

Spring 2009 PCM Forestry Newsletter

The topics below are a summary of items past present and upcoming that relate to forestry issues at PCM.

Grant Action

Last Aug. we applied for grant funds from the Colo. State Forest Service (CSFS) that we would have to match on a dollar for dollar basis. We won't hear if our proposal will be funded until perhaps May-June 09. In all likelihood, it will not be fully funded as requested.

Per recommendations of the recently completed Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), authored by professional fire consultant Anchor Point of Boulder, Colo., we requested funds for three areas:

- a) re-vegetating Meadows Blvd. hillside in PCM open space
- b) installing reflective metal signs on each home/lot to allow for quick, reliable identification in case of a fire or emergency
- c) Removal of dead and live trees in the narrow strip of land adjacent to each lot that is in the county right of way. This 15-20 ft. wide strip parallels the road or cul-de-sac adjacent to each property and is bordered by your property line and the edge of the paved road. On many lots, if funded, this would cause the removal of 10-15 trees. On some lots there may be more and on some perhaps none.

The purpose of this removal is to eliminate some trees that could possibly fall across the road due to a windstorm or fire, thus preventing access and/or egress. It also gets a little more fuel out of the forest and allows for more sunlight penetration which helps keep roads clear of ice and snow.

The CWPP was written by fire protection professionals and encompasses the area from the top of Berthoud Pass to Red Dirt Hill near Granby. The removal of these trees was one of the prime recommendations for the PCM area.

I'd like to ask for your input and opinions on this issue. Please email Pete Peterson at petes_aksj2@msn.com <mailto:petes_aksj2@msn.com> or call (970-887-2449) or write to PO Box 729 in Tabernash, Colo. 80478. I'm requesting your input now in anticipation of some grant monies being awarded in the next several months and work being done this summer. The county Road & Bridge Div./Dept of Nat.

Resources already cleared trees in this defined area from the margins of 4-Bar-4 Road (Cty. Rd.5) in the summer of 08. Though you may have sprayed or trimmed trees in this area, it is beyond your property line and in the county road right of way. In it's most basic form, this is a safety issue. There would be no cost to you, the lot owner, as grant monies, if awarded, would cover the tree cutting, cleanup and removal. Funds spent for other forestry work--defensible space, tree removal, chipping, slash removal, etc. would have to match the funds received on a one to one basis.

Fire Fighting/Fire Awareness/Defensible Space/Fire Suppression Training Seminar-Summer 09

In a forest fire, hot embers can be transported 1-2 miles AHEAD of the advancing

flames by wind and by fire generated thermal currents. These can cause numerous spot fires over a wide area. With this in mind, the Forestry Committee at PCM has been in touch with Debra Carr, our counterpart at the adjacent Fairways HOA. Last May, she attended a 40 hr. training class held by the USDA Forest Service. Four days were classroom instruction. The fifth day consisted of building fire lines, practicing techniques, and then suppressing a 5 acre fire. This is the class that all Wildland Fire Fighters take before they head into the forest to fight fires. She took this class so she could teach members of her HOA and the grounds crew at the Pole Creek Golf Course. The class she taught them was a condensed version of the 5 day class, but it covered all of the key points. She felt everyone walked away with a clear understanding of what was required to suppress a wildland fire.

Below is the itinerary of her class from last year:

Classroom--about one hour

- 1) Objectives & Limitations
- 2) Clothing requirements
- 3) Safety
- 4) Mop up Technique (how to put out small fires)
 - a) tools
 - b) wet & dry mopping
 - c) team structure--2 person and/or group
 - d) prioritize fuels
 - e) cold trailing

On-Site--about two hours

- 1) mopping technique demonstration--building fire lines, mopping, cold trailing
- 2) Mopping exercise for participants--simulate putting out small fires in grassy meadows, forest floor & logs--with and without water source, using fire line techniques, mopping & cold trailing.

With the shortage of snow this winter the fire season may start early. Debra recommends doing this training in mid to late May or early June. If you choose to participate, you will get dirty but this may be the knowledge and experience that will save your home and/or lot!! Please let me know at the email, telephone or PO Box given above if you would like to participate.

