

COUNTY OF INYO NATURAL RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF AUGUST 8, 2013 MEETING

MEMBERS:

DAVID GERMAN (VICE-CHAIR)
DOUG THOMPSON
RANDI PRITCHARD
DANA JEFFRIES
WALTER SHARER (CHAIR)

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ALTERNATES:

JAEL HOFFMAN
VACANT

STAFF:

JOSHUA HART, AICP
NOLAN BOBROFF

PLANNING DIRECTOR
PLANNING STAFF

The Inyo County Natural Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC) met on Thursday, August 8, 2013, at the Superior Court of California, County of Inyo, Department 2 Courtroom, 345 South Clay Street, Independence, CA 93526 and at a satellite location at the Jill Kinmont Boothe School, George Lozito Conference Room, 166 Grandview Drive, Bishop, CA 93514.

Walter Sharer, Chair opened the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

ITEM 1: ROLL CALL – Members in attendance: David German, Doug Thompson, Randi Pritchard, Dana Jeffries, Walter Sharer and Alternate Jael Hoffman.

Also present was Josh Hart, Planning Director; Nolan Bobroff, Planning Staff; Bob Harrington, Water Department Director.

ITEM 2: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE- The pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Sharer.

ITEM 3: PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – This was the opportunity for anyone in the audience to address the Committee on any related subject that was not scheduled on the Agenda.

There was no one from the public wishing to comment on any items not on the Agenda.

ITEM 4: APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Approval of Minutes from June 6, 2013.

MOTION: Moved by Dana Jeffries to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Jael Hoffman.

The Motion passed 5-0; Jael Hoffman, Alternate voted for Doug Thompson who had not yet arrived.

ITEM 5: TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN – A representative from the Forest Service will provide an update on the Travel Management Plan (TMP) Sub-Part B. This plan was completed for the Inyo National Forest for lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service. For more information on the TMP, see: <http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php/?project=17479>.

Marty Hornick of the U.S Forest Service (USFS) gave a presentation going over the history of the TMP and where it is headed in the future. Mr. Hornick provided various handouts and maps related to the TMP.

Comments and questions posed by the Committee include:

- Are people complying with the road closures and what is the penalty for non-compliance? Mr. Hornick replied that compliance was increasing and the rangers tasked with enforcement were actively trying to educate people and are gradually becoming stricter with fines.
- What is the process for trails and roads that weren't included in the approved TMP? Mr. Hornick replied that any changes or additions have to go out for public review and comments before any changes can be implemented.

ITEM 6: WATER DEPARTMENT – The Inyo County Water Director will provide information regarding various County water policies and agreements, and a general overview of what the Water Department is tasked with managing.

Bob Harrington, Inyo County Water Director gave a brief summary of the Water Department and discussed the County's various water agreements. Mr. Harrington provided copies of the Groundwater Ordinance and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) Long-Term Water Agreement.

Comments and questions posed by the Committee include:

- Whether mitigation projects have an end date or run in perpetuity? Mr. Harrington stated that most run in perpetuity.
- Who ensures that ranchers who lease land from LADWP receive their fair share of water? Mr. Harrington replied that the County monitors the long term water agreement and often works as a middle man between the ranchers and LADWP.

ITEM 7: INYO NATIONAL FOREST PLAN UPDATE/REVISION – TOPIC PAPERS & FOCUS PAPERS (Action Item) – The County is working with the Inyo National Forest (INF) on it update to the INF Plan. Topic Papers were released regarding the Plan Update/Revision earlier this year, and the NRAC previously provided input for the Board of Supervisors' consideration. The comment period for the Topic Papers has been extended, and additional input regarding the Topic Papers from the NRAC is being requested for the Board's consideration, as well as input on the draft Focus Papers that are being prepared by County Staff. Additional information is available at: <http://inyoplanning.org/InyoNationalForest.htm>

Josh Hart, Planning Director and Susan Joyce, Forest Planner with the USFS gave a brief summary of the Forest Plan Update and where in the plan they currently are.

The Committee had the following comments and questions:

- Dust pollution was not addressed by the topic papers.
- Economic activity may be better analyzed at the County level.

- Multiple uses need to look at both a regional level and local level.
- The NRV looks at things from a holistic viewpoint.
- How will the Forest Service utilize the input? Ms. Joyce responded that the Forest Service will analyze the comments and implement them accordingly.

Josh Hart informed the Committee that the purpose of the Focus Papers is to identify the issues that are the most important to the County and condense them into shorter more readable documents.

ITEM 8: GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING CODE UPDATE (Action Item) – The Committee will receive a presentation from staff regarding the General Plan and Zoning Code Update and provide comments and input on the draft. The draft General Plan and Zoning Code is available on the Inyo Planning Website at: <http://inyoplanning.org/GPandZoningUpdates.htm>

Josh Hart, Planning Director provided a brief summary of the General Plan and Zoning Code update and asked the Committee for any input.

The Committee had concerns related to how the Zoning Code would be enforced and the potential hardships that high fines could cause on low income households throughout the County.

ITEM 9: U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE – CRITICAL HABITAT PROPOSAL (Action Item) – The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) proposes to list and designate Critical Habitat for the Sierra Nevada Yellow-Legged Frog, the Northern Distinct Population Segment of the Mountain Yellow-Legged Frog, and the Yosemite Toad. Critical Habitat for these species is proposed in Inyo County and adjacent to the County along the crest of the Sierra Nevada. The NRAC will conduct a workshop and potentially provide recommendations for the Board of Supervisors. Additional information on this item is available at: http://inyoplanning.org/projects/USFW_YellowLeggedFrog.htm

Josh Hart, Planning Director provided a brief summary on the proposal to designate critical habitat and indicated that the County is concerned about potential impacts to recreation, fishing, packing, and other recreational uses.

The Committee had the following concerns and comments:

- Many of the lakes within the designated areas have already been treated by California Fish & Wildlife and do not have fish in them.
- With regards to the survey being completed by Staff; Staff is contacting businesses that rely on tourism and inquiring what they feel the impacts might be from this proposal
- The implications of this proposal are unknown and it is possible that some areas could be closed from it.
- Utilize the data collected from the survey carefully because it is unlikely that all recreational activities would cease from the proposal.
- Look at hunting tags because those are zone specific.

ITEM 10: OLANCHA-CARTAGO 4 LANE PROJECT – The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) with the support of Inyo County Local Transportation Commission has proposed widening about 12.7 miles of U.S. Highway 395 in Inyo County near the towns of Olancha and Cartago. In June of 2011, Caltrans selected the preferred alternative for the project.

Staff will provide an update for the NRAC on the project. For more information on the project see: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist9/projects/olancha/>

Nolan Bobroff, Planning Staff introduced the item and gave a brief summary on it.

The following summarizes the comments made by the Committee:

- Profit losses in Olancha will be gained in Lone Pine
- The project will have huge impacts on Olancha.
- Caltrans needs to explain their rationale for the decision.
- Funding will come from Mono, Inyo, and Kern Counties.
- A lack of leadership in towns and a failure to contribute, led to this decision.
- Impacts from noise and pollution need to be looked at in an EIR.
- Comment period will commence once the EIR is released.

ITEM 12: SCHEDULE OF NEXT MEETING – The Committee discussed meeting in November or December.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Prepared by:

Nolan Bobroff
Staff to
Natural Resource Advisory Committee