

**BIG SUR MULTI-AGENCY ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES FOR AUGUST 23, 2019  
PFEIFFER BIG SUR LODGE CONFERENCE CENTER  
PFEIFFER BIG SUR STATE PARK, BIG SUR**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Supervisor Adams called the meeting to order at 10:18 am.

**II. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Roll call and introductions were made. BSMAAC members in attendance included Martha Karstens (Resident of Big Sur – North Coast), Anneliese Agren (Resident of Big Sur – South Coast), Kirk Gafill (Big Sur Chamber of Commerce), Butch Kronlund (Big Sur Community Association), Joseph Sidor (Monterey County Resource Management Agency), Supervisor Mary Adams (Monterey County, District 5), Joseph Navarez (Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District), Sara von Schwind (Caltrans), Brent Marshall (California State Parks), Kevin Elliot (USFS), Dominic Dursa (California Assembly, District 30), Bill Monning (California Senate, District 17), Kathleen Lee (US Congress, District 20).

Senator Bill Monning introduced Kyle Foster as the new California Highway Patrol Commander for the regional, as well as other CHP officers and Commander Garrett Sanders from the Monterey County Sheriffs Office, who were in attendance at the meeting.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The June 28, 2019 minutes were approved with corrections, including name clarifications and changes to Anneliese Agren’s comments on the Caltrans TDM agenda item. Approved with no further changes.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:**

**Rick Aldinger** commented about the porta-potties that Parks Management has on Sycamore Canyon Road and requested that they be removed.

**Dana Carnazzo** commented about the need for traffic control at the north entrance to Old Coast Road. She noted that the cones had been placed by a neighbor, not by Caltrans, and they have now been taken away. She requested that Supervisor Adams work with Caltrans and the County to put them back. She mentioned a new “app” called “Good to Go” that tells people where to go to the bathroom.

**John Handy** commented about the need for upper speed limit signs because of slow drivers, especially from Ventana Inn south. Sara von Schwind responded that Caltrans has been doing a speed survey, an engineering study to look at the spacing of related signs, and that near Deetjens they may reduce the speed.

**Ken Eklund** commented that for Apple iphone users, Google Maps is directing people incorrectly. He requested that Caltrans work with the phone apps to have correct information, especially during construction work, and to also have the correct information on street signs.

**Mike Caplin** made a follow up comment that the USGS base maps are incorrect (federal issue), and asked if that could be addresses at a separate meeting.

**Anneliese Agren** also made a follow up comment that Google Maps does have a way to make corrections but it doesn't seem to always work.

**Marcus Foster** read a statement on behalf of the Big Sur Fire Brigade, giving thanks to USFS, Caltrans and the Sheriff for their teamwork among the agencies to quickly contain the Mill Fire on Nacimiento-Ferguson Road. He also expressed concern about dispersed and illegal camping on Highway 1 and County roads, noting that it is hard to enforce. He noted that while State Parks is citing people within their jurisdiction, the County Code requires the Sheriff to wake people to giving citations. He asked if there are ways to increase the citation amount and improve the enforcement requirements. He observed that this illegal camping is degrading the turnouts with waste and other issues.

**Mike Caplin** requested the BSMAAC to add an agenda item for the RMA to make a presentation and provide a written report regarding land use policies applicable to fire prevention and ESHA, and to clarify the fire authorities ability to do mitigation. He asked for clarification on what the rules are and what people can and cannot do. He noted the Governor's 45-day projects, including the Palo Corona and Palo Colorado projects, because of the high rating for fire fuel management needed in Monterey County.

**Lindsey Romano** commented about illegal campfires on the South Coast of Big Sur and added that some signage had been added they are having some effect on reducing camping, except on weekends. He noted that inconsiderate people who don't follow the rules can deny legitimate campers opportunity to do so. He stated that more enforcement is needed, noting that fighting fires is a huge expense but that there is inadequate funding for preventative enforcement, which is pennywise and pound foolish. **Kevin Elliott** (USFS) responded that a new officer will be hired in 2020 who will be responsible for enforcement in the Monterey Ranger District of the Los Padres NF.

