

Mono Basin Fire Safe Council Minutes  
15 September 2021 (via Zoom)

Attendees: Glenda Bayless, Lisa Cutting, Robbie Di Paolo, Margaret Eissler, Santiago Escruceria, Bob Gardner, Alec McAfee, Paul McFarland, Joe & Annie Moore, Tom Strazdins, John Warneke

- Public comment
  - Helpful to have FSC Minutes available before the RPAC meetings (Lisa)
  - Alec McAfee, new BLM Fire Mitigation/Education Tech
    - Patrol of public lands, including North Mono Basin, to help communities & educate public about fire safety; Previously with BLM fire engine at Topaz Lake
    - amcafee@blm.gov; 760-616-4142; stationed at Bishop office
  - To Alec: Will communicate with you regarding FSC activities and actions (Robbie)
    - Would Alec/BLM consider a public group meeting about fire safety to be held in Mono City or Lee Vining? Have attended similar in Reno (Joe)
      - Yes; Send me email about what you want to see (Alec)
- Report from Bob Gardner
  - Visited with Glenda Bayless to tour North Mono Basin; Learned of fire and other concerns
    - Now have better sense of who lives where and what risks exist
    - Will move forward on items talked about
  - Thanks expressed for taking the time and listening to our concerns (Glenda; Joe)
- Firebreaks (fuel breaks) in Mono City
  - How can Mono City maintain?
    - Helpful to have MOU with Forest Service concerning use of equipment and training (Robbie)
    - Meeting with Dave Swisher echoed what John said in last meeting
      - Mono City Fire looking into acquiring skid steer with brush mower attachment, to clear lots for defensible space
      - Unclear when Forest Service will again have access to equipment; Meaning up to community to clear & prepare for possible wildfires
- Fire safety flier
  - Black & white copy to Paul (Robbie)
    - Paul or Robbie a resource for more
  - Business check-in revealed none had any left (Tom)
  - Unknown number of fliers handed out (Robbie)
  - Will check campsites for laminated fliers (Tom)
- Truck banner
  - No reply from DWP despite outreach (Bob)
  - Scout for alternative locations

- Brush bin update
  - Bin emptied following last month's meeting
  - Dave Swisher reports delay in emptying due to D&S staffing shortage (Robbie)
  
- SCE gates
  - Site visit from Samantha (SCE in Bishop) to address daisy chaining locks (Paul)
    - She had no keys for locks or knowledge of gate locations [facepalm 🤦 ]
      - Went on tour of locations
      - Requested Paul make map; Map sent that afternoon
  - Gate north of Tioga Lodge with No Trespassing sign is Forest Service land (Paul)
  - Gate on Rock Crusher Road with SCE and LV Fire locks
  - Is discussion of gates in regard to access to fires? (Alec)
    - Yes; Gates put on SCE property to control dispersed camping & campfires; In turn, creating concern for fire department access & response to wildfires; SCE unwilling to give out keys; LV Fire with daisy chain solution (Robbie)
    - Access is a valid concern; Fire emergencies permits responders authority to cut locks (Alec)
      - LV Fire does this (Paul)
  
- Update: CA Fire Safe Council county position
  - Application submission date extended to 30 September; County will submit (Bob)
  
- Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program
  - See [conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/grant-programs/Pages/Regional-Forest-and-Fire-Capacity-Program.aspx](https://conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/grant-programs/Pages/Regional-Forest-and-Fire-Capacity-Program.aspx)
  - Holly Alpert, of the Whitebark Institute, is working with Mono County to apply
  - Attended stakeholder and regional meetings, learning what they offer (Robbie)
  
- CalFire grant applications submitted by Holly Alpert
  - See April 2021 Minutes for background information; [fire.ca.gov/grants/fire-prevention-grants](https://fire.ca.gov/grants/fire-prevention-grants)
  - Programs the applications submitted for were not funded (Robbie)
    - Search continues to secure funding
  
- Funding opportunities
  - In Mammoth Lakes, SCE offering funding for defensible space & home hardening
  - FSC unable to apply for grants on own
  - MOU with LV Fire allows for specific projects to be included in funding proposals
  
- CA FSC annual conference
  - 5 October in Sacramento
  - 6 October workshop

- Contacted about possible Zoom/online format for both dates (Robbie)
  
- Inyo National Forest reopening info
  - Reopens 16 September (Bob)
    - Inyo only; Not a blanket reopening
  - Fire restrictions continue in forest and on private lands
  - No open flames; Allowance only for controlled flame with shut off; Must have valid campfire permit (Bob; Alec)
  - Effort this year for County to synch with federal regulations (Robbie)
  - LV Fire patrol found 2 fires in closed campgrounds (Tom)
    - At night, can spot distant campfires in Mono Basin
  - Campfires happening in North Mono Basin (Glenda)
  - Encountered campfire ring (not fire) on DWP land; Reported to Sheriff; Forest Service responded with “can’t do anything” (Robbie)
  - Fuel breaks in North Mono Basin? Concern with how dry it is (Glenda)
    - Ana Maria out here 3 years ago then planning dropped
    - Will reach out to Ana Maria about project and find out more (Robbie)
      - Ask to be put in contact with fuels person to save time (Alec)
  
- Next meeting to be held on 20 October 2021 at 5pm