



Yosemite West Property &
Homeowners, Inc.
www.YosemiteWest.org

In the West

**Newsletter
November 2011**

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President's Fall Message

by Kelly Rich, YWPHI President 2011-2012

Greetings All! This is a first for me - as newly elected President of the YWPHI Board of Directors, I get to write the opening lines for our newsletter. Such an honor! First I'd like to thank Tom Lambert for the work he did as our last President. Now he has a busy new role in the Park Service and, with that, he's passed the President's hat to me. This allows me to welcome Scott Renfro (see p.3), our newest member on our Board of Directors. With our fresh enthusiasm, I'm hoping to successfully address the main items that our Board faces.

A bit about me - I arrived in Yosemite West in 1999. For years I'd dreamed of having a place in Yosemite so I could relax during my rock-climbing visits. Getting my place was a real step up for me; I no longer had to run from the rangers that tracked me by horse after sleeping in the woods around the valley. But silly was I to think that having a place in Yosemite West meant that I could relax there. As we all know, paying for a home is the easiest part of home ownership. More difficult are the endless tasks needed to keep a place up and running and in good shape. And once you've taken care of your home, it's uplifting to become a part of the community by helping your friends and neighbors with those tasks that are best handled as a group. This is the spirit that lead me to join the Board in 2007; I wanted to help our community address the main problems that we face as a neighborhood in this special part of the Sierra.

While the scope of the Board is relatively small (we don't really have the power to address major infrastructure issues), we can be a point of contact for the people that live here. The Board can gather the various issues that our community faces, and can help to focus and steer the groups responsible for the items so that the issues get addressed. As the Board president, it's my hope that our Board is successful in this endeavor.

The last thing I'd like to address is our Holiday Open House. I regret that YWPHI will not organize a party this year. Although the open house had a good seven-year run, the past couple of years have seen a decline in the number of people who hosting the event, as well as the number of folks attending. The Board is looking at other dates to hold similar social events; perhaps we can figure out a way to revive the good feeling of community that this event provided. Best regards to you all, may your holidays be healthy and fun filled!

Minutes from YWPHI Board Meetings

Once approved by the board, minutes from previous YWPHI Board of Directors' meetings are posted online at <http://www.yosemitewest.org/board.htm>. The minutes from April 20, June 23, July 21 and September 4, 2011 are now available.

In the West Publication

Thanks to these contributors to this edition of *In the West*: guest editors Kim O'Neil and John Mock; resident Jeff Hornacek; and Board members Rea Jackman, Scott Renfro and Kelly Rich.

Welcome New YWPHI Members

We're pleased to welcome Dimon and Sue Schaad to YWPHI!

Whitelist YWPHI Domain

We'd like to remind members to whitelist the yosemitewest.org domain and associated email addresses so that email from YWPHI doesn't inadvertently go into your spam or junk folder.

Yosemite West Guidelines for Residents & Guests Update

YWPHI has updated the **Yosemite West Guidelines for Residents & Guests**, posted a laminated copy on the bulletin board, made photocopies available to rental operators, and posted the update online at <http://www.yosemitewest.org/guidelines.pdf>.

About YWPHI

YWPHI was established to promote and protect the best interests of the owners of land used for residential purposes in Yosemite West. YWPHI shall strive for the improvement and betterment of all facilities and services within the area, and shall promote and encourage maximum community and civic spirit, and foster good will and friendship among all residents of Yosemite West.

2011 YWPHI Annual Meeting

We had a large turnout - 44 people from 22 households - for YWPHI's annual meeting on Sunday, September 4, 2011. We'd like to thank everyone who attended for their input. We'd also like to thank Rea Jackman of the YWPHI Hospitality Committee for organizing the potluck brunch and Betty Clark for use of her side yard.

Our guest speaker was Kelly Martin, NPS Chief of Fire and Aviation Management, who spoke about the Bishop Creek Prescribed Burn (see p.5 and map on p.6). We appreciate Chief Martin (pictured below) taking time out of her busy schedule, especially on a holiday weekend, to speak with the community and thoroughly address everyone's concerns and questions.



2011-2012 YWPHI Board of Directors

The YWPHI Board of Directors for the current membership year (9/1/2011-8/31/2012), elected at the annual meeting on September 4, 2011, are; Kelly Rich (President), Mike Stepien (Vice President), Bill Duff (Secretary), returning members Todd “Kipper” Caranto, Rea Jackman, and Kim O’Neil, and new member Scott Renfro (see below).

