

Mono Basin Regional Planning Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 9, 2022, 6:30pm
remote/virtual meeting via Zoom/conference call

Members present: Kevin Brown, Lisa Cutting, Ronda Kauk, Duncan King, Elin Ljung, Bartshe Miller.

Members absent: none.

Public attendees & presenters: Mono County: Jason Davenport, Bob Gardner, Bentley Regehr, Wendy Sugimura. Caltrans: Jacob Burkholder, Mike Collins, Kirsten Helton, Ryan Spaulding, Jill Tognazzini. Public: Lynn Boulton, Margaret Eissler, Stephanie Heller (USFS), John Ljung, Dave Marquart, Connie Millar, David Rosky, Dan Taylor, Margy Verba.

1. Call to order & pledge of allegiance: 6:32pm

2. Public comment: none

3. Review minutes from December 5, 2021: Duncan moved to approve minutes from January as presented, Lisa seconded, approved unanimously.

4. Supervisor Gardner's report: Lots of concern about horses at South Tufa. Volunteer manure shoveling effort was effective today and evidence of that work is in the parking lot. Bob has planned another horse working group collaboration meeting for February 18.

Noticed blasts from Hawthorne while out at South Tufa today. Exchanging emails with folks at the Hawthorne Depot about the blasts; they cited a study that said blasts do not affect communities in California; Bob asked to see that study and invited them to RPAC. They used to notify the sheriff before blasting but no longer do.

OHV grant meeting last week went well, good turnout, good input for INF and BLM to develop grant proposals. Matt Paruolo is working on long-term grant funding to get signage up but could help with signs in the short term for this season. Wording needs to be correct on the signage; need to pass it by USFS and BLM staff to make sure it's accurate. Even though enforcement is difficult please always call when you see violations, call dispatch, use monobasinwatch.com.

Bob is working to plan a citizens' wildfire committee to meet once a month about topics to get people better prepared for wildfire, defensible space, evacuation prep, insurance, home hardening, etc. Each monthly presentation would be 60–90 minutes. Goal is to reduce anxiety and panic about wildfire. Probably under the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments umbrella and be in effect regionally.

Working to add members to the RPAC. There are people who attend these meetings who would make excellent RPAC members. Attendance is robust otherwise so it's great that people attend and want to speak up. Always open to interest in being on the RPAC and appreciate the attendance.

5. Chair's report: Attended the Housing Committee meeting last night. Lee Vining Volunteer Fire Department assisted with a truck trailer on fire south of the June Lake Junction; grateful to the reporting party who called it in; call 911 if you see a truck on fire.

6. Members' reports:

Elin: Attended the OHV grants meeting last week; commend the Mono Basin locals for being 10 of 45 people there. Attended the OSV planning meeting and the Housing Committee meeting yesterday. Helped scoop horse poop at South Tufa today.

Duncan: Attended the OHV grants meeting and OSV planning meeting. Will send Fire Safe Council minutes and Mono City Fire Commissioners minutes to Bentley to be included in RPAC documents. Received three separate complaints from residents in Mono City being chased/harassed by off-leash dogs while walking/biking; no leash ordinance in Mono City like there is in Lee Vining. Three mountain lion attacks in the last month (dog injuries and chicken coop break-in); there are four mountain lions in the area but only one has taken an interest in Mono City.

Bartshe: Update about the Visitor Center from the Mono Lake Committee: Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board is involved and unhappy that CalRecycle filed no permits and did not complete CEQA for the work. Working on finding a settlement with CalRecycle; involves INF, Kutzadika'a Tribe, Lahontan. Moving slowly but winds are blowing in a favorable direction for a solution to an extremely poorly executed project; example of how a state agency should never operate. Also out at South Tufa today for volunteer poop scoop effort, good showing, good collaboration with USFS. South Tufa is being lost as we speak. USFS will not be able to do anything about horses unless the community collaborates; this is all of our issue. 100 horses were at Rush Creek recently; they're also heading for DeChambeau Ponds along Highway 167; worried about petting zoo effect as visitation picks up.

Ronda: Talked to Kutzadika'a Tribe about the housing effort; support it and could help move it along.

Lisa: Attended the housing meeting, Fire Safe Council meeting, OHV meeting; great participation.

7. Inyo National Forest update (Stephanie Heller): Another virtual OSV meeting tomorrow night at 5:30pm; then coffee with the ranger on Saturday at Shady Rest 10:00am and at Sherwin Tanks 11:00.

