MEETING RECORD

**SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE**

Thursday, September 26, 2019 – 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

Altadena Community Center, Altadena, California

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# Action Items and Next Steps

# **Members interested in helping plan a field trip** during a future Collaborative meeting should reach out to Sarah Di Vittorio.

# **Matthew Bokach** will develop a priority Forest Service wish list that help inform the final version of the Collaborative Action Plan.

# Selection of the Chair and Vice Chair will take place at a future Collaborative meeting.

# **Claire Robinson** and **Daniel Rossman** will identify members to serve as their alternates on the Steering Committee.

# Building Successful Partnerships with the Forest Service, Matthew Bokach and Fabian Garcia

Matthew Bokach, San Gabriel Mountains National Monument (SGMNM) Manager, and Fabian Garcia, Angeles National Forest (ANF) Partnership Coordinator, lead a discussion about partnering with the Forest Service, and provided an update on the 2020 Program of Work

* Matthew reviewed the ANF’s 2019 Program of Work (POW). He emphasized that the POW for 2020 will be almost identical, with federal management priorities remaining consistent.
	+ The POW is very focused on management of special uses including electricity, gas lines, County Infrastructure, and CalTrans.
	+ Management of special use permits and infrastructure make up much of the Forest’s current work.
	+ Priority projects include vegetation management and fuels projects. These also consume large portions of Forest Service staff time, and are representative of the national agenda.
		- The ANF has the largest fire-fighting force in the agency nationwide.
		- Increased timber production and vegetation management are directives from the current federal administration. However, prior to the 2016 election, vegetation management was still a huge priority as a way to address the risk of fires.
		- Immediately after the Station Fire, the ANF did not perform many controlled burns, but that has changed and now a substantial amount of burning is done annually.
	+ Matthew highlighted resource projects including:
		- Williamson Rock- Project work includes management of endangered species and recreation areas
		- Cattle Canyon- Project work is focused on sustainable recreation improvements on the East Fork
		- The ANF is working on an overall Recreation Plan for the area.
		- The ANF is also developing a response to the Gold Spotted Oak Borer (GSOB) threat.
	+ The ANF will need the Collaborative’s help to fill the commitments spelled out in the Monument Plan. It does not fit in the Forest’s current capacity without outside assistance.
	+ **Action item**: Matthew to develop priority wish list to share with the Collaborative.
* Matthew also discussed the budget associated with the POW
	+ Revenue for the ANF includes settlement money from the Powerhouse Fire
	+ Funding sources like this often dictate ANF priorities
		- The appropriated budget does not cover hiring more staff, even with settlement and permit money.
		- Staff time is not allocated for campground maintenance.
* Collaborative feedback and questions:
	+ Collaborative members noted the lack of enforcement actions and routine maintenance in the POW.
	+ It was also noted that the plan is primarily focused on the San Gabriel Canyon and the Collaborative would like to ensure all parts of the Monument that are now open to the public are included in the POW.
	+ The Collaborative asked if more funding came in as a result of the Monument designation.
		- Matthew noted that there was a temporary allocation of money for the first three years of the Monument designation. This past year was the first year without those extra funds.
		- Recreation money was bumped up as a result of the Monument. That money has remained in place and was used to hire Recreation offices and support the OHV program.
* Matthew noted several staffing issues that are being handled internally:
	+ The ANF was hiring summer field rangers. This past summer they only hired 2 rangers and these rangers only staffed visitor centers. (The ANF was not comfortable sending such a small team into the field).
	+ Two Monument staff resigned within the last month.
	+ HR is working out the kinks in the hiring process to increase field staff next season.
	+ There is money to have more staff on the ground (this year they were unable to fill all the funded positions.)
	+ Jamahl pointed out that staffing is an issue on the entire ANF, not just the Monument.

The Forest Leadership Team (FLT) has an ongoing discussion about how to work with partners, and help them do their work. They are currently working on the 2020 POW and will need to allocate time for the ANF to check up on partners. Fabian stepped in to discuss ways the Collaborative and ANF can partner.

* The ANF added Partnership and Volunteer Coordinator positions (Fabian and John Cho, respectively).
* Shared Stewardship is a national strategy, so more emphasis within the ANF will be placed on helping partner organizations do their work.
* One of the first priority projects is the Trails Stewardship Summit, to highlight the need for public engagement in ongoing trail maintenance.
* Fabian also highlighted that documents have been put in place to authorize partners to work on the ANF. Fabian’s position as Partnership Coordinator exists to help support these groups.
* Examples:
	+ Conservation Education Ad Hoc put out interpretive signage. Wayfinding and education materials will be out on the Monument with Angeles grant funding.
	+ The Mount Wilson Bicycling Association (MWBA) carries a lot of the weight of trails work. How to get the ANF out of the way?
	+ Chantry shuttle on National Public Lands Day, with support from Nature for All, NFF, REI, and the City of Arcadia.
* Fabian views the Collaborative as a way to reach out to the community and get work done on the ground. He encouraged groups to put together proposals around shared interests.
* Grant opportunities are coming up and groups are encouraged to bring ideas to the table. The ANF can help refine these ideas if needed.
* Matthew and Jamahl explained how the POW and National Priorities determine where the ANF works. Jamahl and Matthew have to report back up the chain addressing how they meet these priorities. “Crisis of the Day” issues, FOIA, and Congressional requests come up and force a redirection of attention and resources.
* Jamie Uyehara, ANF Resource Officer, mentioned a collection of 11 project she has collected, and needs a forum to give these projects out.
* Funding options to support the upcoming work include possible matches from organizations like Southern California Edison and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. They might support projects in need of small grant support. The key to acquiring this funding will be to prepare and plan projects ahead of time, so they are ready when funding becomes available.
* Communication among members of the Collaborative will be crucial to avoid overlap.

