

A Healthy Forest is a Healthy Habitat



951-659-6208

Newsletter

Shela Boynton, Editor

Summer 2012

Volume 13

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Getting Rid of Our Number One

FIRE HAZARD

Mike Esnard, President

The re-roofing grant is here! We have been given final approval for a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to replace wood roofs on the hill. Work to obtain this grant started in the fall of 2009, so it is a testament to the perseverance of Executive Director Edwina Scott and others at the council that we finally received the go-ahead. These federal funds pass through the California Emergency Management Agency and are under the authority of Riverside County's Office of Emergency Management.

Under this project, any homeowner with a wood shake or wood shingle roof can replace it with a class A fire-resistant roof, up to \$8,400, and be reimbursed for 75% of the cost. Homeowners can choose a contractor to do the work from a county-approved list.

This obviously is a wonderful deal for the owner, as well as a great benefit to the community. Wood shake roofs are probably the greatest fire hazard in any residential community, since they present large, flammable surfaces to the ember storms that accompany wildfires. Research has shown them to be a significant vulnerability, which is why FEMA decided to allocate prevention dollars towards their replacement.

If you have such a roof, please call the MCFSC office at 951-659-6208 for information on how to participate.

Photos from the spring Firemen's Muster



MCFSC President Mike Esnard



REMOVE THE GREATEST FIRE HAZARDS IN THE COMMUNITIES



IF YOU ARE NOT ON OUR LIST, CALL TODAY FOR INFORMATION ABOUT HOW TO REPLACE YOUR HAZARDOUS SHAKE/WOOD SHINGLE ROOF WITH A 30 YEAR FIRE RESISTANT ROOF AND RECEIVE A 75% REIMBURSEMENT.

MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES FIRE SAFE COUNCIL
951-659-6208



photo courtesy of Ed Smith, University of Nevada

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



IN MEMORY OF VI HALLACY

The Woodies are mourning the loss of their friend and co-worker who passed away May 4 at the age of 83.

Vi was a capable chainsaw operator and teamed-up with Bill Baker to operate one of our woodsplitters. After a nursing career in Orange County, she moved to Idyllwild nearly 25 years ago, becoming fully involved in the community through several volunteer organizations. We miss her very much.

“CITIZEN OF THE YEAR”

At the annual MCFSC Board luncheon for the Woodies, Pascal Simon was honored as “Citizen of the Year”. A retired psychologist in his native France, Pascal and his wife, Colette, moved to Pine Cove in 2007. Joining our ranks, he quietly mastered the wood splitter. Pascal has been one of our most consistent volunteers for the past five years. “Felicitations”, Pascal! We appreciate your warmth and good-humor.



Woodies on the march in Idyllwild’s Annual 4th of July Parade.

INTRODUCING MCFSC’S BOARD OF DIRECTORS Your friends and neighbors working to keep our communities fire-safe



From bottom left: Lois Henson, Ron Perry, Doris Lombard, Secretary Ray Barmore, 2nd Vice President Larry Kueneman, President Mike Esnard, 1st Vice President Chris Kramer, Jerry Holdber, Agency Liaison Norm Walker, Treasurer Tom McCullough



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.

SECOND ANNUAL MUSTER A SUCCESS!!

The Firemen's Muster, our community's fire awareness event, was held on April 28, a brilliant, sunny day. Idyllwild's recreation site was filled with booths and firefighting equipment as well as people enjoying the mountain views and learning about fire suppression and prevention.

As with last year's event, we aimed to make it interesting for children, so we were glad to see lots of families with kids fully engaged. There were trailers (BLM and Forest Care) and booths with all sorts of fascinating displays, including a number of live snakes (State Parks, Forest Service), and knowledgeable people who could talk about all of it.



Smokey Bear made a grand entrance. But the surprise hit of the day was the Forest Service's demonstration of K-9 patrol dogs led by Shelley Murrell and Mark Snyder. CalFire and Forest Service firefighters did a hose lay, local contractors took down a tree, and kids scrambled over vintage fire engines, wearing red fire hats.

The goal of the day was to share important information with the community and to motivate people to prepare their homes for fire season. Behind the scenes, we experienced so many different groups working together for the public interest. Our own Edwina Scott coordinated with all involved, making the event a great success due to the support of our partners: US Forest Service, CalFire/Riverside County Fire, SB Forest Association, Idyllwild Fire, Bureau of Land Management, Mountain Communities Patrol, State Parks, Idyllwild Rotary, Radio Club, and Perricone Juice of Beaumont. Also a special thanks goes to the Town Crier and Pine Cove Water District for providing the sound system.

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FIRE SEASON BLAZING

Mike Esnard, President

Large fires burned all over the west this spring, with the ones in Colorado making national news on a regular basis. The west has seen record-setting heat and dryness, part of a national trend. The first six months of this year have been the warmest on record in the contiguous United States (National Climatic Data Center).

Last year, it was Texas setting records for fires. Now, it's Colorado with nine major fires burning in the state at the end of June. An unprecedented 259 homes were destroyed by the High Park Fire which burned over 87,000 acres to the west of Ft. Collins. Within a week, this record was reset by the Waldo Canyon Fire west of Colorado Springs, burning 347 homes and causing the evacuation of over 35,000 people.

This is not a surprise to people following these issues. Tree mortality in the Rockies, spurred by an increasingly hot, dry climate and the activity of the bark beetle, has been a subject of conversation for years. Overstocked forests, loaded with dry fuel, are a prescription for large fires. Estimates of forests before European settlement run between 40-80 trees per acre; now they often have as many as 1,000 trees per acre.

The question is what to do about it. Waiting for huge fires, spending millions to put them out, and then replacing destroyed property is clearly the least intelligent option. Thinning forests and modifying vegetation in and around communities, as well as harden structures in those communities, seems the wisest.

Every time I read about the costs of fighting these large blazes, I think of how much forest thinning could have been accomplished with just that money alone. I say "just that money", because the expenses of large fires far exceed their firefighting costs. Early and incomplete estimates of housing losses in just the Colorado Springs area are \$110 million; early estimates of the firefighting costs in June for the state of Colorado are \$40 million.

Money spent on prevention by all concerned (federal and state governments, and individual property owners) is the smart move. So, when each of us puts money and time into making our own homes fire safe, we are doing the smart thing, and it just makes good sense.

The MCFSC thanks these contractors for their generous support of our Firemen's Muster.

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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.mcfscc.org), click the *How to Join* link, then the *Donate* link at the bottom of the page.