



951-659-6208

Newsletter

Shela Boynton, Editor

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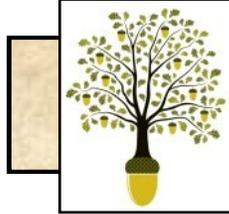
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MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF 2013

Mike Esnard, President

Coming off a very good year, The Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council (MCFSC) faces new challenges in 2013. The list includes containing the Goldspotted Oak Borer in Idyllwild (see page 3), implementing the FEMA re-roofing grant, getting by without a new California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) grant, and building partnerships for our biomass project.

The FEMA/CalEMA re-roofing grant, aimed at helping homeowners replace wood shake or shingle roofs with Class A fire-resistant roofs, was a major effort last year and will be again in this one. The documentation required for each homeowner was extensive. This year, we expect to see most of the roofs replaced.

On January 29, we hosted FEMA and CalEMA personnel who wanted to see certain homes and discuss historical and environmental concerns. The visit went well. The team did not see any problems with the grant and put the likelihood of final approval and start time for June-July. We are extremely eager to see construction start this summer and are crossing our fingers that it will.

For their support with this project, MCFSC thanks Greg Rodrigues, representative for Congressman Ruiz; Phillip Wang, FEMA; Linda Ortiz, CalEMA; Kim Dana and Gina McGaugh, Riverside County OES. We also appreciate the time and effort given by Bob Smith, researcher and archivist for the Idyllwild Historical Society.



January 29 meeting with FEMA team

Another challenge is that we were not awarded our 2013 grant for property abatement from the CFSC, the state clearinghouse for federal money for fire risk reduction projects. We have been very successful with these grants in the past, but funds have been declining for several years while the number of applicants has increased. So, though we were not totally surprised and, in fact, have created reserves for just such an eventuality, we will do all we can to achieve this grant in 2014.

Our last major challenge will be to lay the groundwork for a biomass utilization project. This project began last year as a feasibility study which led us to at least two conclusions: it's too big for us to do alone, and truly knowing its feasibility will take more time than we expected. So, this year we will start by enlisting the support of other organizations which will be crucial for such a project. We will need to develop some serious partners.

I am sure we will do very well in meeting these challenges, for we engage them with an outstanding staff, an excellent board of directors, and a very supportive and involved mountain community.



The Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council Newsletter is funded by a National Fire Plan grant from the USDA Forest Service through the California Fire Safe Council, sponsors, and donations. Donations to Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council are used to further public awareness and support fire prevention and hazard fuels reduction objectives.



MCFSC WOODIES NEWS

WE ARE THE WOODIES...



...and this is what we do: It is early Friday morning. From all over the mountain, about a dozen men and women converge on The HELP Center. Two make the 30 mile drive from Pinyon Crest. The rest come from Fern Valley, Pine Cove, Idyllwild and Mountain Center. It is cold. Helmets and chaps go on. Gloves, too. Brittle tarps crackle as we uncover the splitters and wood piles. Chainsaws rev. The splitters' engines turn over, and the crews begin their work. Each of us has done it all: chainsawed logs into rounds, moved the rounds to the splitter, loaded them onto the arm lift, set them in the steel jaws, pulled the hydraulic levers, caught the split wood and tossed it in the wheelbarrow, muscled the loaded wheelbarrow over to the wood cage, up the steep ramp, and off-loaded the wood onto the piles of firewood, then rolled the wheelbarrow back to be reloaded; raked the work area to keep it clear of ankle-twisters, filled trash barrels with the unusable woody debris, took them in our vehicles to the transfer station, dumped them...then returned for more of the same.

We work hard, help each other, laugh and are proud of what we accomplish together. Join us!



-Doris Lombard

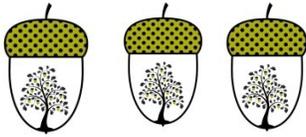


<In January, MCFSC needed to get a letter out about the Goldspotted Oak Borer. Project Manager Pat Boss called the Forest Service, and they sent the firefighters from Keenwild Station 56 to help. As always, the wonderful Woodies came to lend a hand, as well as board members and staff. Thanks to everyone!

Many thanks to the Rotary-Anns for their generous donation to the Woodies.



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.



Gregg Bratcher, CAL FIRE Forester;
John Hawkins, Chief Riverside Co. Fire
Dept.; Dr. Tom Coleman, US Forest Ser-
vice Forest Health Entomologist

THE GOLD SPOTTED OAK BORER
A THREAT TO OUR OAKS
Mike Esnard, President



This past November, an alert CAL FIRE forester, Kathleen Edwards, spied a tree off Highway 243 in the center of town that looked like it might have been injured by the Goldspotted Oak Borer (GSOB). This beetle has decimated oaks in San Diego County over the last few years, and everyone was hoping it would stay out of Riverside County. Sadly, Edwards' suspicion was confirmed and, with the discovery of several more infested trees, we now are sure that the beetle is in Idyllwild.

