



# The Sunshine Fire Protection District Newsletter

## Letter from the Chief By Michael Schmitt

The New Year has been here for a while now and gives us a chance to reflect on the last year and prepare for the current wildfire season. We already had two significant fires this year, the Wagonwheel Gap Fire in our neighboring district (Boulder Mountain Fire Authority/Pine Brook Hills) as well as the Rogers fire between Lyons and Longmont which had property as well as livestock losses to claim. One of our engines with George Woodward, Alan Kirton and Alex Honeyman responded to this fire. It was reported to me that they saved one house and further represented our district quite professionally.

We get very busy during larger events such as the aforementioned fires, even if they are not in our district. To stay updated, please consider visiting the website ([www.boulderoem.com](http://www.boulderoem.com), click on "Emergency Status") for the Boulder Office of Emergency Management or add their Twitter account "@BoulderOEM" to your feed. Even if you are not big on social media, like myself, you can have a Twitter account just for this

purpose. They are excellent at continuously updating the status of a larger incident on their feed, and the Boulder Sheriff Information Line is 303-441-4300 and gets updated every 15 minutes.

We generally do not have the time to return calls or emails during these events as we are trying to coordinate our response with the County and neighboring districts. Additionally, as many of you already know, you can sign up for the Emergency Notification

System for alerts in your area. If you have an emergency of course dial 9-1-1.

With spring being around the corner, I personally feel that these fires are a reminder to pass on to our residents to prepare your home and property. At this point I am sure everyone has noticed how dry it has been.

We will most likely still get a few more snow storms with decent accumulation, but the times in between can be expected to be warm, dry and windy. It is now, before an incident, that you want to start cutting the grasses around your house and along the driveway to six inches or less, clean out gutters, and ensure that your firewood pile is at least 30 feet away (and uphill) from your house. That being the bare minimum amount of preparation combined with proper fire mitigation already in place.

**In 2016, 25 SFPD Firefighters participated in a record breaking 70 calls.**

Medical – 27

Structural, car, & wildland fire/smoke reports – 18

Vehicle & Bike Accident – 10

Search & Rescue – 1

Hazardous Conditions - 2

Automatic Smoke Alarm - 9

Water Rescue/Flooding - 3

Continued on Page 3

## CWPP Committee Update - By Abby Silver

Our CWPP planning committee got together on February 23 to review our 2016 projects and map out a list of future priorities. A giant thanks to Boulder County, the Colorado State Forest Service, and the State of Colorado for partnering with us and providing grant funding to help finance our mitigation efforts!

### A Look Back at 2016:

- We have completed the thinning along the shared driveway at 4300 SCD. The slash burning portion will be completed in the winter/spring of 2017.
- Our two chipping events were well received as always. 31 households participated in the Spring event, and 25 in the Fall event with a total of 156 cubic yards of material chipped.
- We planned and signed up homeowners for SFPD's first CWPP-sponsored slash burn project.

### A Look Ahead at 2017:

- We will again be offering Spring (May 29- June 2, 2017) and Fall (October 23-27, 2017) chipping. Residents will be contacted about 6 weeks prior and encouraged to sign up by email (as usual).
- We have had about 35 homeowners with over 500 slash piles sign up for that program. Burning will take place over the winter/spring of 2017 and continue into the fall2017/winter2018 burn season as needed. With this much work, residents should expect some burn activity to occur anytime the conditions are conducive.
- Sign project maintenance: We will get on this once the ground softens up, most likely in late May. Please contact Abby Silver (abberoo@msn.com) or Henry Ballard (deputy-chief@sunshine-fpd.org) if your post is no longer upright and/or your sign has disappeared.

**Save the Date:** Spring Community Chipping

May 29 - June 2, 2017

- SFPD will continue partnering with Boulder Mountain FPD and Fourmile FPD for ongoing maintenance along our shared egress routes. This mostly includes cutting down trees and hazard trees within 30 feet of the roadways. This is a particular issue along the Mine Lane Egress Route due to the large number of burn trees still present.

- Maintenance/repair will take place on the hydrant outside Station 1 on CR83.

