

**Mono Basin Regional Planning Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, July 14, 2021, 6:30pm**  
**remote/virtual meeting via Zoom/conference call**

**Members present:** Kevin Brown, Lisa Cutting, Duncan King, Elin Ljung. **Members absent:** Ronda Kauk.

**Public attendees & presenters:** Mono County: Bob Gardner, Wendy Sugimura, Bentley Regehr. Public: Paul Ashby, Lynn Boulton, Margaret Eissler, Amy Lewis, Chris Lizza.

**1. Call to order & pledge of allegiance:** 6:31pm

**2. Public comment:** none

**3. Review minutes from June 9, 2021:** Lisa moved to approve the minutes, Elin seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**4. Supervisor Gardner's report:** The Board of Supervisors considered and approved an ordinance prohibiting camping on County roads/parks/parking lots that included a discussion about finding a place for unhoused folks who live out of their cars to camp overnight like Inyo County has done. The Board of Supervisors voted again on raising salaries for at-will County employees and Supervisors; it was approved 3-2 with Supervisors Gardner & Corless voting no; Bob does not believe in increasing Supervisors' salaries without an election in between the vote to raise and the raise taking place. Mono County sent a letter to California Public Utilities Commission and state legislators saying we've had it with Suddenlink for dropping the ball several times. Streetlight replacement in Lee Vining, Mono City, and June Lake is continuing over the next 30–60 days; if it doesn't improve let Bob know. Dispersed camping at Grant Lake: over Fourth of July there were 55–65 campers but only 2–3 illegal fires, which was much better than Memorial Day Weekend; USFS is holding off on closing the whole lake to camping to see if things have improved. The National Association of Counties held their annual conference in Washington DC as a half-virtual, half-in-person event; Supervisors Gardner & Corless formed a resort tourism gateway counties working group a few years ago to expand focus of western counties to more than just mining; heard about an effort by national group Recreate Responsibly that is similar to Camp Like A Pro; Colorado has the same issues we do and have closed some camping areas saying public lands need a rest. The Board of Supervisors have returned to in-person meetings with a virtual option; RPACs and others are in process.

**5. Chair's report:** Mono City had a community barbeque sponsored by the fire department with a good turnout. Speed sign at the north end of Lee Vining is not working properly.

**6. Members' reports:**

**Lisa:** Attended the Mono City fire department barbeque.

**Elin:** [monobasinwatch.com](http://monobasinwatch.com) is a website for documenting illegal camping, trash, campfires, and off-roading in the Mono Basin. Website put together and moderated by community members. Documenting and recording illegal activity will help direct limited law enforcement where it is needed most.

**Bartshe:** The Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District sent a letter approved by their governing board (two Mono County Supervisors serve on it) to the DWP Commissioners requesting that DWP take immediate action to solve air quality violations from Mono Lake's exposed lakebed; it's the largest source of PM<sub>10</sub> air pollution in the nation; DWP has until October 1<sup>st</sup> to respond. The State Water Board

issued a draft order amending DWP's water export licenses in order to implement the Stream Restoration Agreement; once the order is finalized it clears the way for the Grant Lake Outlet to be modified to provide proper flows into Rush Creek; will implement public trust requirements for all Mono Basin creeks. Important to note that implementing the Stream Restoration Agreement does not settle the issue of lake level; the draft order calls it out to be solved in the future. Attending the three-day Traditional Ecological Knowledge summit hosted by the Mono Lake Kutzadika'a Tribe; it's well facilitated with great participation, excellent information, powerful ceremonies. Camp Like A Pro and camping map is a fantastic resource; thanks to Bob for being the catalyst for the project.

**Kevin:** Thanks to Bentley for sending a printed copy of the Mono Basin Community Plan. Current Inyo Register reports pedestrian hybrid beacon signals installed across Highways 395 and 168 that can be activated by a pedestrian; there's also one in the Village in Mammoth; cool to see that it can be done across Highway 395.

