



# the Sunshine FIRE·brand

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

EARLY WINTER 2009

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Looking around and liking what he see's—Chief Honeyman's lay of the land
- Chimney fires and warming up the season
- Bark Beetles in Ponderosa forests: what you can do
- "And the winner is...": children's poster contest results

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January 8, 2009—Old Stage Fire, Boulder Colorado. A wind drive event that burned over 3000 acres and destroyed two buildings. 30 different Fire depart-

ments were involved in the suppression that took over two days. More than 1300 homes were evacuated in the face of a rapidly advancing fire driven by

strong winds. The cause of the fire was determined to be a downed power line that rapidly turned a grass fire into 1 of the largest fires in Boulder County.

## Founding of the Sunshine Fire Protection District, part 2

In the beginning, equipment was scarce, but residents were determined to work together. The forest service said they would furnish Pulaskis, shovels (called "lady shovels" because they were small) and trombone water backpacks that held 5 gallons of water, if the neighborhood would pay for them. Lloyd drew the plans for a shed to house the equipment. The original plan was to have multiple fire tool cache sheds up and down the canyon, built and stocked by individuals. Milt Moore distributed plans for the sheds, but Don Dick didn't think very many people built them. Many Sunshine resi-

dents did purchase the Pulaskis, shovels and backpacks.

Our first fire tools were purchased in bulk from the Colorado State Forest Service, with individuals deciding what they wanted to buy and SFPD consolidating all the orders into a single one. Terry Beesen worked with each county fire department to establish unique colors to mark the tools. SFPD was assigned red and blue, and there still are a few tools around with this marking.

The first vehicle was a Six-by-Six from the Colorado State Forest

Service – a yellow vehicle with a 500-gallon tank. The Six-by-Six was an army surplus all-wheel drive truck with 6 drive wheels like the ones used during the Korean War. A large tank on the back took up all the space except that it had a pumper in one side and had draft capabilities, so it could draft from a cistern or stream. The problem was that there are no streams near Sunshine and domestic cisterns were inadequate and small. Milton Moore was the driver and John Tveitaraas rode shotgun.

*(continued on page 7)*

## Training together & more ....



Our annual Firefighters' Ball was held this week at the Gold Hill Inn: it was the 3<sup>rd</sup> holiday party for the combined Gold Hill, Four Mile and Sunshine firefighters. What struck me about the atmosphere of the party was how comfortable everyone felt together—there was none of the awkward mixing of people that sometimes accompanies similar joint holiday get-togethers. In the 'how time flies' category, it has been nearly five years now that the three departments have been training together as one unit. In fact, it's hard for me to remember when we didn't train together and there are firefighters on all three departments that have known trainings only as a combined unit.

This familiarity and comfort with each other is important because it allows us to better serve our communities during emergency response. For example, in the last two months we have had two structure fires—one in Gold Hill's district and the other in Sunshine's. Structure fires, in particular, are a test of operational cohesiveness. What was remarkable to me in our response to the fires was the essentially seamless integration of the three departments: interior attack teams, overhaul efforts, water delivery tasks, and so on, were composed of members of the three departments, mixed and matched as needed. The three departments, working

together, provide the equipment and personnel needed for a significant event, such as a structure fire, that one of our department's, alone, would find it difficult to muster.

All of the Boulder County fire departments west of Broadway are composed of volunteers; in a few departments the Chief is paid but emergency response for the most part falls on the shoulders of the volunteers. Volunteer firefighting has a long tradition in the U.S. In fact, Benjamin Franklin organized the first fire department. Some 72% of all firefighters / EMS responders in the U.S. are volunteer. In spite of this long history, volunteer departments are faced with a number of challenges, many stressing our ability to respond. In the foothills of Boulder County, topography and demographics are against us—a low housing density and expensive real estate mean that there are fewer and older volunteers. Four Mile Fire's Salina station is ~ 1/2 mile from the Sunshine Station #2, as the crow flies, but is a good 20 minute response via Sunshine Canyon, Poorman Road and Four Mile Canyon Drive. Similarly, the Gold Hill station is only 3.5 miles from our Station #2 on County Road 52 but the transit time is 15 minutes, at best.

