and duties as peace officers employed by the State Department of Parks and Recreation, although enforcing rules at a state park is not the primary duty for the Sheriff's Department. Historically, this has been a joint or shared action between park peace officers and the County Sheriff's Department. Simon also distributed copies of a memo from the Sheriff's Department regarding their role.
- **Marshall Rudolph**, County Counsel: Talked about a sample operating agreement available from the State Department of Parks and Recreation that would allow a public

agency to contract with the State in order to operate a park. The agreement gives an agency a fair amount of authority to operate and maintain the park, but provides no financial support; an agency may possibly have to pay the State for the “privilege” of running the park. Fees can be charged but only to cover direct costs; also, an agency would take on the responsibility and liability for the full scope of the operations. This is a standard agreement currently used by the State.

#### Board Comments

- **Supervisor Hazard:** Mono Lake has always been patrolled by the Sheriff's Department. The County has concurrent jurisdiction to provide regulation for public safety on Mono Lake. Expressed concern about destruction of tufa formations, and suggested erecting a barrier so people don't climb on them. The County should also consider restricted use from the water side.
- **Supervisor Hansen:** The bad publicity about this park closure must stop because it is impacting tourism. In the event of “closure”, he believes the Forest Service would be the best agency to manage the park since they own the land on which South Tufa is located. He asked for information about what the State does at the reserve and what they own. He also asked what the Forest Service owns and what they are willing to do.
- **Supervisor Bauer:** Asked about the interface between the State and Forest Service. Also, Prop 42 expands the operation agreement to allow non-profits to manage operations in addition to other governmental agencies.
- **Supervisor Johnston:** Understands that Prop 42 allows for another agency to help manage a state park, but the closure list is still under consideration so no definite decision has been made yet about Mono Lake.

#### Agency Comments

- **Dave Marquart,** Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve, provided the following information:
  - Distributed two brochures regarding the Mono Lake Tufa area (on file in the office of the Clerk of the Board).
  - The Forest Service owns about 60+% of the shoreline, and the State owns about 30+%.
  - The State currently has a joint MOU with the Forest Service regarding operation, and an agreement with the Mono Lake Committee and the Forest Service for joint educational/interpretive services (this was established when the scenic area was first created).
  - Read excerpts from the operation plan describing a state reserve and the purpose for protection. Read information specific to the Tufa State Reserve.
  - The State Parks employee(s) and volunteers help maintain the area (i.e. picking up trash). State Parks handles about 50% of the work at South Tufa and assists with trail maintenance and education. Volunteers are trained to assist all three entities (State Parks, Forest Service, and the Mono Lake Committee).
  - The only fee site at this time is at the South Tufa, which is a Forest Service fee area.
  - The current elevation of the lake is approximately 6,384; the mandated elevation is 6,392. The shoreline shrinks and expands based on the water level. If the lake rose to the 6,392 level, water may cover some of the tufa, but most will be exposed. Tufa formations are best protected under water because when exposed, they break down naturally and also break down when people climb on them.
  - Marquart works up to 1,500 hours per year; there is a full-time ranger position but that employee has been filling in at Bodie, which leaves Marquart and the volunteer corps available for Mono Lake.
  - Two years ago, the State decided that state reserves would become “natural” reserves, hence the name Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve. Mono Lake has some of the most pristine wetlands in the State.

- South Tufa is federal land with a State presence; the old marina north of Lee Vining is a State site, as is the board walk on the north shore; there is a patchwork of State lands around the shore.
- Prop 42 only applies to about 20 parks.
- Outlined a proposal that he presented to the State: Bodie Foundation would continue to fund his position and the Park would continue to operate with a reduced staffing level, with the State continuing (hopefully) to fund his vehicle; they could possibly implement a \$2-\$3 fee at the marina in order to generate their own funds. Basically, this proposal would maintain the status quo. If the Park loses the ranger position, hopefully they could have a roving ranger from Bodie. The idea of asking for funds from California State Parks Foundation is currently being explored.
- **Mike Schlafmann**, Forest Service, provided the following information:
  - The Forest Service has been working in partnership with the State.
  - Role of the Forest Service: South Tufa fee site, visitor center, deChambeau ranch, and trails; the visitor center is closed during the winter.
  - They have about 8 staff members, with 1 year-round staff member. The Forest Service is facing the same challenges as State Parks.
  - The Forest Service is interested in working with State Parks, and willing to help in a limited capacity; it is not likely they could assume complete responsibility. Also, they are cautious about stepping into another agency's jurisdictional responsibilities.
- **Geoff McQuilkin**, Mono Lake Committee Executive Director, provided an overview:
  - The Committee has been established for over 30 years. It is a non-profit and was formed initially to protect Mono Lake from DWP. They now help protect Mono Lake against other threats that might impact it.
  - The Committee has been involved in various aspects of legal action, such as monitoring the Lake level. They work on restoration around the Lake, and education programs; they also raise funds and look for programs beneficial to management of the Lake. They try to be watchdogs as well as advocates for public involvement. The Committee is composed of 16,000 members worldwide.
  - They would like to get the Park off the closure list and have been working on some strategies.
  - The popularity of Mono Lake has grown to about 250,000+ visits per year; this requires a management plan. People come to the Mono Lake information center all-year round.

