



The Sunshine Fire Protection District Newsletter

Letter from the Chief By Chief Steve Waltman

On the ballot this November will be an issue critical for the continuation of our fire department. Our primary source of funding to operate the department comes from property taxes, and we need you to vote to keep the taxes as they have been by passing issue 5A. Currently, our tax rate is comparable to those of Boulder Mountain to the north of us, and Fourmile to the south. Without 5A, our tax revenue will be cut approximately in half, and we would not be able to maintain our current level of service and equipment.

Your fire department is an all-volunteer group of community members who work to provide first response emergency services for our district. We respond to emergency calls, train, and maintain the trucks, equipment, and facilities. I want to recognize several volunteers whose contributions to the department go beyond responding to calls and attending trainings. Deputy Chief Henry Ballard helps with everything. Fire Marshal Bruce Honeyman, in addition to his duties of ensuring that new

**As of September 4, 2014
SFPD has participated in 39
calls in 2014.**

Structural & wild land fire – 14

Vehicle & Bike Accident – 7

Medical – 6

Search & Rescue – 6

Automatic Smoke Alarm - 6

construction is safe from a fire perspective, has taken the lead in creating and updating our policies and procedures. Truck Maintenance Officer Michael Schmitt is one of our most active members as he works to repair our aging trucks. Training Officer Caleb Sevan plans and organizes our trainings and coordinates with Fourmile and Gold Hill, our training partners. New Member Training Officer Rick Lansky guides our new members through the application process and provided orientation training for them. Communication Officer Peter Beresford keeps our pagers and radios programmed and repaired. Medical Officer Lin Ballard keeps our medical equipment repaired and ensures that our medical supplies are

current. Officer Eric Bader handles the recordkeeping for our members' wildland firefighting certifications and also our agreements with the state for responding to major fires. Former Board of Directors member Jen Lansky has been ensuring that records of our calls are complete, and she is the one who made this newsletter happen. Please join me in thanking these people for their service when you see them.

And now a reminder: While we have been fortunate to have a cool, and more importantly, wet summer, Colorado's big fires have been wind driven, and we are heading into 'wind season'. Having had a catastrophic fire four years ago does not mean we could not have another one, and the wet summer has given us tall grasses and plenty of weeds. Mowing or weed whacking the vegetation around your house could make a big difference if we have another wildfire.

Stay safe, but don't hesitate to call us when you need us!

Chief Steve Waltman

Fire Marshal's Letter - Water, water, not everywhere

by Fire Marshal Bruce Honeyman

One of the main challenges in using water for fire suppression in rural areas is the availability of water. In Boulder and some County subdivisions, pressurized water distributions systems exist for firefighting purposes. The above ground manifestation of these is the fire hydrant. Typically, a hydrant is located on every city block. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has a standard (NFPA 291) for marking fire hydrants according to their flow: blue (1,500 gallons per minute or more); green (1,000 – 1,499 gpm); orange (500 – 999 gpm); red (< 500 gpm). Sometimes the outlet ports are painted to reflect the hydrant's pressure. Not all cities abide by these conventions and it is common for neighborhoods to paint hydrants to look 'cute'. Because we are off the city's water distribution grid, SFPD approaches the water problem from a different angle: we have cached water in a series of cisterns throughout the district. The water pressure comes from the pumps on our fire trucks and the distribution system consists of the long 'hose lays' that we set up to help move the water to where we need it.

The cistern project has been a long-time effort. Jim Burch, my

predecessor as Fire Marshal, developed the original plan and we have been implementing it over the last two decades. A pretty good rule of thumb for a completed cistern at today's prices (i.e., a tank and all of the fittings) is about \$1 per gallon, although there is an economy of scale with larger cisterns costing less per gallon than small cisterns.

Other Front Range fire districts have similar water supply problems. Boulder Mountain Fire Protection District, our neighbor to the North, is a bit unusual because it also has a water district (with a large water reservoir) with a number of pressurized hydrants. Four Mile Fire Protection District has cisterns but also 'dry hydrants' that can tap into Four Mile Creek if there is enough flow.