The three departments have a combined rostered volunteer base of ~ 70, of which perhaps a third are 'active' and available

for response. Depending on the time of day, the number of firefighters that are available can be even less. The combined number of apparatus in the 'superdepartment' is 14 and ranges from tenders (water carriers) and structure engines to 'brush trucks'. For small departments like ours, the ability to combine resources, both in terms of personnel and equipment, provides the means to address emergencies that far exceeds our individual departments, alone.

The demographics and topography of the Boulder foothills require that fire district personnel think outside the jurisdictional 'box'. The combined training and response of Four Mile, Gold Hill and Sunshine fire departments is generally recognized in the County's emergency services as innovative and a great success. In many ways, our joint venture is a view to the future of emergency volunteer services in Boulder County, where fire districts merge operationally to provide enhanced emergency response under the administration of a regional fire authority.

I would like to thank all of the Sunshine Fire, Gold Hill Fire and Four Mile Fire volunteers that work so hard to make our communities safe. I hope that you all have a safe and happy 2010.

-Bruce Honeyman, Fire Chief SFPD,  
chief@sunshinefire.org

*“Familiarity and comfort with our mutual aid partners is important because it allows us to better serve our communities”*

## Introducing.....

You may have noticed that the SFPD logo has changed. Our previous logo was developed in the early

1990's. The new logo enhances some of the original colors and adopts the universally recognizable maltese cross.



# Let's start a fire...

Since our last issue, SFPD firefighters have been called to two chimney fires and have talked privately with a number of residents regarding small unreported fires involving heating equipment. Nationwide in 2006, there were an estimated 4200 reported



home structure fires involving chimney or chimney connections that resulted in 10 civilian injuries and \$54 million in direct property damage. Though home fires involving chimneys or chimney connections have been declining over the past

20 years, some of the causes haven't changed and include creosote buildup and combustible materials too close to heat sources. As was the case in one recent call, the majority of non-confined home fires started by chimneys or chimney connectors begin in concealed or structural spaces as a result of heat sources being too close to fixed combustibles such as a structural member or framing.

In a rural setting such as ours, heating related fires (36%) are the most probable cause of a structure fire. Heating fires most frequently occur (78%) in chimneys but also include fires started by other heating equipment that have not been properly maintained. Wood stoves and kero-

sene heaters are two examples. Creosote buildup is the leading cause of chimney caused home fires, but other material such as adhesives, resin and tars are also contributing factors.

When a fire does start, the extent of flame damage that homes sustain in rural settings is worse than in non-rural areas. Again this was true in one of our recent calls as the fire resulted in damage costing tens-of-thousands of dollars. Contributing factors to this are increased response times due to longer travel distances and that fires may burn longer before being noticed due to sparser population densities as compared with non-rural areas. This last point represents a significant life-safety issue in rural homes as smoke alarms were operational in only 27% of rural residential fires.

As winter comes upon us, as if it hasn't already, here are some fire-place and home fire safety reminders:

1. Have your chimney or wood stove inspected and cleaned annually by a *certified* chimney specialist.
2. Clear the area around your fireplace of debris, flammable materials, and decorations.
3. Burn only dry, seasoned wood. Soft, moist wood accelerates creosote buildup.
4. Keep air inlets on wood stoves open, and never restrict air supply to fireplaces. This may cause creosote buildup that could lead to a chimney fire.
5. Use only newspaper and kindling or fire starters to start a fire.

Never use flammable liquids, such as lighter fluid, kerosene or gasoline.

6. When adding wood to a working fire, wear only short, tight-fitting sleeves to reduce the risk of igniting your clothing if the fire flares up during the refueling. Remember this years fire prevention slogan "*Stay Smart, Don't Get Burned*".
7. Ash disposal should be in a tightly covered metal container and kept at least 10 feet away from your home and any other nearby buildings.
8. Stack firewood at least 30 feet away from your home and outside ignition Zone 1 of your defensible (d) space. While its hard to imagine a wildfire in these cold, snowy conditions, remember Boulder County had a 3000+ acre wildfire on January 8th of this year.

**"In the rural setting, heating related fires are the most probable cause of a structure fire"**

One final thought: while chimney's and chimney connections can be risk-factors for home fires, so to can portable heating units. Make sure they are moved around regularly so as to not overheat one area in particular and that flammable objects and materials are at a safe distance.