Inyo National Forest map was just revised. Able to extend the camping prohibition area on the map to places where closure orders apply but were overlooked; includes lower Mill Creek section which is now closed and enforceable. Logistics like large boulders in the way will come later.

Working on getting the Visitor Center staffed, including Yosemite staff.

Horses: Looked into the existing law and policy and gotten guidance from Washington, DC office. Law says that when there are excess horses outside of their range they should be removed "at the earliest opportunity." Since it's already law and policy NEPA isn't required but it's not easy to capture and move horses; could start moving horses this summer. Would not be helicopter roundups; passive traps to remove 10–20 horses per week. Several prongs of the effort: immediate action and also longer-term management plan of the herd.

8. Mono Basin Fire Safe Council: Illegal campfire ring at lime kiln was removed. Dirt road from Mono City to Cemetery Road needs repairs so it can be used as emergency egress; Bob talked with BLM who say most of the road is in the Scenic Area in sage grouse habitat; if we are concerned about that road for use it will probably depend on community members volunteering to shore it up. Funding opportunities being examined. Citizens' wildfire academy. Discussion about water sources in the North Mono Basin that might be available for firefighting. New banner being finalized. Mowing the Mono City fire breaks is

on the USFS program of work for this year but it will depend on staffing. Annamaria Echeverria says new posters and signs will go up on all boards along Highway 167.

9. Mono Basin Housing Committee: Continuing to list property information for Lee Vining and Mono City. Discussed the idea of a community housing trust. Looking into the Mono County property near Community Center as a potential building site. Focusing on community survey next month. If you'd like to join the group let Elin, Bob, Kevin know. Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, March 8, 7:00–8:00pm.

10. Mono Basin Bear Committee (Margaret Eissler): New Department of Fish & Wildlife staff position has been created and filled by Dan Taylor. Dan introduces himself; will be working on getting people to stop feeding wildlife, getting info to locals and visitors to not attract wildlife on property, store trash appropriately. People can contact Dan when needed for larger animal interactions (bears, lions, bobcats, etc). Email: daniel.taylor@wildlife.ca.gov. Phone: (760) 937-2226.

11. Update on Lee Vining Main Street Project (Caltrans): Jill Tognazzini is the project manager for the Lee Vining Pavement Rehab Project (\$23 million available for the project), which is a “once in a generation” project. Michael Collins, engineer, described the two options available for the pavement rehab: “Mill and fill” removes 2–4 inches of top pavement and replaces it to extend the life of the road by 20–30 years. Full depth reclamation takes out the whole depth of the road, regrades it, and rebuilds it to match new construction created around it, would last 40 years without major work needed. See the Caltrans website for details: <https://deavpm.wixsite.com/d9lvrehab>. Since comments on pavement options are due before next RPAC meeting, discussion about a special RPAC meeting so others in the community can hear about the project; will meet Thursday, February 17 at 5:30pm.

12. Review and adopt resolution to meet virtually until March 9, 2022 (planning staff): Duncan moved to approve, Bartshe seconded, unanimous vote in favor of adopting the resolution.

13. Information items (planning staff): See the project updates chart here: <https://monocounty.ca.gov/rpac-mono-basin/page/mono-basin-rpac-meeting>.

ADUs: Took feedback from RPACs about ADUs to the Board of Supervisors; Board directed that all five designs be available; also directed that prescriptive designs for garages should also be renewed.

D&S Waste: Waiting for the consultant to submit their draft environmental report.

Pumice Valley Landfill: Potentially expanding the capacity of Pumice Valley once Benton Crossing Landfill closes. Working on what environmental document will be appropriate; planning to contain any sort of expansion within the 2005 environmental document; update in the next couple of months. RPAC requested a more holistic presentation/discussion about landfills/transfer stations in the County overall.

Hipcamp: Might go to the Planning Commission in April.

15. Upcoming agenda items: Presentation/discussion about waste management and landfills in the County; quarterly appearance of all land management agencies; discussion about the role/function/viability of RPAC and the regular meeting schedule; Lee Vining skate park; letter of support for Kutzadika'a Tribal recognition; Mono Basin Community Plan – develop list of prioritized connectivity/transportation projects; SCE Lee Vining hydro relicensing at next public input stage.

14. Adjourned to next meeting, March 9, 2022: 8:43pm