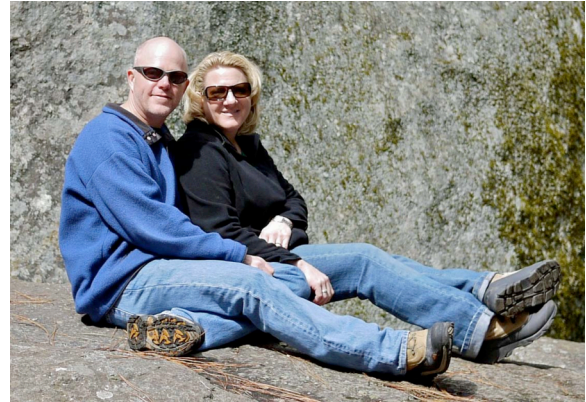
Two Board terms expired this year; Rea Jackman and Tom Lambert. Rea Jackman agreed to serve her second term on the Board and received a unanimous vote from the membership. YWPHI would like to thank our outgoing president Tom Lambert who served two terms on the Board. Scott Renfro volunteered to serve on the Board; Scott introduced himself to the membership and also received a unanimous vote from the membership.

John Mock chairs the YWPHI Fire Safety Committee. Kim O’Neil is Treasurer and webmaster. Rea Jackman leads the Hospitality Committee with Barbara Stepien, and Mike Stepien heads the Nominating Committee.

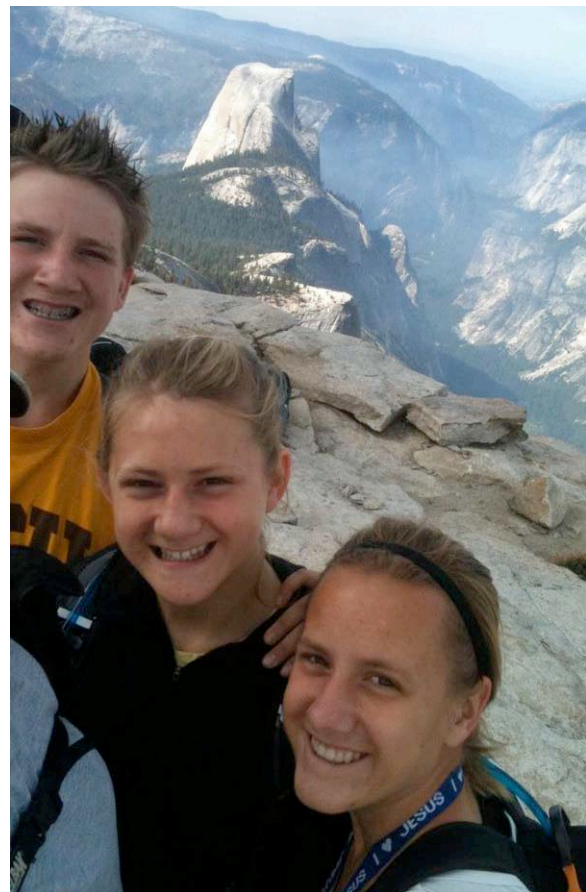
Meet the Renfros

Scott and Sandi live in San Jose with their three kids: Lauren (15), Ian (14), and Natalie (13). Both Scott and Sandi grew up in San Jose. Sandi went off to Sac State while Scott went to Cal Poly. Although it’s hard for them to comprehend, they’ve been married for twenty-one years and their once-toddler kids are now teenagers. They all enjoy spending time outdoors and sharing Yosemite with friends and family. They can often be found hiking or climbing on summer days, and snowboarding on winter

days. They’ve been fixing up and enjoying their place in Yosemite West since 2009, and look forward to many more happy memories to come.



Scott and Sandi Renfro and their kids



Open Projects

by Kelly Rich

The YWPHI Board of Directors is always trying to find ways to improve the environs in Yosemite West and we have a long Wish List of things we'd like to accomplish. While some of the items fall beyond the scope of what YWPHI can and should do, other items can be easily taken care of with one or two hours of volunteer work. Still other items will require a larger organized group to address the task.

Currently we have open items that we would like to see addressed, but we need volunteers in order to get these tasks accomplished. If you are interested in helping out with these projects, please contact me via the following e-mail address, president@yosemitewest.org.