All the best for a happy, safe, and of course, warm New Year!

-Brett Haberstick Fire Marshal SFPD,  
firemarshal@sunshinefire.org

## Fire safety education events...

This past October, SFPD conducted two fire safety presentations at area schools. At both Harmony Preschool and Gold Hill Elementary, SFPD and Gold Hill FPD firefighters showed equipment and taught children that

firefighters were their friends and there to help them in emergency situations. Kids were also able to "practice" their firefighter skills (*photo right*) and took home aids to help them and their families map out home escape routes and meeting places.





# Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Despite the early snows, Sunshine's Fire Mitigation 2009 project was completed on schedule in early October.

## Mitigation by the numbers.....

**27:** # of property owners

**55:** parcels of land mitigated

**1294:** # of cubic yards of chipped material

**37:** acres mitigated

**\$1,442.12:** cost per acre

**\$4,471.98:** in-kind donations

**\$58,983.85:** total cost

Thanks to the Four Mile Mitigation Crew who did a fabulous job cutting, chipping, and piling slash in order to leave the forest safer and looking healthy and tidy. All parties involved, from the landowners to the mitigation crew to SFPD and State and County stakeholders, seem extremely pleased with the results.

Questions have come up about what will and won't be included in our community mitigation projects. As a matter of fairness, uniform guidelines will apply until all the roads in our

fire district have gone through one full round of mitigation, creating a fuel break within 150 feet of either side of all district roads. We expect this to be completed by 2013 or 2014.

1. All work will be done to Colorado State Forest Service acceptable standards.
2. Work will be paid for largely from the CWPP mitigation funds plus grant money.
3. Landowners will be asked to pay \$150 per acre mitigated on their property. This is to make it fair for those landowners in the taxing district who don't have property along the roadways but still pay mitigation taxes.
4. Slash within 50 feet of a roadway or driveway will be chipped. All other slash will be collected into burn piles.
5. Work won't take place in a

landowner's Defensible Space (i.e. within 50 feet of a structure) even if that D-space falls within the project area. However, the mitigation crew will be available to discuss and accomplish work within this zone at the landowner's expense while they're in the area.

6. Mitigation contractors won't be responsible for burning. Burning the slash piles will be the responsibility of the individual landowners, and needs to be done in accordance with Boulder County burn directives.

For more details about the scope and cost of the project please contact Abby Silver at [abberoo@msn.com](mailto:abberoo@msn.com)

*Abby Silver, Chair CWPP Advisory Committee*

## Behind the scenes: Wildfire Danger Sign

You may have noticed a new sign at the intersection of SCD and County Road 83. This important addition to our District was presented to Sunshine by Boulder County as a thanks for all the work on the CWPP.

About 15 years ago, a dozen or so wildfire danger signs were located throughout BC at the entrances to major canyons (one of these signs is located on the right side of SCD as you drive up the canyon). As these old signs are wooden and have had many years of exposure to the elements, most are now in

bad shape and in need of replacement. So a program was started to replace them with newer, aluminum signs. There was also a desire to place some new signs closer to the fire stations where they could be updated in a more easily by the fire district.

The new metal signs are mounted in wooden frames (just like to the original wooden ones), but with a twist. Rough peeled logs are used for the frames instead of 4x4 dimensional lumber. Importantly, the logs for these frames come from

ongoing local fuels reduction projects (like the one that was done along SCD this summer). A local contractor built the frames and delivered them this fall. The new signs should last much longer than the originals and be functional for many years to come.



# Fire Prevention Poster Contest: the winners are....

Sunshine FPD, Four Mile FPD, and Gold Hill FPD teamed up this Fall to sponsor our first Fire Prevention Poster Contest to coincide with NFPA's Fire Prevention Week October 4-11, 2009. The theme of this year's fire prevention message was "Stay Smart, Don't Get Burned". Some of the poster were made as a part of a general fire awareness education held at Gold Hill Elementary School and others were submitted by residents of the three Fire Protection Districts [FPD].