(this will be a joint endeavor of PCM, WP Highlands, Sunset Ridge, Stagecoach, PC Valley, The BLM, the CSFS, E. Grand Fire Dist., The Dept. of Nat. Resources and several others)

\$2500 in Tax Deductions for Making a House Safer from Wildfire

In the Colo. legislature, HB08-1110, sponsored by two Jefferson cty. legislators, allows homeowners to take up to a \$2500 in deductions on tree work in "urban interface" areas of Colo. The Colo. State Tax Deduction goes into effect in 2009 and can be applied to work needed to make homes more Firewise, such a creating defensible space, developing emergency exits, establishing a viable water supply for

fire fighting, protecting home interiors with sprinklers, smoke detectors, and fire extinguishers, and updating homes with more fire resistant materials.

The work, certified by the Colo. Dept. of Revenue, would apply to work done between Jan. 2009 and 2014. Fifty percent of the total cost of creating wildfire defenses can be used for the deduction, up to \$2500. Only one income tax filer per household may claim the deduction. This bill targets any private landowner who lives where there is a CWPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plan) in place. We have one of these, completed in Nov.07.

The bill is not intended to reimburse individuals for planting trees or for removal of beetle killed trees unless the removal promotes defensible space. As this program begins in 2009, it will be utilized on 2009 taxes, filed in the spring of 2010. More information will be provided in this newsletter as it becomes available.

To learn more about defensible space and making your home Firewise, go to: <http://csfs.colostate.edu/wildfire.htm> on the Colo. St. Forest Svc. website.

No brochures have yet been put out detailing other aspects of this program.

New Topic—Preserve Our Starry Night Skies

The following article is from a recent Mountain Parks Electric monthly publication and addresses the increasing problem of light pollution.

"Well, it happened again. Relatives visiting from back east were astounded at our night sky. *'I can't believe how many stars there are'* and *'I didn't realize how beautiful the night sky is'* have become common refrains.

Living in the rural west, we tend to take for granted our grand vistas and dark nights. We also tend to forget that the majority of Americans live in areas so blighted by artificial lighting that the night sky has disappeared. Unfortunately, the problem is not confined to large population areas. Rural areas are increasingly impacted. A recent article in National Geographic (Nov. 08) entitled "Our Vanishing Night" highlighted this problem.

Any outdoor light produces a phenomenon known as "sky glow". The more outdoor light and air pollution, the more the sky glows. Large cities and major transportation corridors produce a tremendous amount of sky glow and can affect areas for hundreds of miles. There are no places left in the continental US with truly dark heavens.

There is a generation of our children growing up that has never seen the Milky Way or more than a handful of bright stars. The brilliant display of thousands of stars set against a velvet black sky that our grandfathers slept under is being replaced by a dull artificial glow. Imagine John Wayne out on a lonesome trail, sleeping under the equivalent of a streetlight.

Currently the National Park Svc. has designated a few remote national parks as "Dark Sky Sites". A tourist business has emerged touting dark skies, catering to folks from light-blighted areas. For communities that depend on the outdoor tourist dollar, dark skies will become a rare and valuable asset, an asset that is too easily lost.

Early exterior lighting fixtures consisted of a bare incandescent bulb with a simple shield to keep the rain off. Only a fraction of the electricity used actually produced light, with the majority of the power spent heating the bulb. Of the light produced, only a fraction was beneficial since shining upward and sideways wasted the majority of the light. Improvements in bulb technology, including fluorescent and sodium

vapor lamps, have improved the efficiency of the bulb itself, producing a better balance of light vs. heat. However, the glass enclosure does nothing to utilize the light escaping upward.

The best solution for outdoor lighting today comes from innovation in the design of the surrounding fixture rather than the bulb. The full cutoff outdoor fixture uses a highly reflective, specially shaped shield to reflect all the light produced by the bulb downward, utilizing the light that would otherwise be wasted. The full cutoff outdoor light improves the overall efficiency and does the most to reduce unwanted sky glow. Light is not free. As we enter the 21st century, energy has become more expensive and will become even more so over time. Unwanted and wasted light is estimated to cost the United States more than \$2 billion out of the \$11 billion spent on outdoor lighting each year.