# Update from the Angeles National Forest, Matthew Bokach

Matthew Bokach also provided a general Angeles National Forest/San Gabriel Mountains National Monument Update.

* The current budget is very limited. Money is allocated to the Regional Offices, and the regions decide how funds are allocated. The process is changing, but the bottom line is that the current operating budget is decreasing.
	+ The Regional Offices are holding more money back in order to remain flexible when responding to unexpected scenarios like wildfire.
	+ Having projects ready when Federal Appropriations become available in 6-9 months will increase the likelihood of projects receiving funding.
* As of this meeting, the ANF has experienced an easy fire season.
	+ Fuel moisture is still high.
	+ The Fire Danger recently shifted from high to very high. It does not change how people use the ANF, but activities will be limited.
	+ The ANF has been sending out crews to other regions.
* Matthew and Ian McBride from CALFIRE spent a few minutes explaining how the ANF and CALFIRE cooperate around wildfire management.
	+ CALFIRE is the State’s wildland firefighting organization
	+ The ANF coordinates with LA County directly as well.
	+ There are mutual aid zones between organizations, agencies work together to control fires.
	+ The ANF has 28 fire engines and 5 hotshot crews (20 members each).
	+ CALFIRE, LA County, and the ANF also coordinate on fuels reduction work.
	+ Cooperation even extends across state boundaries. While California always maintains a certain minimum, they give and receive support from other states like Arizona as the fire season ramps up.

# Steering Committee Selection

The Collaborative discussed Steering Committee Selection and Reviewed protocol.

* The Steering Committee is expected to provide high level strategic guidance. It is an elected body, selected from the full Collaborative, and includes the Chair of each Ad Hoc Committee. Anyone can self-nominate or nominate other at-large membership to the Steering Committee.
	+ It is comprised of 4 Committee Chairs and 2-4 at-large members at any given time.
	+ The Chair and Vice Chair of the Steering Committee are chosen from this group.
	+ **Action Item:** Selection of the Chair and Vice Chair will take place at a future Collaborative meeting.
* There must be a quorum on each Steering Committee call in order to make decisions. If at least 4 members are not present, decisions cannot be made.
* Liz Reilly suggested each Ad Hoc Committee designate an alternate for each Ad Hoc Committee to ensure there is a quorum on each call. The average additional workload per month is 2 hours.
	+ Michelle Nuttall, Southern California Edison will serve as alternate for Liz Reilly
	+ Joseph Gonzalez, Rivers & Mountains Conservancy, will serve as alternate for Margaret Clark
	+ Roberto Morales, Sierra Club will serve as alternate for Belinda Faustinos
	+ Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel, Community Hiking Club will serve alternate for Steve Messer
	+ **Action Item:** Claire Robinson and Daniel Rossman will identify members to serve as their alternates.
* Rene Gonzalez, San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps, was selected as the newest Steering Committee member.

# Announcements & Miscellaneous Business

# Steve Messer will be presenting at the CA Trails Conference in Modesto from April 20-23. He would like to present on the Community Collaborative. Sarah and Dania expressed interest in co-presenting.

# Dania notified the group that the NFF has re-branded and thus has an updated logo that should be used from now on.

# Gary Stickel highlighted his work with an ancient monument. It is possibly related to tracking solstices. He also discussed his ongoing work protecting the Champion Oak Tree in the Jurupa Hills. It is an extremely old organism, deserving of protection and sacred to native people.

# Participants

Dale Benson

Matthew Bokach

Gary Boyer

Jamahl Butler

David Calkins

Irma Carle

Sandra Cattell

John Cho

Olga Duran

Diane Erskine Hellingel

Belinda Faustinos

Fabian Garcia

Robert Garcia

Kelly Gardner

Joseph Gonzalez

Moses Hagobian

Cliff Hamlon

Rene Jimenor

Susan Jennings

Eric Johnson

Steve Messer

Jeremy Munns

Michelle Nuttall

Bill Reeves

Liz Reilly

Jack Sahl

Judy Shay

Gary Stickel

Josh Travers

Jamie Uyehara

Laurene Weste