A total of 32 posters were submitted with topics ranging wildfire mitigation and campfire safety to home fires and what to do. Three posters, 1 from each of Fire Districts, were selected by a panel of 8 firefighters who probably had as much fun as the children who made the posters. Each poster was special and it was difficult to choose a winner. For those who were chosen, a special gift was awarded.

The top three winners were:

1. **Sedona**, Sunshine FPD
2. **Siena**, Gold Hill FPD
3. **Cecelia**, Four Mile FPD

Here are their posters (in order):



## Children's Fire Prevention Calendar

Sunshine FPD, Four Mile FPD, and Gold Hill FPD have created a fire awareness calendar that includes 12 of the top posters submitted as a part of the Children's Fire Prevention Poster Contest held this past September & October. Each month highlights a particular fire related concern of children in our three Fire Districts.

The calendar is printed on tear-proof and waterproof paper and highlights the month's fire training and Board Meetings for each of the

three departments. There is also space available for your own notes and important dates.

These calendars are available early in January so watch for them in your mailbox.. Each residence will be given 1. Additional calendars are available for the cost of \$5.00 each. If you would like additional calendars send a email to [sfpd.fireground@gmail.com](mailto:sfpd.fireground@gmail.com) with the desired quantity, your full address, and best telephone number to reach you if there are any questions.

## Bark Beetles Management In Ponderosa Forests



*“By selectively thinning our forests we can mimic natural disturbances that once kept our ponderosa forests healthy.”*  
- Ryan Ludlow

One hundred years from now Boulder County landowners will look back at this time in history and think about what it must have been like to live through the great bark beetle outbreak of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

They will talk about how amazing it must have been to witness entire hillsides of forest change before landowners’ eyes. They will think about the struggles landowners must have encountered while adapting to the changing landscape. What they won’t be able to understand is the emotion and heartbreak landowners felt when they lost some of their favorite pines. They won’t be able to fully understand the enormous amount of work it took to clean up all of the hazardous dead trees.

What I hope they will realize is the momentum and sense of place that built from the epidemic. They will look around at their forests and realize that the healthy forests they see in the 22<sup>nd</sup> century were shaped by individuals who saw the great bark beetle epidemic as an opportunity to become active stewards of their land. I believe this outbreak is an opportunity to create forest management plans today that will positively influence the health of our future forests. It is an opportunity to better understand the ecology that drives our disturbance-driven forest ecosystems and an opportunity to create healthy, vigorous forests that are better able to respond to future insect and disease outbreaks. Foresters had hoped that the current bark beetle outbreak would not transition out of our

higher elevation lodgepole forests into the ponderosa pine belt. Unfortunately, in the last few years pockets of bark beetles have begun making the transition. Fortunately, there are specific actions that landowners can take now, prior to large numbers of beetles arriving in their ponderosa forest, which may reduce the total number of trees lost to beetles. In this article I won’t go into great depth about ponderosa pine ecology; instead I hope to outline two techniques that if followed may reduce the number of trees lost to bark beetles in your ponderosa forest.

It is believed that landowners who aggressively thin their forests prior to the arrival of beetles will lose fewer trees than areas that are left unmanaged. There has always been a need to aggressively thin our ponderosa pine forests in order to restore them to healthy functioning ecosystems. With the predicted arrival of large numbers of bark beetles into the ponderosa pine belt the need for restoration has never been greater. Much of our ponderosa pine forests are stressed, unhealthy and highly susceptible to bark beetle attack. There are significantly more trees per acre today than historically. By selectively thinning our forests we can mimic natural disturbances that once kept our ponderosa forests healthy. Restoration forestry reduces the overall number of trees in the area, creating less competition for the remaining trees. After restoration, the remaining trees grow more vigorously and the forest as a whole becomes healthier. It is believed that if landowners restore their forest prior to the arrival of large number of beetles, their remaining healthy trees will be better able to fight off beetle attacks. Time is

of the essence; action is needed now!

Once beetles began attacking trees in your forest you should aggressively remove all currently infested trees (also known as direct control). Direct control reduces the total number of beetles in the forest and may reduce the number of trees lost to beetles. The key to direct control is making sure to “sanitize” or kill all beetles underneath the bark of your infested tree. There are several approved methods to sanitize trees; chipping, hauling to a Community Forestry Sort Yard, solar treatment, and debarking are some examples of sanitation.

