

**BIG SUR MULTI-AGENCY ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 21, 2016
PFIEMER BIG SUR LODGE CONFERENCE CENTER
47225 HIGHWAY 1, BIG SUR, CALIFORNIA 93920**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Dave Potter at 10:16 am.

II. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Roll call and introductions were made. Agency attendees: Congressman Sam Farr, Senator Bill Monning, Daniel Dodge (representing Assemblymember Alejo) – arrived at approximately 11:30 am, Supervisor Dave Potter, Jeff Kwasny (USFS), Sara von Schwind (Caltrans), Brent Marshall (State Parks), Mike Watson (California Coastal Commission), Caine Camarillo (Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District), Joe Sidor (Monterey County Resource Management Agency), Rob Carver (Coast Property Owners Association), Dick Ravich (Resident of Big Sur – North Coast), and Kirk Gafill (Big Sur Chamber of Commerce).

PROCEEDINGS

III. Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of June 17, 2016, were approved without change.

IV. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items:

- **Steve Beck** – Commented on Highway 1 traffic, and suggested signs to remind drivers to pull over when delaying five or more vehicles.
- **Mike Caplan** – Commented on laws that hinder wildfire preparation and response.
- **Bill Nye** – Commented on the opening of the Fort Ord Veterans Cemetery. Also commented that if law enforcement had captured the license plates of the cars parked at Soberanes, we may know who started the fire.
- **Honey Williams** – Commented on the minutes of the June 17, 2016, BSMAAC meeting. Hudson House should be reopened as a meeting place, not a parking lot.
- **Austin Keegan** - Commented on need for law enforcement within State Parks.
- **Marcus Foster**– Commented on the lack of enforcement regarding illegal camping along Highway 1.
- **Member of the public** (State Parks) - Commented that State Parks should use signage similar to what he observed in Utah regarding regulation of camping.
- **Dave Smiley** – Commented on the need for signage regulating camping.
- **Casey Lucius** – Introduced herself as a candidate for Congress.
- **Member of the public** – Commented on the need for safety signage. Kathleen Lee and Congressman Farr responded.
- **Kerri Frangioso** – Commented on the study of knob cone pines and asked for assistance in identifying possible locations within Big Sur. Also asked about the CALFIRE policy regarding tree removal. She also commented on the selective logging that occurs in the name of hazardous tree removal.
- **Kelly Sorenson** (MPRPD Board President) – Advocated for Measure E. Mike Caplan asked about retirement benefits.
- **Honey Williams** – Thanked Sam Farr and Dave Potter for hosting the BSMAAC.
- **Martha Karstens** – Announced the availability of sand bags to help with erosion control. Asked about events, and Kathleen Lee responded.
- **Member of the public** - Commented on illegal fires along area roads.

- **Jonathan Berkey** - Commented on fire breaks and erosion issues this winter, and the need for seeding and installation of drainage controls.
- **Marcus Foster** - Commented on pedestrian safety at Bixby Bridge.
- **Member of the public** - Commented on traffic and hiker safety near Bixby Bridge.
- **Steve Griffin (USFS)** – Provided an update on the status of the Soberanes wildfire, and introduced USFS Liaisons Darrin Mills and Dave Cooper. The current focus is on recovery, continued suppression, and repair work. The wildfire was 100% contained as of October 12th, 2016. Of the 132,000 acres of wildfire impact area, approximately 37,000 acres are private or state lands, and 95,000 acres of federal land. There are approximately 378 miles of fire line. The Incident Command Post moved from Toro Regional Park to San Lorenzo Park. Martha Diehl asked about remediation standards and coordination between work crews and local residents. Mike Caplan commented on the need to change laws to allow better preparation before wildfires occur, and to make this part of State Parks mission.
- **Kevin Cooper (USFS)** – Provided a presentation on the status of the Burn Area Emergency Response (BAER) Team. The BAER Team evaluated the severity of soil burn and the potential erosion impacts. The team's reports will be posted on the Monterey County Office of Emergency Services (OES) website. Dick Ravich asked about fuel breaks. Pam Silkwood asked about BAER recommendations, and whether the lack of recommendations was an indication of fire severity or due to budgetary constraints. Kevin Cooper responded and informed the attendees that the BAER Team does not put recommendations in the team's reports. Steve Beck asked about woody debris. Mike Caplan asked about debris flow. Ken Eklund urged residents to request an NRCS visit to their properties. Warner McGrew, USFS Liaison, commented on the final close out of the Soberanes Fire.

