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**Editor's Corner**

**Reba Coulter, Exec. Dir.**



**Pay 100% or 25%?**

For those who receive an inspection failure notice from the Idyllwild Fire Protection District, please contact MCFSC. We may be able to assist you through our fuel reduction grants with work that you are unable to do. We have funds for all areas of Mt. San Jacinto covered by the Community Wildfire Protection Plan plus Anza.

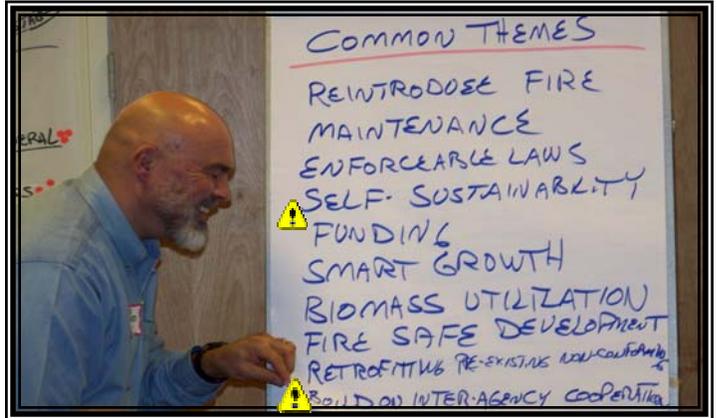
**Act Now!**

**Property owners, we have free money to give you! Act now or lose this opportunity!**

Sorry for the sleazy come-on, but it is actually true. The Fire Safe Council, as most of you know, has received government grants to assist property owners in the fire abatement of their properties. We were most fortunate in this latest round of grants to be awarded \$800,000. (This is US Forest Service money, awarded through the state clearinghouse.) My breathless prose at the beginning has to do with an imposing fact—this could be our last grant. (I know I wrote in my last column that I would focus on the fire agencies in this one, but the situation demands otherwise.)

If you are reading this you almost certainly know from your other reading that government budgets, both state and federal, will be under enormous pressure the next several years. This is not inside information. Anyone who reads or hears news knows that funding in the future will decrease. In many ways our communities have been privileged to have received the money we have for fuel reduction, but we would have to be willfully blind to think that it will continue at present levels.

So what my Fire Safe  
*(continued on page 3)*



Mike Esnard, President, recaps the recurring themes from the various groups attending the workshop held at the Idyllwild Nature Center.

**CWPP WORKSHOP A BIG SUCCESS**

Citizens and fire protection agencies were hosted at an all-day Community Wildfire Protection Plan workshop at the Visitor's Center Thursday, February 7, 2008.

Representatives from Cal Fire, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Resource Conservation Service, MCFSC, Wilderness Society, and various stakeholders gathered to update the two-year-old CWPP.

MCFSC President Mike Esnard organized the meeting by dividing the attendees into mixed groups and having them identify common themes to be reported at a general discussion session. The lists were extensive.

Common Themes included reintroducing Fire to Manage Forest Undergrowth, Maintenance of Fuelbreaks, Smart Growth, Biomass Utilization, Fire Safe Development, Retrofitting Pre-existing Non-

conforming Structures, Building on Interagency Cooperation, Community Involvement, Extending the CWPP to Outer Areas, and Land Acquisition.

Ideal Future and Potential Projects was another topic for small group discussion. The wish list here was an echo of the major themes listed above, basically implementing abatement requirements and maintaining work already done.

Major projects have been completed since the CWPP was accepted by the County Board of Supervisors, the most visible of which is the abatement of the major evacuation routes out of Idyllwild and Pine Cove by NRCS. Driving up the mountain from Hemet, one can see dramatic changes in the fuel load along side Highway 74.

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## It's spring – have you made your appointment with Forest Care yet?



It's spring again-- that wonderful smell is in the air, the birds are singing, the snow is melting, and wow, what happened to the yard over the winter? While picking up the downed branches and raking all the debris deposited by winter, examine the trees and brush on your property. Is there separation between the crowns of the larger trees? Is your yard crowded with small trees and brush underneath existing trees? The arrangement of the vegetation on your property is not only important to ensuring it has adequate resources to thrive, but it also helps to determine the intensity and spread of fire it carries.

