MEETING RECORD

**SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE**

Thursday, March 28, 2019 – 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

Altadena Community Center, Altadena, California

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# Action Items

1. **Belinda Faustinos and Jack Sahl** will draft a letter on behalf of the Collaborative advocating for the USFS and San Gabriel Mountains National Monument budget.
2. **Belinda Faustinos** will share a spreadsheet tracking possible funding sources that could be added to the action plan.
3. **DONE - Sarah Di Vittorio** will update “public benefit” under the fifth priority initiative criteria to read “environmental and/or recreational benefit.”
4. **Each ad hoc Committee** will, prior to the May 23 meeting, identify its top 2 priority projects (and identify near-term tasks to achieve them) and its top 2 alternate projects.
5. **Each ad hoc committee** will, prior to the May 23 meeting, meet with its respective Angeles National Forest liaison to vet priority projects and identify near-term tasks to achieve them.
6. **Adrienne Dunfee** will connect Dania Gutierrez and Belinda Faustinos with Julissa Gonzalez to discuss Monument plan communications.

# Welcome and Introductions

The group welcomed new National Forest Foundation staff Dania Gutierrez, Southern California Program Manager, and Brian Robey, Southern California Program Associate, as well as new Angeles National Forest (ANF) staff Aaron Ash, Deputy District Ranger of the Gateway District of the ANF, and John Cho, Volunteer Coordinator.

A key goal of today’s meeting was to discuss the SGMCC action plan template and break into Ad Hoc Committees to discuss project priorities to be included in the action plan.

# SGMCC Committee 2019 Action Plans

The group discussed the action plan template, then broke into the Ad Hoc committees to discuss priority initiatives. Ad hoc committees reported out their priorities to the group.

The goals of this discussion were to:

* Provide an overview of the action plan template
* Review goals/purpose of the action plan to ensure a shared vision of what we hope to accomplish with the action plan
* Determine a timeframe for the action plan
* Start identifying priorities to include in the action plan

## Action Plan Template

The action plan template outlines the following:

* A description of who the Collaborative is and our partnership with the ANF
* Criteria for determining priority Initiatives
* An overview of priority initiatives
* An action plan which outlines how we organize ourselves to address these priorities

In November we shared action plans with Forest staff and Jerry Perez. We had great discussions about specific and big picture items. Jerry asked to develop an actionable plan and really focus on key priorities rather than scattered efforts which may overwhelm Forest staff. Our goal is to be responsive to that feedback to help ourselves and help them by narrowing our focus. In January, the group discussed a concept for this plan and there was general agreement to our direction. The Steering Committee sees the Action Plan as the central organizing tool for working with the ANF. The action plans will not limit the group from exploring other projects and can be amended in the future.

Discussion

* What do you like about this template?
	+ The action plan codifies engagement and interaction with the Forest which has lacked in the past.
	+ Having an orientation and a focus will be tremendously beneficial.
	+ The template helps us focus on achievable goals and narrow down priorities that we can accomplish.
	+ It gives partners a key communications piece for the direction, priorities, and how to work together.
* Is anything missing/what would you change?
	+ The action plan template does not outline where funding is coming from. We should add a list of annual grants and what they could be used for. As projects are discussed, this will give us a resource for how to start.
* What should be the action plan timeframe?
	+ Several members suggested 3-5 years for projects
	+ The Forest was asked if they have an internal planning timeframe. The Forest has initiated discussions for their FY20 program of work and have just started identifying what will carry over to the next year and what’s priority for next year. The fuels and veg program usually is a 5 year plan but other types of projects don’t have standard timelines.
	+ Three years allows us to prioritize projects that we can actually achieve and establish near term goals.
	+ Agreement: the action plans will span 3 years and will have annual updates, if necessary.

Proposed Projects/Initiatives and Process for Identifying

* In 2016, the group decided, with the help of Forest staff, to develop Ad Hoc committees to enhance priorities
	+ Transportation & Access
	+ Conservation Education
	+ Volunteer
	+ Trails & Recreation
* Our goal now is to provide further focus based on original plans created by Ad Hoc committees to identify focus areas and projects. The Steering Committee has worked together to identify our process.
* Each ad hoc committee will identify the top 2 priorities from their work plan, using the criteria for priority initiatives that are in the Action Plan template.
* Discussion of criteria for priority initiatives:
	+ There is no particular order for the priority criteria.
	+ We need to consider a measure of feasibility and include systemic considerations like funding feasibility.
	+ Discussion regarding criterion on underserved communities:
		- Applicability of this criteria varies because not all projects directly relate to things like public benefit or underserved communities.
		- If we are trying to decide between projects that provide general public benefit versus specific benefit to underserved communities, the Collaborative should prioritize underserved communities.
		- There needs to be a way that shows how we all benefit from the project.
		- “Underserved communities” is the preferred term (over other terms that are sometimes used such as “disadvantaged communities”)
* The Forest recognizes that the Collaborative comprises individual organizations that, outside of the Collaborative, may have other priorities. Therefore Forest staff are focusing on what the members of the Collaborative agree upon while recognizing that they may have other, separate business with individual member organizations.
* Ad Hoc committees will develop a second tier of priorities. The Forest does not want to see multiple lists but would like to see ranking of all projects, and be able to identify opportunities across tiers/ranking that may come up.