A GSOB team of experts was especially eager to alert Idyllwild residents, so we sponsored a Town Hall meeting on January 19, with around 100 people in attendance. The meeting featured Dr. Tom Coleman of the US Forest Service, Dr. Tom Scott of UCR, and Kevin Turner, formerly of CAL FIRE and now at UCR. They are key players in resisting the beetle.

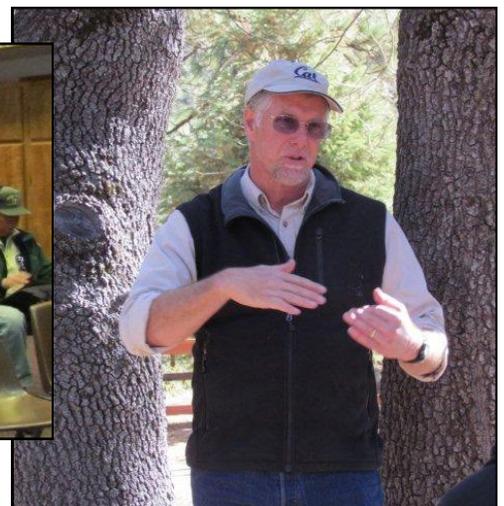
Unfortunately, Dr. Coleman's research into the beetle is not complete, and he is unable to make treatment recommendations for an infected live tree beyond its removal. The main thing we can do at present is to stop the spread of the beetle by not importing infected wood from San Diego, which probably is how it got here. And, we can identify and remove any infected trees in our area before the beetle matures and takes flight in the summer.

Our project managers and the Woodies have undergone GSOB training, along with others in the community, and will try to identify infested trees in the coming months. Please call 951-659-3850 to speak with someone about questionable trees or check our website for useful links.

If we can contain the GSOB spread this year, we will keep thousands of our wonderful oaks healthy and prevent a devastating blow to our forest.



Above, the January 18 GSOB training. Right, Dr. Tom Scott, UCR GSOB expert.



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.



Toby Photo by Barb Reese

ARF Disaster Preparedness Plan

For details of ARF's disaster preparedness plan designed for hill residents and their animals, please go to the website www.arfidyllwild.weebly.com. You will find information on pet first aid classes, a list of first aid supplies, GRAB AND GO BOX suggestions, a list of boarding facilities and pet-friendly lodgings off the hill in case you need to evacuate, and locations of two emergency pet first aid stations.

If you must evacuate, take your animals with you if at all possible. Have a back-up plan with someone who can take care of your pets if you can't get back home. **MICROCHIP YOUR CATS AND DOGS NOW.** Call ARF for an appointment. If your pet becomes lost, immediately call our **Search and Rescue Team at 951-663-6642.**

GSOB DOS AND DO NOTS

Do Not Move Oak Firewood Out of Local Areas

Goldspotted oak borer (GSOB) larvae remain in cut oak logs and firewood from GSOB-killed trees or green infested trees and are a continual threat to further infestation. Wood from GSOB infested trees should not be removed from local infested areas. We emphasize that transporting infested firewood is likely the most significant pathway for introducing GSOB into non-infested areas.



Do contact CAL FIRE's Office if you have questionable firewood, or oak trees with questionable symptoms on your property. **CAL FIRE's Riverside County GSOB Hotline (951) 659-8328.**

Gregg Bratcher, CAL FIRE Unit Forester II



ANZA CHAPTER

Last fall, Project Manager Pat Boss gave a presentation to the Anza Thimble Club and, over the next few months, he met with several property owners in the area to discuss defensible space.

On the right are photos of a property in a high fire area of Anza that had not been abated in many years. The owner worked with Pat to reduce the hazardous fuels on their property reducing the risk of wildland fire. The chips from the project were used for erosion control on their driveway.

If you have questions about the Fire Safe Council or would like a project manager to meet with you to improve your defensible space, call the MCFSC office, 951-659-6208.



Before



...After



PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE AT mcfsc.org TO FIND GREAT INFORMATION ON ALL THINGS CONCERNING FIRE AND FIRE PREVENTION, OUR ORGANIZATION AND THE GOLDSPOTTED OAK BORER



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A sincere thanks to all who send donations and dues. Only by working together can we keep our communities fire-safe.

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.