V. Old Business:

Winter Storm Preparations

Monterey County Office of Emergency Services (OES) representative Dick Bower provided information about various programs available to the Big Sur community. Information available on the OES public website includes BAER handouts, the NRCS request for assistance form, and details about the Watershed Protection Program. Dick Bower commented that OES will use a combination of communication methods to distribute information to impacted communities. Dick Ravich asked about the matching fund responsibility for property owners. The matching fund requirement is 25%. Mike Caplan commented on the need to wildfire mitigation measures in OES literature, and also the need for changes to federal and state laws. Martha Diehl clarified the requirements for NRCS assistance. She also commented on the need for a local weather radar unit. Sam Farr responded to her comments. Lana Weeks commented on the loss of phone service.

Status of Telephone Landlines and Microwave Receptor (Report from AT&T)

AT&T representative Bettye Saxon provided an update regarding replacement of the microwave receptor. She began by commenting that the Soberanes wildfire delayed access to the site to complete the required permit preparation analysis. She also commented that AT&T should have the necessary permit from the USFS within 30 to 60 days. AT&T will use the original development footprint, and once permitted the work will take approximately 3 – 6 months to complete. The new microwave receptor will be faster and more reliable. Rick Aldinger asked about land line upgrades, and commented about the need for more lines and that the current infrastructure is limited. Bettye Saxon responded by stating that AT&T plans to upgrade the entire network but that timing is uncertain. Cheryl Goetz (BSVFB) commented that AT&T is not providing more connectivity or capacity even though it is

needed. Bettye Saxon commented that DSL is no longer provided as a service. Alan Perlmutter commented regarding customer service issues. Rick Aldinger asked if the CPUC could force AT&T to address the service issues. Senator Bill Monning responded to these comments. Aengus Jeffers commented that AT&T and Big Sur need more competition for communication services. Mike Caplan commented that a replacement system needs to be in place before abandoning the existing system. A member of the public mentioned 911 issues. Steve Beck reiterated comments about service issues. Kirk Gafill requested a meeting be scheduled to address service issues. Mary Trotter commented that service technicians are not local and have difficulty finding residences. Regina Costa (TURN) commented on the responsibilities of AT&T under state and federal law. Martha Karstens commented on the unreliability of phone lines.

Condor Retrofit Project Update

PG&E representative Michael Best presented an overview of planned work in 2016-2017. He commented that bird flight diverters are failing, and PG&E plans to install more “tree wire”. Phase I will include approximately 14,000 linear feet of line from Partington Ridge to J.P. Burns State Park. Phase II will extend to Esalen on the south coast. Work will involve pole replacement and helicopter support. Work may also involve temporary interruptions of service.

VI. New Business:

Resolution Honoring Congressman Farr

Monterey County Supervisor Dave Potter presented a resolution from the Board of Supervisors to Congressman Sam Farr, honoring and thanking him for his many years of service, especially to the Big Sur community. Senator Bill Monning presented Supervisor Dave Potter with a resolution from the State Senate thanking him for his many years of service to the community. Senator Monning also recognized Big Sur Kate’s many years of volunteer service to the community. Senator Monning and Congressman Farr also presented resolutions from the State Legislature and Congress to Kathleen Lee for her many years of service as Principal Aide to Supervisor Potter.

The Big Sur Volunteer Fire Brigade (Martha Karstens), Coast Property Owners Association (John Handy), and Big Sur Chamber of Commerce (Kurt Gafill) presented tokens of thanks to Congressman Farr, Supervisor Potter, and staff members (Alec Arago, Kathleen Lee, Jayne Mohammadi, and Brian Flores) for their many years of support to the Big Sur community.

VII. Reports from Member Agencies:

Dick Ravich (Resident of Big Sur – North Coast)

- Expressed condolences to the Reagan family (firefighter/bulldozer operator who lost his life during the Soberanes wildfire).
- Thanked donors for their tremendous financial donations in support of families impacted by the Soberanes wildfire.
- Thanked Kathleen Lee, incident commanders, and firefighters.
- Commented that the Soberanes wildfire was the 17th largest in California history, and the most expensive in terms of firefighting cost at over \$260M.
- Commented on the continuing need for a NOAA transmitter
- Announced the cancellation of the Annual River Run, and postponement of the Jade Festival, due to the Soberanes wildfire.
- Commented on the continuing overuse of Big Sur.

- Commented on the progress of the Big Sur Land Use Plan update by the Big Sur community.

Betty Withrow (Resident of Big Sur – South Coast)

- Absent

Kirk Gafill (Big Sur Chamber of Commerce)

- Commented that business levels are returning to normal after the Soberanes wildfire.
- Commented on the significant economic impact due to the duration of the wildfire.
- Announced that although planned fundraisers were cancelled due to the wildfire, businesses will still provide funding to the Big Sur Volunteer Fire Brigade and Health Clinic.

Rob Carver (CPOA)

- Commented on grants and relief funds distributed to date. \$538K in grants received, and \$200K distributed (including \$24K for septic repairs, \$30K for dumpsters, and \$10K to the Reagan family). He also mentioned a \$100K grant from the Community Foundation, and a grant for a stream gauge on Garrapata Creek.
- Announced that small business loans are available.
- Announced that PG&E has offered to repair Green Ridge Road.
- Mike Caplan thanked the CPOA for their effective management of relief funds.