## Trails and Recreation (Steve Messer, Committee Chair)

Several Trials and Recreation committee members were not present so there are no updates at this time.

## Transportation (Joe Lyons, Committee Chair)

* The committee previously identified North Slope transportation projects.
* A re-launch pilot project of the Gold Line shuttle from Arcadia to Chantry Flats. The intended focus is on a community-based transportation program to provide access underserved communities with access to hiking and recreation opportunities via Chantry Flats. The Baldwin Park community is good community in which to generate support for this and similar projects. Baldwin Park had been identified by Nature for All and by a Needs Assessment from the County.
* It is important to note that Chantry Flats is technically part of the Gateway District, not the Monument itself. However it helps provide access to the Monument and no issues related to this technicality are anticipated at this time.

## Volunteer Engagement (Liz Reilly, Committee Chair)

* The group spent some time getting to know John Cho and helping to familiarize him with the committee.
* The group has a good idea for the Vision/End Point they are trying to achieve. Checkpoints along the way include:
	+ Identifying how to document volunteer engagement
	+ Developing a better interface
	+ Finding better ways to identify potential projects and document volunteer engagement.
* The list of priorities developed needs to be revisited because one objective was to find funding for a volunteer coordinator. Now that John is in place, new items can be considered.
* The committee will have a call with Liz to update her on the day’s discussion.

## Conservation Education (Claire Robinson, Committee Chair)

* The group identified the need to develop information at both a watershed and local scale.
* Different strategies for welcoming the public were also discussed. Ideas include brochures disseminated at local schools and trailhead signage.
* Conservation Education did not have associated USFS staff this year, and no grant opportunities were found. The group took this as an opportunity to develop a “mosaic” approach. This approach includes developing maps of available resources and recreation opportunities as well as fire ecology. Five features for the mosaic approach include:
	+ Fishing- Identify areas to highlight Steelhead Trout Life Cycle and similar information
	+ Fire Ecology and Behavior
	+ Legacy, Culture, and First People
	+ Water Infrastructure- Demonstrate how water is managed within the Forest.
	+ Sustainable Recreation- Identify suitable areas and define stewardship within the context of recreational activities
* The group will work to identify areas where these mosaic features can be highlighted with installed signage. The group will continue to develop signs and identify relevant areas for placement as funding becomes available.
* The cumulative Conservation Education Plan is currently on hold until funding becomes available. The mosaic plan is an efficient way to implement a visual approach over time, gauging the effectiveness as we go along.

## Discussion: Next Steps for the Committees

* **Each Committee** will come back to next Collaborative meeting with top 2 priorities and short term goals to maintain forward motion.
* **Each committee** will meet with their Forest liaison before the May SGMCC meeting to check in on goals and develop action plans.

# Forest Service Update, Adrienne Dunfee

*Regarding the Monument Plan*:

* ANF is still reeling from the government shutdown and have taken the time to reprioritize after losing a month of work.
* ANF is on track with the monument plan but with the loss of a month of work there is a series of meetings they are getting back on the schedule.
* ANF is in the process of finalizing a communications plan for the Monument plan. ANF will work with the Collaborative to ensure the role is beneficial.

*Staffing updates:*

* Rachel Smith- Deputy Forest Supervisor, is on a temporary assignment to the Sequoia National Forest
* Julissa Gonzalez- getting ready for Monument plan release
* Shane Sparrow- safety officer will help get the Forest back on track in terms of internal process and work with partners and volunteers

*Regarding plans and projects*:

* ANF is currently working on large recreation projects at East Fork, Cattle Ranch, and Williamson Rock project. The projects depend on the final Monument Plan and staff have plans to develop Environmental Impact Statements soon.
* ANF is currently working with National Forest Foundation staff on toilet installation projects and trailhead projects at Vincent Gap and Colby Bridge,
* ANF is getting ready for fire season. It has been difficult to get things burned because it is wet but the Forest is doing a lot of fuel treatment at the moment. Fuels treatment time has been lost due to the shutdown, but they are ramping up their work in the next few months and will be bringing on seasonal firefighters in May.
* Recent federal legislation (the John Diungell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreaton Act, signed March 12, 2019) authorized establishment of the Saint Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial and National Monument.. Jamahl and Aaron will be working on commemorating this event.

