



The Sunshine Fire Protection District Newsletter

Letter from the Chief By Chief Steve Waltman

It has been over a year since we've managed to put out a newsletter. I sincerely hope that we do better than one-newsletter-per major disaster in the future! Today I'm going to fill you in on our response to the flood, and briefly mention our progress in preparing our community for another wildfire.

During the flood, Sunshine FPD's volunteers donated over 640 hours of their time. Our first priority was to ensure that all of our residents were safe. Fortunately, the same geographic factors that contributed to the destruction of so many homes in our community during the Four Mile Canyon Fire, contributed to our being

Mitigation Tip:

Vegetation should be mowed/weed-whacked to six inches or less within 30 feet of your home. Also doing this along the road and your driveway will provide wider firebreaks. Vegetation can act as a ladder fuel and ignite larger fuel, these can then throw burning embers and pose an even larger threat.

comparatively unscathed during the flood. Once we had confirmed that our residents were safe, we assisted our neighboring districts in finding and evacuating their residents. You may have seen or used the temporary bridge we installed over the washout on County Road 83. We also arranged for temporary repairs to County Road 83 and Whispering Pines, to restore access to those homes cut off by the washouts. As soon as those repairs were in place, we used them for a medical evacuation of one of our residents.

We are expecting a check from FEMA to cover our costs during the flood, but the administrative wheels turn slowly.

Looking forward, we hope to repair the flood damage to the escape route from the end of County Road 83 up to Mine Lane in case some future incident makes the main canyon road impassable.

Also, as you may have noticed, during extended power outages we lose phone service and DSL-based internet after about two days. We have discussed this with CenturyLink, and are preparing to

use one of our generators to prevent this from happening during future outages.

An important part of the department's mission of protecting our residents and community is planning and preparing before emergencies.

Alan Kirton did most of the work to get significant Community Wildfire Protection Plan grants to pay for creating a defensible space wildfire barrier around homes, and to create a fuel break along Sunshine Canyon. In addition, Boulder County's mitigation program, although it offers fewer dollars to each resident than Sunshine's CWPP program, is able to pay for some things our grant cannot, such as improvements to structures to make them more fire resistant.

Our volunteers do everything the fire department requires. Keeping the department running requires much more than just training and responding to calls, so please consider volunteering even if responding to emergencies is not for you.

Fire Marshal's Letter - 2014's 'To Do' List for Safety

by Fire Marshal Bruce Honeyman

Spring is just around the corner! It's hard to believe when it is 15 deg. F. outside as it is this morning as I write this newsletter article. Never-the-less, it's time to start thinking about 'uncovering' your home from its winter hibernation. Below is a list of things to consider. Remember, if you have questions about anything related to fire safety, please contact me (303-449-6685).

Over the years, my thoughts about defensible space have changed considerably. There is no doubt that modern building codes, particularly those parts tailored to homes in the urban / wildland interface, make homes more safe from fire. Recently, District homeowners received information packets from Wildfire Partners containing two brochures: 1) *Wildfire Home Assessment and Checklist* from the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety; and 2) the Colorado State Forest Service publication *Protecting Your Home From Wildfire* (FIRE 2012-1).

Both contain plenty of information for your consideration. However, as you read though defensible space information, ask yourself the following question: if no firefighting resources can reach my home (and this is likely in a large fire that overwhelms our ability to respond), can my home survive unattended? **In other words: is my home stand-alone safe?**

Some other things to think about for wildland fire mitigation:

- If the trees closest to your home ignite, will the radiant heat be sufficient to ignite your home? The answer can be complex and depends on multiple factors including window type, your siding and so on.
- Have bushes and forest litter crept back over the winter; is it time to widen the zone of thinned vegetation; have new ladder fuels arrived?
- Keep roofs clear of debris: all of those pine needles that accumulate over the winter need to be cleaned from gutters.
- Check to see if roof shingles blew off during the winter Chinook winds: these need to be replaced.
- Enclose porch floors, roofs and attic openings (this will help keep wind-blown firebrands from getting into your home).
- Dispose of slash from thinning. There are a few remaining months to do this before the snows go. Be sure to follow the SFPD and County guidelines for burning.
- Don't park vehicles in tall, dry grass: hot mufflers can start fires.
- Stack firewood uphill or on a contour and at least 15 feet away from buildings.

- Get rid of trash that accumulated over the winter.

Ideas for general emergency preparedness:

- If you are new to the District, let us know! We are a small District and would like to know about our neighbors' needs and concerns. We're here to serve you.
- If you have a buried propane tank, provide us with a means of locating it when the access to the tank is under snow (e.g., a flag sticking up several feet).
- If you have a sprinkler system for your house, please let us know if you have a fire department connection and its location. If you don't know if you have such a connection, call me and I'll check it out for you.
- Put emergency contact and medical information in a location that is easy for firefighters and emergency medical personnel to find. Pharmacies sell plastic information holders, usually emblazoned with a big red cross, that you can attach to the refrigerator door. If you have a living will or Do Not Resuscitate Orders (DNR), make sure that they are easy to find by emergency responders. Good locations include the refrigerator door, as described

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Fire Marshal's Letter

2014's 'To Do' List for Safety – Continued from Page 2

above, or with your collection of medications.