### Long-Range Planning: 2017 and Beyond:

- Access to water is always of paramount importance in firefighting efforts, and SFPD has been focused on boosting our Emergency Water Sources (as discussed in section 8.7 of our 2013 CWPP). We are in the planning stages for three such projects. We will get engineering input and gather bids and permits (2017) with an eye towards implementation in 2018.
- The largest and most complex of these projects will be the addition of a pressurized (gravity fed) hydrant along CR83 near the intersection with Misty Vale, fed from the 130,000 gallon cistern at Station 2.
- Water supply is lacking along Whispering Pines, we would like to install a 12,000-30,000 gallon cistern.
- We currently have a cistern at one-mile intervals along Sunshine Canyon Drive, except in the 6000 block. We would like to add a 12,000-30,000 gallon cistern somewhere near 6500 SCD.

For more detailed information including financials, please see the minutes from our CWPP Planning Meetings:

<http://www.sunshine-fpd.org/About/SFPD-CWPP.cfm>. **As ever, please feel free to contact me with any input or project suggestions.** Abby Silver, CWPP Committee Chair: abberoo@msn.com

## Chief's Report

By Michael Schmitt - Continued from Page 1

Consider working with Wildfire Partners ([www.wildfirepartners.org](http://www.wildfirepartners.org)) to get help assessing the mitigation level of your house and property. You can either do the work yourself under their guidance, or contact any of the local companies that specialize in wildfire mitigation. Last year's Cold Springs Fire in Nederland was yet another example of how well good mitigation works. Moreover, please update your family emergency evacuation plan as needed.

We have some changes that may significantly affect us as a fire district. The district's tax income is projected to drop in 2018. This is due to an adjustment in the Residential Assessment Rate which is projected to go from 7.96% to 6.56%, a drop of 18%. The actual drop in the District's tax income will be based on the change to the assessment rate, including changes to home and property valuations. We will be monitoring the effect of these changes as it will directly impact the District's ability to replace fire apparatus and firefighter's personal protective equipment. Depending on the outcome, we will be very appreciative for any additional donations you may be able to offer to offset that shortage when the time comes.

I was thinking about naming a "firefighter of the year" before our Christmas get-together in December. It is really tough to single out just one person because we have some seriously dedicated individuals we are lucky to have as our members. Honestly, all of them fit into that category. As there are so many that I feel are completely deserving, I am compelled to name these individuals for their outstanding commitment to the district, its residents, and visitors. That is not to pass

over the other highly committed people in our department, but these guys are worth their weight in gold when it comes to their reliability and utmost professionalism as responders. Their constant hard work and sacrifice is what allows the fire department to run as well as it does: Rick Lansky, Alan Kirton and Deputy Chief Henry Ballard. Henry is so humble that he may scold me for naming him here... but he has been a member of our department for 30 years! It is safe to say that it is not only the duration he has been with us that deserves an applause, but also the level of integrity and commitment he constantly brings to the table.

In the ten months as Chief, I have learned that the department does not function without these folks as well as the many that operate in the background such as Jen Lansky, Johanna Hurley, Dave Hurley and Deirdre Damron. We could not be effective without you all supporting us. Thank you very much from all firefighters for your dedication to the district.

If you are interested in joining our fire department please let me know. We welcome men and women that want to become active firefighters as well as the equally important support force behind the scenes. You would become part of the fire community and enjoy having an extended family, as we all are at the department.

To all our new residents, welcome to the district. Please feel free to contact me any time you have questions on life up in the canyon, especially when mountain living is new to you.

### Quick Checklist for Fire Readiness:

- Create a 3-5 ft. non-combustible "vegetation free" perimeter around all structures.
- Always keep wildland grass cut to a max height of 6 in. within 30 ft. of all structures.
- Be sure gutters, rooflines, and decks are always clear of pine needles and leaves.
- Stack firewood at least 30 ft. away from home.
- Prepare a "grab and go" disaster supply kit.
- Screen all attic, roof, soffit and foundation vents with 1/8 in. metal screening.
- Prepare an "In Case of Fire" check list. Include things that you want to grab or do if you have a few extra moment before evacuating. **PRINT** this list out in case of power loss.
- Make a family evacuation plan including pet.