*Regarding ANF staff liaison roles*

* ANF has designated staff liaisons and backup liaisons for each Collaborative. This is intended to facilitate communications between Forest staff and Ad Hoc Committees to ensure we are on the same page.
* Staff liaison assignments include:
	+ Transportation
		- Ricardo Lopez- Forest Engineer
		- Chinling Chen- NEPA Planner
	+ Volunteers
		- Fabian Garcia- Partnership Coordinator
		- John Cho- Volunteer Coordinator, who will eventually take the lead
	+ Trails/Recreation
		- Justin Seastrand- Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist
		- Thalia Ryder- Archeologist
	+ Interpretation/Conservation Ed
		- Fabian Garcia- Partnership Coordinator
		- Nathan Judy- Fire Information Officer
	+ Planning and Implementation
		- Matthew Bokach- Monument Manager
		- Jamahl Butler- District Ranger, Gateway District
* Staff liaisons will ensure the Forest can support and feasibility implement action in the plan \.
* Liaisons will attend committee meetings in person or remotely, and Collaborative-wide meetings when possible.
* Liaison roles will include:
	+ Support decision making by sharing funding, priorities, and staffing
	+ Bring information back to the Forest Leadership Team
	+ Ensure cohesion with Forest priorities
	+ Identify opportunities for committees members to work on other projects
	+ Ensure the monument plan and action plans are living documents that inform future actions

*Miscellaneous*:

* Collaborative members asked how they can collectively contact their Congressional representatives to advocate for the USFS budget. The NFF cannot serve in an advocacy role. The Collaborative is welcome to write a letter to local representatives.
* **Belinda Faustinos and Jack Sahl** draft a letter to share with the group.

# Lightning Talk: Belinda Faustinos, Nature for All

* Belinda discussed the background and goals of Nature for All. With a staff of 5 doing work in the San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles, and the San Gabriel Valley, Nature for all works with coalition partners to do work and community engagement with the goal of consistent, sustained, stakeholder engagement.
	+ The Los Angeles area represents an opportunity to invest in improving the diversity of the outdoor and conservation communities. All communities deserve the same care and work ethic in how projects are done. Historically, underserved communities do not receive the same level of care and investment, but LA can be a model for advocacy and effective project implementation.
	+ Nature for All worked on Measure A, providing access to outdoor recreation areas, and helping to shift the public’s perception of those place; and on Measure M, generating funding to provide access to parks and open space.
	+ Other work includes drinking water quality improvement projects, listening and engaging with constituents and meeting them where they are on these issues.

# Announcements

* Upcoming events:
	+ Backcountry Horsemen Education Event, March 29-31, Ingalls Park. Event information on website. Sarah sent out information for this event.
		- Presentation on using smartphones as complete GPS units
		- Packing Clinics
	+ Rivers and Mountains Conservancy 2-in-1 Summit taking place this summer to bring together stakeholders
		- Thursday, July 25- RMC 20th Anniversary Celebration
		- Friday, July 26th- Tours of the LA River (Bus and walking)
		- Possible equestrian tours
	+ Gary Stickel highlighted an archaeological study he is conducting.
		- He has spoken about and studied an ancient, 23 ft. boulder with sacred paintings. It is unique in American archaeology. He has spoken about previously and received positive feedback and interest. Big Rock lecture to be given in May.
		- Gary also asked for support in protecting the largest living Oak Tree, located in Jurupa valley. It is approximately 13,000 years old and the oldest living organism in CA. It is currently threatened by development and letters of support to protect it can be sent to the Governor. Sarah will distribute a template letter.
	+ Pasadena Casting Club will be hosting the National Championship of American Casters in Lower Arroyo Park from July 31-August 4. Information will be emailed out and attendance would be appreciated to help educate attendees about the Angeles National Forest.
	+ Daniel provided Federal Policy Updates:
		- The House Natural Resources Committee is investigating issues surrounding Bears Ears. The review process of National Monuments seemed to be vague and ill-defined. Secretary Zinke (Dept. of the Interior) was invited to SGMNM but did not respond. The House is still pushing on the issue and waiting for a response from Interior.
			* No final decision on the Monuments’ review process was ever officially made, however. There is a gut feeling in Washington that the process is concluded, though this is not official.
		- Senator Harris is pushing for expanded federal protections for SGNMN in the Senate, including designating Wild and Scenic Rivers, expanding the National Monument to parts of the LA River, and establishing a recreation area. The bill will be re-introduced this session and there will likely be updates next month. Both Senator Harris and Representative Chu sent staff to work on the issue.
			* Daniel will continue to update the group on this issue and asked that if/when announcements about designation are made, members of the Collaborative post their support on social media.
* Lastly, the group voted to approve the addition of representatives from the City of Santa Clarita and Southwest Council of Fly Fishers International to the group. Both were approved.

# Participants

Aaron Ash

Adrienne Dunfee

Belinda Faustinos

Ben Smith

Bill Reeves

Brian Robey

Claire Robinson

Dale Benson

Dania Gutierrez

Daniel Rossman

Emerald Vela

Fabian Garcia

Gary Stickel

Jack Sahl

John Cho

Julian Juarez

Justin Bubenik

Kelly Carle

Marybeth Vergara

Michelle Nuttall

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Sarah Di Vittorio

Steve Messer

Susan Jennings

Suzette Mera