**Pam Peck**, on behalf of the Coastal Trail working groups executive committee, presented draft maps of the proposed coastal trail alignments by segment. The maps were put up on the walls for everyone to see, and also are available on website at [www.bigsurcct.net](http://www.bigsurcct.net). She noted there were some glitches with inaccurate information on the base maps, but they have outlined problem areas where the alignment might be on private property. She thanked Senator Monning for his support for the community led process and working with Caltrans.

**Aengus Jeffers** – Thanked Congressman Panetta's office for several things, such as the climate change bill, but also small things that can be done by elected officials. He gave an example of assistance he has gotten with the cremated remains of a World War I veteran that were found and now will be interred with his wife with full honors. **Kathleen Lee** responded that had been done by Marina Perepelyuk in their office.

**Supervisor Mary Adams** mentioned that Kate Novoa has published several good articles in the Voices of Monterey Bay online publication.

**V. NEW BUSINESS:**

None.

**VI. OLD BUSINESS:**

- a. Cell Phone Coverage Issues – **Kathleen Lee** provided a status update on efforts to provide cell phone coverage, working with Senator Monning, Assembly Member Rivas and Supervisor Adams offices, as well as State Parks, AT&T, CABS and others. The focus is currently in the Garrapata area, and though it is a smaller area it still has a \$2M cost. They are meeting regularly to work on funding.  
**Steve Beck** asked about co-location agreements between AT&T and Verizon, noting that Point Sur has AT&T but not Verizon. Kathleen responded that Verizon typically co-locates and that Verizon is focused on urban areas and hasn't been very responsive. She noted the system of Bixby, Point Sur and Anderson Peak triangulating, but that the topography is challenging so they are working on existing telephone poll infrastructure. **Martha Karstens** noted that there is no cell service where the traffic control is happening at Hurricane Point, that the cell tower had gone out at Big Sur the day before and might not yet be fixed, and that the backup generator needs to be rebooted. **Kirk Gafill** asked if AT&T could provide an update to the BSMAAC on changes to be made in 2020. **Brent Marshall** (State Parks) said there needs to be continued attention to communication, with PG&E and AT&T assuming there is access, and that they need to provide notice when needing to get to Point Sur.
- b. Big Sur Byway Committee Formation – **Supervisor Mary Adams** thanked everyone who expressed interest and informed everyone that the expectations of the committee would be clarified before she makes any appointments. She noted that there are a number of other planning efforts going on with Caltrans TDM plan and the possible Destination Stewardship plan, and that there is a need to evaluate how to align these different efforts.
- c. Caltrans Big Sur Transportation Demand Management Plan – **Sara von Schwind** said she had no specific updates as Caltrans is continuing its work to put a draft plan together and moving forward with data collection. They are looking at ways for target audiences to get out of their vehicles. Someone asked if there would be data collected at Bixby Bridge. Someone responded that 70 percent of visitations to the Big Sur valley result in return trips to the Monterey Peninsula.
- d. Brief Status Updates
  - i) CHP Housing – **CHP Commander Kyle Foster** announced that a land use agreement had been executed with State Parks. They had a meeting with the contractors who will be constructing the housing. They anticipate a 9-month construction timeframe for the two 455 sf officer houses. CHP has an occupancy target date of July 2020.
  - ii) Garrapata State Park Restrooms – **Brent Marshall** commented that the two expanded potential sites have been surveyed and they will have two sites confirmed by Planning in September. It is too early to give an exact timeframe, they will be going for funding next year.
  - iii) Log Jam on the Big Sur River – **Brent Marshall** said he is working with Sara at Caltrans to address any work that needs to be done in short order and that the trees upstream appear to be slowing down water. They are evaluating and surveying the area with Caltrans staff, it appears to include a leach field area south of Pfeiffer Big Sur and another area across from the Catholic Church.
  - iv) Wayland Bridge – **Brent Marshall** commented that there are no major updates; State Parks will be going out for bid soon.
  - v) Restrooms in General – **Martha Karstens** asked that this item remain on the agenda until these issues are resolved. **Kirk Gafill** asked if there is any chance there could be some additional chemical toilets at Garrapata until the permanent restrooms can be

