

## **Minutes of the Palomar Mountain Planning Organization 2015 Annual Meeting**

### **Saturday, May 23, 2015 at the Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department**

**Board Members Present:** Glenn Borland, Robert Carlyle, Steve Clark, Donna Dose, George Evangelou, Brenda Fromlath, Elizabeth Getzoff, Bruce Graves, Michael Pique, Linda Thorne, Yvonne Vaucher, Michael Walsh.

**Board Members Absent:** Heather Beer, Rosemary Johnston.

The annual general PMPO meeting was convened at the Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department 10:11 A.M. Saturday May 23, 2015. In addition to the Board, about 45 members were present. The Chair, Glenn Borland, thanked Chiefs Cristina Williamson & Cliff Kellogg and the Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department for hosting the Pancake Breakfast and Annual Meeting, Brenda Fromlath and Susan Humason for organizing and producing the newsletter, Donna Dose, sister Pat, and Betty Newman for organizing the breakfast, Yvonne and Sue E\*\* for being chefs, and Bruce Graves & George Evangelou for meeting setup.

#### **Secretary's Report (Michael Pique):**

The minutes of the May 24, 2014, annual general meeting were distributed and approved with corrections to Bruce Graves' account of Fire Department history.

#### **Treasurer's Report (Linda Thorne):**

As reported in the PMPO spring 2015 annual newsletter, our balance carried forward from December 31, 2013, was \$41,487.16 (checking: \$8,171.82, savings: \$33,315.34). We received \$2,419 in donations from 23 donors. Our ending balance (Dec 31, 2014) was \$42,090.95 (checking: \$8,752.25, savings: \$33,338.67). \*\*these two don't add up; we'll fix Saturday

Filing to the Attorney General of California Office - Registry of Charitable Trust - has been completed for 2014. This must be done every year. Form SR100 (Statement of Information) has been filed. 2014 income taxes have been filed. The treasurer's report was approved unanimously.

#### **Traffic Safety (Alan Serry):**

Alan discussed the New Year's Day breakdown of the snow emergency plan, which calls for early activation of the California Highway Patrol, U.S. Forest Service, Sheriff, and County Roads Department to get traffic enforcement and snow removal equipment up here. But someone goofed and didn't act until 10:00 AM, after the roads were gridlocked. The experience must have taught a lesson, as the next snow day worked out better. Remember, in case of road closures, carry chains and some identification attesting to your mountain affiliation, such as a tax or utility bill.

Watch out for motorcycles on the South Grade and bicycles everywhere. You're supposed to leave 3-foot clearance to bicycles, but the roads are only 10 feet wide and "my truck is 8 feet." Brenda Fromlath warns not to cheat the center line: the water trucks are wide and sometimes "on my side of the road." Alan is looking to step down (again) as Traffic Safety Officer and needs someone else to step up.

#### **Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department (PMVFD) (Suzann Leininger):**

Suzann Leininger, PMVFD Board President, announced Chief Cliff Kellogg's retirement and led a round of applause for his service. The Department is getting a new Type 6 "Rescue" vehicle, built on a Ford F550 chassis and drivable by any of the firefighters. The Fire Board is still meeting with the county considering the 50-year lease of the station grounds. The drafts of the agreement are posted on the web site, <http://www.palomar-fire.org>.

She introduced Cal Fire Battalion Chief Cristina Williamson and our Palomar Mountain training officer Captain Richard Tilch. Captain Tilch said we have a "great crop of new guys" and everything's running fine; two of the new crew are paramedics and all of them are EMTs. He says "Please call us if you think you need us - if it turns out you don't, we'll just go back home; no hard feelings."

#### **Neighborhood Watch (Alan Serry):**

Alan said there have been some break-ins on the mountain, and even at the State Park, where a table saw, generator, and air compressor were stolen. Some isolated cabins were stripped empty over several days. Brandy Contreras from the Valley Center Sheriff office suggests:

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- 1) nixle.com - a phone app that notifies you of road closures and sheriff alerts
- 2) nextdoor.com - information-sharing specific to Palomar Mountain, as set up by Alan Serry, to support the Neighborhood Watch. You can send messages like "I was broken into last night" or "I'm burning brush today, don't panic". Contact Alan Serry to get an "invitation".
- 3) "602 letter" Trespass Arrest Authorization for your property - file with the sheriff, authorizes sheriff to remove/arrest trespassers, good for 30 days
- 4) vacation check - request to sheriff while you're away
- 5) extra patrol - request to sheriff

Alan notes that you can shoot firearms on your property except in an area around Crestline or within 100 feet of another house.

Elizabeth Zebec says she learned from a sheriff's officer that her house address "is not on our GPS". Suzann Leiningner said the sheriffs have the Fire Department address books (in their computers). Alan said the easement and house number signs we put up for fires and medical emergencies will help the sheriff too.