First, we have a stash of firefighting equipment (hose, nozzles, hydrant wrenches, etc.) that is currently being stored in several garbage cans on the southeast corner of Henness Circle. We would like to build a fourth "hose house" for this equipment, so it can be safely stored while being made accessible in case there's a need for it to be used. (YWPHI previously constructed and installed three other hose houses, which are in place along Yosemite Park Way.) While YWPHI has set aside funds to construct the hose house, we need somebody to take over the project to see that it gets completed. (We're not asking you to personally construct it - rather to oversee the design, production and installation.)

Second, we'd like to create and distribute educational flyers and signage for dumpsters that explains the importance and legal requirement of proper garbage disposal.

Fire Safety

2011 Fire Season Recap

Yosemite West was impacted by two major fires this summer; the Avalanche Fire and the Motor Fire. Thunderstorms descended on Sunday, July 3. Shortly after noon a lightning strike ignited a wildland fire east of the Glacier Point Road near Avalanche Creek, one mile north of Chinquapin. The **Avalanche Fire** was in a designated wilderness and was managed for multiple objectives as a Wildland Use Fire. The fire started on one tree and grew throughout the month of August to 1,068 acres. By managing this fire, NPS Fire was able to provide additional defensible fire buffer to Yosemite West, Badger Pass Ski Resort, and other nearby park infrastructures. Kelly Martin, NPS Chief of Fire and Aviation Management, led a two-hour long community meeting on Saturday, August 13th to explain the project and answer residents' questions.



Lightning-caused wildland fire is common along Henness Ridge and is part of the local fire ecology. Such fires have historically been small, with low intensity, and help maintain a healthy forest. In areas where wildland fire is suppressed, such as Yosemite West, fuel reduction work is essential to decrease the risk of severe fire that could threaten life and property.

On Thursday, August 25th, a motor home caught fire along Highway 140 east of the confluence of the South Fork Merced River and the main Merced River. The **Motor Fire** quickly spread to both sides of the Merced Canyon. Mariposa County Sheriff's office initiated a CodeRED alert the same day placing Yosemite West in pre-evacuation status, advising that evacuation could become necessary and that residents should prepare. In the days that followed, the Motor Fire grew to 5,231 acres. The fire burned on both sides of the Merced River and east of the South Fork Merced River, geographically one of the worst-case scenario locations for its potential threat to Yosemite West. The South Central Sierra Interagency Incident Management Team led the successful effort to contain the fire without loss of life or property, and there was no need to evacuate Yosemite West.

Although YWPHI is not involved with providing fire information or firefighting efforts in any way (per the Mission of the YWPHI Fire Safety Committee), we wanted members and neighbors to be aware of how they could be better informed about wildland fires and posted periodic updates to the News page of the YWPHI website throughout these incidents. (The history of these fires is at <http://www.yosemitewest.org/news.htm>).

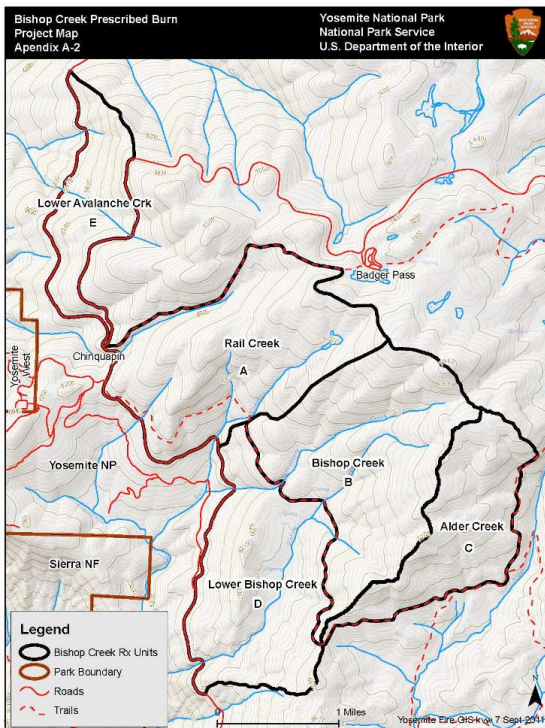
If you have not already done so, for your own safety, please opt in to the

county's CodeRED system (<http://www.yosemitewest.org/help.htm>) and include all your contact numbers on it.

