

Minutes of October 26, 2019 SBNF Cabin Coalition Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 10:08 am at the Big Bear Discovery Center. About 12 cabin representatives were in attendance from the following 6 tracts: Barton Flats, South Fork Santa Ana River, Metcalf, Lytle Creek, East Lakeview and Seven Oaks. Also in attendance was Scott Evans, now the Recreation Officer on the Mountaintop Ranger District.

Forest Service Update

Staffing: Scott announced that he has been promoted to the Recreation Officer position on the Mountaintop District. In this position he will continue to oversee cabins and special uses in addition to supervising all the recreation functions (note – contrary to our feelings, cabins are not a recreation program within the FS). A detailed FS staff from Juneau is due shortly to backfill Scott's responsibilities for cabins, filming and such, and the FS has posted Scott's special uses position plus one more to handle the 1400 special use permits on the Forest.

Casey Shaffer has been extended to July 2020 in her intern position and Scott is hopeful that she will fill one of the open positions. Scott assured us that he will stay involved with cabins to make a smooth transition to any new staff.

The big news is that renovation of the Discovery Center will begin by mid-November in order to move the District offices into the unused exhibition space. The long-time District offices just east of the Discovery Center, with the exception of the fire station, are actually County property which the FS has been renting for decades. This renovation will take about 6 months and FS staff expects to move into their new offices about May 1, 2020.

Services that have been available at the Discovery Center, such as wood permits and winter parking permits, will be available from Forest Service staff at the Big Bear Visitor Center located at 40824 Big Bear Blvd, which is just east of the Post Office at the foot of Pine Knot Avenue.

Staffing on the various Ranger Districts is as follows: Be sure to note the new FS emails below with the "@usda.gov" suffix.

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] District Recreation Officer

- 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 Department of Fish and Wildlife: Walter Douglas, Game Warden – 760-702-1062 or Rich Fischer, Game Warden – 951-288-7651

Fuels Clearance Projects: Fuels clearance is the #1 priority on the Forest. The contract for fuels clearance work on the North Shore area from about Pine Hill Lane to the dam may have been awarded by now and work should start by spring 2020 and take about one year. This clearance work will include the cabin areas in that portion of the Big Bear Tract.

The Forest is now under full fire restrictions for extreme fire danger. Fires are not allowed even in designated campgrounds and no open or charcoal fires are allowed. All BBQs must have shut off valves.

Public Safety Power Shutoffs: The Big Bear Valley has received several warnings of possible power outages but has not yet had the power turned off. The Lytle Creek community has had 2 recent shut-offs of 2-days each. If you're in the mountains – or at home, for that matter – if warnings are issued of a possible shut-off, be prepared by making sure your car's tank is full and you have spare flashlight batteries, at a minimum.

Cabin Inspections: A handful of cabins were inspected this year in the Lakeview Tract and Casey is working to update the files. Scott described that there's no pressure for these inspections to be done, so they've been pushed off by other priorities. [We continue to offer volunteer assistance to conduct these inspections.]

Cabin Sales: Approximately 25 cabins have sold during the past 6 months and Scott has seen no slow down. Buyers must meet with the Special Uses Officer before closing a sale and Scott says he has a standard spiel to make sure they understand what they're buying and all the requirements. From his perspective, Scott believes most cabins sell because the owners get to a point that they can't handle the workload. Buyers, however, are usually in their 40's and 50's and are motivated by the idea of a cabin in the woods.

In Lieu Lot Pilot Project: Roy updated the group on the status of the In-Lieu Lot pilot project. Three prospective In-Lieu lots have been identified [one each in the Metcalf, South Fork and East Lakeview Tracts] and an assessment conducted. These lots and their evaluations have been submitted to the SB Forest Supervisor and Mountaintop District Ranger and a meeting requested to review these lots and discuss next steps. Additional possible IL lots have been identified and will be pursued depending on the outcome of the pending meeting with Forest management.

Special Uses Fee Retention: Under the Cabin Fee Act passed by Congress in December 2014, the special use fees that cabin owners pay each year will be retained by the Forest Service beginning in 2025 for the administration of the recreation residence program and other recreation uses. In anticipation of those dedicated revenues remaining with the Forest Service, National Forest Homeowners is working to develop a proposal for their use which will be shared with senior management in the Forest Service's Washington and Regional offices. Roy asked for ideas for use of these funds and a discussion ensued. Among the ideas suggested were completion of the historic assessments of recreation residence tracts, bringing tract roads to FS standards, fire prevention and suppression actions (e.g. water tanks), and removal of hazard trees. Contact Roy with additional ideas.

Golden Spotted Oak Borer: Luisa Serrano of the Metcalf Tract shared information on the threat posed by the Golden Spotted Oak Borer ("GSOB") to black oaks on the Forest by this invasive pest that has been found in the Sugar Loaf area. We will arrange for a presentation on this pest for next spring's meeting. In the meantime, cabin owners are asked not to bring firewood from other areas onto the Mountaintop – "Buy It Where You Burn It."

Historic Assessments: The Lakeview Tract was assessed for its historic status this spring and results of the work are pending. We have recently learned that Dr. Lauren Bricker of Cal Poly Pomona has been promoted and that the University will apparently no longer be involved in carrying out these assessments through their School of Architecture. In conjunction with their land exchange, the Lytle Creek Tract has been required to conduct a historic assessment, and has arranged for this work to be done by HistoriCorps at a cost of \$11,200 for 31 cabins.

Setting Next Meeting Date -- Our next meeting is tentatively set for May 2, 2020.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:43 am.

Minutes Prepared 11/6/19 Roy Glauthier