### **Mutual Water Company (Linda Thorne):**

The Mutual Water Company is in good shape; our county liaison is happy with our testing and record-keeping. We just finished our consumer confidence report and copies are available. It's about time to read the meters: please pay on time when you get your bill. Also, return your proxy cards and update your emergency contact information. Our main wells are down but not threatening; a secondary shallow well, Darby, hand-dug in the 1930s, has run dry. Question: do the water trucks affect this? No, they're not in our watershed; Palomar has a highly fractured aquifer. She went to a drought meeting a few weeks ago; the low snow pack is the main problem, which does not affect us. Tree ring studies going back 1200 years suggest most droughts are 3-5 years long.

**Deeded Easement Project (Bonnie Phelps):** The goal of the project is to have banks and other mortgage lenders be satisfied with the legal access to all Palomar properties: the emphasis is on the Crestline/Birch Hill area as that is where most of the problems are. The detailed requirements by the lenders change over time: the last 6-8 months have required a "plotable deeded legal easement" to a county-maintained road. This requirement has stopped most transactions - on about 90% of Palomar Mountain. In the last 12 months, 12 Crestline water shares changed hands: all were cash buyers or had loans that slipped in just in time. This "land-locked" problem affects you even if your property isn't up for sale: if you want to refinance it, for example.

We now have one possible precedent by researching a parcel on Assessor's Map 9, north of the Mutual Water Company building near the Lodge. Thomas Herrington at the county had a volunteer who located some key maps in their archives. It appears now that if we can get the County Counsel to accept Map 9 as having valid language granting public road easements, we can use other similar maps for other areas on Palomar. Now, another requirement has emerged: a road maintenance agreement. We'll have to weave in such agreements, possibly based on a 1930s-era California law involving "implicit" maintenance agreements.

### **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) (Alan Serry):**

CERT is sponsored by the Palomar Mountain Fire Department, to prepare and train community members for emergencies. CERT members are people like you who take a series of classes: basic medical, fire extinguishing, search & rescue. You can then participate in CERT monthly training sessions.

Finding properties by their street addresses has always been tricky on Palomar - the Fire vehicles have maps but with most side roads unnamed, there were still problems. The 2004-era signs identifying the Crestline & Birch Hill side road easement numbers have now been replaced with larger and even more visible ones. Please, if you live in that area, *know your easement number* and also put a house number sign along the easement road near your house or where your driveway branches off from the numbered road. CERT is offering residents 4-inch tall house

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number signs for \$19. These personal signs are available in standard reflective green, or blue if your house has a water tank usable by fire engines in an emergency. This morning at the CERT booth outside the fire station you can see sample signs, place your order, and update your Fire Department emergency contact information.

### **Community Center of Palomar Mountain (CCPM) (John Lesac)**

John Lesac is now the president of the Community Center Board. He noted the population up on the mountain seems to have changed, with not as much interest in participating in community events as a few years ago. The CCPM is trying some new activities: a July 4 Craft Show at the Forest Service Group Camp, and plans for a star party, cooking class, movie night. We are looking for board members: currently have Diana Serry and Terri Bailey.

Question: why no Labor Day Saturday Fire Department Barbecue? Suzann Leininger said the Fire Board decided to not do it this year because the 2014 barbecue raised only \$3000 - way down from the \$8000 or so that it used to. Michael Walsh observed that the barbecue had been a highlight of the year, with a 37-year history. Cliff Kellogg noted the Barbecue was a big commitment for the person running it, a back-breaker, and no capable volunteer could be found this year. Suzann said that organizing it with all the new permits for food handling, sales tax vendor registration, alcohol licenses had made it too much work and, with the declining revenue, not a cost-effective use of volunteer time.

**Goldspotted Oak Borer (Dr. Thomas Scott):** Dr. Thomas Scott, University of California Riverside Department of Earth Sciences, explained the threat of the goldspotted oak borer beetle (GSOB) to our native oak trees. About 120,000 acres of San Diego County oaks have been lost so far. Dr. Scott pointed out that he when spoke to us in 2011, the beetle was still 10 miles away; it's now infesting the East Grade road at mile 3.5 to 4.0.

He passed around samples of infected trees, with elongated holes about the width of a car key where the larvae emerged after feeding on the live cambium layer of the tree. The beetle was recognized as the cause of "sudden oak death" in 2008, and is known to attack both deciduous (Black Oak) and evergreen (Coast and Canyon Live Oak) trees. Repeated attacks occurring over several years can kill mature trees, and the beetles hit the biggest and oldest trees first - bigger than 8 inches. Infected trees can have 20 beetles per square foot of bark, 500-600 beetles per cord of wood, and 200,000 larvae per tree. The beetles in one tree can easily kill 20-30 other trees the first year. Most oaks die within three years of an attack and outbreaks typically cause 6 to 12% annual mortality and 70 to 90% eventual mortality. Unfortunately, we can recognize infestations only after 2-3 years, when it is too late to save the tree. Dr. Scott asks us to inventory our oaks, looking for thinning leaves at the top of the canopy and early shedding. Look for Black Oak trees that leafed out poorly, and be very vigilant for trees that keep their leaves after they turned brown: that means the tree died during the dry season before dropping its leaves. In Coast Live Oaks, look for cupped, very spiky leaves. In Canyon Live Oaks, look for flat bi-color leaves, not always spiky. The beetle doesn't seem to infect Engelmann or Scrub Oaks. When he suspects a dying tree is infected, he axes parts of the bark to look for beetle tracks; the exit holes are not as reliable a marker.

