

## **Minutes of August 6, 2022, SBNF Cabin Coalition Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 3:04 pm at the Glauthier family cabin #8 in the Metcalf Tract. 16 cabin representatives were in attendance from the following 7 tracts: South Fork Santa Ana River, Metcalf, Southwest Shore, Pine Hill Drive, East Lakeview, Polique Canyon and Stetson Creek.

### **Forest Service Update**

Knowing that they would be unable to attend this meeting, Forest Service staff arranged a Teams call with Roy on Tuesday, August 2, which included Acting District Ranger Evalds Rimbenieks, Recreation and Public Services Staff Officer Joseph Martin and Front Country Special Uses Administrator Cheryl Williams.

### **Staffing**

- Evalds “Evy” Rimbenieks has assumed the position of Acting Mountaintop District Ranger and should be in this position until November 14. The District Ranger position has been posted and interviews are in-process. \*["Evy" is pronounced "AV" as in "audio-visual"]
- Casey Shaffer continues as the Special Uses Administrator on the Mountaintop but is presently on detail to the Los Padres NF through mid-October.
- Jay Marshall has moved from the Forest office to the position of Archaeologist on the Mountaintop District.

Staffing on the various Ranger Districts is as follows:

### **Forest Office**

- Danelle D. Harrison [[danelle.harrison@usda.gov](mailto:danelle.harrison@usda.gov), 909-382-2710] Forest Supervisor

### **Mountaintop Ranger District**

- Evalds Rimbenieks [[evalds.rimbenieks@usda.gov](mailto:evalds.rimbenieks@usda.gov), 909-382-2830] Acting District Ranger
- Joseph Martin [[joseph.martin@usda.gov](mailto:joseph.martin@usda.gov)] Recreation and Public Services Staff Officer
- Casey Shaffer [[casey.shaffer@usda.gov](mailto:casey.shaffer@usda.gov), 909-382-2872] Special Uses Administrator
- Jay Marshall [[jay.marshall@usda.gov](mailto:jay.marshall@usda.gov), 909382-2866] District Archaeologist

### **Front Country Ranger District**

- Joe Rechsteiner [[joseph.rechsteiner@usda.gov](mailto:joseph.rechsteiner@usda.gov), 909-392-2851] District Ranger

- Cheryl Williams [[Cheryl.williams@usda.gov](mailto:Cheryl.williams@usda.gov), 909-382-2907] Special Uses

### **San Jacinto Ranger District**

- Marc Stamer [[marc.stamer@usda.gov](mailto:marc.stamer@usda.gov), 909-382-2728] District Ranger
- Rita Morris [[rita.morris@usda.gov](mailto:rita.morris@usda.gov)] Special Uses Administrator

### **Forest Service Dispatcher [24 Hour] 909-383-5654**

**Forest Service Law Enforcement: (open) Tyler Smith (temporary)**

**San Bernardino County Sheriff: Christian Cordoba, Deputy -- Call 911**

**California Dept of Fish and Wildlife: Walter Douglas, Game Warden – 760-702-1062**

**Or Rich Fischer, Game Warden – 951-288-7651**

**Big Bear Discovery Center** The Discover Center is not yet open to the public, however, passes and permits can be obtained by seeing the Forest Service volunteers.

### **Fire Issues**

- Fire Rating The present fire situation is “Very High” and is expected to be increased to “Extreme” by September. Recent monsoon storms have helped the moisture levels somewhat, but not enough considering the continuing drought.
- Current Fire Restrictions prohibit fires, campfires or charcoal fires except in a Forest Service-provided fire ring or BBQ. These restrictions are presently under review and may be revised depending on fire conditions.
- Forest Closure? You may remember that 10 National Forests across California were closed for a month in September 2021 due to extreme fire conditions and to conserve fire protection resources. There is presently no plan to order such a closure this year unless conditions get much worse.

**North Shore Landscape Restoration Project** The comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement closes on August 13, 2022. This project will implement fuels reduction from the Big Bear dam eastward past the East Lakeview Tract, which is above Baker Pond. As part of this project, 41 miles of new multi-use trails will be built, including non-motorized recreation opportunities for hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikes, and motorized opportunities for Class 1 E-bikes. A revised EIS is expected in October.

**Administrative Parking Passes** On July 28, 2022, the Supervisor’s Office announced that Administrative Parking Passes will no longer be issued to allow parking in designated fee sites located near recreation residence permit areas. From discussion with FS staff, it appears that cabin users or their guests were improperly parking in parking lots intended for trailheads or other fee uses and were making copies of Administrative Passes, which are controlled

documents. The impact of this decision on parking during snow periods when cabin access roads are blocked is currently unknown. Further discussion is planned with FS staff before this winter.

**Cabin Inspections** With Casey on detail until mid-October, it is expected that no cabin inspections will be done except for those needed for changes in ownership. In the absence of Forest Service inspections, tract associations could conduct informal or “courtesy” inspections using the FS inspection form.

**Improvement Requests** Until Casey returns, all improvement requests are to be sent to the Recreation General Mailbox: [SM.FS.BDFspecUses@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.BDFspecUses@usda.gov) New requests will be processed as time allows with priority going to emergency projects (for example, roof repairs, water or sanitation repairs, etc.) and minor projects such as repainting in the same color and reroofing with the same color/materials. Be sure to send along photos of the existing cabin situation.

If you have submitted a Recreation Residence Proposal Request and don't know what's happened to it, email the General Mailbox above to ask.

**Rental of Recreation Residences** Short-term rental of cabins is allowed by our permits with prior written approval from the deciding officer. It is my understanding that there are no approved short-term rentals. Long-term rentals and rental through commercial sites such as Airbnb is not allowed. The Forest Service is aware that several cabins are being used as long-term rentals and will be taking appropriate action against these permit holders.

**Emergency Service Directions** This effort is intended to ensure that emergency responders can find any specific cabin should assistance be needed. As described previously, volunteers from the Southwest Shore Tract have found a way to insert their location and access information into SB County's Emergency Services database. The new development on this issue is that Big Bear Fire has initiated a trial effort to enter all cabins in the Metcalf Tract into the County's database along with their access routes. Once the trial has been tested with the Metcalf cabins, Big Bear Fire plans to extend this program to all other residence tracts in the BB valley. Efforts will continue to clarify the process for residence tracts not in the BB valley.

Polique Canyon representatives suggested that other tracts may wish to check out the tract map that is posted at the entrance to their tract and the keypad-controlled gate that allows access.

**Improving Cell Coverage in the South Fork Area** Since T-Mobile absorbed Sprint, cell phone coverage in the South Fork area along the Santa Ana River has been intermittent and unavailable for weeks at a time. Cabin owner Mary Lear has taken on the effort of working with the Forest Service and the cell phone carriers to explore the addition of a cell tower or repeater to ensure reliable service. Both a tower and repeater require a privately-owned site and a power source, although solar power could be part of the answer. No definite resolution yet.

**Cabin Insurance** During open discussion one attendee expressed frustration at trying to find fire insurance for his cabin. This continues to be a problem for many owners. According to the meeting attendees the following companies are writing cabin insurance: State Farm, USAA, and the California Fair Plan. Combining your cabin and home may help secure coverage. It was also suggested that agents or brokers located in Big Bear Lake may be able to secure coverage. Big Bear Insurance Co. was specifically mentioned by one attendee.

**New Business & Open Discussion** None to report.

**Setting Next Meeting Date** -- Our next meeting is tentatively set for November 5, 2022.  
Location and meeting details to be announced.

Meeting was adjourned about 4:30 pm.

*Minutes Prepared 8/11/22*

*Roy Glauthier*