The great bark beetle outbreak is going to change the look and feel of forests throughout the western United States. I hope this outbreak can create a shift in the way we perceive our backyard forest. Our forests are not static and need to be actively managed in order to stay healthy. Without active management, our forests become weak and unhealthy. Bark beetles are nature’s way of revitalizing and starting forests over again. This outbreak is an opportunity to become active stewards of our land and to begin creating a long-term forest management plan. Forest management actions taken today will have significant influences on the health of Boulder County’s future forests.

If you have questions about bark beetle management, forest ecology or want to learn more about becoming an active steward of your land, feel free to contact me directly by e-mail at [pine-beetle@bouldercounty.org](mailto:pine-beetle@bouldercounty.org) or by phone at 720-564-2641.

- Ryan Ludlow, BCFHI



*"No previously healthy person should die of hypothermia after they have been rescued and treatment has been started."*

*Cameron C. Bangs, M.D. The Mountaineers 1986*

When you think about hypothermia you really need to realize that the treatment of hypothermia historically has been controversial and remains so today.

Hippocrates, Aristotle, and Galen all suggested various remedies. Cold weather has had major impact on military history as well. Hannibal lost nearly half of his army of 46,000 while traversing the Pyrenees Alps in 218 BC. Baron Larrey, Napoleon's Chief Surgeon reported that only 350 of the 12,000 men in the twelfth division survived the cold during the retreat from Russia in 1812. He observed that those soldiers who were rapidly rewarmed closest to the campfire died. Note: He is also the person who is credited with creating the first ambulances by adapting carriages of the French flying artillery and using them as Flying Ambulances. Americans are not immune as the winter of 1777 to 1778 took its toll on Washington's troops at Valley Forge and approximately 10% of the United States casualties in Korea were cold related.

Today innumerable cold-related

tragedies affect both military personnel and civilians, in particular Hunters, Sailors, skiers, climbers, boaters, and swimmers. Widespread participation in outdoor sports and activities has clearly increased the number of patients who develop hypothermia.

So what is considered hypothermia? And how do we treat it? Well hypothermia is defined as a body core temperature less than 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit). As the temperature drops below this level, the body becomes unable to generate sufficient heat to function efficiently



(this is where we step in). Many variables contribute to the development of accidental hypothermia. Exposure, age, health, nutrition, medication, and intoxicants can decrease heat production, increase heat loss, or interfere with thermostability.

So what does it look like??? Well some common signs are:

1. Uncontrollable shivering (although, at extremely low body temperatures, shivering may stop).

2. Weakness and loss of coordination
3. Confusion
4. Pale and cold skin
5. Drowsiness—especially in more severe stages
6. Slowed breathing or heart rate.

If not treated promptly, lethargy, cardiac arrest, shock, and coma can set in.

So the million dollar question is how do we, as First Responders/ EMTs help??? Well we actually have a pretty easy job when you think about it. It really comes down to three things.

1. Prevent heat loss!
2. Prevent heat loss!!
3. Prevent heat loss!!!

(Okay, one thing really)

Seriously the most important thing is to prevent further heat loss from the patient by removing wet garments and insulating the victim, shielding him/her from any wind, cold or exposure, and if possible ventilating with warm, humidified oxygen. PREVENT further heat loss. That my friend is the key, very simple and intuitive. Remember the quote that started this article. Keep warm and be safe out there.

- Robert Putfark, Clinical Manager for Pridemark Paramedic Services

**"Wide participation in outdoor sports and activities has clearly increased the number of hypothermia cases"**

## REVERSE 911: you need to do it

Residents of Sunshine and all cities within Boulder County can receive emergency notifications via their cell or home phones, and by text messaging and email. This system will be used to notify residents about imminent threats to health and safety such as the need to evacuate due to a wildfire or take other appropriate actions during emergency situations.

There is no fee for this service and your information is kept private. Alerts will come from 911Alert@bouldercounty.org to sign up. Your home or other residences can be registered at: [www.boco911alert.com](http://www.boco911alert.com).

This is an important service Boulder County is offering and allows SFPD to get information to you quickly in emergency situations.