## Fire Marshall's Report - Call 911

By Bruce Honeyman

### 'Call 911'

It's 8:30 AM on a weekend morning and the three-day old bagel you're trying to slice seems like wood. All of a sudden the knife slips and the palm of your hand is the next thing the knife sees. There is pain and blood; a lot of it. Direct pressure to the wound doesn't seem to help. Calling '911' seems to be a good idea. To many, the emergency network is just a black box. Someone answers 911 with 'What's your emergency' and after bit someone shows up at your door. However, between the 911 call and the response to your home, a lot of things take place and, depending on the nature of the emergency, the response path may take a number of different forms. The entity answering the '911' phone is Boulder County Dispatch, part of the Boulder County Sheriff Department. Who shows up is more complicated.

Although we are often at the station at 5880 Sunshine Canyon Drive for

training, vehicle maintenance, meetings and so on, the likelihood of some of us being at the station during a 911 call is small, although it does happen. Instead of staffing the station, Sunshine firefighters carry pagers that notify us of a 911 call. For example, the page we received for the Wagonwheel Fire on Feb. 17 looked like this on my digital pager: BCFD170212-001603 FIWILR-Wildland/Grass Fire ADD: 744 Wagonwheel Gap Rd Info: Sees smoke / neighbors backyard Time: 07:35 Units: BM3 BR3 SS3 BCFD02 02/12/17

The first string, BCFD170212-001603, is the identifier of the incident. This says that the fire was the 1603<sup>rd</sup> incident of the year for the County that was logged through the 911 system. Note that this excludes City of Boulder calls, those for Longmont and some others. Other parts of the alpha-numeric text

include the address of the incident (or the address of the person reporting the incident), the time of the call and the units paged. In this case the initial units were Boulder Mountain Fire (BM3), Boulder Rural Fire (BR3), Sunshine Fire (SS3) and the County Fire Crew (BCFD02).

So, why would Sunshine be paged for a call way over on Wagonwheel Gap Rd.? This leads us to the complexity of the response system. Wagonwheel Gap Rd. is part of the Boulder Mountain Fire District. For some types of 'calls' (i.e., incidents), we have an 'auto-aid' agreement with our neighboring districts. This means that, for certain types of calls, when our partnering district gets a 911 call, we are also toned, just like it was in our own district. The auto-aid agreements are part of the

Continued on Page 5



Our dedicated firefighter Alex Honeyman: When a car is not available you ride your bike with a headlight to the fire station.

Photo by Ross Wehner

## Fire Marshall's Report

By Bruce Honeyman - Continued from page 4

quid-pro-quo of response in the County—we help others and they help us. The reality is that no district in Boulder County has the resources to stand alone—we need each other. In the case of Boulder Mountain Fire, we have auto-aid agreements for wildfires and structure fires. In addition to auto-aid, Boulder County also has ‘mutual-aid’ agreements in place for pretty much all of the fire districts. This means that an officer of one fire district can radio Boulder County Dispatch to request additional resources from other districts (a sort of opt-in for additional help, in contrast to the instantaneous nature of auto-aid). For example, if Sunshine has a structure fire, we will need a lot of water delivered to the incident in the form of water tenders from other districts. If Sunshine and auto-aid resources are not enough, a Sunshine Fire officer could radio Boulder County Dispatch and say, ‘We need two water tenders sent to this call’. Boulder County Dispatch would then look for available tenders in the database and send a tone to the appropriate district asking for help to be sent. Since the mutual aid agreement is already in place in the County (it is a blanket agreement amongst neighboring districts, as well as others farther away), the district asked for help by Dispatch would send the tenders if possible.

So far in this discussion, we have the entity that receives the 911 call (dispatch) and a primary agency responsible for responding (Sunshine Fire, for example). We also have 23 fire districts in Boulder County and the potential for auto-aid and mutual-aid agreements. How does this all fit together?

As you can imagine, there is a potentially infinite number of emergency call types, e.g., trauma (like the knife wound I started the article with), car accidents, medical emergencies of all types, wildland fire, structure fires, requests for assistance (e.g., traffic