#### Public Comments

- **Hillary Hansen**, resident: On behalf of a majority of property owners around Mono Lake, distributed a packet of information (copy of Assembly Bill No. 42, copy of Parks and Monuments Article 3.6 regarding the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve, copy of land ownership map, and Mono Lake Committee document regarding closure of Mono Lake and local community response to this document). The Department of State Parks wants proposed solutions, so it is important to maintain community dialogue and involvement and present a unified solution.
- **Charlotte Lange**, Chairperson Mono Lake Kutzadika'a Paiute Tribe: The tribe uses the Lake for spiritual purposes and to collect food. They have been considering how their organization could manage the Lake. Lange served in law enforcement so she knows what is required.
- **Alan Blaver**, Mono Lake Kutzadika'a Paiute Tribe: Read his letter, a copy of which was distributed to the Board. Historically Mono Lake has been an important cultural and heritage site. Access for the Tribe is becoming more restricted; the native people need to be included in all discussions and decisions concerning Mono Lake. He asked agencies to give the Tribe notices of such meetings.
- **Janet Carle**, resident and volunteer coordinator: Talked briefly about the volunteer

program. Does not want public perception to be that Mono Lake is closed since it discourages tourism. Facilities include: boardwalks, a marina/dock, a restroom, parking, and benches. The goal of the Reserve is to preserve the natural resource. She would like everyone to work together to get this park off the closure list; there could be legal questions about closing the park because of a lease with the State Lands Commission. Mentioned that there is a joint legislative hearing in Sacramento on November 1<sup>st</sup> in order to address state park closures.

- **Jeff Hansen**, resident, north shore Mono Lake: Property and business owners should be considered primary stakeholders. Everyone can agree that the community loves Mono Lake. In the winter, he provides volunteer snowplow services so people can park and view the Lake. People need to work together to take care of the resources. Historical rights need to be protected.
- **Brad Sturdevent**, President of Bodie Foundation: They are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and have been cooperating with California State Parks for about 2 years. Bodie and Mono Lake were in the same sector at one time; they are now separate units but are supervised by the same person. State Parks has used nonprofits since 1968 to help keep parks open, and the Foundation has drafted a letter of intent proposing that they assume operations of Mono Lake.
- **Urs Willimann**, Bridgeport resident: He is a volunteer and helps with interpreting. Mono Lake has many foreign visitors.
- **Raven Angeles**: The Board needs to hold an evening meeting in Lee Vining so people who live in that community can participate. She suggested a bid process for control and management of the Reserve. She presented a letter from Rick Noles, a resident, addressing AB 42 and outlining the history of park management. Noles expressed his opinion that if State Parks fails then the Forest Service should manage the Park.
- **Igor Vorobyoff**, volunteer: He works for all the agencies involved. His biggest concern is to protect the Lake so people can visit and enjoy it. Volunteers plan to stay involved; they just want a good leader.
- **John Frederickson**, Sierra Recreation: The County should get more information about the budget shortfall.
- **Gloria Ma**, Tioga Lodge: Suggested that the community change the perception of closure by using the County's tourism website. If the Board creates a subcommittee, requested that it include local community business owners.
  - **Dan Lyster**, Economic Development: His office posted a message on the County's tourism website that Mono Lake is not closed. Perhaps social media could be causing the misperception.

#### Board Discussion

- **Supervisor Hunt**: Management needs to be in place for the public lands in Mono Basin to address protection and preservation, along with a strategy addressing economic development. Would like to see a solution evolve at the local level. More details are needed about AB 42 in order to develop a specific plan.
- **Supervisor Hansen**: Uncertain about how much management is provided by the State; there is overlapping authority and this State park is surrounded by National Forest Service land (they have an area plan). The Sheriff's Department has a boating program and a presence along 395, so the County plays a big role. Believes historic uses need protection. At this point, there is no indication that the State won't close the Park, so action needs to be taken locally.
- **Supervisor Johnston**: Wants to keep all options open, including being one of the 20 State parks on the Prop 42 list. Believes the Board should first support the proposal outlined by Marquart; suggested that someone attend the meeting scheduled for November 1<sup>st</sup> (joint legislative hearing) since elected officials at the State need to understand the minimal impact of Mono Lake on the State budget. At this time, the County is not in a position to provide financial resources or take on management responsibility.

- **Supervisor Bauer:** The Park is already being run by volunteers and non-profit funding, with the County providing law enforcement; perhaps reserves could be hired to help with law enforcement. Believes the State either won't or can't solve this problem. The first step should be to get the Park off the closed list; would like to consider an operating agreement for management (the County could handle paperwork and facilitate ideas). Agreed that someone from the County needs to be present at the November 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.
- **Supervisor Hazard:** All options should be considered at this time. Suggested creating a subcommittee of Board Members to identify stakeholders, and to discuss and facilitate solutions; they could then report to the full Board. Believes the role of the Board is to facilitate discussions, and decide how to proceed. The County can bring all parties together to voice concerns and discuss ideas/solutions so the community can move forward collectively. Ultimately the State will have to make a final decision. This may be an opportunity to move away from State management and their budget problems. Everyone that has access to media can blitz the electronic world with the message that the Park is open.

ADJOURN: 11:33 a.m.

ATTEST:

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DUANE "HAP" HAZARD  
CHAIR

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LYNDA ROBERTS  
CLERK OF THE BOARD

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