

THE WOODS



December 25



A NEWSLETTER FROM CASCADEL WOODS
PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION
VOLUME 61 DECEMBER 1, 2020



December 31

**ALSO INCLUDED: 1. MINUTES OF CMWC SPECIAL MEMBERS MEETING
2. SNOW PLOWING PRIVATE DRIVEWAYS**

THE WOODS NEWSLETTER TURNS SIX

It is hard to believe we are beginning our sixth year of this newsletter. Aimee Cox was your editor in the beginning. Carol Eggink helped Aimee with pictures.

In September 2017 Carol began writing The Woods newsletter. We have shared Christmas party pictures with you as well as Breakfast in the Woods events. We have also shared Ice Cream Socials and the annual BBQ event hosted by your Firewise Brigade, and Hot August Nights BBQ events.

We have also been through a few wildfires together such as the 2015 Corrine Fire that spotted over to Willow Creek. We called it the Willow Fire. Then the Mission fire of 2017, and lastly is the Creek Fire which spotted over to Peckinpah and took out four homes and nearly consumed a couple more buildings. The Creek Fire is still active.

We have been through a few Grants together, and we are hoping for more. This is a constant search and application project.

You can scroll through all of the newsletters on the website at <http://cascadelinternet.com/>.

CMWC NEWS

We have replaced the snow plow with a used truck and plow. We have inspected the sander, and it looks like it is not salvageable.

The skid steer has been equipped with tire chains to enable it to maneuver in the snow. We had a small snow fall in November, and the skid steer did OK. We called in some assistance from Jeff Bouche who brought down his tractor from the Heights to assist us in snow removal.

The fencing around the water company facilities has been replaced.

NOTICE TO ALL WATER CO. MEMBERS

If you are a part time resident or you plan to be away for a long period, it is that time of year to make sure your water is turned off at the meter and your house is drained of water in the lines to prevent busted lines from freezing pipes. If you realize you have left and forgotten to turn off the water at the meter, please call Stan Eggink at 559.877.6290. He will make sure the water gets turned off.

This will help to prevent a busted line from flooding your home and possibly draining our tanks. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

CMWC SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING – CAL FIRE CONCERNS

The meeting was attended by CAL Fire Rancheria Station crew. We invited them to go over their concerns with Cascadel Woods during their stay here while fighting the Creek Fire. Fire Chief Justin Macomb said they were first on scene after the spot fire ignited on Peckinpah Mountain about one and a half miles above us. The minutes are included with this newsletter for your review and information. The main issue Justin has with Cascadel is all the brush piles and log decks all over the community from felling of beetle death trees by several different agencies and from grant work. It is our hope to begin work on these issues in December.



BURN SUSPENSION LIFTED BY CAL FIRE

Effective as of November 23, 2020 the burn suspension was lifted for Merced, Mariposa and Madera Counties. Burn permits are required. You can burn only on permissive burn days. You must maintain control of the burn at all times.

Do not leave the burn unattended. BEFORE you start the fire call the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control burn day information line at 877.429.2876 to see if it is a burn day.

Burn Permits are available at the local CAL Fire Station. The Rancheria Station is closest to us. They are located at 534288 Road 200, O'Neals, CA 93645. Their phone is 559.877.2322. Burn safely. Keep water, rakes and shovels handy just in case.

FIREWISE BRIGADE NEWS

The Firewise Committee met on November 21 on the front deck of the Clubhouse. We discussed many issues. To read the minutes, please go to the Water Company side of the website listed above. Keep up with what goes on in The Woods. It is our intention to hold a chipping day in December, weather permitting. If you have accumulated limbs and other chippable items, call Carol Eggink @ 559.877.6290 and ask to be put on the list. We hope to be able to do this on Thursday and Friday, December 10 & 11. We will be chipping at other places already scheduled prior to these dates.

CREEK FIRE STATUS as of 11-29-2020

The fire is 90% contained and has burned 379,895 acres. Full containment is expected Nov. 30, 2020. Cal Fire says the Creek Fire is the largest single fire in California history.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

Saturday December 5, 2020 from 7:30AM – 11:00AM
Location is the Oakhurst Community Center.
Call to verify – 559.683.5854
Children & adults \$6
Under 5 – free



NORTH FORK SCOUT CHRISTMAS TREES

Tree sales will begin at 9AM on Dec. 5 and continue daily until sold out. As always the trees are located in the lot behind the North Fork Library. Hours are 9AM-5PM weekends and 3:30 – 5 PM on weekdays.

