

San Bernardino National Forest Cabin Coalition Committee Meeting

May 13, 2022

Location: Big Bear Discovery Center Conference Room

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

Forest & District Update

Casey Shaffer, Special Uses Administrator, was in attendance to represent the Forest Service. She reported some of the staffing changes that have occurred over the past few months.

- Amy Reid is the temporary Deputy Forest Supervisor
- The District Archeologist position has been filled but he doesn't handle our projects
- There is a new Law Enforcement Officer. His office is in Arrowhead and he reports to the Washington office, not the SB National Forest office.
- The staff has moved to the Discovery Center from the previous Forest Service buildings. Those buildings were leased from SB County and now owned by the Forest Service.

Forest Service Road Closure

Access roads are now open except for seasonal roads for Summer. Road Use Permits are no longer required.

Fire Issues

Controlled Burn activity is winding down now that we are entering the fire season.

The annual clearance requirement is still set for June 1, 2023. The requirement is 30' from buildings and 10' from propane tanks. One of the members asked if we could get an extension due to the lateness in getting access to our cabin due to the heavy winter. Casey said she would ask if an extension could be granted.

For hazardous tree removal, we need to send Casey an email with pictures. She promised a quick turnaround.

2023 Cabin Inspections

These are currently being done only for cabin transfers due to staff shortages.

The idea to use cabin owner volunteers has been delayed. Casey needs to put together a position or job description and a hazard analysis. Until she gets more help, that won't happen.

Cabin Improvement Requests

Five minor in-kind projects are currently open and should be approved next week.

Projects requiring Heritage Review are in a bottleneck due to staffing shortages. **"There could be a 3-5 year delay."** A cabin tract representative asked what recourse could we pursue. Roy suggested writing to the Forest Supervisor.

There is a new requirement in the process. When you have an approved Historical Architect review your project plan, the Historical Architect needs to apply for an “Organic Act Permit” from the Forest Service which has the requirements for the Historical Review. This will add additional time in the process.

Historical Assessments

Roy passed out a status sheet of Historical Assessments. I have attached this to the minutes. Only 5 tracts have completed SHPO concurrence on their assessments. I believe SHPO stands for State Historic Preservation Officer.

Big Bear Tract, which includes Southwest Shore and around 164 cabins on the North Shore from the dam toward the east, does not show SHPO concurrence although the status shows our part of the Big Bear Tract has been evaluated.

The Forest Service is required to complete these assessments “when they can”. Roy suggested that cabin owners proceed as if they fall under the historical guidelines.

Other FS Issues Affecting Cabins

Permit non-compliance issues are being worked between the Forest Service and Cabin owners. A cabin tract representative asked if there was a list of non-compliant cabins. Casey said she could not disclose that information due to privacy restrictions.

Permit Renewals

Roy prepared a handout on the 2028 Permit Continuation or Renewal. I have attached the handout which highlights and summarizes the process.

Roy reported that there is an updated Special Use Permit Form being proposed for our Permit Renewals in 2028 that the NFH is pushing back on. There are provisions and language in the new form that the NFH objects to. One example is a provision that the Cabin can only be used 5 months each year. Another is that you can rent your cabin with prior approval from the Forest Service but only for 30 days per year. The language has been revised so that non-compliance findings could “Terminate” the permit versus the previous term being “Revoke” the permit. Legally, a “Terminated Permit” could not be appealed, whereas a “Revoked Permit could be appealed. There were 10-12 issues in total. The NFH may have to petition Congress to get action on their objections. But that would be expensive.

A bombshell was dropped by Casey that the new Permit is already populated in the system and as of April 1st, any new permits due to cabin sales or family transfers are now subject to the new Permits. Roy was not aware of this and was rather upset.

Special Use Fee Retention

As of FY2025, the Forest Service will retain the Special Use fees that we pay each year. This will be in addition to the general allocation that they already get. Five percent will be retained by the Washington Office, Ten percent will be retained by the Regional offices, and 85% will be retained by the Forests that

contain Recreational Residents. In the case of the SB National Forest, we will retain about \$1.5M per year. This is to go to general administration and special projects. We, the cabin owners, will have input, but not control, as to how the money is allocated. But we have to have that input into them before the 2025 budget is set which will be later this year. NFH proposed a set of recommendations for us to consider. These are attached to these minutes. The members in attendance reviewed and discussed these and gave a preliminary input to Roy to take forward. These were:

1. Administration of the Recreation Residence program on an amount per cabin basis to be determined by the Forest Service and indexed annually by inflation. In 2010 this was determined to be \$600 - \$700 per cabin. In 2025 this is expected to be \$900 per cabin.
2. On forests and districts with a sufficient number of recreation residences, establish dedicated staff positions to administrate the Program.
3. Fuels Reduction and removal of hazardous trees within tracts and affecting access roads.
6. Training of special uses staff in administration of recreation residence permits

Items 4, 5, and 7-11 were deemed to be later year items not for the first year.

Item 5 included review and approval of improvement requests and I voiced a need for that. The consensus was that Item 1 and 2 covered that for SB National Forest and the bottleneck was with Heritage Review staff which are outside of SB National Forest staff.

These were my notes which correlate fairly well with Roy's published minutes but they may amplify some of his points. I also provided the attachments which his minutes did not.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Hafen

Cabin 61

Big Bear Southwest Shore Colony.