Joe Sidor (Monterey County Resource Management Agency)

- Informed attendees of the availability of the Big Sur current project report.

Dave Potter (Supervisor, District 5, Monterey County Board of Supervisors)

- Thanked the Big Sur community, his staff, and Congressman Sam Farr for supporting him over the last 20 years. He also commented on some of the highlights and memories.
- Presented Certificates of Recognition to the agencies that have supported the Big Sur community over the last 20 years.

Caine Camarillo (Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District)

- Thanked Supervisor Potter and Congressman Farr for their years of service.
- Commented that MPRPD had four properties affected by the Soberanes wildfire, which resulted in \$1M in damage. Over 1,300 acres of district lands were impacted by the wildfire, and crews constructed over 30 miles of fuel break or dozer lines on district lands. Over 800 acres were burned at Mill Creek, which will require a major reconstruction.
- Announced an Open House at Rancho Canada to receive public input on use of new district lands.

Mike Watson (California Coastal Commission)

- Commented on applications for improvements at Ventana Inn.
- Commented on the County's code enforcement action at the Tap Room, and possible involvement by Coastal Commission staff.
- Coastal Commission staff continues to coordinate with County staff on fire recovery efforts.

Sara von Schwind (Caltrans)

- Informed attendees of the availability of the Big Sur Project Update report.
- Commented on the status of the Elephant Trunk project.
- Announced that Caltrans has begun culvert cleaning along Highway 1 as part of its winter preparation activities.

- Announced that Art has retired, and that the new maintenance superintendant knows the Big Sur area.
- Mike Caplan asked about road sensors.
- Commented on the County's climbing land project between Rio Road and Carmel Valley Road.

Brent Marshall (State Parks)

- Introduced himself as the new Monterey District Superintendent. He also introduced John DeLuca as the new Big Sur point of contact for State Parks.
- Announced that J.P. Burns State Park is now fully open, that Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park is still closed and will remain closed until spring, and that Andrew Molera State Park is partially open pending relocation of all firefighting activities and personnel. Bridges along the Big Sur River will not be removed during the winter.
- Thanked Supervisor Potter and Congressman Farr for their years of service.
- Requested public input on the Carmel Area State Parks General Plan update. Announced an October 24th meeting with the Point Lobos Foundation, and that more community meetings will be scheduled.
- Rob Carver asked about a Science Camp proposal.
- Mike Caplan asked if the Carmel Area State Parks General Plan update will include amendments to allow or require preparation for wildfires. Brent Marshall responded that State Parks does manage fuel loads on its lands.
- Mary Trotter commented that whatever happens at Point Lobos affects or impacts Big Sur, and to ensure coordination occurs with the Big Sur community regarding the Carmel Area State Parks General Plan update. She also requested an apology from State Parks for the Soberanes wildfire.
- Rick Aldinger asked for clarification about the status of day use at Andrew Molera State Park.
- Michael Wisner (Carmel Highlands Association) welcomed Brent Marshall and mentioned that he looks forward to addressing issues.
- Martha Karstens asked for an update on the CHP housing.

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

- Absent

Jeff Kwasny (USFS)

- Commented that the Strategic Fuel Break Initiative was placed on hold during firefighting efforts for the Soberanes wildfire. He announced that a draft Environmental Impact Statement would be available for review in a few months. Mike Caplan asked if the proposal includes recommendations to increase the widths of fuel breaks.

Daniel Dodge (representing Luis Alejo, 30th District, State Assembly)

- Announced that Assemblymember Alejo would be moving to the County of Monterey Board of Supervisors.
- Thanked Supervisor Potter, Congressman Farr, Alec Arago, Kathleen Lee, and the Big Sur community.

Bill Monning (Senator, 17th District, State Senate)

- Announced that the State Senate had recently adjourned in memory of firefighter Robert Reagan.
- Commented that the State's fire suppression budget has increased from \$50M in 2008 to \$950M in 2016.
- Welcomed Brent Marshall to the BSMAAC.

- Commented that he has seen significant improvement in coordination between local, state, and federal agencies during firefighting actions.
- Announced that grants are available for post-fire relief, and that interested parties should contact his office for assistance.
- Commented that the issue of overuse of Highway 1, although placed on hold during the Soberanes wildfire, would now start to be addressed.

Sam Farr (Congressman Sam Farr, District, United States Congress)

- Announced submittal of the boundary line change bill for the Los Padres National Forest.
- Thanked the Big Sur community for allowing him to represent them in Congress, it was a great honor to serve.

VIII. Reports from Other Agencies: None

IX. Next meeting: January 20, 2017

X. The meeting adjourned at 1:52 pm.