FROM THE EDITOR

We hope you enjoyed The Woods Newsletter. Send submissions for the January Newsletter by December 27, 2020 to Carol Eggink at egginks@netptc.net.

CORRECTION ON THE COMMUNITY PHONE LIST FROM LAST MONTH

Please change Ed Rose's contact phone to 209.626.6450.

EVENTS AND MEETINGS

- Dec 11 – CMWC Board Meeting –Cancelled**
- Dec 10 & 11- Chipping Day (weather permitting)**
Thursday & Friday beginning at 10AM
Call Carol to be put on the list for chipping.
- Dec 25 – Christmas Day**
- Dec 31 – New Years Eve**

NEXT MONTH

Jan 1 – New Years Day



END OF NEWSLETTER

**CASCADEL MUTUAL WATER COMPANY
SPECIAL MEETING, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2020
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE LOAN PROPOSAL**

MINUTES

Stan Eggink called the meeting to order at 10:07 AM.

Board members in attendance – President – Stan Eggink, Vice President – Ed Rose, Treasurer – Steve Johansen, Secretary- Ken Trapp, Director-Ron Davino by proxy.

Cal Fire Rancheria Station was asked to join us for this meeting to go over their work during the Creek Fire.

Chief Justin Macomb began by telling us the events as they unfolded for them in regard to Cascadel Woods Subdivision. On Sept. 4th the Creek fire began in the Shaver Lake area. On Sept. 5 it spotted above Cascadel Woods just about 1 ½ miles. The crews attacked the fire where it spotted in but were unable to get a containment line going so they abandoned the area and went into Cascadel Woods to begin the dozer lines and hose lays around the subdivision. Justin and the Rancheria Station have been protecting Cascadel Woods through the past three fire evacuations and are very familiar with our roads and our terrific water system. Justin knows if at any time we find there is no way off the mountain, we will all be safe in our shelter-in-place area across from the clubhouse.

The men from the Rancheria Station were here for 96 hours straight with no relief. There simply were no local crews available. One strike team came in on day two and three more were requested but all strike teams were already committed. The Rancheria Crew would not leave us, so they stayed for four days.

One of the four homes that were lost was due to a tree falling into the house and there was no saving the home. The crews managed to cut dozer lines and do hose lays behind the homes along Cascadel North, Waterfall Way and Gertrude Creek. This effort saved the majority of those homes. Their main goals were to get around the downed and standing dead trees from the past 6 years of Bark Beetle die off of the Pines.

Justin was asked about the usefulness of maintaining the fuel breaks throughout Cascadel Woods. It is advisable to maintain these dozer lines. Try to get more grants. We need to talk to USFS to get permission to maintain the fuel breaks around the water company infrastructure, but still grants would be the most economical way to proceed.

Justin requested that we find a way to push back the easements along Cascadel Road at least five feet on both sides throughout the length of the road and to remove all log decks in the subdivision. It is just too tight when trying to get the engines in here. If a few turnouts could be created along the road, that would be great.

One member of the crew spoke to the structure triage that is done throughout the year on any given property by Cal Fire. This is also done at the first run through of the subdivision in the event of a fire and we have been evacuated. They will look for the location of water tanks and propane tanks. They will locate visible hazards such as firewood piles located too close to the home during the summer and other items such as storage of paint cans and gasoline can storage near structures or combustible equipment. In the event of an evacuation the crew will put a sign located at the front of the property to inform any other crews who come along where everything is located, hazards included. If the doors are open they will go inside and make sure your curtains are closed to keep out radiant heat to try and prevent a fire from igniting from heat alone. If you have a roof ladder, make it visible or lean it up against the house to make the crews life easier to check your roof. This eliminates them from having to pull their ladders down from the engine and put them back again.

Members present thanked the crews and Justin for their insight on things we still need to do to be a more Firesafe community and for saving Cascadel Woods once again.

The Special Members meeting began at 10:39 AM.

Stan Eggink –

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) required this open meeting of the community to discuss the impact of the loan to the membership.

We have been trying to obtain a grant to replace the three old water storage tanks for over 5 years. We thought we were getting close to closing the deal on the grant with the USDA, but it turns out that the water company financials are above the level to qualify for a grant. However, we are being given the opportunity to apply for a USDA low interest loan to cover the replacement costs. The proposed loan is for \$428,150 for a 99,000 gallon tank which would be used to replace three (3) older and leaking 15,000 gallon water storage tanks. The addition of the larger tank would increase our total water storage capacity from 135,000 gallons to 189, 000 gallons. The interest rate on the proposed loan is 1.875% for 40 years at an annual cost of \$15,577.20 to the membership.

