

Mono County Collaborative Planning Team

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Members present: Stacy Corless, Mono Supervisors; John Wentworth & Sandra Moberly, Town of Mammoth Lakes; Ryan Dermody, Caltrans; Deanna Dulen, Devils Postpile National Monument; Doug Power, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center; Gordon Martin, USFS/Inyo; Jan Cutts, USFS/Humboldt-Toiyabe; Jim Donovan, NPS/Yosemite; Jeff Fitzsimmons, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

Members absent: Mike Grahek, LADWP; Erin Nordin, USFWS/Reno; Shane Saulque, Benton Paiutes; Jay Hall, Bridgeport Indian Colony

Staff present: Wendy Sugimura, Gerry Le Francois, Kelly Karl, Melissa Bell, CD Ritter

Guest present: Sandy Hogan

DRAFT MINUTES

April 30, 2020

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ATTENDEE INTRODUCTIONS: Stacy Corless called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. via Zoom. Attendees recited the pledge of allegiance to the flag and introduced themselves from afar.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

3. MINUTES:

MOTION: Approve draft minutes of January 30, 2020 (*Dermody/Nelson.*)

4. AGENCY ROUNDTABLE: Agencies discussed planning issues & pending project

5. AGENCY UPDATES ON CORONAVIRUS ACTIONS:

Ryan Dermody, Caltrans: Traffic count numbers on US 395 saw 38%-50% reduction. April data later. Coronavirus: Field staff working but single-occupancy vehicles despite GHG issue. Skeleton crews. Maintenance quicker, no traffic. Crack sealing, guardrail fixes. Most office staff teleworking. Equipment issues, lack of laptops. Construction deemed essential by Gov. Newsom, so move ahead in summer: Aspen/Walker shoulder widening; SR 108 truck turnaround site; paving Mono parking project at end of scenic loop; set parking areas atop Deadman Pass (no more snowmobile unloading on highway), refuge for snowplow drivers for safety. Pass closures during Coronavirus: requests to pause/delay, balance needs of users. Brent Green retiring April 30, no word on replacement.

Corless: Great news on Caltrans projects to be done this summer.

Gordon Martin, USFS/Inyo: Extension of closure for mountain bike through May 15, subject

BLM • Benton Paiute Reservation • Bridgeport Indian Colony • Caltrans • CDFW • LADWP • Lahontan
RWQCB

Mammoth Lakes, Town of • Mono County • NPS/ Devils Postpile • NPS/Yosemite National Park
USFS/Humboldt-Toiyabe • USFS/Inyo • USFWS/Nevada office • US Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training
Center

to cancellation or extension. Hiring of recreational seasonals off till May 24. Fire seasonals on now. One fire module per barrack, limited beds. Public feedback on Lakes Basin: Gate closed till order from Dr. Boo for campgrounds/resort to operate. Need two to three weeks to get ready. OK to recreate but Edison can close areas temporarily. Reds Meadow gate closed, no order yet. How allow public in when melt-out occurs? Shuttle not viable with social distancing. In fall after shuttle stops, parking is a zoo. DEPO has limited staffing, cannot handle huge crowds. Not sure level of opening, need protection measures in place for cleaning restrooms/sites. Management organization helping coordinate.

Gardner: Fire restrictions? *Martin: Something region-wide, nothing certain. Few fires in Inyo. Campfire restrictions in place all summer.*

Dermody: How staff fire engines? *Martin: Each module is family unit, sit in truck side by side. Not mix with other family units.*

Corless: Recreation site closures? *Martin: Concessionaire CLM will bring in hosts, set up, remove hazard trees. Gradual opening. Group campgrounds closed for year. Two-week period at time. Reservations canceled through mid-May, maybe end of May. All wilderness reservations canceled. Copies of CDC guidelines.*

Wentworth: Discrepancy on nightly rentals, campgrounds info. Get consistent message.