Bishop Creek Prescribed Burn

NPS had planned a 5,224-acre prescribed burn, the Bishop Creek Prescribed Burn, divided into five segments. The Bishop Creek Prescribed Burn is mostly in Wilderness and the primary objective is Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) protection. The project would buffer the communities of Yosemite West, Wawona, Glacier Point Historic District and El Portal from unwanted wildfire by reducing an over accumulation of fuels. It builds off the recent 1,068-acre Avalanche Fire, other prescribed fires and mechanical thinning treatments in Yosemite's Suppression and Wilderness Fire Management Units. Additionally, this project is another step in restoring fire dependent forest ecosystems in Yosemite's lower mixed conifer pine forest.

Ignition of the 1,400-acre Rail Creek segment started on October 24th. A trough of cooler, moist air brought higher than expected relative humidity, which kept fuels moist. The October 24th test burn revealed that the fire would not progress or consume fuels in a manner sufficient to meet the project's objectives of reducing fuels. The burn has been indefinitely postponed.



Air Quality Monitoring Equipment

Throughout these fires, NPS had Air Quality Monitoring Equipment installed in Yosemite West that provided real-time data available to the public via the Internet. NPS worked in conjunction with the Mariposa County Air Pollution Control District to evaluate health impacts from the smoke.



In the West

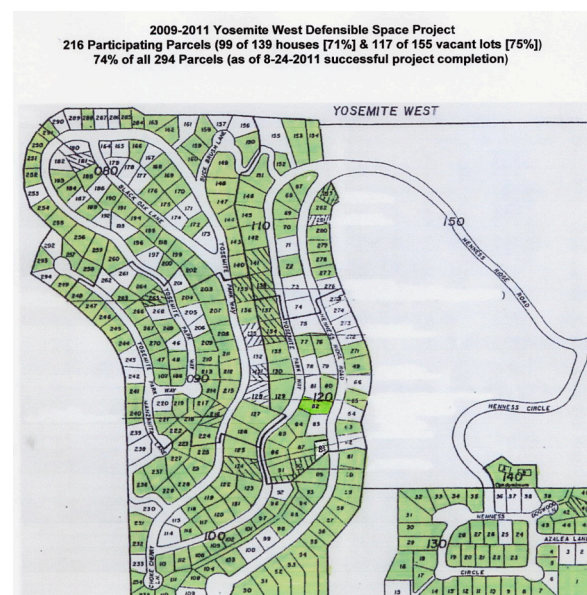
2010 Grant Closure

In August, YWPHI completed on-the-ground defensible space work inside the community. The three-year (2009-2011) participating parcels total 216 or 74% of all 294 parcels; 99 of 139 houses (71% of all houses) and 117 of 155 vacant lots (75% of all vacant lots). This concludes all grant-funded chipping inside the community (see map below and online at www.yosemitewest.org/grants.htm#2010grant).

In September, YWPHI completed on-the-ground work to treat 56 acres outside the community. This work involved a combination of mastication, lop-and-scatter, and chipping on one privately owned parcel and three County-owned parcels on the western perimeter of Yosemite West.

This successful, three-year effort to improve community-wide defensible space for Yosemite West took approximately 7,500 hours of physical labor!

Thank you to all property owners who participated in the project.



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2011 Grant Status

As we have previously reported, YWPHI was awarded a 2011 National Fire Plan grant for \$94,350 for fuel reduction on the 49-acre Project Area YW-004 (see the Yosemite West CWPP) on June 14, 2010. In March 2011 we signed the grant agreement with the California Fire Safe Council. However, the National Park Service (NPS) informed the California Fire Safe Council that it would likely be after the end of the fiscal year (September 30, 2011) before NPS would know if they could actually fund the 2011 grant. All grant activities have been on hold since we last reported about this in the Spring 2011 issue of this newsletter.

We recently received word from the California Fire Safe Council that they signed an agreement with NPS in early November 2011, and NPS has indicated they will release the funding for this grant very soon. This means that the grant will go forward and the fuel reduction work can occur. We had hoped to complete this work before winter, but Yosemite West has already received more than a foot of snow *this fall*. The early snowfall likely means this project will resume in spring. However, we'll keep a hopeful watch on the weather and snow conditions and implement the fuel reduction as soon as possible once funds are released.