installed. Brent responded they have some on the east side but can't put them on the other side because of the slopes and need for roadway. **John Handy** asked whether there was anything being done on the south coast and commented that the restrooms at Willow Creek and Mill Creek campgrounds are being closed to public use and that tickets are being written to people not paying the \$10 fee contrary to prior direction. **Joe DePola paulo** commented on the lack of information about fires, camping, bathrooms. People should know where bathrooms are located, but there is no internet service to tell people in real time. There is toilet paper at every turnout. **Kevin Elliott** stated his expectation is that Parks Management will let people use restrooms and said he would follow up with them regarding charging for restroom use. **Dana Carnazzo** asked how she would know when this had been done, as she informs people going south that they should be able to use them. **Anneliese Agren** commented that people park on the highway and walk in to use the restrooms but can't go into the parking area. She requested a protocol for the correct information to give to people. **John Handy** said these are long walks and not accessible, that signage is needed to explain and the need for a parking spot next to the bathroom that people can use to pull into. **Brendan Shave** commented that PMC has been sending people to Plaskett Ridge Road to camp, that they are having illegal campfires there, having seen 15 in the last two weeks. He had personally spoken with 14 of them but stated a need for enforcement and tickets. He thinks PMC should let people use the restrooms at the campgrounds. **Debbie Waggoner** (Parks Management) responded that they do not send people up to Plaskett Ridge and that it is not their policy. The fee area is per their permit and the signage is consistent with the permit. Use of the bathrooms is not the issue, it is people who are driving in and staying. She is training a new district lead on their policies. **Senator Bill Monning** commented that some progress is being made and inquired whether there is a paper map and information card that could be distributed by businesses. He noted the need to continue to work with State Parks and USFS for consistent, clear policies so that people don't get mixed messages at the gate. **Butch Kronland** responded that information is available on the CABS and Chamber websites, and that the Big Sur Guide is also linked, with other maps with restrooms identified. **Kathleen Lee** commented that work has been previously done to identify USFS and publicly available restrooms, with that information uploaded into the CCC app. She noted the need for hospitality employee education, that they and other folks who come into contact with visitors are the greatest asset. She noted State Parks and USFS improved their bathrooms signs last year. **Dana Carnazzo** commented on the need for signage telling people how far to the next restroom. **Supervisor Adams** asked whether electronic signage at Rio Road could give people real time information on the drive time. Someone commented that part of the joy of Big Sur is not having cell coverage or internet access, not necessarily the right solution. **Mike Caplin** commented on signage in other areas (e.g. Prunedale or Salinas) that direct people in Big Sur could give info on websites to find information ahead when people have time to look it up. **Kirk Gafill** commented that it is a scenic highway and people have challenges reading even basic signs. He suggested a need to be humble about what can realistically be included in a sign and a need to be careful about what and where. **Sara von Schwind** concurred with this comment about challenges that people don't see signs, and about the scenic highway and limits on regulatory signs. She noted the need to balance the community's needs, and that the businesses were hard hit from the road closures. Caltrans needs to

work with the agencies who have bathrooms. **Brent Marshall** added that when the map was prepared, restrooms are available at short intervals but there are additional traffic and logistical issues. He echoed that you don't want to over sign and that there are limits to signs as the solution.

