

San Bernardino National Forest Cabin Coalition Committee Meeting May 7, 2022

Location: Karin Hanson's cabin #98 East Lakeview Tract

Roy Glauthier called the meeting to order a little after 10 AM.

Special Uses & District Update

Casey Shaffer, Special Uses Administrator, was in attendance to represent the Forest Service. She said the latest newsflash was that there is a nationwide "Back to the Office" date of June 6, 2022. Most forest service personnel have been working virtually from home.

She reported some of the staffing changes that have occurred over the past few months.

Marc Stamer, the District Ranger has transferred or has been assigned to a different district. Scott Eliason (not sure of the spelling of his last name) has been assigned as the acting District Ranger. DD Harison, the SBNF Supervisor, will be looking for a permanent replacement as soon as possible.

Scott Evans (not sure of his current position) has left and Joey Martin is acting for him. Our website lists him as the Recreation Officer but Casey said something about Public Relations Services.

Casey said she was taking a 120-day Special Detail assignment in the Los Padres Forest starting June 6th. She said she was remaining local as the assignment allowed her to work remotely. She said she would be checking in time to time to come for any local issues.

Fire Issues

Casey said the current Forest Service policy is to clear brush 30 feet from cabin/structure perimeter and 10 feet around propane tanks. If the cabin owner wants to follow CA policy of 100 feet from perimeter, they need to submit an [improvement request proposal](#) to the Forest Service along with a diagram of the property and what vegetation will be removed. They may send the Forest Service Botanist out to survey the clearance area for approval.

Clearance of pine needles, pine cones, dead branches etc. around cabin must be completed by June 1st. If you see any cabins that have not been cleared report it to Casey.

North Shore Fuels Clearance

This project is on hold due to staffing issues and other higher priority projects. It will remain on hold until a new District Ranger is assigned.

Dead Standing Trees & Absent/Neglectful permittees

Report these to Casey

2022 Cabin Inspections

These are currently being done only for cabin transfers due to staff shortages. There was discussion about using volunteers like we did a few years ago. Casey said feel free to organize some volunteers from your tract. You can use the [inspection form](#) on the Forest Service website.

Cabin Improvement Requests

Casey is still the contact for Cabin Improvement Proposals. August 30th is the cutoff for 2023 proposals. Casey plans to respond by April 1, 2023 or sooner. If Heritage review is required, it will take longer for approval.

Roy reported that only 5 Tract Heritage Surveys have been completed for Historical Status. He said that all cabins should proceed as if they fall under Heritage status to be safe.

Other FS Issues Affecting Cabins

There was discussion about the funds from Permit Fee submissions going directly to the Forest Service. Casey said that their biggest problem isn't funding as it is staffing. There is a lot of turnover of personnel and they are shorthanded.

10-15 cabins have not paid their permit fees. The Forest Service will issue letters to pay within 60 days or the permit will be revoked and the cabins will be sold or removed.

There was a question about Metal Roofs. Casey said that metal roofs have been approved for some cabins. But if a new metal roof is requested, it must go to Heritage Review.

[Options for Neglected and Abandoned Cabins](#)

Roy presented a guide for tracts to address this issue. The guide is attached to an email that he sent out after the meeting.

Emergency Services Project

Roy said that Southwest Shore has been addressing how to get emergency service responders to locate our cabins. He asked me to report on what we were currently doing to the other members in attendance.

I reported that Gary Stahl has been leading this effort and gave a little history on our past efforts. I told them that the latest activity involved the implementation of a San Bernardino wide Geographical Information System which would identify and locate points of residence or interest entered into the system. The GIS will be used by the 911 dispatchers as well as the local responders. Gary Stahl has been working with the person in charge of this and has provided all of the map and cabin location information to him, including cabin numbers and road access names and road maps. The GIS project and implementation is expected to be briefed to the Big Bear Emergency services within a week or so. I showed the members the Maps that Gary had created and I said they should do something similar and contact Brent Rolf at the San Bernardino GIS office. One of the other tract representatives was familiar with the GIS. Other members said they had large maps or cabin number listings at the entry roads to

their tract already. I mentioned this is good if the tract only has a few entry points but our tract has many entry points and single entry driveways from the highway. A map like Gary put together was much more practical for us.

One representative said he had a phone app called “What Three Words” that provided your position within 15 or 20 feet. I’m not sure how that helps a responder to get to you if they don’t have a private road map.

Everyone thought that the GIS was a good approach.

Cabin Insurance

Roy reported that many cabins have been dropped or declined coverage by the Insurance Companies. He asked if anyone currently had insurance and through what companies. The responses were few. State Farm was mentioned and another company that I didn’t get and hadn’t heard of. A couple of representatives said they had to go through the California FAIR Plan for their fire insurance and another company for their liability and theft protection for double or triple the premiums they previously had. This all is consistent with what we discussed at our last SWS annual meeting.

Stewardship Projects on Forest

Roy said that his tract does an annual cleanup project every Memorial Day. He knows that other tracts do something similar. He said we need to make these projects known to the Forest Service and take credit for the stewardship and benefit that we provide to the forest in the area surrounding our cabins. When policy changes on our use permits are considered by the Forest Service, they need to be aware of the positive impact we have over and above the fees that we pay.

New Business Discussion

One representative asked if the chipping project that Big Bear Lake had a couple of years ago was going to be continued. No one had any information about what was currently planned. One other representative asked if there were any funding programs available. Casey said she was unaware of any through the Forest Service but that other state or federal funding programs may exist.