2011 In-Kind Contribution

If you haven't already done so, please let us know how much time and/or out-of-pocket expenses you've incurred raking pine needles and working to reduce hazard fuels on your property by completing and returning the **2011 In-Kind Contribution** form attached to the end of this newsletter. The

hours of volunteer labor that you put in (as of January 1, 2011) have a dollar value we will use to meet the "matching funds" requirement for our 2011 National Fire Plan Grant. This grant requires a 25% match from the community, the highest percentage of any of our five grants, and we still need to accurately document the community's contribution. To date, we have only received contributions from 24 property owners. We know there's more out there. Forms are also available at the mailbox shed and online. Please help us meet our match!

Fire Hose & Hydrant Training

YWPHI organized and held a Fire Hose & Hydrant Training (a.k.a. a "hose lay") on July 27th. The training was coordinated by resident Malcolm Neal (whose new title is Fire Equipment Manager & Hose Lay Coordinator), and led by Mariposa County Fire Department Division Chief Curtis Jackson and NPS Fire Captain Bernard Spielman. Twelve homeowners participated from eight households, including one rental operator.

Malcolm made a video of the training and is in the process of editing the video and burning it onto DVDs. When he has completed this project, YWPHI will be mailing a DVD to every homeowner in Yosemite West so everyone can familiarize themselves with the procedures.

Around the Neighborhood

More than a Mailbox Shed....

YWPHI built and maintains the mailbox shed. Those of us who get our mail delivered to our Yosemite West addresses know that the mailbox shed is more than a physical place to get mail. It's also a place to get information - whether you're chatting with your neighbors or our mail carrier, or looking at postings on the bulletin boards.

YWPHI purchased and installed two large bulletin boards inside the shed. Everyone is welcome to post content on the bulletin boards, no approval is necessary nor does YWPHI manage "content." (Since the County owns the land on which the mailbox shed is located, County law applies. So, for example, political advertisements are not allowed to be posted on County property and hence are not permissible in or on the mailbox shed.) You'll find that both YWPHI and Mariposa County post flyers and meeting/hearing notices, contractors occasionally post their business cards or advertisements, and residents post information about upcoming events, goods for sale, lost/found, etc. Even if you don't get your mail delivered here, it's a good idea to stop by the mailbox shed whenever you're in Yosemite West to get the latest information.

Fire Lookout Trail: Pets Not Allowed

Many of us enjoy visiting the Henness Ridge Fire Lookout. Please keep in mind that the route to the fire lookout is on National Park Service (NPS) land and pets are *not* allowed, leashed or unleashed. NPS has prohibited pets on trails for many years; it is not a new policy. Yosemite West

should be a good neighbor and not abuse the park access we enjoy. This regulation protects both pets and wildlife from disease and each other. In particular, dogs chase wildlife, pollute water sources, and can become defensive and dangerous in unfamiliar surroundings. Pet owners need to assure their pet does not damage the park values for others.

Rattlesnakes

Yosemite National Park (and Henness Ridge) is home to one species of rattlesnake, the Northern Pacific rattlesnake (*Crotalus oreganus oreganus*). Rattlesnakes are a valuable predator in our ecosystem that help control rodent populations and other prey that have the potential to grow out of balance. Rattlesnakes are venomous, so everyone should familiarize themselves with how to identify one and know what precautions to take. If you encounter a rattlesnake:

- Keep your distance - rattlesnakes can strike only a distance equal to half their own length.
- Watch where you step or reach with your hands.
- Stand still if you think you hear a snake, until you've located the snake; then move away.
- Beware of snakes without a rattle - baby rattlesnakes don't have rattles and adult rattles can break off.

Recently a resident on the way to the fire lookout came across a rattlesnake that had been killed. We all know that hunting and/or killing of any wildlife inside a national park is illegal, and this law applies to snakes as well. Any such incident should

be reported to park authorities.

If you encounter a rattlesnake inside Yosemite West and wish to have it in another location - like away from your house - some of our neighbors have the ability to help capture and relocate a snake. As a first point of contact, Moose Mutlow has offered his services!