## VII. REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES:

- a. **Martha Karstens, North Coast Big Sur Resident**, observed that campfires and bathrooms are unresolved, have come up again and are not going away. She asked if campfires could be banned year-round and whether dispersed camping could be rescinded. She shared that she prepared a written report, including announcements for the upcoming Grange Hall clean up and the upcoming Big Sur River Run scheduled for October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019. This run benefits the Big Sur Volunteer Fire Brigade and the Big Sur Health Center. Thanked USFS for work completed on Sycamore Canyon Road. Provided a fire insurance update. Announced something that CERT had gotten a PG&E grant for 60 portable radios and more.
- b. **Annalisa Agren, South Coast Big Sur Resident**, provided a hand-out with a color-coded map of the south coast. She explained the color coding with blue for support services, pink for County maintained roads, orange for Forest Service maintained roads, green for popular destination areas and yellow for residential areas. She gave additional details within each category. She thanked County Public Works for doing seven miles of vegetation management and that they now have a better understanding of why mowing is important for public safety.
- c. **Kirk Gafill, Big Sur Chamber of Commerce**, announced three new businesses in Big Sur, including at the Mercado Segrado (formerly the Village Shops) and the Ventana Smokehouse. He commented that business activities have been flat at the 2012/13 levels, and that international tourism is dropping. He noted that the work on Highway 1 has been a traffic challenge for residents and visitors, and thanked Caltrans and SB1 for the road improvements.
- d. **Butch Kronlund, Community Association of Big Sur**, shared that on 5 & 6 August, the CABS held a series of meetings with Costas Christ regarding visitation in Big Sur with over 200 people attending. He thanked District 5 Supervisor Adams for her support in getting funding for this through the Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau (MCCVB). He recognized outgoing MCCVB lead staff Tammy Blount for helping with the process to receive the funds and wished her well in the future. He noted they have signed a contract with Costas Christ to develop a Destination Stewardship Plan over the next nine months, and that they are exploring options to gather more long-term traffic data to inform acceptable levels of change.
- e. **Joe Sidor, Monterey County Resource Management Agency** informed everyone the County's project status report for Big Sur was available and had been provided with the agenda.
- f. **Supervisor Mary Adams, Monterey County**, Provided an update on the Short-Term Rental Ordinance. The ordinance had been considered by the Planning Commission at a workshop on July 24<sup>th</sup> and will be considered by the Planning Commission again on September 25<sup>th</sup>. The Board of Supervisors will likely consider the ordinance in either late October or November. She noted that the County has a webpage with information on the short-term rental ordinance that can be found at: <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-i-z/resource-management-agency-rma-/planning/ordinances-plans-under-development/short-term-rental-ordinances-coastal-ref130043-> She shared that she participated in the Henry Miller Library "Under the Persimmon Tree" speaker series in July, and attended the CABS presentation by

Costas Christ on destination stewardship planning. Supervisor Adams also recognized the MCCVB and Tammy Blount for her work in Monterey County.