So, how have we developed the water supply in Sunshine? District cisterns are funded in two primary ways: through the 'cistern fund' or through our general operating and maintenance funds.

What is the 'cistern fund'? When a new residence is built, the owner (or contractor) is required to develop a water supply plan. This requirement comes through Boulder County's Building and

Inspection Services Division¹. This can mean either an on-site cistern or a contribution to the 'cistern fund' of the District. In my nearly 15 years as Fire Marshal, the County, who oversees Site Plan Reviews, has not once required an on-site cistern, instead recommending the contribution to the cistern fund. About ten years ago, the District's Board passed a resolution stating that the cistern contribution should be scaled to the floor area of the new construction (the County recommends a flat fee). The minimum District contribution is \$2,500 and then it increases with home size (a 5,000 sq. ft. construction requires a \$4,000 contribution). The cistern contribution makes sense for constructions with relatively easy access for our water supply engines and 'near' a District cistern. However, the recommendation that takes precedence is that of our District. The District can also recommend an on-site cistern in lieu of the contribution and we are increasingly taking this path.

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¹ Use your web browser to go to Boulder County website at <http://www.bouldercounty.org/> and then type 'fire hydrant approval form' in the search box.

Fire Marshal's Letter

Water, Water not everywhere – Continued from Page 2

If an on-site cistern is recommended, the minimum size is 5,000 gal. Why did we conclude this size as a minimum? Because of the dearth of water in the District and the sometimes-relative remoteness of a home, our best opportunity for suppressing a fire is to catch it early (a wooden-frame structure fire doubles in size approximately every 7 minutes) with sufficient water to 'knock' it down. Our largest truck carries 1,000 gallons of water. Cisterns in our District are accessed through 'dry hydrants' or standpipes. Thus, we get water from a cistern by 'drafting' or sucking the water out of the cistern—the standpipe acting as a sort of straw. For new cisterns we require connections for 2 in. and 6 in. 'hard suction' hoses. Setting up a draft takes a bit of time so the water supply needs to be of sufficient size to make the effort worthwhile. As such, the combination of the need for sufficient water for early fire suppression and the effort to connect to a dry hydrant and get water out of the cistern led us to the minimum on-site cistern size of 5,000 gal. On occasion, depending on the home size and location, we have required much larger on-site cisterns (e.g., up to 30,000 gal.). All cisterns, fittings, etc., must meet NFPA requirements for water supplies

for rural firefighting (NFPA 1142; NFPA 22).

Our policy is that a new 'private' cistern will be installed and filled with water by the owner (in lieu of the cistern contribution). If, at any time after the initial filling, the District uses the water then we will replace it. Also, and critically, once a cistern is put into service as part of our agreement with the owner for him or her to meet the County's water supply criteria, the cistern must remain 'in service' (i.e., fittings are in good working order; water in the tank; access unimpeded) as long as the residence is occupied. Note that even if a water supply is private we, by law, can access it during an emergency.

We currently have nearly 200,000 gallons of water in public cisterns in the District, with the cisterns spaced about a mile apart (the approximate addresses are 7000, 5880, 5400, 4500 and 3300 Sunshine Canyon Drive, and 300 and 1300 County Road 83). Station #2 at 5880 Sunshine has a 115,000 gallon cistern in its foundation! Additionally, a number of swimming pools are available for emergency water supply, but mostly during the summer.

Finally, since January 2013, the County has required that all new residential construction, irrespective of size, have a

residential fire suppression system. Sprinkler systems save lives! We also require fire department connections to be installed as part of the sprinkler construction. These connections allow us to connect our fire engines to the sprinkler system to continue water flow after the sprinkler system tank is exhausted.

So, the next time you drive up or down Sunshine, check out the cisterns and think about the decades' long effort that it has taken to develop our water supply system.

