

Minutes of August 10, 2019 SBNF Cabin Coalition Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 am at cabin #64 in the South Fork Tract. 18 cabin representatives were in attendance from the following 6 tracts: Barton Flats, South Fork Santa Ana River, Metcalf, Lytle Creek, Minnelusa and Seven Oaks. Also in attendance were Scott Evans, Special Uses Administrator for the Mountaintop Ranger District, and representatives of our three law enforcement agencies – identified below.

Forest Service Update

Law Enforcement on the Forest Scott felt it was important for the cabin community to have a better understanding of the roles of the law enforcement agencies operating on the forest and to connect names and faces. At his invitation, representatives of the three primary law enforcement agencies (other than the CHP) were in attendance and spoke about their roles and responsibilities:

USDA Forest Service Law Enforcement – Kyle Addison, Law Enforcement Officer

Kyle has been on the San Bernardino for less than a year, having transferred from Kentucky. He is a Federal Officer, but his role is quite similar to the County Sheriff, but only on the Forest. His responsibility is anything law-enforcement related – homeless setting up camp, offroad vehicles in restricted areas, campfires, and anything having to do with fires. He is available 24x7 (cell # below) and recommended that in an emergency, call 911 and FS Law Enforcement.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife -- Walter Douglas, Game Warden

Walter also lives in Big Bear and, with a second officer, covers the Mountaintop as well as a huge area extending into the desert. Game Wardens are also Federally-deputized and, while having full law enforcement authority, focus primarily on issues related to hunting and fishing. Walter related that he has written a lot of citations recently for trespass into closed eagle areas. Other issues the Game Wardens address include hunting too close to occupied buildings (must be more

than 150 yards away), nuisance wildlife, illegal camping, and destruction of habitat. Walter noted that Archery Bear season begins August 17, Archery Deer season in September, and general deer season in late September. Be especially aware when hiking during these periods.

San Bernardino County Sheriff – Christian Cordoba, Deputy. Christian is on temporary assignment to the Forest out of the Yucaipa Station while Paul Franklin has been on medical leave. Christian described the Sheriff's role as handling traditional law enforcement issues – crisis intervention, burglaries, suspicious people or vehicles, and trespass. Be advised that cabin users need to be proactive with their security and that we need to know your neighbors.

In response to questions, the three representatives shared this useful information:

- Where is camping allowed in the forest? Camping is allowed anywhere on the National Forest except, by Forest Order, within ¼ mile of any State Highway, designated campground, picnic grounds, improvements, trail heads and private property.
- Are campfires allowed? Only in designated campgrounds, though currently the Forest has placed fire restrictions into effect due to high fire danger.
- Is target shooting allowed on the forest? Yes. But only at designated areas and only when NOT under fire restriction, which we currently are. Also there are 2 concessionaire ranges on the Forest that allow target shooting. They are open to the public for a fee and have limited hours of operation. These generally close only during extreme fire danger.

Staffing Scott and Casey are pretty much it for all special uses on the Mountaintop District and Scott has just taken on administration of the Front County cabins, too. Sonny Rivera on the Front Country is split between special uses and the billing officer position in the Forest Office. Casey is in an “intern” position and thru at least November and maybe until next summer. Efforts are under way to make her permanent. Be patient with any requests.

Note that all Forest Service emails are changing from the familiar

“@fs.fed.us” suffix to “@usda.gov.” The old “@fs.fed.us” emails still work for now, but you should change your address books to the new emails below.

