

Minutes of November 5, 2021, SBNF Cabin Coalition Virtual Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 3:11 pm using Zoom. 11 cabin representatives were on the call from the following 8 tracts: Barton Flats, South Fork Santa Ana River, Metcalf, Stetson Creek, Southwest Shore, Falls, Pine Hill Drive and East Lakeview. No Forest Service staff were able to make the call.

Roy opened the meeting by noting that COVID is still very much with us. Cabins have been a great place to “socially distance” throughout this pandemic, but we hope to be back to in-person meetings by next May.

2021 has been a tough year for fire losses. Nearly 200 recreation residences have been lost to date, 180 of those in the Caldor Fire along Hwy 50 between Sacramento and South Lake Tahoe. Most of those 180 were lost in a single 12-hour period. Fire crews had succeeded in protecting cabin tracts until the fire jumped ahead of their protection lines and burned through areas that hadn't yet been treated. It's hoped that most of those lost cabins will be rebuilt, but that will depend on assessment of each cabin, county building requirements and each permit holder's situation.

Finally, Roy noted that this week he emailed a link to the Economic Impact Survey that National Forest Homeowners has just initiated and asked that an appeal be sent along to all cabin owners in our tracts asking them to complete this survey. A similar survey done in 2007 provided important supporting data during the fight for the Cabin Fee Act and it is anticipated that data coming from the current effort may be important as the permit renewal process begins in only a couple more years. Cabin owners do not have to be members of NFH to complete the survey. The survey can be accessed through the NFH website at www.nationalforesthowners.org.

Forest Service Update

[With no FS staff on the call, Roy covered these items.]

Staffing

The Chief of the Forest Service, Vicki Christiansen, retired in June and was replaced by Randy Moore, who had been the Regional Forester in our Region since 2007. This is important to cabin owners due to Randy's involvement with the cabin program and the recovery of cabins lost to wildfires.

Roy noted again that Jody Noiron retired December 31, 2020, and has been replaced by Danelle D. (“DD”) Harrison as Forest Supervisor on the San Bernardino NF as of August 15. DD was most recently in the Regional Office working on post-fire recovery and, before that, was on the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit where she had been Deputy Forest Supervisor since 2018.

More locally, Joseph Sanchez joined the Special Uses staff in August and will focus primarily on non-cabin special uses but will help Casey when needed. Casey Shaffer continues as the Special Uses Administrator responsible for recreation residences across the Mountaintop and

Front Country Districts. Casey has a significant workload and the best way to communicate with her is by email (address in table below).

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

- Danelle D. Harrison [danelle.harrison@usda.gov, 909-382-2710] Forest Supervisor

Mountaintop Ranger District

- Marc Stamer [marc.stamer@usda.gov, 909-382-2728] District Ranger
- Casey Shaffer [casey.shaffer@usda.gov, 909-382-2872] Special Uses Administrator
- Joseph Sanchez [joseph.sanchez@usda.gov] Special Uses Administrator

Front Country Ranger District

- Joe Rechsteiner [joseph.rechsteiner@usda.gov, 909-392-2851] District Ranger
- Cheryl Williams [Cheryl.williams@usda.gov, 909-382-2907] Special Uses

San Jacinto Ranger District

- Julie Hall [julie.hall2@usda.gov, 909-382-2921] District Ranger
- Rita Morris [rita.morris@usda.gov] Special Uses Administrator

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

Forest Service Law Enforcement: (open)

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

Updated USFS Permit Fee Billing/Collection Practices The annual billing of permit fees will no longer be done by each Forest but by a National Billing Team. Bills will be sent by email if the Forest Service has your email address. If your annual fee bill is not received by December 8, 2021, you need to contact the Billing Team at sm.fs.wonbt@usda.gov . Under new regulations, the USFS will be less flexible regarding past due permit fee payments. Late fees and interest will be charged if payment is not received by January 31. And your permit is subject to revocation if the annual fee is not paid by March 31.