Bruce D. Honeyman,
Fire Marshal

Mitigation Tip:

Seal Off Openings

Put metal screens over vents and other openings to block embers. Screens with gaps no bigger than one-eighth inch can stop flying embers from getting through vents leading to fires starting in crawl spaces and attics.

CWPP Committee Update
By Abby Silver

SIGN PROJECT – Summer has proven to be a busy time for all of our CWPP committee members resulting in less progress than hoped. The CWPP is looking for a volunteer to manage the sign replacement project and we need YOU! Please contact Deirdre Damron (303)544-0273 if you are available to help.

COMMUNITY CHIPPING PROJECT – Due to the reduced beetle threat, we were able to offer chipping in spring 2014. As in the past, there was no cost to the homeowners, 43 of whom participated. This project was funded by our mitigation taxes (50%) with an equal match provided by Boulder County's chipping grant. Thanks to all who participated!

FUEL BREAK WORK - 2014 – In the spring, thinning was begun along Sunshine Canyon Drive from the area around Bald Mountain down to the bottom of the district. In July and August a similar project

was completed along the length of Whispering Pines. Completion of the work along the lower part of SCD is scheduled for completion by mid-September.

FALL CHIPPING:

Fall is around the corner so mark your calendar for fall chipping: October 6-10. More information will be emailed to everyone closer to the time.

D-SPACE PROJECT – We initiated a new program last year, funded in part by a WFRR grant. Homeowners who sign up for this program will receive an assessment of their defensible space (within 150 feet of their home) and be reimbursed 50% for any forestry mitigation that they contract for based on that assessment. We have partnered with local foresters Eric Bader of Boulder Outdoor Center and Zach Littlefield of Four Mile Mitigation to perform these services.

Limited funds are still available, so folks who are interested should contact Alan Kirton (ajkirton@ionsky.com) for more information.

FUTURE PLANS - 2015: We have applied for another round of matching grants from the CO Dept of Natural Resources under their Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant program. If granted, the funding has been designated to: continue offering the spring and fall chipping events; do shaded fuel break maintenance (along the road) from miles 5.6 to 7.0 on Sunshine Canyon Drive; and do mitigation work along the shared driveway at 4111 SCD.

Please feel free to contact me with any input or project suggestions. Our infrequent meetings are announced by email. All are welcome!

Abby Silver
CWPP Committee Chair
abberoo@msn.com

Sunshine Fire Protection District's Annual COMMUNITY FEST

Saturday, September 27, 2014
4 to 8 p.m. at Station #2

If you are available to help with this event or would like to donate an item to be auctioned, please contact Beth Byerlein c 303-638-8188 h 303-409-9550 beth.byerlein@gmail.com Johanna Hurley at 303-440-7227 or johanna.hurley@gmail.com or Deirdre Damron deirdre_damron@hotmail.com (303)544-0273.

SFPD's November Ballot Question 5A

By SFPD's Board of Directors

The purpose of Ballot Issue 5A is to keep the Sunshine Fire Protection District's total mill levy equal to what it has been since 2009 and to keep the Fire Department's portion of the mill levy equal to what it has been since 2000.

The Sunshine Fire Protection District provides structural and wildland fire suppression, emergency medical response, operations level hazardous materials response and search and rescue. SFPD also provides an ongoing wildland fire mitigation program. In 2000, the District's residents passed a 4.000 mill tax increase to run for 15 years in order to fund capital projects and equipment modernization. The last year for receiving tax income from this mill levy is 2015. The SFPD's current mill levies include a General Operating levy of 4.480 mills, the Capital Projects levy of 4.000 mills and a Wildland Fire Mitigation levy of 3.560 mills; resulting in a total District mill levy of 12.04 mills. The Fire Department's portion of the mill levy is 8.480 mills. Ballot Issue 5A will increase the General Operating levy by 4.000 mills at the same time the Capital Projects levy of 4.000 mills ends in 2015. The District's total mill levy of 12.04 mills will not change. If Ballot Issue 5A does not pass, the ending of the Capital Projects levy of 4.000 mills in 2015 will mean that the District's levy for supporting the Fire Department's operations, maintenance and capital improvements will drop from 8.480 mills to 4.480 mills; resulting in a 47% reduction in tax revenues.