Staffing on the various Ranger Districts is as follows:

Forest Office

- Jody Noiron [jody.noiron@usda.gov, 909-382-2710] Forest Supervisor

Mountaintop Ranger District

- Marc Stamer [marc.stamer@usda.gov, 909-382-2728] District Ranger
- Scott Evans [scott.a.evans@usda.gov, 909-382-2808] Scott is the primary administrator for all cabins on the Forest. Scott prefers emails.
- Casey Shaffer [casey.shaffer@usda.gov, 909-382-2872] Special Uses Resource Assistant Intern

Front Country Ranger District

- Joe Rechsteiner [jrechsteiner@fs.fed.us, 909-392-2851] District Ranger
- Santiano (Sonny) Rivera [santiano.rivera@usda.gov, 909-382-2929] Special Uses

San Jacinto Ranger District

- Julie Hall [julie.hall2@usda.gov, 909-382-2921] District Ranger;

Forest Service Dispatcher [24 Hour] 909-383-5654

Forest Service Law Enforcement: Kyle Addison -- 909-659-4560 (24x7)

San Bernardino County Sheriff: Christian Cordoba, Deputy -- Call 911

California Dept of Fish and Wildlife: Walter Douglas, Game Warden – 760-702-1062

Or Rich Fischer, Game Warden – 951-288-7651

Cabin Inspections Interns from the Washington Office completed 2/3 of the Lakeview Tract before departing the forest. Scott and Casey still need to complete this year's allotment, so will be in touch to arrange volunteers for this effort.

The District Ranger wants to reinstitute self-inspections, which would count against the required annual quota. This has not been approved yet, but Scott will send along the self-inspection form for our information.

Fuels Clearance Projects The North Shore area from about Pine Hill Lane to the dam is now out for bid, however, Scott does not expect work to begin until late 2021 and will take about 1 year to complete. This clearance work will include the cabin areas in that portion of the Big Bear Tract.

Scott wanted to remind cabin owners that they are responsible for hazard trees that would affect their cabins. Contact Scott by email if you have a possible hazard tree so that he can request that FS staff inspect the tree and mark it for removal. The FS does not remove these trees. The cabin owner can keep two winters' wood supply with a wood permit.

Improvement Requests Scott said that he has a handful of Improvement Requests on his desk and that he continues to process them as they're received rather than holding them for annual approval. A few requests have been denied for decks exceeding the allowed footage and one that wanted to build a second story. Once approved, the permittee has two years to complete the work. If you're not hearing back on a submitted request, email Scott.

NFH Dues Increase

Roy noted that National Forest Homeowners instituted a dues increase that take effect with all dues collected in 2019. Member Tract should particularly note the new 3-Year membership, Cabin Membership and Lifetime Membership. Information of these options appears on the Home page at www.nationalforesthowners.org.

In Lieu Lot Pilot Project

Under the terms of our special use permits, if a cabin is destroyed and cannot be rebuilt in-place, the Forest Service may offer an in lieu lot on the same or an adjacent forest for construction of a replacement cabin. Although this clause has been in our permits for many years, it has been applied in only a few situations and is not well-understood. In an effort to clarify how in lieu lots are to be identified, a pilot project has been initiated on the San Bernardino National Forest to clarify this policy, develop guidelines by which possible in lieu lots could be identified and undertake to identify 8-10 potential in lieu lots for use in the event of a future destruction of cabins.

The Pilot Project has clarified the criteria for the selection of possible in-lieu lots and has identified two specific lots in the Metcalf and South Fork Tracts for consideration by the Forest Service. Additional efforts are under way in other residence tracts to identify possible in-lieu lots. Discussions are planned in the next few weeks with Regional Office staff regarding the pilot and next steps.

Cabin Coalition Leadership – Since last August interest has been solicited for volunteers to assume the moderator position for the Coalition. This appeal has resulted only in numerous “attaboys” for the job I have done for about 15 years. I appreciate this support and certainly don’t plan on going anywhere. But if you’ve got an interest in stepping up, let me know. There will continue to be Coalition meetings, but others needed to get involved.

Setting Next Meeting Date -- Our next meeting is tentatively set for November 2, 2019, however a request has been received to move it a week earlier, to October 26. Stay tuned.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:49 am to the annual BBQ Picnic. A hearty “Thank You” to the Santa Ana River Users Association for hosting and catering our picnic.

*Minutes Prepared 8/13/19
Roy Glauthier*