Sign up for FREE emergency alerts on home, work and cell phones, text messaging and e-mail.  
<http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/alertsignup>

## Letters from good friends....

I was approached in late summer to do an article for this newsletter... when the forest could have sparked and burned. So here I am gazing at the snow covered peaks of the Front Range with my PC screen saying it is 5.2 degrees outside. Not much chance of a wildland fire today.

In the intervening space I have been busy working with three other communities on their Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) and doing an evaluation of all completed plans for the State Forest Service. And these activities give me a chance to reflect on what you have accomplished in Sunshine.



I remember an initial meeting with enthusiastic residents of Sunshine: Abby, Ardie, Brett, Dieder, Ian, Johanna, Martha, Steve Stratton, and others. Bob Bundy from the State

Forest Service and Eric Philips, Boulder County Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator, were also on hand. Everyone was aware of the wildfire hazard to the area. Everyone wanted to make a good decision for the community in moving ahead to develop an effective, usable CWPP to lead the area and you as residents into the future to carry out personal and landscape mitigation that would mean something.

And you did. Over the course of about a year the Sunshine team met and discussed boundaries, mitigation needs, and the writing of plan sections. One long meeting developed recommendations to make concerning fuels mitigation projects on lands surrounding the developed areas. And the team received something invaluable to the success of any CWPP...enthusiastic support and action on the part of a significant number of area residents...that's you!

The team has hosted very effective public information and education days and reached out to home owners to help assess their property hazards and show them the way to mitigate danger to life and property. I was privileged to be part of the effort.

You as a community should congratulate yourself on an excellent collaborative effort...and build on that into the future. The Sunshine CWPP is one of the best I have seen. And I say this not because I was involved. But in my review of plans completed to date I have seen a lot of good plans and a few that need more effort, but Sunshine's is one of the best in my estimation for several reasons. Your plan gets to the point and outlines feasible action. Projects are well defined and specific as to treatment and area to be treated. Descriptions of area units and analysis of wildfire hazards and behaviors are well done.

And, you have acted upon the plan. Team members learned how to do hazard analyses and residents cooperated with the analysis so the plan adequately defines areas of concern.

Community work days and individual defensible space actions by residents have helped develop a sound level of protection Sunshine.

Your CWPP team has continued its momentum to provide guidance, seek grants, and work with the County and State to make things happen and to be there for residents who need information and help. Your job is to support them and step into vacant positions as they occur. The written CWPP was only a beginning. Wildfire planning and mitigation is like painting a battleship. When you have gone from the bow to the stern you start over again at the bow. The mitigation efforts you take over a period of years now will help a lot, but vegetation continues to sprout and grow. The areas around your homes continue to need cleanup and treatment such as limbing and removal of dead materials.

I use the Sunshine plan as a model of what a community can do on its own. So...congratulations are in order to you folks in Sunshine, as well as the CWPP committee members, for their support of and work towards making your plan a true example of community commitment and effort to mitigation of wildfire danger. Keep up the great work! The snow will melt and it will be dry again. May you have a wonderful Holiday season!

*- John Chapman is the Community Wildfire Protection Plan Coordinator for the Southern Rockies Conservation Alliance.*

**"I use the Sunshine CWPP plan as a model of what a community can do on its own"**

**-John Chapman**

## Sunshine Fire Protection District: Henry Ballard's Historical Perspective

In mid-1986 I was asked if I could serve as Treasurer for the fire district board. Let me draw a little picture of the fire department in those first years that I was involved. We had the original Sunshine fire station, courtesy of volunteer builders in

about 1970, with four vehicles and two doors. The truck that looked like a fire engine was a 1952 Reo, manual 4-speed transmission, manual steering, a lot of fun to shift from the driving gear to pumping water, and fairly mysterious for amateur firefighters. (After 23 years of working

with different trucks, I can say that it wasn't all that bad. Any engine with any capabilities at all gets complicated to run, and there's no getting away from it.)

*(continued on page 10)*



# Founding of Sunshine Fire Protection District, part 2

(continued from page 1)

Milton Moore was the driver and John Tveitaraas rode shotgun. Don Dick remembered "It had an automatic transmission and I remember driving it to a training session at Sugarloaf. On the way back, the bands heated up due to slipping as I climbed out of 4-Mile Canyon through Poorman. Eventually it wouldn't go any further and we had to leave it there for the night. The next morning, Ernie Williams, who handling our truck maintenance, went back and found that everything had cooled off and drove it back to Sunshine." Audie Covey and Beebe Doherty were also trained to drive the fire truck. The Colorado State Forest Service also supplied the Fire District with a pumper.