If you are concerned about the trees and brush on your property, call Forest Care. Forest Care is offered through the cooperation of CAL FIRE and the San Bernardino National Forest Association to reimburse landowners up to 75% of the cost of thinning their trees to reduce hazardous fuels. Originally intended for properties 5 acres or less in size, additional funds may allow the Forest Care program to treat properties up to 20 acres.

Since summer 2006, over 500 landowners have participated in the Forest Care. Visit the Forest Care website at [www.sbnfa.com](http://www.sbnfa.com) to read more about Forest Care participation in the San Jacinto mountain communities. Approximately \$1 million in federal funds has already been allocated to these projects to accomplish the work. The average reimbursement is around \$1,500, which means that the average landowner has paid around \$500 to make their home and property fire safe while protecting the health of the forest they moved here for in the first place.

Forest Care is here to help make our

mountain communities a safer place to live. To schedule your appointment with a licensed professional forester, get materials to hand out to others in your neighborhood or community, or to arrange for a Forest Care staff member to give an exciting and informative presentation to your group or club, call (888) 883-THIN or visit [www.sbnfa.org](http://www.sbnfa.org).

*Forest Care is one of 6 programs managed by the San Bernardino National Forest Association (SBNFA), a 501(c) 3 nonprofit. The mission of Forest Care is to help create forest-friendly communities through reducing fuels in the short-term and instilling stewardship values for long-term change. Forest Care partners with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and is funded through a U.S. Forest Service grant. For more information or to find out how you can support Forest Care or SBNFA, contact Shawna Meyer at (909) 382-2697.*

## EWNS

The "Early Warning Notification System" link on the County website is up and operational. As a recap, this system is utilized to inform Riverside County residents of an existing or threat of an emergency, by calling your residence and delivering a recorded message. The numbers in the system are those that are listed as your home number. You can register your cell phone numbers as well by accessing the County website link at [the bottom of the page](#).

*The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the California Fire Safe Council or the U.S. Government. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the California Fire Safe Council or the U.S. Government.*

## "Adopt a Fuelbreak"

Trish Tuley, a photographer and resident of Pine Cove, drove past an "Adopt-a-Highway" sign this winter and thought of fuelbreaks. Being an avid hiker on the Pine Cove fuelbreak, and having noticed that the vegetation is growing back, she asked herself why it would not be possible to have citizens pitch in to maintain the local fuelbreaks. So she shared her idea with Doris Lombard and Ron Perry, and thus began a rapid series of meetings and discussions that is bringing her idea to fruition this spring.

Both the Forest Service and CALFIRE are enthusiastic about the idea. Fuelbreaks, as many of you know, are swaths of reduced fuel that are absolutely critical in the defense of the community. We have miles of them on the western slope. In discussions with our council and the agencies, we agreed that what is needed most at the moment is accurate, up-to-date information regarding the vegetation on the fuelbreaks. In the first phase of the project, we agreed to focus on the Pine Cove fuelbreak, and to set as our goal the acquisition of information by a group of trained volunteers who are able to walk the break and record their measurements in ways useful to the Forest Service.

Hal Carey, a forester who moved over to the Forest Service when NRCS finished their hill projects, has taken the lead in putting together a training program, initially for 12 volunteers, to provide the necessary skills for mapping and measuring the vegetation. Recently, a group of us spent the morning on the fuelbreak with Hal and Greg Casselberry, deputy ranger of the district, discussing what kinds of measurements would be both important and easy to take. As we refine the measurement goals and methods, Hal will design the training program, targeted for the beginning of May.

Once we get data coming in from the first trained group, we will train another. How far we can go with this we don't yet know, but it is a compelling vision to imagine teams of mountain residents regularly walking the fuelbreaks to assess their re-growth. Perhaps we can

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(Continued from pg.1—Act Now!)

colleagues and I are putting before you is this: If you need abatement work done, now is the time to do it. I don't mean raking a few needles. The work we can help you pay for is significant fuel reduction, such as taking out dead or dying trees, thinning overstocked live trees, and thinning thick, dangerous brush. (Don't worry; they will take the needles, too.) This is work that is appropriate for an experienced contractor, and through our grants we can now pay 75% of the contractor's price. You pay us 25%, and we don't cash the check until you are satisfied with the work. And if you are concerned that contractors are inflating their prices because of the grants, rest easy. All jobs are put out to competitive bid, so your charge of 25% is the lowest price offered by an experienced licensed contractor. You just can't beat this deal.

