

Mono Basin Fire Safe Council Minutes  
19 May 2021 (via Zoom)

Attendees: Glenda Bayless, Robbie Di Paolo, Santiago Escruceria, Bob Gardner, Duncan King, Paul McFarland, Connie Millar, Megan MULLowney, Gary Nelson, Tom Strazdins, John Warneke

- Public comment
  - Could there be a ladder for the brush disposal bin in Mono City? (Connie)
  - Why so few people on these calls? We hear details of importance and what actions are being taken. Any ideas? These are valuable meetings to listen in on. (Connie)
    - Having Minutes is helpful; Distribution list alerts those who attend; Minutes present a crossover when available for RPAC; Grassroots engagement with these topics and activity; Projects also funneled into funding proposals (Robbie)
    - When the public sees action, there will be more interaction (Gary)
    - Future grant opportunities directed at fuels reduction, with recording individual time spent on property clearing; and education (Robbie)
    - More engagement with those who don't or can't come (Robbie)
- Updates
  - Lee Vining Fire access to SCE gated areas
    - Gates still locked; Nothing moving on it (Tom)
    - Official letter sent to Cal Rossi (Paul)
      - No response until Bob spoke up, then a quick reply
      - Asked for keys to the gate; Cal's superior declined
      - Cal offered idea of a Daisy chain... lock on a lock
        - LVF will pursue, with set of locks all keyed the same
        - Following up with Cal about moving forward
    - Community decided to drive around SCE gates
    - Main ignition source for fire in the area is the power lines (Paul)
      - SCE did intensive clearing and greatly reduced potential of fire start from lines
      - Less concern for dispersed campfire
        - Roads to get there blocked; Less public use
      - Concern is access to gated areas
    - Discussion
      - Is there a liability issue regarding access to areas, for fighting fire, protecting our community... Can we hold them liable? (Santiago) [Paul shaking head 'no']
      - Need further communication with SCE
  - Mono City fire breaks
    - Mowing BLM fire break (Dave Swisher)
      - BLM without access to bobcat with mower this year
      - Trying to locate private contractor; Have brush mower for use
        - Hugo, Lee Vining, available for \$20/hour to mow around people's homes

- Will follow up to learn more (Robbie)
  - Mono City Fire has schedule for weekend fire patrols in Lundy and surrounding areas (Dave Swisher)
- New business
  - New Forest Service grant opportunity
    - To fund brush disposal bin in Mono City
    - Currently Mono City Fire covers the cost
    - Will follow up with Forest Service (Robbie)
  - County Town Hall announcement
    - 25 May, 5.30pm; via Zoom
    - Addressing actionable solutions for dispersed camping for this year
  - Sheriff non-emergency number for reporting violations
    - 760-932-7549 ext.7
    - If see camping or other activities where not allowed, call and dispatch will take responsibility to filter calls to agency that needs contacting (i.e., Sheriff; BLM; Forest Service; DWP)
    - 911 is for emergencies but can also be called for non-emergencies
  - Inyo National Forest and BLM fire restrictions beginning Monday 24 May (Bob)
    - Sheriff may align County restrictions with this Order by 1 June
    - May also ban private residence outdoor fires
- MBFSC letter of support for CalFire grant proposal
  - Proposal submitted by Holly Alpert, Whitebark Institute [see April Minutes for details; [fire.ca.gov/grants/fire-prevention-grants](https://fire.ca.gov/grants/fire-prevention-grants)]
    - Regional education plan for fire safety
    - Fuels reduction in Mono City
- Status of dispersed camping measures for Lundy Canyon
  - Email from Reif Lawson: Dispersed camping allowed outside of Scenic Area; Make conscious effort to desist actions preventing camping in allowed areas (Robbie)
  - Discussion
    - Closure Order, written in 1992 or 1993, doesn't allow for dispersed camping in the upper canyon, where the developed camping sites are located (Megan)
      - Currently, there is need for attention to renewing the Order, and give thought to including the whole canyon
      - Resource values and risk have changed; Use patterns have changed with the developed area
    - Generally speaking, there is no provision for dispersed camping where there are developed sites, or where there are values at risk (e.g., right up against a community)
    - Mono Basin Scenic Area Comprehensive Management Program shows that dispersed camping is allowed outside of the development zone

- Will propose to extend the boundary and put on the incoming Ranger's radar; Get order refreshed by July or August; Will need to look into more
- Area in question is within the scenic area and within the developed zone (Paul)
  - Could extend the designated developed rec closure... Also a moot point, as already in Scenic Area closure
  - And, the Closure Order enabling the Scenic Area Management Plan may have already lapsed
- Developed area closure in Lundy Canyon extends down to the gate, as a clear demarcation
  - Closure Order for the Scenic Area as a whole takes care of this problem and others
  - Clears up ambiguity out there, and allows for policies and orders to be put back in place for enforcement
  - For educational purposes, areas should be understood as closed to dispersed camping
  - Hope the Forest Service will support continuity to go forward with educational pieces identifying where long term closures have been in place and understood by lots of different people even if the background paperwork wasn't kept up on
- What is the policy on dispersed camping in an area with a developed campground? (Bob)
  - Not official policy; Commonly understood that the agency that manages an area doesn't allow for dispersed camping; Scenic Area Management Plan relates that dispersed camping is not appropriate around developed areas (Megan)
- Day-use spots saw camping last year, and the 'No Camping' signs torn down. How does this get enforced? (Connie)
  - County enforces these spots and can get more signs there, as part of the dispersed camping signage effort this summer (Paul)
- Fire safety banner
  - At Tioga Green for northbound traffic
  - Think about a new location down the line
    - Some wear suggests new banner for next season
      - Bigger lettering to make it more readable; Maybe change design
  - Scouting other locations (Bob)
    - Check in with SCE for other areas; Maybe truck at Mono Vista RV Park (Robbie)
- Campfire safety flier
  - Sent around via email; Send feedback to Robbie
  - Hand out fliers with firewood bundles

- People will continue to have campfires in campgrounds, and these can get out of hand; Camping in general can be a risk (Paul)
  - Could this be a bilingual double-sided flier with English & Spanish? (Megan)
    - Will translate and send to Bob for printing 75 copies (Robbie)
  - Tom volunteered to put up
    - Need 20 laminated copies to post in Lee Vining and Lundy campgrounds
  - Will need unknown number of copies for wood sellers: Mono Market; Beaver's Sporting Goods; Mobil Mart & Deli
    - Get translation to Bob and he will print out 75
    - When run out, Beaver's can copy and hand out more
  - Would love to see more of the Forest Service sign, 'Before you light it, be ready to fight it'. Something to post next to the FSC flier. (Connie)
    - Will follow up (Megan)
- Social media, website & Additional exposure for FSC
  - Something on the County site with mention of the Fire Safe Council, meeting info, and how to contact them (Robbie)
    - Will follow up (Bob)
  - Created a MBFSC Facebook page (Robbie)
    - Not much there yet; Might look into Instagram
  - Website
    - Will work with Chance for revisions and updates
    - Work on providing exposure for website and social media on the appropriate platform
- Home hardening workshop
  - In-person workshop this Fall, and/or remote workshops (Robbie)
  - Need to find, reconnect, with panel of people who can talk on subjects (Bob)
  - Not only defensible space; Attention to how houses are outfitted (Bob)
  - Idea for brush removal discount; Coordinating community action (Robbie)
  - Community tree removal operation; Promoting metal roofs (Duncan)
- Next meeting to be held on 16 June 2021 at 5pm