Jan Cutts, USFS/Humboldt-Toiyabe (H/T): Similar for Mammoth/Mono. Buckeye closed after earlier congregating. Campgrounds closed, just starting season. Westrek basing dates on stay at home, maybe June 1. Frequent cleaning of restrooms. Fire restrictions: Campfire restriction till end of May. Essentials are firefighters, seasonals week from Monday. About 28-30 employees, bring in half, quarantine. Two fire engines ready to go. Take care of each unit, maintain distancing throughout season. H/T reintegration plan repopulate office, prepare for interaction with public, still telecommuting. Wilderness quota starts end of June, maybe safe measures in place by then. Shorthanded in recreation program related to seasonals, hiring process challenging. Bring in one for restrooms. Want to not close toilets. Lots of work to happen.

Wentworth: Protocols same as Gordon's? *Cutts: Expect direction/guidelines from WA office on how to go back to work. Martin and Cutts already coordinating. Best to be consistent. Wilderness permits different even before Coronavirus.*

Corless: Mono has helped H/T with restrooms, hope having same conversations. Update to BOS. *Cutts: Reach out to Matt Paruolo, Mono.*

Steve Nelson, BLM: At risk of broken record, most of office into telework status week prior to Governor's directive, then all staff except law enforcement. Quite transition to provide service to public. Got State director for closure order on recreation site, big push from Eastern Sierra. Crowley already closed. Hot springs in Long Valley with gated access. Biggest outcry from Bridgeport related to Travertine hot springs. Help from Mono sheriff, H/T, Caltrans, Mono roads. Got hard closure in place within hours. Partners super helpful. Assistance from agencies to help people make good choices. Alabama Hills closure on scenic area driven by time of year when super popular on Easter break, group camping, things not helpful to anybody.

Focused on fire readiness, permanent firefighters teleworking. Career seasonals on quite some time. Planning for seasonals next Monday. Own room, own bathroom. No transient firefighters moving in. Moving target, learning a lot. Challenging new situation. Coronavirus invisible. Group things comes with fire. Large fire incident involves groups. Hope not, but hope is not really a plan. Aggressive suppression program outside traditional fire season but now it's here all year. Common goal, same mission. Hit initial attack really hard. Big unknown when module goes down, someone gets sick. Highest confidence in firefighters, consummate professionals, high degree personal responsibility. Kind of like a family. Stay connected with EOC (Emergency Operations Center) in both counties. No opening plans but

overreaching message is same: coordination, respect of State and local orders. Somewhat easier than USFS because fewer facilities. How will Inyo and Mono counties approach? Not on/off switch, more of a dial. Complex situations not black and white but dynamic. Different fire order now: statewide good for five years. Never had before. Sets standard on some things captured in seasonal fire prevention order. Not preclude campfires yet. Clearances, tools at campfires. Similar to Nevada BLM. Fire resource response restrictions. At least five weeks earlier than average, late May early June. Ban campfires in dispersed areas.

Gardner: Dispersed camping BLM, Inyo, H/T. Consistent policy across region. *Nelson: H/T more restrictive*

Wentworth: Sustainable Partnership previewing webpage of closures across Inyo, Mono, Alpine. One place to find all closures. *Nelson: Focus on Alabama Hills now. Good news is huge strides related to sage grouse conservation. Committed partners, solid funding. Long Valley coming out of couple-year trough despite weaker counts effort. Not going to list species. Thanks to all participants.*

Jim Donovan, NPS/Yosemite: In for Kathleen Morse, who is at another meeting. Yosemite closed March 20, concession staff sharing quarters, cooking facilities. 90% laid off. Potential cases, working closely with public health services. Heavy demand, limited options. How manage when reopen? Delayed hiring trail workers, only law firefighters. Concerns on shared housing. Leadership team meeting twice weekly. Construction projects: sewer between Wawona and wastewater treatment plant by end of June; in fall moving toward Tioga Road rehab from Olmsted to Blue Slide, tree thinning, delays up to 15 minutes, 2021-22 lane closures for asphalt work, night work delays; new parking areas along Tuolumne to reduce roadside parking; two feet snow on ground to melt out, park opening Memorial Weekend proposed.