Many residents have abated their properties, but if you have not gotten around to it, give us a call (659-6208). If you have had work done but think you might need more, give us a call. You might have had a tree die recently, or you may have finally decided to thin out that wall of manzanita on the perimeter, or trim those branches away from your deck. If you have a neighbor that needs work, please tell them about us. We have three very experienced project managers--Don Patterson, Pat Boss, and Mike Kellner--who are happy to talk with you about your property. You don't even have to be sure about what you want done before you call, since they will talk it over with you.

So this is really is an important opportunity. I deeply hope that in the next six months we can use every dollar to which we have access to make our homes safer. And I hope that everyone who lives here, full or part-time, will help us put this money to good use. Forgive the cliché, but this moment, (and the money) may not come again.

**By Mike Esnard**

## Prevention = Dollar\$ & \$ense

Just two hours of **volunteering** a week can bring meaningful benefits to a person's body and mind. **AmeriCorps**



## BROWNING GIANT SEQUOIAS

**By Deborah Geisinger**

ISA Certified Arborist, Biologist,  
Plant Health Care Specialist

*Sequoiadendron giganteum* (Lindl.) Buchholz, commonly known as the "Giant Sequoia" or Sierra Redwood, is noted for its enormous size, age, and rugged, awe-inspiring beauty. They occur exclusively along the west slope of the Sierra Nevada in about 75 groves scattered over a 260-mile belt, and they can live from 2000-3000 years. Most groves have been accorded protected status.

Throughout the world they are highly regarded as ornamental and shows promise as a major timber-producing species. Certain individual trees thrive here on our mountain. However, since we rarely, if ever, receive the levels of rainfall these trees want or need, many are turning brown as a result. This is a hardy species and even though they look terrible, many of these brown trees are still very much alive and have a high potential for recovery from their current state of decline, given the proper care.

So, why are some browning and others are still green? The Sequoia's natural range typically receives 35-55 inches of rainfall per year (Idyllwild averages about 25 inches), with most arriving between October and April. The browning of Sequoia's is typically caused by restricted growing areas coupled with snow removal from around the base. For example, look at the two trees closest to the school building at Idyllwild School that receive runoff from the roof versus the ones by the sidewalk and street.

A confounding factor is the lack of an active mulch layer. Mulch retains moisture and provides a rich environment for the beneficial community of nutrient-cycling micro-organisms needed for optimum tree health. Stop raking to 'bare mineral soil under your trees and start letting a natural layer of mulch or duff rebuild, up to 3" inches deep, and 6' feet out from the trunk wherever possible. In the mean time, bagged mulch or compost can go over bare soil to help activate conversion of new debris. Once established, this layer can be conveniently supplemented annually by forest debris removed from other areas of your property.

Finally, there can be many factors contributing to the decline of an individual tree. Changes in soil elevation, foot or other traffic, construction damage, insects, etc. Basic horticulture is usually lacking in most cases. The International Society of Arboriculture, a nonprofit organization supporting tree care research around the world; provides the most rigorous and widely recognized certification program in the world as well. The ISA established a website for the general public called [www.treesaregood.com](http://www.treesaregood.com). This site is a wealth of basic horticultural information for tree and plant health care. If you've done all of the basics for your tree and it still looks sad, you can find an ISA Certified arborist in your area at [www.isa-arbor.com](http://www.isa-arbor.com) for a trained, professional assessment of your trees.

### NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR MCFSC

[exec-dir@mcfsc.org](mailto:exec-dir@mcfsc.org)  
[info@mcfsc.org](mailto:info@mcfsc.org)

(cont. from pg. 2—"Adopt a Fuelbreak")

even imagine them thinning the smaller trees and chaparral, while they are still easy to cut. (If you can see yourself enjoying this, please give us a call.) Truthfully, we aren't sure what is possible now, but by June we will have teams measuring plots and getting the data to the Forest Service. And thanks to Trish, we will have entered into a new phase of citizen-agency partnership on our mountain.