- g. **Joseph Navarez, Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District**, shared they have been working with CalFIRE on the Governor's fire fuel reduction projects at Palo Corona, White Rock and Laurel Springs. They have been working on protecting habitat while reducing fire risks. He announced that they have dropped the permit process for Palo Corona Regional Park when entering through the Rancho Canada unit. He noted that the comment period has closed on CEQA review of the General Development Plan for Palo Corona Regional Park. Announced that the Mill Creek Reserve remains closed. Kathleen Lee added thanks to MPRPD for a new app with maps and programs being offered.
- h. **Mike Watson, Coastal Commission**, was unable to attend the meeting. No report.
- i. **Sara von Schwind, Caltrans**, shared that they are working on the Polar Star emergency project, which includes a via duct, wall and lane addition. There are nighttime closures for this project, which is expected to be done in the spring. She noted that PG&E has applied for permits to do fuel reduction work under their lines Highway 1. She noted they have been doing new speed limit studies and surveys that will be completed in the area of Deetjens Inn, mile marker 42.5 to 44.5. Informed the public about the availability of the Caltrans project list, which identifies both current and future projects, and specifically mentioned the paving project that will be going out to bid and start in the spring. She noted that last year there were six winter storm closures at Paul's Slide and Mud Creek, and they will do them again this coming year as needed for public safety. At Paul's slide they are working on re-establishing two lanes but will leave the signal there, dormant. Barbara Woyt asked a question about the current work at Hurricane Point and a concern about invasive species being brought in with the soil stockpiles. She would like to see mitigation and monitoring to remove and manage exotics in this area.
- j. **Brent Marshall, State Parks**, having given a number of updates under old business, Brent shared that a canine officer position was being filled.
- k. **MBNMS**, Karen Grimmer was unable to attend the meeting. No report.
- l. **Kevin Elliot, U.S. Forest Service**, see attached remarks.
- m. **Dominic Dursa, Office of Assemblyman Robert Rivas**, introduced himself as the Principal Field Representative for Assembly Member Rivas. He thanked everyone involved with responding to the Mill Fire, noting that it was the first time he had experienced going through a fire.
- n. **Senator Bill Monning** opened by acknowledging his staff Nicole and Colleen, also in attendance. He shared good news that they had solved a challenge with the Big Sur School District through the budget process, with a trailer to erase penalties and recognize the rural nature of the school district. He spoke about fire insurance, an emerging issue that his office is collecting information about. He asked people to notify his office if your insurance has been cancelled, as they are tracking where this is occurring. He noted that while the State's insurance commission cannot make certain mandates, products should be available to all and they are working to ensure coverage. He mentioned the FAIR Act has low rates. He noted additional challenges with PG&E for safety and future liabilities. He noted the State legislature passed the largest spending budget and the largest reserve. Bills he got passed included one for safe clean drinking water that will generate \$3B over ten years for capital projects in areas with contaminated water supplies. They are moving forward with Phase 2 of the Veteran's Cemetery. He also gave thanks to all who responded to the Mill Fire and mentioned CalFIRE prevention projects and funding for suppression and new equipment. He spoke about the

tragedy at the Gilroy Garlic Festival, mentioning the people who lost lives, responded to victims, and the need for sound gun control and national action. He acknowledged Mike Caplin and the working groups on the California Coastal Trail as a community-based planning effort. He shared they will be busy in the Senate with over 1,000 bills to process in the coming few weeks, and lastly that he will speak at the Henry Miller Library that Sunday.

- o. **Kathleen Lee, Office of Congressman Jimmy Panetta**, provided a written report on the legislation that their office had introduced. She noted that over 365 bills have been passed by the House but only 35 by the Senate, and asked people to contact Senate offices to get them to consider bills. Congressman Panetta held six town halls that week while he was in the District before going back to Washington D.C. In the district, they have completed 1,043 meetings, casework with constituents to achieve over \$1.2M in constituent savings and closure over 1,900 cases. Further, they have had 42,000 constituent engagements with a 90% response rate. She thanked all who worked on the Mill Fire, and especially to Fin for his responsiveness for inquiries. She thanked everyone who are engaged and for being civil, noting that it give hope that public engagement is possible. She noted the national issues of immigration, gun control and impeachment, and that there is a focus to legislate and govern. Lastly, she encouraged standing up and saying something for people who are under attack.

**VIII. REPORTS FROM OTHER AGENCIES ON ISSUES PERTINENT TO BIG SUR**

None.

**IX. NEXT MEETING**

Supervisor Adams announced that the next meeting will be held on November 1, 2019 at 10am at the Big Sur Lodge.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

Supervisor Adams adjourned the meeting at 12:52 pm.

