The Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council held a Town Meeting the evening of June 26 this year at the Idyllwild Town Hall. Featured were County Fire Chief John Hawkins, Idyllwild Fire Chief Patrick Reitz, and Forest Service Fire Chief Dan Felix.

The meeting was a great success: large turnout (over 100), important fire messages from three key fire chiefs, and real dialogue between the chiefs and the community. Perhaps of greatest importance, we were later able to bring community concerns from the meeting about unabated properties to the Mountain Area Safety Task Force meeting, where County Chief John Hawkins immediately committed to creating a task force to rewrite county codes to force abatement on hazardous properties.

This group, including our own Executive Director Edwina Scott and with Chief Hawkins as chair, has already met. I have no doubt some very real and valuable changes are going to come out of it that will benefit us all.

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Farewell to Shela Boyington, Editor

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Woodies at Work
Doris Lombard

Some of the equipment used by the Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council Woodies volunteers has been partially funded through the generosity of the Idyllwild Community Fund.
Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council Welcomes Katie Martel

On August 17, Katie Martel, grants manager for the California Fire Safe Council combined work with pleasure. She made a site visit to inspect the MCFSC 2014 grant project area while vacationing with her family in Idyllwild. Project managers, Don Patterson and Pat Boss guided her on the tour, pointing out project sites and other items of interest.

Our first stop was to meet the wonderful Woodies at the Help Center. Katie watched as they bucked and split bole-wood into firewood and was able to talk personally with several of them. Karen Patterson, Executive Director of the Help Center, was a gracious hostess welcoming Katie and commending the Woodies for their dedication.

Next, the group visited to a fuels reduction project completed by the Woodies for one of our local residents who no longer can physically do the work. The owner met Katie and expressed her gratitude for the Woodies’ help. It was obvious the owner was preparing for winter by the stack of firewood, which she received from the Help Center.

Later, Don and Pat pointed out several fuels reduction projects and roof replacement jobs. The tour proceeded up River Drive to an excellent example of a proposed project, to be done in partnership with MCFSC, Riverside County Fire and Southern California Edison. Don and Pat identified several bark beetle and GSOB infested trees. Additionally, Katie and her daughter, Allie, were able to inspect a suspect GSOB tree and they both identified exit holes.

We hope Katie enjoyed the tour as much as we enjoyed showing her our accomplishments.

Fond Farewell to Our Newsletter Editor, Shela Boyington

As you set off on your new journey, you take with you our deepest sincere thanks. The articulate creative skill and effort you put into the MCFSC Newsletter enriched our public educational outreach messages. Your gentle presence graced our board meetings, as you patiently guided us in contributing our words and photos, thus raising fire safety awareness, helping to make our mountain safer.

Your new neighbors and friends in Bend are so lucky to have you to soon join them in making their community a kinder place, as you share your contagious smile, clarity of vision, your intelligence, wit and integrity.

May you find your new life full, with exciting challenges to be met along with rewarding new relationships.
Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council appreciates the support of everyone who has sent in membership dues and/or donations. Memberships are valid for one year. We do not send membership reminders, but include a registration form in all newsletters. You are welcome to make a donation or pay membership dues by using PayPal. Just log on to our website (www.mcfsc.org), click the How to Join link, then the Donate link at the bottom of the page. THANK YOU! Only by working together can we keep our communities fire safe.

DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Above are before and after photos of a mountain property. In the before picture (left) you cannot see the house because of the overgrowth of brush and trees (arrow points to the house in the after photo). This new owner not only created defensible space for his home, but for his neighbors also. Thank you!

Goldspotted Oak Borer (GSOB) Inspections

Pictured above is the Oak-K Team, one of the GSOB Inspection Teams (left to right), Elliott Taylor, Aida Quiles, Doris Lombard and Ron Perry. Not pictured are Ron Krull and Erin O’Neill a second team of GSOB inspectors.

This summer, these volunteer inspectors donated more than 180 hours looking for GSOB infested trees. Unfortunately, 53 infested oaks have been identified since fall 2012.

If you would like help inspecting your oaks for signs of the pest, please call the GSOB HotLine: 951-659-8328.

You may also find additional information about how to identify and report oak borer symptoms at the GOSB.org.