- Get a fireproof safe for critical personnel information or put the documents in a safety deposit box at one of the local banks. Our 'fireproof' safe was destroyed in the Four Mile Fire, so beware!
- Think about those items that are precious to you (e.g., family photographs) and keep them organized for quick and easy access if you need to quickly evacuate your home. In an emergency, you may have only a few minutes to gather belongings. Scanning photos is relatively inexpensive and there are many businesses in town that will create digital copies for you to put in a safe-deposit box.
- Make sure that emergency responders can locate your house: your fire department address marker (the green plastic strips) should be in good shape and visible from the road. Many seem to have blown down during the severe winds of the last few months. If you need a new one, or are unsure if your current marker is adequate for the task, contact me. Remember that some of our mutual and automatic aid responders (e.g., AMR and adjacent fire districts) may not be as familiar with our District as we are.
- Trim branches along your driveway to facilitate moving our

equipment to your home (our largest pumper, 4501, is 9 feet wide and 11 feet tall).

- Develop a family evacuation plan. Agree upon a rendezvous point, perhaps at a friend's house in town. Practice family fire drills: know the best exits from your home.
- Check the batteries on your smoke detectors. Smoke detectors save lives! Get a CO (carbon monoxide) detector, too.
- If you have a cistern for emergency water or a fire department connection for your swimming pool, make sure that the fittings are in order and that the cistern has water.
- If you are going away on vacation, try to remember to park vehicles away from likely routes of emergency access. If you have a turnaround at your home, leave it free of vehicles so that we don't need to back down your driveway when we leave.
- Make sure that your fire extinguisher is charged and is located for easy access. A good place for an extinguisher is just outside the kitchen.
- Extinguishers need to be serviced yearly! If you don't know the proper way to use an extinguisher, contact us and we'll be glad to show you.

- Have flashlights with fresh batteries at convenient locations in your home.

- If you have a gate on your driveway, make sure that we are up-to-date on the access code.

- Clean out your garage and storage areas!

- Properly dispose of hazardous materials.

- Have your fireplace chimney inspected and cleaned.

Finally, get an estimate of the actual costs to replace your home in the event of a complete loss and find an insurance company that will insure it for that value. Don't rely on your insurance representative to provide you with that number: find a trusted local contractor and have him or her write up an estimate.

Furthermore, document all coverage negotiations with your agent through written requests and have him or her respond in kind. Remember, two thirds of homeowners who lost homes in CA and CO fires were underinsured. If you have any questions about emergency preparedness, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Have a safe and fun summer!

Bruce Honeyman,

Fire Marshal
(303-449-6685)

CWPP Committee Update By Abby Silver

The CWPP committee has been very active in the past year. Thanks to our grant-writing superhero Alan Kirton, we have applied for and received a number of grants recently that have contributed greatly to accomplishing a number of projects in 2013. We have also been designated recently as a FireWise Community. Essentially, we have gained national recognition for our fire mitigation efforts. Here is a summary of the projects that were completed in 2013 and are in the pipeline for the coming year:

CWPP DOCUMENT UPDATE – A group consisting of some authors of the original CWPP document plus some new members met throughout 2013 to update the document. This was scheduled, as it had been 5 years since the original was written. Much has changed, due both to the fire and to the projects our community has carried out since 2008. An email went out to the community in January 2014, summarizing the changes and linking to the full current version of the CWPP document: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/wkq43ci43zh7wms/Ow--0uep3j>

SIGN PROJECT – In 2013 Henry Ballard spearheaded a volunteer effort to place a reflective address sign at every junction in our district. Unfortunately, a number of these signs have been blown down by the raging winds that seem to be our new normal weather. The CWPP committee will be dealing with this once the ground has unfrozen and new posts can be installed more easily. Please try to safeguard your

sign until then, as a lot of time and expense went into the sign and lettering. We will send out an email with further info/instructions in a few months.

The CWPP committee will be hosting a community meeting to share the CWPP document updates and discuss future mitigation projects.

When: Tuesday

March 25, 7-8:30 PM

Where: Station 1, CR83

SCD SHADED FUEL BREAK PROJECT – In 2013 we continued thinning along our roadways from Sunshine Canyon Drive near the CR83 junction to a bit east of the 4 mile marker. In 2014, we plan to continue thinning along SCD to the bottom of our district. This two-part project is partially funded by a state sponsored WFRR grant, which pays for half of the cutting and chipping while the CWPP fund pays 40% and the landowner the remaining 10% (as per past similar projects).