In 1995 the water co was awarded a one million dollar grant to replace the existing water infrastructure and repair the roads due to the required excavation. Our current USDA loan, which began in 1998, is costing the membership \$25,088 per year, (\$16.00 per month) for almost the same loan amount due to a higher interest rate at the time of 5.25%. There are 18 years remaining on the loan.

State regulations mandate the water company keep a year's worth of costs on hand as an emergency fund. You pay \$5 a month which is applied to our reserve accounts for this purpose. If after one year of reserve payments the money is not needed for an emergency that money moves into our long-term reserve account. Many small corporations do not have this feature built into their billing and finances. The loans we have also require we have a reserve account for emergencies. Funds must always be readily available to quickly cover the costs of parts, material, labor and permits to properly repair any failure within our vast system. The cost of providing water to everyone has not been raised in the past ten years. We are a mutual benefit corporation and we must take care of ourselves. Maybe we should have raised the rates at least \$1 per year over that same period, but we chose to manage the costs rather than increase the rates.

Our system is now 25 years old and we can expect problems that will need attending. During the Creek Fire, we experienced some fire damage to the spring input lines, overflow lines, and fencing damaged by fallen trees and heat from the fire melted some of the slats in the fencing. Afterward, there were many trees that posed hazards to persons attending our water system as well as interfering with access to the water system and these had to be removed. That was \$6,000 out of the reserve funds. This is one example of why we must keep reserves available.

The new loan will cost \$15,577 per year which equates to a \$10 increase per membership per month. However, there are enough reserves to pay half of the annual cost of the new loan for several years. That would reduce the per member increase to \$5 per month for the first few years. Approximately \$7,500 will be paid from reserves and \$7,500 will be paid from the \$5 per month increase. We plan to do this for at least five years but, no increases will take place until the project is complete which we anticipate to be a year from now. The CMWC Board will continually review the reserve fund balance in an effort to minimize individual membership cost increases. In a worst case scenario, the most any member would ever have to pay for the proposed loan would be a \$10 per month increase. Unfortunately, we may not refinance the current loan to combine with the proposed loan. We have asked this question and the USDA will not permit it.

It was also mentioned that according to a Bass Lake website, the Bass Lake Water Company is increasing everyone's rates by 28% to cover the cost of a new water tank for their system.

A question was posed from a resident paying only road fees voicing concerns of road money possibly being used for the project to replace the tanks. It was explained that the road money is in a separate account from the water company and may not be used for anything other than roads. A Balance Sheet, dated November 5, 2020, was handed out. The Road Maintenance balance was \$41,062.10. Under Fixed Assets account # 1500 – Road Maintenance Assets is \$102,023. All Road monies and assets are kept separate from water company accounts.

Now that everyone is paying their share of road maintenance assessments we have the most money ever in that account. As a result, Ed Rose is working with engineers to repair the bridge and the weir (wet crossing) on Cascadel Road. Residents have been talking about repairs to the bridge for 40 years and now we can finally take action due the available funding.

END MINUTES.

SNOWPLOWING PRIVATE DRIVEWAYS

Your Water Company is back in action having replaced our snowplow destroyed last September in the Creek Fire. As in the past, we are offering, for a small fee, driveway snow removal for those residents interested in taking advantage of this labor saving service. It should be noted that driveways will be plowed during daylight hours only and after the roads have been reasonably cleared and are passable to all vehicles.

The fee for driveway snow removal, on an "as requested basis," is \$25 each time. A "one-time seasonal" fee that covers as many snow removals as necessary is \$125. Snow removal for paid full time residents is automatic. Part time paid residents need to contact the office to provide dates they intend to occupy the property so we can plow your driveway prior to your arrival. The "as needed" and "seasonal" fees are for driveways 100 feet in length or less. The fee for longer or more difficult driveways will be determined on a case by case basis.

Please contact the office at (559) 877-2635, e-mail: info@cascadelmutual.com or Stan Eggink, (559) 877-6290 e-mail: egginks@netptc.net to arrange for snow removal. Seasonal payments need to be sent to our office and made out to The Cascadel Mutual Water Company, memo: snow removal. If you pay with online banking or credit card, please call the office and leave a message or email the office to inform the bookkeeper of your payment for snow removal.