control at a non-injury accident) and so on. In fact, Boulder County Dispatch has about 30 emergency ‘types’ that are used for dispatch purposes. What this means is that in the universe of incident types, Dispatch ‘bins’ every 911 call into one of the 30 categories. As I illustrated above, the page for the wildland fire on Wagonwheel Gap Rd. (wildland fire is one of the incident types) also contains additional information beyond the type of call; address, units toned, and other information bytes can be included. The bagel / knife wound would be binned to a trauma type but likely with a short description of the nature (e.g., ‘hand wound while cutting bagel’). So, why are the incident types important? The incident type determines our mutual- and auto-aid responses, and response partners. For example, a ‘rollover’ accident in our District would trigger an auto-aid response from Boulder Emergency Squad, the agency whose members are experts at getting people out of smashed cars. A ‘smoke report’ in our district (someone reporting a suspicious smoke-like cloud—we get lots of these and many amount to nothing) would trigger an auto-aid from Boulder Rural Fire, while a confirmed wildfire would get auto-aid responses from Boulder Mountain Fire, Four Mile Fire, the County Fire Crew, Gold Hill Fire, Boulder Emergency Squad and Boulder Rural Fire (and many other mutual aid responses as needed). The specific type of aid agreement is set up in the County computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system by representatives of the fire districts. Thus, when a call of a certain type is received by the County Dispatch, the dispatching system automatically determines the agreements that are in place and sends out the appropriate tones to the agencies. As for our bagel wound: Sunshine Fire would of course receive the tone because the emergency occurred in our district. Boulder Rural Fire is auto-aid on trauma calls and would respond. Four Mile Fire officers have the

Continued on page 6

## Fire Marshal's Report

by Bruce Honeyman - Continued from page 5

Sunshine 'cap codes' in their pagers and would also respond as needed. Boulder County has a contract with AMR for medical response and an ambulance would also be automatically dispatched. Sunshine medical responders who are officers can respond directly to a medical incident using their POVs (personally-owned vehicles) as they carry medical 'jump kits'. The first arriving medical responders would assess the situation and the need for further resources, including a reduction in the response.

If, for example, the first medical responder on scene was able to control the bleeding from the knife wound he or

she might decide to cancel other units (individual firefighters responding POV or fire apparatus) 'enroute' except for those he or she deemed to be critical (e.g., AMR to transport the patient to the hospital). Often a Boulder County Sheriff officer shows up to make sure the scene is safe.

Although Sunshine is a relatively small district in area, we are large in resources when considering all of our relationships with other County Districts.

## Bald Mountain Land Development Sale

by Colette Pfeiffer

The Bald Mountain Open Space is divided into three pieces: The Bald Mountain Trail area, land just north of the scenic area on Sunshine Canyon Drive, and a 90 acre parcel further north which is accessible from the dirt road. All the land is ecologically vibrant with abundant wildlife (including sightings of a lynx) and has the potential to support a future trail system linking Annie U White and Bald Mountain Scenic Park.

The first two pieces of land are likely to remain Open Space as Boulder County has entered into a letter of intent with the State Land Board (SLB) to purchase them. However, the County stated it has no interest in buying the remaining 90 acres saying it "has little ecological, cultural, agricultural or scenic value and does not contribute to a creating a buffer between communities." The SLB is now in the process of subdividing the 90-acre parcel into 2 lots for sale as large single family home sites.

These decisions were made without the knowledge of the local community or county at large in contradiction with guiding principle No. 7 of the Comprehensive Plan: Actively engage the public in the planning process.

Local residents are deeply concerned about these plans and in particular the way the process has appeared to be managed without open communication. They are currently seeking a meeting with the new Parks and Open Spaces Director to determine what lies behind the County's apparent lack of interest in preserving open space and in particular exploring an option to buy the 90 acres to extend the Annie White Trail which is adjacent.

Any questions or to get involved please contact Colette at 3034490274.

**\*Mitigation Tip:** Experience shows that most homes damaged or destroyed by wildfires are ignited by embers, not the flaming front. As you are creating your defensible space and choosing building materials, consider the following: "If an ember were to land here, would the resulting fire threaten my home?"

## What should you do if a Wildfire approaches and you are in your Vehicle

First try to avoid being caught in a vehicle because a car offers no protection from radiant heat. If you can shelter in your home or a building, it is better to do this than staying in your car. If you have no choice but to remain with your car during a fire front, do the following in order to help survival.

If you are able, keep driving to safety, drive slowly and very carefully.

- Keep the headlights and hazards lights on. Visibility will be considerably reduced.
- Watch for other vehicles and pedestrians. Collisions and injuries are a major hazard in low visibility; people and animals may be panicking and possibly running on the road.
- Use your horn if you are worried that people or animals are nearby but you cannot see them.
- When driving be careful driving across bridges. They may be damaged.
- Do not drive through heavy smoke. You risk hitting other vehicles, fleeing people and animals, or driving into inanimate objects such as rocks and ravines.
- Watch for fleeing livestock and wildlife.

