

## **Minutes of May 13, 2006 Cabin Coalition Meeting**

In attendance were 12 cabin representatives from 9 different tracts [Barton Flats, East Lakeview, Lakeview, Metcalf, Minnelusa, Pine Hill Drive/Snow Valley, South Fork Santa Ana River, Seven Oaks, and Southwest Shore] and 3 Forest Service staff: George Kenline, Forest Lands Officer; Allison Stewart, District Ranger Mountain District; and Betty Hartenstine, Special Uses Administrator.

Following introductions, Forest Service staff discussed a number of current issues:

**Forest Service Budget & Impacts:** The Forest Service budget for the current year started out tight and has gotten tighter as funding was cut mid-year. Funding for FY2007 beginning in October will be even less. As a result, staffing levels have been cut and more cuts will be seen. This impacts every area of FS administration and management, particularly including administration of the cabin program. Expect approvals to be delayed and for there to be limited staff to work with local cabin owners and tracts.

**Forest Management Plan:** Has been completed and implementation has just begun. The actual Plan will have limited impact on recreation residence cabins, as these are being thoroughly assessed as part of the CRCD process [i.e. Permit Continuation].

**Fire Situation and Fuels Projects:** The fire situation is good right now but the FS expects that the risk rating will be upgraded to "High" by sometime in June. They're feeling good about this fire season, though this can change quickly.

Hazard tree removal and fuels clearance projects continue with \$6.2m in new funding which will be spent through September. Contact your special uses administrator if your tract still has hazard trees threatening cabins.

Cabin owners are reminded to maintain their required 30 foot clearance around buildings and 10 feet around propane tanks. The State of California requirement for a 100-foot specifically does not apply to federal lands, but this is still under discussion.

### **CRCD Process** – Permit Continuation

1. **Consistency Determination:** Each permit holder should have received a letter from the Forest Supervisor dated May 1, 2006, informing them that the Consistency Review has been completed and that the determination has been made that all 22 residence tracts on the forest are consistent or can be made consistent with the Land Management Plan. The next step is to complete the Continuation Determination, that includes the environmental analysis and documentation. These will be completed by December 31, 2006. The public will be notified of this process and given opportunities to comment.

**Please note an error in this consistency letter:** Any questions should be phoned to Veronica Magnuson at 909-382-**2765**. The phone number printed in the letter is for Allison Stewart, who says she'd love to talk with you, but won't be able to answer your questions on consistency.

2. **Compliance Inspections:** Inspections are in process on the Front Country residence tracts and are about one-third completed. The target is to complete all cabin inspections on the forest by the end of the summer and to send the results out to the permit holders as they are completed. The previously-mentioned budget cuts are severely-impacting this work.

**The Forest Service is seeking the assistance of the tract associations in the Big Bear Valley to provide volunteers to be trained to assist with this process by:**

1. Preparing site sketches for each cabin, showing placement and sizes of all improvements on the lot;
2. Taking photos of each cabin and any improvements; and, if time allows,
3. Conducting the cabin inspection, using the prepared FS form.

A **Training Meeting** will be held on Saturday, June 10, at the Discovery Center beginning at 10:30 am, to cover the work to be carried out. Please contact Betty Hartenstine with any questions and to provide her with the names of volunteers for your tract.

**Cabin File Reviews:** Contact your permit administrator to schedule an appointment to review your cabin file. FS staff will schedule several “open houses” in the Fall for file review, but cannot do so during the summer due to unpredictable schedules. [Note that the FS District offices have no copiers at this time, so you’ll need to take copies if you wish to add documents to their files.]

**Water Issues:** This issue applies primarily to the tracts in the Santa Ana River watershed who received letters in 2004 [?] informing them that they must cease water usage from the local streams. That directive has been suspended until further notice. Regional staff will be assisting in an analysis of this issue.

**CUFFA Implementation:** Roy noted that the CUFFA Regulations were published on April 3, which started the two-year transition period. During this period, the cabin owners in each typical lot group will have to make a choice in writing regarding the prior 1997-1999 appraisal:

1. To accept that appraisal and implement the resulting special use fee;
2. To request a peer review, which would determine if the valuation would be affected by the new CUFFA rules; or
3. To request a new appraisal, applying the new CUFFA rules to the previous comparable sales data.

A letter is due from the Forest Service concerning CUFFA and this choice that must be made by the cabin owners in each typical lot group. There remain questions that NFH is researching concerning the new regulations, so watch the NFH website for updates on CUFFA and appraisal procedures.

**New Appraisals:** CUFFA changed the time between appraisals from 20 years to 10 years – which means that new appraisals are beginning even as CUFFA is implementing the previous ones. New appraisals on the San Bernardino NF are

scheduled for 2008. Due to the real estate boom that has occurred in Big Bear over the past 5-6 years, this next round of appraisals should be a matter of concern for all cabin owners. Tract organizations can start preparing for those appraisals by reviewing the typical lots used in the last appraisals to ensure that they are, in fact, typical of the lots they have been chosen to represent. There may also be situations where additional typical lot groups should be created to reflect differences in access, view or services.

**National Public Lands Day:** Limited interest was expressed for cabin owner participation in a Lands Day project or possibly two projects – one in the Big Bear area and another in the Santa Ana River watershed. Roy will contact the SBNF Foundation staff person coordinating Lands Day efforts.

**Group Discussion:** A question was raised about land sales to fund the Public Schools fund. Allison indicated that there were no parcels selected for potential sale on this forest.

Another question was about the existence of In-Lieu lots on the forest. Betty indicated that there are some in-lieu lots, but that a lot would have had to have been used in the past for a cabin in order to be considered for in-lieu status. Platted lots on the historic maps cannot be used as in-lieu lots unless they had actually been used for a cabin and that cabin destroyed or otherwise removed.

**Next Meeting:** The next Cabin Coalition meeting was tentatively scheduled for Saturday, August 19.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10pm.