Capital replacement is an ongoing process for fire departments. Many capital items have a mandated service life based on changing standards and normal wear. The service life of fire engines is often governed by the increased maintenance costs to support the older equipment. SFPD used the Capital Projects mill levy to purchase two new fire engines, but is now faced with having to replace another aging fire engine and firefighter's Personal Protective Equipment. The current PPE are well past their mandated service life and are a safety hazard for SFPD firefighters. If Ballot Issue 5A is not passed, the District will not be able to replace this capital equipment or meet future capital needs. The 2010 Fourmile Canyon Fire severely impacted SFPD's tax revenue. Compared to 2010 tax revenues, the District's tax revenues were down 6% in 2011, 47% in 2012, 37% in 2013 and 21% in 2014. In the last four years the loss of tax revenue has forced SFPD to balance paying for operating and maintenance expenses versus funding capital needs. Continuing the tax revenue for capital spending and moving it to be part of the District's general operating funds will give the District the ability to meet its current and future operating and capital needs. Passing Ballot Issue 5A will allow us to do that without increasing the District's total mill levy.

Ballot Question: BALLOT QUESTION 5A

SHALL SUNSHINE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT TAXES BE INCREASED \$50,000 (FIRST FULL FISCAL YEAR DOLLAR INCREASE) ANNUALLY, COMMENCING JANUARY 1, 2015, BY INCREASING ITS EXISTING GENERAL OPERATING PROPERTY TAX BY 4.000 MILLS, SAID TAX INCREASE TO COINCIDE WITH THE END OF THE DISTRICT'S CURRENT 4.000 MILLS CAPITAL PROJECTS PROPERTY TAX, TO BE USED BY THE DISTRICT FOR GENERAL OPERATIONS, MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, AND SHALL THE REVENUE FROM SUCH TAXES, AND INVESTMENT INCOME THEREON, CONSTITUTE A VOTER APPROVED EXCEPTION TO THE REVENUE AND SPENDING LIMITS OF ARTICLE X, SECTION 20 OF THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION, THE 5.5% PROPERTY TAX LIMITATION OF SECTION 29-1-301, COLORADO REVISED STATUTES, OR ANY OTHER LAW, AND WITHOUT LIMITING, IN ANY YEAR, THE AMOUNT OF OTHER REVENUE THE DISTRICT MAY COLLECT AND SPEND?

Fall Weed Management
 By Steve Sauer - Boulder County Weed Coordinator

The Four Mile fire of 2010 changed the landscape in many ways. Since then we have noticed recovery of grasses occurring but also noxious weeds have reared their ugly heads. It seems that when major disturbances take place weeds are sometimes the first plant to show up. One of the reasons this happens is that some weeds seed can stay viable in the soil for 80-100 years. Somewhat of a scary thought. With fall fast approaching you might think it is not a great time for weed control, but for some it can be the best. Before doing any weed control make sure that you know what weeds you have. If you're not sure consult with your county weed coordinator or your local Colorado State Extension agent. Once the plant has been identified, then management strategies can be determined. Following are some of the noxious weed species we have found in the burn area.

With all of the moisture we have had this year it seems that the weeds are doing very well. Some of the winter annual weeds such as cheatgrass are beginning to germinate. Musk Thistle, Diffuse Knapweed, and Common Mullen are biennials which produce a rosette the first year and flower the second. Canada Thistle, Dalmatian Toadflax, Yellow Toadflax and Leafy Spurge are all perennial plants, which mean they last for more than two years. Many of the perennials reproduce from both seed and root, making them very hard to control mechanically.