Corless: Lee Vining chamber on opening. NPS fit in with Caltrans plans? *Dermody: Our portion of Tioga ready but not want people recreating up there. Gate stays closed.*

Donovan: Considering limits on vehicles entering park daytime. Just background talk. Keep distance standards when reopen.

Corless: YARTS, others looking at similar systems in different locations so maybe NPS and Reds Meadow on same wavelength.

Deanna Dulen, Devils Postpile National Monument (DEPO): Showed picture of postpile to reminisce. Webcam went down. USGS found 2-3 ft snow a week ago. NPS anticipating national direction soon, regional incident management teams. First priority is health/safety of all. Each park has individual circumstances. Re-evaluate as conditions change. Strong connection with Yosemite and its public health officials. DEPO has crowded shuttles, all line up at restrooms, at trail. How handle social distancing? Employee housing. Shared restrooms, kitchens. Reduce staff, bring on June 8. If no housing, can't work for DEPO. Typically takes three weeks to open facilities. Quite a few mid-June to July openings last decade. Cold, shady, dark canyon we all love. Two high-priority construction projects: 100,000-gal water tank has rust, tweaking chlorine levels. Smaller tank to come. Best water source in valley. Also, wastewater pumped to Rainbow Falls trailhead. USFS took out flush toilets, put in vault toilets. Concentrated visitation. No handwashing available. Replace in two years. Flush toilets in day-use area. Rebuild wastewater system. Leach field at overnight parking. Lots of planning, engineering. Funding to replace 2020-21. Cannot open campgrounds till complete wastewater issue resolved, probably years before opens. Environmental outreach to public. Best way to prioritize visitor safety with modified operations. Very different from anything before.

Jeff Fitzsimmons, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board: South Lake Tahoe, Victorville offices staffed with teleworking. Responding to emails within 48 hours, usually

same day. Inspections maintaining social distancing. Remote inspections. Response fluid with current situation. Constantly making changes.

Sandra Moberly, Town of Mammoth Lakes: Working on recommendations to reopen businesses. Fire Chief Frievalt will release May 11. Businesses know how to reopen. Restore consumer confidence. Town Council approved rental assistance program, managed by Mammoth Lakes Housing, up to \$500/mo supplement. Canceled July 4 celebrations. Looking at alternatives. Town purchased Shady Rest parcel, contract with development partner on plan for site. Applied for \$20 million noncompetitive grant, likely to get.

Wentworth: Governor's directives on reopening?

Wendy Sugimura, Mono Community Development: Uncertainty on applying regulations on public health orders. No hard/fast rules, educational/social responsibility instead of hard system. Keep everyone safe, personal life choices. Things not slowed down, planning applications coming in. Tioga Inn Specific Plan approved by Planning Commission, to BOS in future. Building Division active. Construction projects identified as essential. Strict inspections, nobody on site, just plans. Most are cooperative.

Bob Gardner, Mono Supervisors: Get rules out to businesses on reopening. Available so can be ready to go when orders are lifted.

Stacy Corless, Mono Supervisors: Bright spot is civic center for all county departments. On track to move Sierra Center Mall during May. Start Minaret Village Mall in June. Maybe grand opening in July. May 5 BOS update on Long Valley ranch leases from LADWP. Went from concern two weeks ago to get open for summer.

Sandy Hogan, Local Transportation Commission: Two things: 1) CD's last day, can't imagine any of meetings she takes notes for, sad to hear not at LTC, value her dearly; and 2) Hogan keeps track of CPT, values partnerships. Deceased Supervisor Andrea Lawrence would be so pleased, idea from Beaverhead County in Montana to get this going. Carried on for all these years. Agencies had no understanding what each other did, now all know it. See all levels working together. Would be very proud.

John Wentworth, Mammoth Town Council: Echo Sandy's thoughts. LTC will never be same. Presence, charm, minutes, efforts carry going forward. Thanks for service. BOS resolution in future. Big round of applause. Celebration for all work.

6. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

7. **ADJOURN** at 10:54 a.m. to next meeting: Thursday, July 30, 2020, at 9 a.m.

Prepared by CD Ritter, CPT clerk

Dear CPT: Thanks for all the appreciative comments at my last meeting!