## **Big Sur Multi-Agency Advisory Council Meeting**

**August 23, 2019**

### **Remarks from Kevin B. Elliott, Forest Supervisor, Los Padres National Forest**

#### **Mill Fire**

- U.S. Forest Service appreciates the assistance provided by
  - **Matt Harris** and the firefighters from Big Sur Fire Brigade for their leadership and Matt Harris first took initial attack incident commander role
  - **Luke and Duke Krenkel** and the rest of the FHL crews
  - **Buddy Bloxham** who assumed the role of Operations Section Chief and later Agency Rep for CALFIRE. CalFire offered everything requested
  - Other agencies to recognize include
    - California Highway Patrol
    - Monterey County Sheriff
    - Caltrans
    - Monterey County Roads
    - Ventana Wilderness Alliance for staffing the trail closures
- Experienced a long and wet spring that kept fuel moistures above average longer than usual
- All ground and air resources were available at time of incident
- Thanks to the incredible efforts of all involved the fire stayed out of Kirk Creek Drainage and held at 312 acres, with a high of 640 personnel.
- The cause is still under investigation.

#### **Strategic Community Fuelbreak Improvement Project**

- Fuel break this year
  - Our intent was to implement along North Coast Ridge Road from Terrace Creek to Cold Springs. Due to a wet winter and spring we were only able to accomplish approximately 4.5 miles of much needed brushing along the North Coast Ridge Road. This brushing was all in the non-Wilderness portions of the area.
- Current Collaboration
  - Together with partners State Parks, Santa Lucia Conservancy, Jim Hill, Pam Silkwood, Resource Conservation District among others we have approximately 1300-1400 acres via fire prevention and CA Climate Change Initiative grant.
    - Los Padres NF portion consists of the 542 acres from the Strategic Community Fuelbreak Improvement Project approved November 13, 2018. The Forest is also pursuing use of the Good Neighbor Authority with CalFire to implement Mescal Ridge (non-Wilderness) and Hennicksons ridge (Wilderness) approximately 100 acres.



### **Pine Ridge Trail**

- We had a productive meeting with State parks and in working with our partners at Ventana Wilderness Alliance (VWA), we began planning and coordination efforts to reopen the Pine Ridge trail. Current plans the use of American Conservation Experience crews to complete work from Terrace Creek to the State Park boundary early March through April with intentions of re-opening the trail mid-May.

### **PBDUA/Sycamore Canyon Rd. –**

- A successful effort to fix the potholes and perform brushing work along the road took place on August 8<sup>th</sup>. In collaboration with roads engineer from the Cleveland NF, crews from the Sierra NF and Los Padres NF Big Sur engine crew), and PMC (Traffic Mgmt.) the road was closed for one day and the worked was completed.

### **North Coast Ridge Road (NCRR)**

- A draft road maintenance agreement was presented to the Federal Aviation Administration five weeks ago and we are scheduled to having a meeting to discuss on Aug 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Currently, there have been reports of unauthorized use on NCRR and at Anderson Peak. These reports are taken seriously and Acting District Ranger Fin Eifert and the Los padres Lands and Special Uses staff are researching and coordinating efforts to address the potential issue.

### **DISPERSED CAMPING AND CAMPFIRES**

- Roadside camping is prohibited along the Nacimiento-Ferguson Road (Forest Road 22S01), from its intersection with State Highway CA-1 then east for 12 miles (Fort Hunter Liggett boundary) per Forest Order 0507-51-19-09, effective August 20, 2019 – August 19, 2020. Forest Orders only last one year. This is a continuation of a previous order prohibiting roadside camping along the Nacimiento-Ferguson Road.
- Open campfires remain banned across the entire Los Padres National Forest except in designated campgrounds per Forest Order No. 05-07-00-19-05, effective June 29, 2019 through January 31, 2020. Fuel conditions are continually evaluated to assess whether further fire restrictions may be implemented or extended.
- Effective enforcement remains a concern by all partners and cooperators. Forest Supervisor Kevin Elliott shared his recent conversation with the Los Padres Patrol Captain indicating a federal Law Enforcement Officer would be hired in 2020 for the Monterey Ranger District (the previous LEO transferred).