Yosemite West Archives

by John Mock

Several boxes of documents about Yosemite West were recently transferred to the Yosemite National Park Archives. These came from past residents and property owners, such as Ken Wall, Dick Huizenga and Walt Rowland, and from current residents Betty Clark and Elizabeth Ringrose. The Park expressed interest in these materials, which date from the June 1967 subdivision agreement for Yosemite West, made between the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors and Yosemite Highlands Inc. and 40 Acres Inc. They include materials from the Mariposa Superior Court and subsequent Appellate Court decisions, minutes from YWMDAC meetings and related documents, some historical records from YWPHI and minutes from its annual meetings, among other notable documents. These extensive materials are an important historical resource not only for our community and our County, but also for our big neighbor next door, Yosemite National Park. The YWPHI Board of Directors agreed that they should not just sit in boxes in someone's basement, and the Park's offer to archive, index, and care for them was accepted and approved. The Park is now in the process of cataloging the materials, following which they will be ready for digitization into a

(hopefully) searchable online database. Completion of the digitization process may be contingent upon additional funding to cover labor costs. Meanwhile the public can access the original documents at the Yosemite National Park Archives (209-379-1283) in El Portal; an appointment is required.

Trash - A Never Ending Problem in the West

by Rea Jackman

I am appealing to all of you to help keep our community beautiful and pristine. The wildlife around us do their part - nothing is left behind, they even try to clean up our messes! Let's not invite them for dinner.

You can help - I think part of the problem is awareness if you all will inform your guests, family and friends that trash must be carefully put in locked dumpsters or physically taken home. If you are a rental operator perhaps posting trash removal information somewhere visible in your house might help - a reminder for guests to know that even leaving bits of food on a barbecue can be a problem.

There are a few of us that live here full time. We are the ones, for the most part, that pay the price by having to pick up garbage. And to remind you once again our dear bears pay the biggest price by losing their lives.

Many people that come to visit, perhaps there first time, might not even know about the forest and the caution and care that must be taken to assure a balance between humans and wildlife - let's help in this awareness to assure their visit will be a safe and enjoyable one!

Do You Know Where Your Trash Really Goes?

Some rental operators simply ask their renters to take their trash with them when they leave. It's a simple concept - the renter disposes of their own trash and the rental operator incurs no cost for trash disposal. The reality - more frequently than any of us would like to admit - is vastly different. The renter doesn't really want that smelly bag of garbage in their car all the way to wherever they're going, they don't really want to hunt around for the nearest park dumpster (by the way, it's illegal to put residential garbage in park dumpsters), so they opt for the quickest fix and dump it somewhere in Yosemite West.... The problem is that all of the dumpsters in Yosemite West are privately owned and locked, so renters may just find the nearest dumpster and leave their garbage bag(s) on top of or on the ground against the dumpster. Somebody else will surely be by soon to put their garbage bag inside the dumpster, right? Maybe yes, maybe no. Meanwhile, the wildlife scavengers have ample opportunity to access human garbage and frequently do. The mess strewn from ripped garbage bags is left for a resident to clean up. If you currently ask your renters to remove their own trash, please review this strategy and consider changing it for the benefit of Yosemite West, both its residents and its wildlife.

Water Pressure Regulators

by Jeff Hornacek

The Yosemite West water system is a complicated and aging system. The mountainside location of the community creates a challenge in maintaining adequate and safe water pressure to each home. At

times the water pressure has spiked due to repairs or malfunctions in the delivery system. These water pressure spikes can cause water leaks inside the home and water heaters to release water through the pressure relief valve. It is suggested that each residence have a working pressure regulator and shut-off valve that is accessible year-round and protected from the elements.

The pressure regulator helps control the water pressure inside the home. It is typically installed where the water line enters the home and is adjustable with a wrench or thumb screw. Some of the devices have an internal screen that captures sediment and needs to be removed and cleaned. Pressure regulators may also become ineffective with age or stuck with sediment.

Typically the water pressure regulator is adjusted to provide between 40-60 psi inside the home. Many plumbers in the mountain communities recommend setting the regulator at the lowest pressure that delivers adequate water to all faucets, tubs and sinks. The water dispenser in refrigerators are usually the first device to stop supplying water if the pressure is too low.

The regulator will help control the water pressure but it is relative to the incoming water pressure. If the outside pressure increases so will the inside pressure even with a regulator.

A licensed plumber can service or install a water pressure regulator in existing homes if the water supply is accessible. It is also suggested that you install a water sediment filter to capture the fine particles in the water supply that cause many problems with running toilets, dripping faucets and reduced water heater performance.

Propane Tank Safety

Some of you may remember the incident a few years ago when a propane tank became dislodged and rolled down the hillside. