

Mono County Collaborative Planning Team

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MEETING NOTES

January 26, 2012
(Approved April 26, 2012)

Members Present: Hap Hazard, Mono Supervisors; John Eastman, Town of Mammoth Lakes; Bernadette Lovato, BLM; Eric Dillingham, USFS/Humboldt-Toiyabe alternate; Brad Mettam, Caltrans; Carl Benz, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service/Ventura (via teleconference); Dave Brillenz, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center; Jon Regelbrugge and Deborah Lyons, USFS/Inyo; John Anderson, Devils Postpile National Monument alternate

Members Absent: Chris Plakos, LADWP; Donna Sisson, Yosemite National Park; Bruce Kinney, CDFG; Bridgeport Indian Colony; Adora Saulque, Benton Paiutes

Staff Present: Scott Burns, Tony Dublino, Wendy Sugimura, Heather deBethizy, Matt Carter, C.D. Ritter

Guests Present: None

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Acting Chair Hap Hazard called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m., and Eric Dillingham led the pledge of allegiance.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

3. MEETING NOTES: Approve meeting notes from October 27, 2011. (*Lovato/Regelbrugge. Ayes: All.*)

4. AGENCY ROUNDTABLE: Agencies

5. SOLID WASTE AND ILLEGAL DUMPING: Matt Carter, Public Works Department's superintendent of solid waste, mentioned still not meeting budget even after a tipping fee increase last year. Illegal dumping is possibly increasing. The Mono Supervisors decided to waive fees to government entities that encounter illegal dumping on public lands. Contact Carter directly for gate attendants.

Bernadette Lovato asked if this would be case by case, or pick up dumping if see it. Consider a generic letter for a certain time frame. Go to local transfer station operated by contractor. Look at waste to tell if it's illegal dumping. BLM employees should never have personally identifiable info. If so, it would run through BLM law enforcement. Asking for public lands free of illegal dumping, will show areas where it's happening. Within Mono charge each division appropriately, even roads or parks divisions.

Hap Hazard indicated Mono Supervisors want the countryside clean. Maybe photographing illegal dumps would give some idea of the extent. BLM noted that Inyo County waives fees. Carter replied that dumping is against the law, so wants to catch violators and publicize illegal dumping to avoid a \$5 fee. Jon Regelbrugge thought a personal call by a department head was not going to work, nor would steps added to field staff's daily patrol. Hold staff accountable. Some patrols pick up trash every single day, so figure out a reporting method.

Carter requested a quick phone call: 760-932-5453 or 775-690-2984 cell. Hazard contended that "all illegal dumping is not created equal"; e.g., tourists vs. local residents with household trash. Lovato listed items such as tires, refrigerators, washers, microwaves, sofas, and Brad Mettam added contractor debris. Regelbrugge opined that staff could encounter any stuff any day any time. John Eastman noted bad

economic times when people have trouble paying rent, much less dump fees. How to address that problem? Carter noted that town residents pay a quarterly fee, and there's been talk of reduced fees for welfare recipients. He noted that some cities charge a \$25 fee in order to make a profit. Regelbrugge appreciated the willingness to work with agencies.

6. LAND TENURE PROJECT: Wendy Sugimura described this as a grant-funded project by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, largely initiated at CPT. A final report is scheduled for Mono Supervisors Feb. 7 and Inyo Supervisors Feb. 14.

The idea is that, with the many federal and agency lands and small segments of private lands, land ownership patterns could be adjusted to make agency management as effective/efficient as possible and allow community expansion. The project started as a mapping effort to accommodate needs. Added to the mapping portion is a how-to manual for landownership adjustments. The project has been impacted by economic conditions. Under consideration are how to navigate political/agency landscape to initiate projects, why agencies are interested in selling/trading lands, ways to do that, and community policies. Continued interest has been shown in meeting and coordinating. Maybe revitalize a CPT subcommittee?

Bernadette Lovato thought the reason land tenure deserves a continuing place is to provide not only the public with a toolbox but also a baseline for USFS and BLM. The report should not be static. Keep an ongoing dialog on the pulse of the community and have a forum for relevant information when planning comes up.

Sugimura mentioned a set of recommendations to better meet public needs. The study area includes both Inyo and Mono counties, but Mono has more depth with specifics.

Brad Mettam recalled that Inyo CPT fell by the wayside, but Lovato has seen renewed interest in Inyo, especially acquisition policies by BLM. Two natural fits are planning commission or Natural Resources Advisory Committee.

John Eastman asked about private-sector interest in Mono. Hap Hazard noted that the County has projects. Lovato indicated the Adobe Ranch owner has expressed interest. The BLM is not actively soliciting land it would like to have. Hazard mentioned landfills and cemetery in Tri-Valley.