The first Board was made up of Lloyd McIrvine, John Tveitaraas, Bob Doherty, Haydee Battany (who served as Secretary of the Board) and also current resident Bill Walters. Lloyd McIrvine and John Tveitaraas were instrumental in attaining the permit for the special district. Fred Niccore was the first fire chief (called "Captain" at the time). When he moved away after a couple of years, Lloyd McIrvine took over and the name changed to "Chief". Other early chiefs include Lou Feierabend, Bernie Jarrell, Jim Stoleberg, and Bob Heflin. Former chief Jim Burch spearheaded the effort to put cisterns at critical locations around the district.

The first truck purchased by the SFPD itself was an old white Boulder City fire truck. It was in terrible condition; nothing worked. Some residents today recall that there was an A-frame in the Canyon that

burnt down because they couldn't get the truck to pump water.

Several anecdotes survive those early years of the SFPD. One such story involves the occasion when SFPD applied for a privy permit. A representative from the County came up and looked at the firehouse, declared that it was built without a permit, and put up sawhorses to block the entrance. Lawyers who lived in the area did some research, and lo and behold, discovered that Sunshine was still incorporated: the fire station was re-opened. Sunshine was quietly unincorporated by the County in 1975.

Another story comes from John Tveitaraas. During a 1975 fire, SFPD was assigned to protect the west area of the fire. They stayed until dark. They returned the next morning with 17-18 people to work mop-up. Many American Indians, employed by the forest service, came as well. John witnessed the change of crews – he thought it was unique that they marched into position. At the end of the day, an exhausted John saw someone he knew and asked, "Do you happen to have a beer?" At least a dozen people offered him one.

Another story comes from Don Dick. "I also remember the Gold Hill fire of approximately May, 1972. We had an extremely dry spring and when someone dropped a tree into power line, the fire almost exploded instantly. I watched the fire as I came back from Denver, where I was working, and went immediately up to Gold Hill and hooked up with a partner. We linked up with SFPD on the

ridge east of Gold Hill and started fighting the fire along with about 10 others from Sunshine. Audie Covey was there with a large red stain on her blouse where she had been hit by a slurry drop from a helicopter. She was more concerned about ruining her blouse than the fact that the slurry could have seriously injured her if the main body of water had hit her. After a while, they took the engine to go get more water and everyone else went with it. Unfortunately, the engine never came back so the two of us spent the night shoveling dirt onto numerous hot spots which flared up in the dark. We had no flashlight and the hillside had a lot of mine test holes, so we had to move slowly and carefully to each new hot spot. We also ran out of drinking water and were very grateful for dawn and a relief crew which allowed us to go get some water and food."

Finally, many residents recall that at one time at the Sunshine saddle, there was a sign that appeared to be a forest service sign. It read, *Caution: Tick-infested Area*. The sign had been made by Beebe Doherty, who lived up there. She also made the Sunshine sign featured in the front June Howard's book *Stories of Sunshine*, which used to stand at the corner/ intersection of SCD and CO 83. This sign, of course, was the sign which was twice stolen: the first time, it was soon found in a CU student's dorm room. The sign was stolen a second time and it hasn't been seen since. Rumor has it Nature divined that Sunshine should stay off the map.

- David Wheeler & Megan Meehan



## NOW AVAILABLE: SFPD 40th Anniversary Shirt....

In celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the founding of Sunshine Fire Protection District we have gone through our history books, searched random files, and taxed our collective memories to come up with a list of all those who have volunteered with SFPD over the past 40 years. The list includes firefighters, Board Members, and those active in the early founding of the District.

The short-sleeve tee shirts are 100% pre-shrunk cotton. The list of names has been

printed on a navy, duty style shirt. Sizes that are available for order include S-XXL. The price for each shirt is \$20.00. Hooded or zip-up sweatshirts are also available as a special order for \$40.00.

