

Cabin Coalition Meeting Notes
McCreery Cabin 13, Stetson Creek Tract
August 6, 2011

- **Attendees:** 26 representatives from 8 residence tracts: Big Bear Southwest Shore, East Lakeview, Lytle Creek, Metcalf, Minnelusa, Seven Oaks, South Fork Santa Ana River, and Stetson Creek. Also three Forest Service representatives: Mountaintop District Ranger Scott Tangenberg, Deputy DR Omero Torres, and Special Uses Administrator Katie Nelson.
- Welcome & Self Introductions by Roy Glauthier
- General Announcements
 - Stetson Creek Ranch having bear break-ins, so keep an eye on your cabins
- **Forest & District Update by Scott Tangenberg**
 - Note that the Forest Service manages the land, not the animals – i.e. bears. For animal problems, call the Department of Fish and Game.
 - Management & Staff Update
 - Forest Supervisor has not changed, still Jody Noiron
 - Robin Prince is on jury duty, probably through the rest of August
 - Katie Nelson is back and is the only remaining permit administrator for the mountain through August.
 - Sharon Dooley has taken a permanent assignment on the Sierra NF and will not be returning.
 - Lytle Creek: Gabe Garcia is still the Ranger but the Deputy District Ranger, Richard Thornburgh, is filling in at the Supervisor's Office for work related to special-use permits for the entire forest
 - George Kenline retired recently after 48 ½ years of service. Fran Colwell is retiring at the end of this year with over 30 years of experience!
 - CRCD Compliance & Cleanup
 - Roughly 130 cabins forest-wide are without a 20-year permit
 - 3 of those are in Lytle Creek; the remainder on the Mountaintop
 - The Forest Service will put effort into this
 - Around half are simply missing the cabin owner's signature
 - Question from the group: Can tract associations help with this?
 - The Forest Service is already re-sending permits, which is bringing the number down already
 - Jason Collier is handling the Lytle Creek area
 - The other half of cabins without 20-year permits are due to more significant issues of noncompliance – water, septic, maintenance
 - There are 5-6 cabins which will require severe measures, due to things like inability to identify or contact the cabin owner, but this action will likely carry into next year
 - Issues like new cabin sales, etc., take precedence over the noncompliance list
 - Volunteers!
 - The Forest Service has been using volunteers to help out with inspections
 - Please refer people who look like good potential owners to the Forest Service
 - Note that you may only own a single cabin at a time, but multiple cabins can be owned by different members of the same family

- Contact Katie if you want to volunteer to help out with follow up on noncompliant owners
- Currently, the Forest Service has more volunteers than they know how to effectively manage, so they might be initially slow in responding or reaching out to you
- Fire Situation & Clearance Issues
 - What's the status on the \$150 State Fire Tax for our cabins?
 - Per Scott, it doesn't look like this will happen, since he hasn't heard anything about it recently.
 - What's the status on the 200 ft clearance requirement?
 - Nothing new on this front, either, so go by what is stated on your permit, which is 30 ft.
 - Fuel Reduction Planning
 - There are numerous ongoing Fuel Reduction Planning meetings
 - Trying to plan for all acreage that will need fuel reduction, because the more acreage in the plans, the more likely it is that grants will be awarded
 - So these planning projects are part of the process of winning grants in order to actually implement these plans
 - To see details on the planning projects that are in the works, go to the [San Bernardino Forest Service website, Mountain Top Ranger District, Projects & Plans](#)
 - South Big Bear Fuel Reduction Planning Project (including Metcalf tract) has been completed
 - Bluff Mesa Planning Project is almost finalized
 - Santa Ana Fuel Reduction Planning Project is complete (note that there are two planning projects under the name "Santa Ana")
 - These planning projects cannot address the entire forest, so they are primarily targeting travel corridors and fire breaks along those corridors so Fire Service and residents can travel in safety
 - South Big Bear project has started implementation of fuel reduction behind the ski area (around 30 acres)
 - The overall intent is to get everything on this side of the mountain authorized so that once money is freed up, the Forest Service can get to work
 - Request from the group: Please make sure all tracts/areas are included on notifications/mailling list regarding Fuel Reduction plans -- Scott and crew to follow up on this
 - What do we do about dead trees near cabins? (Omero)
 - Notify the permit administrator of any hazard trees or trees with bark beetles and administrator will mark the trees for removal.
 - In the past, the Forester had to inspect and mark the trees, but now the Foresters are overburdened, too, so Katie or Robin can mark them.
 - These trees are still the responsibility of the cabin owner. The Forest Service still has no money to help with removal.
 - Requests for Improvements/Repairs
 - The Forest Service is overburdened right now due to being short-staffed
 - Omero will work with Robin and Katie to finalize an official policy for requests like these, so they don't fall through the cracks.

- The policy will be something like: Submit requests by the yearly deadline in order to be included in the planning for the following year.
 - One work proposal template has already been developed and will likely be used as the base template for this policy
 - Remember: EMAIL is better than phone calls!
 - There are some reports of bark beetles in the East Lakeview area, but Scott has seen no pitch tubes, so it might be something else.
 - Please make others aware of the staffing problems
 - What do we do with piles of slash?
 - Forest Service doesn't necessarily know about old piles in your area, so REPORT THEM.
 - The bark beetle infestation triggered a flurry of vendors used to decrease the forest fire fuel, but in the flurry of excitement, piles were forgotten
 - Cabin owners should not add to those piles
 - If needed, contact your permit administrator to designate a safe area to put community slash. Cabin owners can then share the cost of a wood chipper to get rid of that pile. Please make sure not to create a trash pile.
- General Questions
 - Do taxes and fees that cabin owners have paid to the county go to the Forest Service? Answer: No. Actually a miniscule percentage of federal taxes/fees ends up going to the FS: 30% of the taxes/fees goes to Medicare/Medicaid/Social Security, 30% to defense, 30% to discretionary spending (like the Forest Service).
 - 80% of Adventure Pass revenues do stay on the forest, totaling about \$80,000/year. With other funding cuts, these funds wind up paying normal operating costs, not enhancing recreation opportunities.
 - Since 2003, we have seen a 30% growth in people coming to the SBNF and a 30% decrease in appropriated money (money allocated to the forest from Congress)
- Update on the Cabin Fee Act
 - Have been working on this for 4 years
 - Efforts have cost almost \$400,000 to date.
 - Still awaiting a "neutral" finding on the Act's fiscal effects from the CBO (Congressional Budget Office). We already had a neutral finding from the CBO but that was under a different Congress. Once you have a new Congress, all bills must start over.
 - We are waiting for Doc Hastings to introduce the Act as part of a bill in the House.
 - We have 20 supporting House member, evenly split between Dems/Republicans
 - Diane Feinstein is supporting, which is critical
 - Problem is that nothing is happening in Washington DC right now
 - Review: The Cabin Fee Act would get rid of the appraisals in favor of a 2-level fee:
 - Annual use fee: each cabin would fall into one of 9 tiers from \$500 to \$4500. Fee would be adjusted annually for inflation.
 - Transfer fee: paid when the permit is transferred, including within the family. Flat \$1000 up to sale price of \$250,000; additional for higher sales.

- Other Announcements
 - Big Bear Southwest Shore is looking for Ideas for Centennial celebration
 - Roy noted that Huntington Lake is celebrating their Centennial Celebration this summer. Will bring Huntington book to the next meeting
- Next meeting will be in early November. Location and date later.