#### **7. Inyo National Forest update (Megan Mallowney):** Megan sent her update by email:

- The Dexter Fire is transitioning from a Type 3 to a Type 2 Incident.
- Stephanie Heller will be starting as the Mono Lake District Ranger the first week of August. She brings with her a wealth of knowledge as a hydrologist from the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. She recently completed a 120-day detail as the Acting District Ranger for the Santa Barbara Ranger District on the Los Padres NF. She and I have been having transition meetings to ensure a smooth passing of the baton.
- Dispersed camping: continuing to monitor the situation at Grant Lake and other popular dispersed locations on the Mono Lake Ranger District. I have briefed the incoming Ranger on the need to revise/update existing (but expired) Forest Orders for Lundy, Tioga/Lee Vining Canyon, and June Lake Loop to address shortfalls in those restrictions (e.g., the lower portion of Lundy Canyon needs to be added to the closure consistent with the CMP for Mono Basin Scenic Area). I just hired an additional staff member at the visitor center who will be patrolling one day a week in front country areas (the other 4 days are committed to visitor services at the VC and South Tufa), making public contacts and educating visitors on how to use their public land responsibly.
- The Chief of the Forest Service recently issued an "all hands on deck" letter indicating her expectation that we prioritize fire management work as we experience an increase in fire activity, severe fire behavior, and growing demands on our limited resources.

Thanks to Megan for her excellent work here in the Mono Basin, we wish her all the best for the future.

**8. Mono Basin Fire Safe Council:** Reports on ongoing projects. John & Danielle Rea attended and spoke about their ideas for their property; they are taking a step back to evaluate the county planning process/hurdles and neighbors' concerns. Next Fire Safe Council meeting is July 21 at 5:00pm.

**9. Housing subcommittee:** In spring 2020 Bob, Lisa, and Bartshe had a conversation with Clarence Martin (now retired) and Elsa Jimenez of DWP; DWP is willing to sell land for potential housing. Based on that conversation the RPAC should draft a letter expressing interest and ask DWP for all the things they'll need to move the idea up the chain. Bob is willing to send an email to DWP asking for another meeting to see what the steps are if we want to pursue this option. Purchasing property from DWP can be a phased approach; don't have to buy a whole parcel at once to make it more economically feasible. Mammoth Lakes Housing is making an effort to be more regional and may be able to assist, and eventually the County will have a Housing Coordinator; Community Development is the regulator and

therefore cannot be an applicant as well. Elin and Kevin are interested in being on the subcommittee, Bartshe and Lisa are willing to help; Bob will take the lead.

**10. Mono Basin Community Plan second workshop:** What do we want the result of this process to be? Group discussion and general consensus that no revision should take place at the moment; tackling action items is more important. RPAC members highlighted top issues and action items as housing, economic diversity/vitality, pedestrian/community connectivity (transportation issues, safety). Side discussion about the RPAC sending a letter of support for the Kutzadika'a Tribe's federal recognition effort. Bartshe pointed out that the plan would be more adaptable if it considered global issues and major changes that are happening in Mono County—visitation increases, pandemic, climate change. For the next meeting: Elin will pull all action items related to housing and the Kutzadika'a Tribe; will also draft a letter of support for the Kutzadika'a Tribe's federal recognition effort. Kevin will pull items related to connectivity. Lisa will go through action items and generate list of low-hanging fruit or quick items to check off. Bentley will reach out to Caltrans for an update on the Lee Vining Rehab Project and/or to get them back to an RPAC meeting.

**11. Information items (Planning staff):** See the project updates chart here: <https://monocounty.ca.gov/rpac-mono-basin/page/mono-basin-rpac-meeting>. Reminder: RPAC is not a public comment forum; these updates are for informational purposes only.

- Hip Camp: Don't expect any news before September.
- Ray Pok from SCE sent an email about some wooden poles near substation being removed and replaced with patinaed metal poles. Bentley will forward Ray's email to Duncan, Ilene Mandelbaum, and Lynn Boulton.
- RPAC can go back to in-person meetings. RPAC members who wish to attend without wearing a mask must fill out a self-attestation form regarding vaccination status (CAL OSHA requirement). If someone is not fully vaccinated or doesn't want to make that declaration they must wear a mask. Anyone can wear a mask if they wish. Public should wear masks if they aren't fully vaccinated but there's no way to enforce that. The Board of Supervisors can hold hybrid meetings because that equipment is available in the Board chambers but it's not available in the community centers. So we do have to choose between an in-person meeting OR a virtual meeting. Discussion about the options; sticking with Zoom for August and we'll ask community members what they prefer as we encounter them in town and in neighborhoods this month. Priority is to get the best participation possible.

**12. Upcoming agenda items:**

- Mono Basin Community Plan – third review to take place next month
- Housing subcommittee (standing item)
- New Mono Lake District Ranger Stephanie Heller
- Caltrans update
- Conway Ranch – fall 2021

**13. Adjourned:** 8:11pm