

Mono Basin Fire Safe Council Minutes
21 April 2021 (via Zoom)

Attendees: Holly Alpert, Glenda Bayless, Chance Callahan, Robbie Di Paolo, Susan DesBaillets, Santiago Escruceria, Margaret Eissler, Bob Gardner, Duncan King, Dave Marquart, Constance Millar, Gary Nelson, Tom Strazdins, John Warneke, Jeff Wynken

- Public comments
 - Hopeful for a discussion regarding public awareness about leaving campfires unattended throughout the Mono Basin (Glenda)
 - Will provide an update on dispersed camping and fire safety fliers (Robbie)
 - Will there be a brush bin in Mono City? (Jeff)
 - Bin courtesy of Mono City Fire Commissioners and Dave Swisher (John)

- CalFire grant, with Holly Alpert
 - Robbie and Lia Webb participated in larger collaborative discussion with Holly to identify opportunities that might exist
 - Holly is leading the charge
 - MBFSC offered to review the grant application as well as write a letter in support
 - Grant through the Sierra Nevada Conservancy focused on capacity building, project planning, and starting to get stuff funded
 - Governor passed over \$500m for fire prevention and protection; with agencies now soliciting projects for grants
 - CalFire forest health solicitation focused on forested areas
 - CalFire fire prevention solicitation
 - Focus on Education; Developing community wildfire protection plans; Fuels reduction
 - Holly is writing proposals for all three
 - Attention to the first, with a two-fold approach with focus on educating visitors about fire prevention
 - (1) Develop printed materials for the region with a common look and branding with messaging about fire prevention, campfires, communicating fire restrictions
 - Fliers in fire wood bundles; sandwich boards; billboards; posters to put up at visitor centers
 - (2) In person education & outreach: targeting dispersed campers, campgrounds, tabling at visitor centers, events focused on visitors (e.g., fishing opener)
 - Region: all of Alpine and Mono counties; Inyo County west of Owens Valley
 - Grant awarded this Fall, with a timeline through Spring of 2025 (Efforts target summer seasons of 2022-24 and winter)
 - Discussion
 - Training volunteers; Adopt a campground with vest (Connie)

- Alex Ertaud, of Friends of the Inyo, is leading stewardship initiatives with roving volunteers to provide info in a polite way; Dispersed camping education outreach with Alicia Vennos (Bob)
- Important to coordinate, not to compete with multiple efforts (Holly)
- Use of social media: Instagram and QR codes (John)
- Eastern wildfire alliance website; Stories in local media a possibility (Holly)
- Mono County can have branded efforts, and from this grant its own branding of messages that aim at the same goal (Robbie)
- Lia doing research to push forward and manage social media campaigns over three years; pricing that into budget (Robbie & Holly)
- Mono City fire breaks
 - Fuels reduction is another focus of the CalFire fire prevention solicitation (Holly)
 - Working with Inyo National Forest to identify areas around communities
 - Mono City
 - Mowing of shrubs (maintenance, 3-5 year cycle)
 - Thinning of riparian vegetation
 - Ana Maria working with Gordon Martin to communicate concerns to Forest Service on need for fuels reduction above and below Mono City; attention also to fire modeling (Robbie)
 - Early Spring, before nesting season, or late Fall before snow to tackle fire breaks (Robbie)
 - Will follow up with Ana Maria (Robbie)
- MBFSC webpage & Facebook
 - Discussion of how to update and seek to maintain the webpage
 - Webpage updates can be made by Chance
 - Vision of one place, with organized infrastructure, and constant updates (Robbie)
 - Working closely with Holly to build capacity in Eastern Sierra for projects like this (Chance)
 - Need to get people together to sustain such a resource in the long term
 - Discussion
 - Focus first on things like fire restrictions, but also links to information about emergencies and safety (Robbie)
 - Work with various agencies to automatically send info to a point person (Margaret)
 - Get MBFSC on lists, and have public information officers send press releases (Robbie)
 - For latest fire updates, contact interagency fire dispatch in Bishop (Gary)
 - Challenge is how timely you want the information to be (Bob)
 - Could assign person/s to perform weekly check of agency calls & websites, and then funnel info to Chance (Robbie)
 - Attention to just the Mono Basin, so not an onerous job of who to contact (Connie)

- Chance as the point person looking and receiving info, with others chiming in about what they found (Bob)
- Work with Chance, and bring webpage changes back to group for review (Robbie)
- Working with local agencies with long term project timelines, making it easier to access pertinent information (Chance)
- Another idea: Maybe have signs like the Forest Service, indicating fire danger [low, moderate, high, extreme] (Bob)
 - CalFire education grant proposal to include a request for mobile electronic messaging signs (Holly)
- Facebook plans
 - Could the FSC have a Facebook page linking back to the webpage? (Robbie)
 - How to manage and upkeep?
 - Weekly posts on Facebook and Instagram to attract attention, and funnel interest back to the webpage (John)
- Lee Vining FD access to SCE gated areas
 - No action yet taken (Tom and Santiago)
 - Attention to gates that can be double-locked for LVFD and SCE
 - Asked SCE to remove boulders and replace with double-locked gates
 - In talks with Cal Rossi at SCE; Official request letter submitted by Paul McFarland; SCE to move as soon as possible (Bob)
- Fire Safety banner
 - Recruit volunteer to help reposition truck and banner at Tioga Green (Robbie)
 - Look into a new location on SCE land to attract attention of northbound traffic (Bob)
 - Will reach out to Cal Rossi
 - Truck should move when it doesn't have a banner on it... why at a cannabis store? (Connie)
 - Second banner across from Mono Cone on the CalTrans fence? Hess Park? (John)
 - Potential for banner locations and engagement may be of value with the education plans and branded materials for the CalFire grant (Robbie)
 - Another banner for traffic coming down the Tioga Road/Hwy 120? (Connie)
 - Will reach out to Megan Maloney about locations or an old truck
- Fire Safety fliers
 - Interest in doing but no action taken yet (Robbie)
 - Succinct messaging; not like Forest Service overload of information
 - Action item; Will create a draft for everyone to review
 - Send file to Bob for printing
 - Get volunteers to distribute (Tom)
 - Have a dozen laminated copies or thicker paper so they don't blow away
 - Could include paper leaflets in firewood bundles, as part of outreach branding (Robbie)

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- Reach out to firewood distributor (Tom)
- Future agenda items
 - Home hardening seminar (in-person)
- Next meeting to be held on 19 May 2021 at 5pm