In Arizona, the GSOB has some natural predators, but basically there are fewer trees there than here, so here the many big wet trees spawn so many beetles that any predators are overwhelmed. The good news is that the beetle is a poor flyer, especially over chaparral, and spreads largely by people moving infected firewood - even after a sick tree dies and is cut down, the beetles can still survive in cut wood and in the "dead" stump for close to a year. The only thing you can do with infected trees is to cut them down and burn the wood as promptly as you can, or cut away the bark and chip it or burn it, using the rest of the tree for lumber or firewood. Spraying a downed tree with carbaryl insecticide is an effective, low-impact way to destroy the beetles in remote areas where you can't bring in a chipper and there isn't room to burn safely.

The beetles live 11 months of the year down deep in the cambium layer, where no insecticides are known to be effective. Using screens to protect mature trees is impractical, especially since the adult females can lay eggs even through a 1mm (1/25-th inch) mesh. There are some spray-on treatments that can create a barrier around a tree, but they are expensive and have to be applied

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at just the right time, usually April. Thinning oaks can make the forest more healthy but is not likely to slow the infection. Watch your "specimen" trophy trees; get an arborist to check them. Don't park on their roots or let horses play there: compacting the roots is harmful, and other plants near your oak will pass pathogens. Don't water your oaks in the summer - that attracts the beetles. He urges avoiding importing *any* oak firewood, but especially from infected areas including Mesa Grande, Julian, Descanso, Pine Valley, and Ramona. He suggests campground site booking agents tell people not to bring up wood, noting that Yosemite rangers are trying to inspect all incoming wood. Further, he suggests supplying local campgrounds with locally-cut firewood and telling campers not to bring any of their own.

Dr. Scott says Mike Puzo from the State Parks organization would participate in setting up a 4-hour training session.

For more information, email Dr. Scott at [thomas.scott@ucr.edu](mailto:thomas.scott@ucr.edu) or see color photos and a guide "Oak Borer Community Preparedness Planning" at <http://ucanr.org/sites/gsobinfo>.

### Fire Safe Council and Dead & Dying Tree Removal Program (Robert Carlyle):

Fire season will come again, says Robert. He has brochures on making your cabin surroundings more fire-safe, and he can come give you a hand. He also has copies of the Palomar Mountain map brochure showing escape routes and temporary areas of safe refuge. He has no grant funding available this year; the matching fund requirements have become too difficult to meet. Bonnie Phelps says Robert does a great job with his tractor, trailer, and stump-grinder. Call him at (760) 742-1891 if you need help.

Cliff Kellogg said the Fire Department has two SRA-funded grants: one is for clearing a 2.1-mile-long 150-foot-wide fire break along the High Point trail; the other is to pay for 3 days of community chipping. Robert says the Fire Safe Council will help residents move chipping piles for those days.

**State Park (Michael Walsh):** Michael Walsh said to check page 10 of your PMPO newsletter for Rick Barclay's account of how the Palomar Mountain State Park has been saved. In November 2011 the Park was to close the following June. The newly formed "Friends of Palomar Mountain State Park" signed an agreement to cover the Park's yearly operating deficit, about \$60,000, working with CRISPIA, the Cuyamaca State Park Interpretive Association, The PMPO gave \$3000 to get us to a \$30,000 matching grant threshold.

The "Friends" are now an official cooperating association and independent charitable foundation, having raised \$700,000 so far (including matching funds). They bought a booster pump to supply water to the Boucher Hill fire lookout, are improving bathrooms, and repairing the Doane Pond parking lot. They recently funded a full-time summer interpretive educator. The Friends are always looking for volunteers - Rosemary Johnston and Sharon Dahl have joined the Board, making 7 members. Relevant web sites are <http://palomarsp.org> and <http://www.parks.ca.gov>.

### Election of PMPO Board Members:

Zachary Harris and Linda Thorne are leaving the board. Terri Bailey, Sue Hanson, and incumbents Brenda Fromlath, Michael Pique, and Yvonne Vaucher were elected by unanimous ballot to terms expiring in 2018.

The 2015-16 Board roster is:

(terms expiring May 2016):

Donna Dose, George Evangelou, Bruce Graves, Rosemary Johnston, and Steve Clark

(terms expiring May 2017):

Heather Beer, Glenn Borland, Robert Carlyle, Elizabeth Getzoff, and Michael Walsh

(terms expiring May 2018):

Terri Bailey, Brenda Fromlath, Sue Hanson, Michael Pique, and Yvonne Vaucher

The meeting was adjourned at 12:37 PM.

Michael E. Pique, Secretary. [secretary@PMPOinfo.com](mailto:secretary@PMPOinfo.com) Minutes approved \*\*NOT YET.