**By Mike Esnard**

# Mountain Disaster Preparedness Updates

## Prevention = Dollar\$ & \$ense #2

In early March, Dr. Dick Goldberg of Mountain Disaster Preparedness (MDP) held a medical exercise at the Town Hall . Those attending included several local nurses, two doctors, a physician's assistant and several CERT trained MDP volunteers. Dick had several stations that were manned by medical volunteers, Lou Simpson, Vi Halcacy and Julee Austin, among others, and included an exhibit of the MDP medical supplies, a station on wound field bandaging, burn care, deep wound care, and the highlight was a demonstration using pig's feet to show the proper way to suture and/or staple deep wounds.

Also on hand was our Idyllwild Red Cross Representative. Walter Caceres, from the Riverside County Chapter of the American Red Cross, who came to exhibit and explain the contents of the Red Cross shelter equipment trailer. The trailer is stored in Idyllwild and was partly funded by the Idyllwild Community Fund some years ago.

All those in attendance were volunteers who are participating in such exercises in the interest of making our Idyllwild community as safe as possible. MDP plans to do one of these exercises every quarter and is encouraging residents to join MDP and participate as much as possible. Anyone wishing to learn more about MDP or CERT or other scheduled exercises

should contact Nancy Layton, MDP President, at 951-659-1938.

On March 29, a group of Idyllwild neighbors got together at the fire station and under the direction of Greg Morris, MDP communications director and Rick Foster in charge of training, participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Radio Training for Idyllwild emergency preparedness. Under the umbrella of MDP, this class was both a refresher for those already trained and in possession of the radios and new enrollees who recently completed their CERT emergency training.

Rick and Greg took the group through the protocols and language and range capabilities of the radios, as well as, a great hands-on session. Obviously, communication with the outside world would be invaluable to our small hill community in the event of a disaster, which could leave us on our own for an undetermined amount of time. Hence, having trained volunteers able to communicate with our great ham radio operations and then to the emergency entities off hill, will be a blessing. Any hill folk, both part time and full time who are interested in such training, should contact MDP at 659-8100 or at [mdpidyllwild@gmail.com](mailto:mdpidyllwild@gmail.com).

**Volunteers** help themselves to better health while helping others, according to a study released by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

"I commend the Corp. for National and Community Service for its timely focus on health and volunteerism. These findings complement the Administration on Aging's ongoing efforts to harness the power of prevention and wellness for all older Americans. **Volunteerism** is an important tool in our strategy to promote health and prevent disease," said Josefina G. Carbonell, Assistant Secretary for Aging at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

### AmeriCorps

**If you would like to receive a newsletter via email, please send your email address to [MCFSC@greencafe.com](mailto:MCFSC@greencafe.com). Please remember that your contributions are tax deductible.**

### APPLICATION FORM

(\$10 per person or \$20 for family)

(Name)

(Mailing AND Street Address) (Circle-Anza, Idyllwild, Pine Cove, or Pinyon)

(City State and Zip)

(Phone)

(Email address)

MCFSC

PO Box 507  
25380 Franklin Dr.  
Idyllwild, CA 92549

*(continued from page 1—CWPP Workshop a Big Success)*

One idea that was embraced enthusiastically at the meeting was Trish Tully's Adopt-a-Fuel-Break proposal (described elsewhere in this issue by Mike Esnard).

Potential projects identified by the group included:

- Fuel Abatement of Arterial Roads Connecting to Evacuation Corridors
- Fuel Reduction in Anza and Santa Rosa Mountain
- Cooperative Alliances with Like Forest Groups and Agencies (to develop plans for thinning and biomass utilization)
- Forming a Mutual Water District of

Mountain Center

- Helping the Pinyon Community Develop a More Effective Green Waste Disposal System

The group expressed pride in a long list of items, including the development of the Mountain Area Safety Task Force—the inter-agency cooperative organization--- and many achievements of MCFSC, which has secured nearly \$3 million in grants and other funding for abatement of private property.

**By Blair Cenicerros**

**Visit MCFSC's Website at [www.mcfsc.org](http://www.mcfsc.org) or call (951) 659-6208**