The irony of the situation is that poorly designed lights are actually counterproductive. Not only are they costly but by shining a bright light directly into peoples' eyes, it actually makes it more difficult to see at night. Like an oncoming truck leaving the "brights" on, a poorly shielded yard or street light hinders rather than helps night vision. The rationale for yard lights has been expanded to include security lights, but that is a big city solution applied inappropriately to a rural problem. Rural outdoor lights left on all night provide little in the way of security and, in fact, may actually aid rather than impede theft and vandalism.

Here are a few questions to ask the next time you pay the electric bill. WHAT PURPOSE DOES AN OUTDOOR LIGHT SERVE; SECURITY, ILLUMINATION, ADVERTISING, DECORATION? WOULD A SMALLER, MORE DIRECTED LIGHT SERVE YOUR NEEDS? FOR INSTANCE, INSTALLING A MOTION DETECTOR SWITCH ON LIGHTS USED PRIMARILY FOR SECURITY HAS BEEN SHOWN TO BE MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE IN CURTAILING BURGLARIES AND VANDALISM THAN A LIGHT LEFT BURNING ALL NIGHT LONG. Replacing a "light bomb on a pole" with ground level lighting allows the human eye to better adapt to the dark, seeing more while using less energy. Most importantly, fully shielded full cutoff fixtures greatly increase your night-lighting bang for the buck. It makes dollars and sense to take advantage of that technology.

It is up to all of us, both in our own interests and for the good of the United States, to be wise energy users. Help preserve what is left of rural night skies before they, too, become just a memory. Dark night skies are part of what makes the rural West the West.

---From a recent county "Code of the West" booklet designed to give newcomers a sense of rural life

"Select downcast exterior lighting. You probably moved to the country to see the night sky. For yourself and your neighbors, don't obscure the night view with extraneous light"

Final Topic

The PCM Board of Directors, Design Review Committee, and Forestry Committee remain committed to the fair and rigorous enforcement of PCM Covenants and Rules and Regulations. *The Board has in the past and is presently taking the most*

egregious violators of Association rules requiring dead tree removal to Court in order to make Pole Creek Meadows a safe place to live and vacation. The Board will continue appropriate enforcement efforts to achieve this goal. The BOD and Forestry Committee are very grateful for the vast majority of owners that burn slash piles, spray trees, cut off ladder limbs and remove dead trees. The Forestry Committee has and will continue to do all it can to provide education and resources in these areas, as well as log removal each year, for those that cut their own trees. Please continue to be conscientious about this ongoing effort that is required to maintain the safety and integrity of your lot/home.

The winter 2008/spring 2009 slash pile burn season will likely expire in early or mid April. Please burn any accumulated slash before that time. A local specialist in slash burning is John Treiber who can be reached at 970-887-2057. Burn permits are available from the Dept. of Nat. Resources at 970-887-2123 (ask for Jennifer or Amy). You must call to ask if burning is permissible that day--due to temp. inversions, smoke dispersal, snow, wind, etc. Also, call E. Grand Fire to notify them you are burning (970-726-5824)

The spray season for Mt. Pine Beetle (MPB) begins in early May when snow and mud are no longer a problem. It continues thru late June and early July, before beetle flight begins. While the beetle population appears to be in somewhat of a decline, it is important to continue spraying the trees you value. Since we have gone into detail--exhaustively--in the past, regarding the spraying for MPB, we'll not repeat that info again. If you have questions, call Pete at 970-887-2449

Note: It is ESSENTIAL to spray to the absolute TOP of each tree to realize maximum protection.

A recent newspaper article described the concern of Boulder County Sheriff Joe Pelle. He was concerned that people weren't taking preventative measures around their property, to keep fires at bay, such as clearing brush and stacking firewood away from decks. *"If you don't want to help yourself, we'll just walk away. I'm serious about it,"* he warned.

Sincerely,

Secretary W. Quinlan, On behalf of the Pole Creek Meadows Owners Assn. Board of Directors, and the Forestry Committee