Sugimura will send a report to agencies. Scott Burns noted that land tenure was a companion to blueprinting and corridor study, but funding became frozen. Blueprint issues arise around land ownership changes. Lovato asked about setting up a land tenure subcommittee, and Eastman suggested it for the next agenda.

7. MOU UPDATE: Jon Regelbrugge mentioned Humboldt-Toiyabe had requested higher-level review. Staff came up with clauses that concerned other CPT member entities. When agreements exchange funds or services, required clauses might be needed. Data would be shared anyway, but not archaeological sites. Most data are subject to Freedom of Information Act. A message from Mike Crawley acknowledged that things had gotten out of hand. Signing MOU neither violates regulations or policies nor commits to anything that would kick it to a higher level. Clean up the draft without suggested revisions and circulate so both forests would be in a position to sign it. Eric Dillingham thought the forest supervisors should talk, as Crawley still thought boilerplate had to be included. Send electronic copy with signatures to Regelbrugge. Crawley thought it was important to participate in CPT.

8. CALIFORNIA STATEWIDE GROUNDWATER ELEVATION MONITORING PROGRAM (CASGEM): Tony Dublino noted this interagency project the past few years. Legislation in November 2009 mandated groundwater monitoring, and agencies volunteered to be monitoring entities. Mono monitors many of its uninhabited basins. The BLM identified stock-watering wells on its land and gave permission to take readings. Adobe and Mono basins are with BLM, and the Laurel Ponds and Dry Creek are with Town of Mammoth Lakes. Monitor a couple times a year at different wells. Dublino showed a map of districts monitored in Mono County. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) is happy something is being done, even though not a robust effort. Monitoring methods were described. Wells are read in spring and fall. Information available on DWR website shows levels only, not water quality. The DWR was interested in use of wells, but had no information on extraction or duration of use.

Brad Mettam asked if basins were constrained by political boundaries. No, but the monitoring effort is. Inyo could have monitored Owens Valley, but LADWP got it, and Mono does monitor part of Owens Valley. The fall of 2011 should have found groundwater at its fullest point after a heavy winter, so a

downward trend is likely. Overdraft conditions are sought. Hazard cited two wells near the Benton Crossing landfill.

9. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

A. DIGITAL 395: Scott Burns reported that CEQA is finished, awaiting NEPA. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is on top of that **endangered species consultation**. Encroachment permits and a minor planning permit in Antelope Valley are needed.

B. SCENIC BYWAY DESIGNATION: Burns recalled efforts long ago by Coalition for Unified Recreation in the Eastern Sierra (CURES). An elevated designation would open up greater funding possibilities.

Heather deBethizy, Mono assistant planner, introduced a Corridor Management Plan for 395 in Mono County. Internal staff has been working on a plan with scenic, cultural, historical, signage, and interpretive programs. She has worked with IT on GPS of infrastructure such as turnouts, restrooms, and anything influencing the byway. More information is available from Nate Greenberg, who manages data. She mentioned picnic tables at June Lake beach. Eventually input incorporated into the product would include visitor maps on where to stay, park, etc. Or motorists could travel by topic, such as mining. A Request for Proposals on a marketing plan will be sent soon. The project list is continually developing. Outreach to agencies will ask about policies in their management plans.

Brad Mettam noted that Caltrans signage is fluid and changes for operational reasons. Caltrans does maintain a signage inventory. DeBethizy is working on a resources management plan to take back to GIS. Transportation Enhancement grants on the corridor include Sherwin Grade (two) and Conway Summit.

DeBethizy indicated this designation is an economic development tool to help tourists experience the area. It has money for infrastructure and projects. She will confirm past evaluation of scenic qualities in the state designation, and information will be public someday. Dave Brillenz saw it as a good baseline inventory. DeBethizy has been looking at locations of tourist facilities and what is lacking. People are not tourists in their own towns, she noted. Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access (MLTPA) routes throughout the county are already included.

C. SAGE GROUSE: An interagency committee will meet Friday, and hopefully mitigation recommendations will emerge for the next General Plan update. The intent is to avoid listing if at all possible. Bernadette Lovato attended one of largest-ever meetings recently.

10. POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: 1) Agency energy policies and directives; 2) USFS land exchange with Mammoth Mountain Ski Area; 3) land tenure subcommittee; 4) update on MLTPA; 5) elect vice-chair; 6) MOU; 7) geothermal heat exchange systems for energy and cost savings vs. solar; 8) Bridgeport Indian Colony exchange

11. ADJOURN at 11:43 a.m. to next meeting: Thursday, April 26, 2012, at 9 a.m.

Prepared by C.D. Ritter, CPT secretary