OTHER FUEL BREAK WORK: 2014 – We have currently applied for two more grants, which we hope will fund continued work on shaded fuel breaks and maintenance of the work in the “completed” fuel breaks. After SCD, we plan to tackle thinning along Whispering Pines and CR83. These grant applications include language that

will allow us to maintain the work that has already been done along the community roads. The maintenance work will allow us to clean up hazard trees that have resulted from the death or blow-down of trees in the existing shaded fuel break zones. Those projects will remain on the table, but may take more time, if neither of our latest round (2014) of grant applications is successful.

COMMUNITY CHIPPING PROJECT – We continued the popular community-chipping project in 2013, with 45 property owners participating at no cost. This project was also 50% funded by a WFRR grant, with the other 50% being paid by the SFPD’s CWPP fund. We still have half of the grant funding remaining for a similar project that will be offered in the fall of 2014. More information will be sent by email in late August 2014.

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

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SFPD and Neighboring Department Collaboration

Sunshine FPD and the Sunshine firefighters have been cooperating with our neighboring districts for years, but lately, we have gotten a bit more serious. Not only do we have regular joint trainings and respond to many calls in neighboring districts, we have been having discussions about ways to make all three districts (Sunshine, 4-Mile and Gold Hill) more efficient. There have been discussions with people in other districts that have merged in recent years: Rocky Mountain

Fire used to be Cherryvale and Superior – Eldorado Springs, and Boulder Mountain Fire District used to be Boulder Heights and Pineview. Both of these mergers have been success stories. We want to understand what might be gained from cooperating, whether that means merging, cooperating to form a Fire Authority, which is a common halfway measure, or just planning, buying, practicing, and working together, which would require no legal

maneuvering at all. There has been discussion of giving administrative work to an hourly contract employee, to take some of the load off of the people who end up doing all the work. If a merger were to occur, it would be put to a vote and all residents of Sunshine would have a say in the matter. We'll keep the communities informed as we find new ways to cooperate.

Henry Ballard,
Deputy Chief

SFPD Mill Levy Awareness

- On Nov. 7, 2000 the residents of SFPD voted to increase the District taxes by 4.0 mills annually for 15 years to fund capital projects and equipment acquisitions. This capital improvement mill levy expires in 2014.
- In the years since the Fourmile Canyon Fire the District has seen tax revenues decline by 6% in 2010, 47% in 2011, 40% in 2012, 37% in 2013 and 21% in 2014 as compared to 2009 tax revenues. Projections by the SFPD Board show that tax revenues will not recover to 2009 values through 2017 and beyond. SFPD has had to draw on the capital replacement and reserves in order to meet operating expenses during these years of reduced tax revenue.
- Since 2006, SFPD has seen the general, administration, and operational expenses increased 23%.
- The SFPD Board is now considering a 2014 Ballot Initiative that will allow SFPD to meet operating expenses in the short term and set aside money to fund capital replacement in the long term.
- A number of community meetings will be planned for the summer to provide information on this ballot initiative and to gather feedback from the community.

CWPP Committee Update

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with local foresters Eric Bader of Boulder Outdoor Center and Zach Littlefield of FourMile Mitigation to perform these services. There are limited funds still available, so folks who are interested should contact Alan Kirton (ajkirton@ionsky.com) for more information.

The CWPP committee is a volunteer group of neighbors who meet to discuss, plan, and execute projects designed to make our community safer in the event of wildfire.

Your tax dollars support this work. We encourage you as community members to share any ideas you may have regarding projects and priorities. We meet infrequently, but all meetings are publicized and everyone is encouraged to attend. Please feel free to contact me with any input.

Abby Silver
CWPP Committee Chair
abberoo@msn.com

SFPD OFFICERS

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Fire Marshal - Bruce Honeyman
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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
21

Homes in Progress
8

Board of Director Election Update:

The deadline for the Board of Director self-nomination has expired. With only one candidate submitting a self-nomination form, the election will be canceled. Please welcome Alan Kirton to the Sunshine Fire Protection District Board of Directors effective May 13, 2014.

As a community lets thank all of our volunteers from those who provide food for training, provide truck maintenance, spend time on the board, to our first responders on the front line. Below are a few new SFPD fire fighters to add to your thank you list.

New SFPD Fire Fighters:

- Pavel Bouska
- Steve Dedrick
- Bonnie Gibbons
- Dylan Hall
- Alex Honeyman
- Alan Kirton
- Wilder Lavington
- Natalie Littlefield
- Fred Marmsater
- Mara Pawlowski
- Chad St. Onge

And returning Fire Fighters:

- Peter Beresford
- Bruce Honeyman

Calendar

March:

- 25 CWPP community Mt., 7-8:30 p.m. @ Station 1
- 27 WUI/ICS training 7-10 p.m., @ Station 1

April:

- 8 SFPD Board Meeting 7:30 p.m. @ Station 1
- 12 Wildland Refresher 8 a.m.-5 p.m. @ Station 1
- 24 Ventilation Training 7-10 p.m. TBD

May:

- 9 Live Burn Training 8:30 a.m. -12 p.m. @ Training Center
- 13 SFPD Board Meeting 7:30 p.m. @Station 1
- 22 Highway Safety Training 7 p.m. @ TBD