Make Sure FS Has Your Correct Contact Data You may have received a postcard from the Forest Service National Billing Team in mid-September. This postcard asked you to update your contact data. If you didn't get this card or aren't sure, email Casey Shaffer at casey.shaffer@usda.gov and

- Identify your tract name and your cabin number
- Provide the Permit Holder's name, email, phone number(s) and mailing address.

Fire Issues

- **Current Status**: The current fire rating on the forest is "Very High" and restrictions have been continued through January 7, 2022.
- **El Dorado Fire**: Closure order is still in effect and cabin owners within the closure area must submit an online request for overnight use of their cabins. Some areas along Hwy 38 experienced significant debris flow during the storms in October but no damage to cabins was reported.
- **Fuels Clearance**: Some cabin owners are not doing their required annual clearance, which endangers both their own cabins and could allow fire to spread. Report cabins that are not in compliance with clearance to Casey by email.

Dealing With Problem Cabins There continue to be reports of problems with individual cabin owners or their guests:

- Inconsiderate occupants with loud music or too many cars;
- Derelict and unsafe cabins; or
- Cutting of trees to improve views.

Casey has asked that we inform her of such issues and let the FS deal with these issues rather than creating a neighbor v. neighbor issue. Email Casey and describe the issue, giving her the tract name and cabin number. And provide photos if appropriate and possible.

Cabin Inspections No cabins were inspected during 2021 to our knowledge except for those need to complete cabin sales. This means that a lot of cabins will be up for inspection next year.

Improvement Requests Casey is addressing improvement requests as time allows with priority going to emergency projects (for example, roof repairs, water or sanitation repairs, etc.).

If you have submitted an Improvement Request and don't know what's happened to it, email Casey to ask.

Emergency Service Directions The purpose of this project is to ensure that emergency responders can find any specific cabin should assistance be needed. Volunteers in the Southwest Shore Tract developed detailed maps showing which access road to use to reach each cabin in their tract. These were then provided to local fire, paramedic and law enforcement agencies, only to soon find that knowledge of these maps and the actual maps were lost within a very short period of time.

When this issue was discussed at the August Coalition meeting Casey volunteered to contact the Forest Law Enforcement staff to request their input. As of earlier this week this has not yet taken place.

Discussion ensued:

- Roy noted that the GPS coordinates for a cabin can be entered into Google Maps, which will precisely locate that cabin but will not tell you what road to take.
- It was suggested that a basic step would be to collect the local phone numbers for fire, paramedic and Sheriff so that those could be used rather than calling "911."
- If anyone has ideas on this issue, contact Roy.

Cabin Insurance Steve Harbison of the Southwest Shore Colony related that his long-time insurance carrier – Safeco -- canceled his cabin insurance this year. He contacted the broker working with NFH but the only coverage found to be available was with the California Fair Plan at a much higher price for less coverage. The question is "What companies are writing cabin insurance?" There appear to be only a few carriers writing cabin insurance and some are not writing any new policies. USAA and Safeco appear to be in this category. If you have insurance with another carrier – and, particularly, if you have a fairly new policy, let Roy know so the information can be shared.

Stewardship Projects on the Forest With 735 cabins on the San Bernardino National Forest our cabin community presents a huge potential for contributing to the forest and local communities. Roy suggested that the Coalition should identify possible projects and then coordinate the participation of the residence tracts. He noted that the Metcalf Tract has done a trash clean-up on Sunday of Memorial Day weekend for many years, every year removing quite a bit of trash and snow-play debris from the former Coldbrook Campground, along Mill Creek

Road/2N10 and around Aspen Glen Picnic Area. It was suggested that other tracts could organize their own clean-up projects for the same weekend and we could publicize it as a Coalition project. Let us know if you have ideas for other stewardship projects.

New Business & Open Discussion Karin Hansen of the East Lakeview Tract expressed their concern with the new trails being proposed as part of the North Shore Fuels Clearance project. The proposed map places these trails in close proximity to cabins in their tract and traffic could include motorized bikes. They have communicated their concerns to Casey but the comment period closed at the end of October.

Setting Next Meeting Date -- Our next meeting will be May 2022. Date and location to be announced

Meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.

Minutes Prepared 11/8/21

Roy Glauthier