INTERESTED? Send an email to Brett at [spfd.fireground@gmail.com](mailto:spfd.fireground@gmail.com). Please include you full contact address and telephone number, size(s) you want, and if you want to order a sweatshirt..



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## SFPD: Henry Ballard's Historical Perspective

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We had a forest service tanker, also about 1952 vintage – genuine Korean War army truck – plus a pickup with an orchard sprayer pump mounted in the back, and a WWII Willy's Jeep that had a small pump with maybe 50 gallons of water. The Jeep was parked sideways at the back of the station where it couldn't be moved until two of the other trucks were gone. The garage, with all this equipment, was cozy. Parking trucks was quite an exercise until the two garage doors were replaced with one big one. The Jeep never moved, but the other trucks did, and you had to move one of the big trucks out before the pickup (which was parked in the middle) could get out that side.

The fire district board of directors met in the boardroom at the back of the station. There was no bathroom in the firehouse. There were a few extra chairs for visitors, but they were rarely used. There were often vacancies on the board. Announcements in the admittedly modest newsletter had no effect. Subtle hints dropped around the district went unnoticed. At one point the Fire Chief was serving as Chair of the Board (in flagrant violation of the bylaws), and there were still vacancies waiting for volunteers. For years, we would schedule an election every other May and then cancel it because there were no more candidates than vacancies.

As treasurer, I had some specific responsibilities. In addition to making up the budget in the fall, and applying for an exemption from the yearly audit in the spring, I wrote the checks, chased down other board members to get second signatures on the checks (if they couldn't wait until a board

meeting), and reported on the financial state of the district at each monthly board meeting. When I started in the position, the yearly budget was about \$10,000. This meant that a repair bill for \$1500 seemed like a catastrophe. It was hard to think about buying a new truck when it seemed it would take forever to save up enough money. Fortunately, it was also before the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights, so we were able to grow our income as fast as the district's assessed valuation. Inflation was certainly part of it, but income had reached about \$30,000 by the time I resigned from the board in 1998.

Were there fires? Not as many as you might think. Interestingly, I've been remarkably consistent about being out-of-district when interesting things happen. When the Old Stage fire happened at Thanksgiving, 1988, I was able to watch it on the news from the Riverbend Resort near South Fork, easily five hours away. The Lee Hill fire was a similar deal. When Walker Ranch went up in smoke, I was heading out of town to go skiing at the Great Sand Dunes. Even this year, in January, when it should be safe to be out of district, we had the second Old Stage fire and I was in Salt Lake City. However, I did go to the Left Hand fire in 1988. I got a chance to build some fire line and chase burning pinecones down the hill. I did some structure size-up and mitigation, and watched the backfire operation. I remember a lightning strike that started a small fire accessed down a mine road at about 6600 Sunshine Canyon Drive. We were lucky that it didn't climb the hill. As usual, when the weather cooperates, firefighters have a decent chance to put out a fire. I visited it later via mountain bike to make sure it was not springing

back to life.

How about training? It was intermittent, at best. There weren't many active firefighters, although "active" wasn't really a defined term. If you responded to a fire, you could claim to be active. If you showed up often enough, the chief would probably try to get you to take a pager home. I volunteered for the fire brigade at work, and got regular training there to refresh the Firefighter I & II course I took at the Boulder County Fire Training Center, and didn't feel too bad about my own level of training. We did practice getting the trucks to pump occasionally.

The trucks did become an issue. We bought the truck chassis that eventually became 4502 from the Pine Brook Hills Fire District after they decided it didn't have enough power to be a 1000 gallon tanker. We sold the Reo as an antique, and the Jeep to a collector, unloaded the pickup, and bought the present-day 4531 brush truck. We bought an old (1970s) Ford from the Elk Creek Fire District (through Ernie Williams as an intermediary) to get us by until we could get the truck chassis built up into a truck with a pump and tank and cabinets. Fire Chief Jim Stolberg and Fire Marshall Jim Burch were pretty central to these efforts and the effort to plant cisterns around the district so there would be some water available for fighting fires. From the one cistern at Fire Station #1, which is older than my memories, we have expanded to have six other fire district cisterns, in addition to the huge cistern at Fire Station #2, so we now have about 200,000 gallons of water just waiting to be used on a fire.

**Comments or submissions are always welcome!! —**

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