### Tips

- If/when you leave your car and there is nobody around, leave a note visible on your vehicle telling whomever finds it that you're alright and which direction you went.
- Always keep a woolen blanket stored in the car. A spare blanket has so many uses from keeping warm to rescuing wildlife, as well as being useful if trapped in a fire, so it makes sense to keep one on standby at all times.
- Always keep water in your car.

If you are stopped or need to stop:

- First park behind a solid structure if possible. This will help to block radiant heat, which is the killer heat. If you cannot find a solid structure to take the heat, stop the car in a clear area, beside the road or in a similar suitable place. Be sure that you are nowhere near overhanging trees and branches, near combustible material that may ignite, or anything else that will burn fiercely.
- If parked where other vehicles may approach, keep your hazards on to make you more visible.
- Get down on the floor as low as possible. Keep below window level.
- Cover up with a woolen blanket or coat. Do not use synthetics as these will melt and cause severe burns. Cover children and reassure them before covering yourself.
- If you have water, drink it.
- Stay in the vehicle until the main fire passes.
- While the fire front is crossing, resist the temptation to get out and run. Expect the following possibilities:
  - Engine may stall and not restart.
  - Air currents may rock the car.
  - Smoke and sparks may enter the vehicle.
- Once the fire front has passed. You may get out of the car or drive carefully if the car is operationable.

Sources : <http://www.survivopedia.com/how-to-survive-a-wildfire/>  
<http://www.wikihow.com/Survive-a-Wildfire-While-Trapped-in-a-Vehicle>

**SFPD OFFICERS**

Chief - Michael Schmitt  
(303)246-4519  
[chief@sunshine-fpd.org](mailto:chief@sunshine-fpd.org)

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

Fire Marshal - Bruce Honeyman  
(303) 704-0162  
[honeyman@stanfordalumni.org](mailto:honeyman@stanfordalumni.org)

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

President - Deirdre Damron  
(303) 544-0273  
[deirdre\\_damron@hotmail.com](mailto:deirdre_damron@hotmail.com)

Secretary – Alan Kirton  
[ajkirton@ionsky.com](mailto:ajkirton@ionsky.com)

Treasure - Sam Mishkin  
(914) 525-9464  
[sammishkin@gmail.com](mailto:sammishkin@gmail.com)

Jim Peacock  
[jwwpeacock@gmail.com](mailto:jwwpeacock@gmail.com)

Eugene (Gene) Fischer  
[genefischer@yahoo.com](mailto:genefischer@yahoo.com)

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

CWPP Chair - Abby Silver  
(303) 442-1253 [abberoo@msn.com](mailto:abberoo@msn.com)

Website: [www.sunshine-fpd.org](http://www.sunshine-fpd.org)  
SFPD Phone # 303.789.7731

**The Sunshine Recovery**

Homes Rebuilt/under construction  
on property destroyed  
32

New Home sites:  
2

Home destroyed 57

**Please Welcome our  
Newest SFPD  
Firefighters:**

**Currently no new  
Firefighters**

**Calendar**

**Apr:**

- 5 Medical Training - 6-9 Four Mile
- 8 Wildfland refresher - 8:30-5 @ Sunshine statio
- 11 SFPD Board Meeting 7:30 p.m. @ station #1
- 27 Ventilation/PPA/Fire Attach training 6 to 8 PM @ Four Mile

**May:**

- 3 Medical Training 6 -9 @ station #1
- 9 SFPD Board Meeting 7:30 p.m. @ Station 1
- 13 Live Burn training 8:30 AM - 12 PM @ Training Center
- 25 Vehical Extraction Training 7:30-9 PM @ Four Mile

**Jun:**

- 7 Medical Training 6 -9 @ Four Mile
- 10 Milti-Agency Structure training 8:30 - 12 @ Four Mile
- 13 SFPD Board Meeting 7:30 p.m. @ Station 1
- 22 Ropes and Tools with BES 7:30-9 PM @ Four Mile

Comments or suggestions for next newsletter contact:  
Jennifer Lansky at 303.442.2709 or [jen@lansky.cc](mailto:jen@lansky.cc)