Downy brome - Cheatgrass: Mechanical

Tillage, mowing and grazing have been proven to help reduce plant populations once established. The key to effective control is to prevent seed production and/or spread.



There may be some other weed species in the Four Mile area but these would be the ones to be concerned with. Control measures vary greatly and are determined by several factors. The two main types of control measures are mechanical (hand pulling or hand digging) and chemical control. This is a choice that each individual homeowner must make. Each has their obvious advantages and disadvantages. I would be happy to discuss these types of strategies of controlling weeds with you and invite you to e-mail me at ssauer@bouldercounty.org or call 303-678-6110 with any questions you may have. I would also be available to make a site visit if that would be of help.

Common Mullen: Mechanical

Hand pull or dig when soil is moist, prior to flowering and seed production can be effective. If flowers are present, bag specimens carefully so as not to scatter any potential seeds. The key to effective control is to prevent seed production and/or spread.



The Colorado Department of Agriculture has fact sheets on noxious weeds in Colorado. These can help in identification of weeds and also talks about control measures. Their website is www.colorado.gov/ag2. Click on conservation and that will take you to the noxious weeds section where the fact sheets are located. For more information on a species be sure to look at the fact sheet. As I mentioned before please feel free to contact me with any questions that you might have.

² The more direct link to the noxious weed section is http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/ag_Conservation/CBON/1251618874438

SFPD OFFICERS

Chief - Steve Waltman
(303) 786-9414
chief@sunshine-fpd.org

Deputy Chief - Henry Ballard
(303) 449-8619
deputy-chief@sunshine-fpd.org

Fire Marshal - Bruce Honeyman
(303) 704-0162
honeyman@stanfordalumni.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President - Deirdre Damron
(303) 544-0273
deirdre_damron@hotmail.com

Secretary – Alan Kirton
ajkirton@ionsky.com

Treasure - Sam Mishkin
(914) 525-9464
sammishkin@gmail.com

Jim Peacock
jim@mythosandcompany.com

Eugene (Gene) Fischer
genefischer@yahoo.com

**COMMUNITY WILDFIRE
PROTECTION PLAN (CWPP)
COMMITTEE**

CWPP Chair - Abby Silver
(303) 442-1253 abberoo@msn.com

Website: www.sunshine-fpd.org

**The Sunshine
Recovery**

Homes Rebuilt/under
construction on
property destroyed
30

New Home sites:
2

Home destroyed 57

**Please welcome our newest
SFPD Fire Fighters:**

Dave Cleveland
John Hartsoe
Jo Yaptengco

**Sunshine School House
Art, Craft and Bake Fair:
October 18th and 19th**

Any one interested in
participating, volunteering, or
donating baked goods should
contact Janice Wheeler
(hgtvgal@aol.com) or Dee
Spencer (deefish7@gmail.com)

Calendar

September:

- 9 SFPD Board Meeting 7:30 p.m. @ station 1
- 13 Forcible Entry 8:30 a.m. –12p.m. @ Training Center
- 25 Interior Attack Classroom 7 p.m. – 10 p.m. @station #1
- 27 SFPD Community Fest 4 p.m. – 8 p.m. @station #2

October:

- 11 Live Burn: Burn Trailer 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m. @ Station 2
- 14 SFPD Board Meeting 7:30 p.m. @ Station 1
- 18 Sunshine Art & Craft Fair time 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
@ The Sunshine School house
- 19 Sunshine Art & Craft Fair time 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
@ The Sunshine School house
- 23 Flood Classroom 7-10 p.m. TBD

November:

- 8 Tyroliean Rescue 8:30 a.m. -12 p.m. @ TBD
- 11 SFPD Board Meeting 7:30 p.m. @Station 1
- 20 Car Fire Class 7 p.m. – 10 p.m.@ Gold Hill

Comments or suggestions for next newsletter contact: Jennifer
Lansky at 303.442.2709 or jen@lansky.cc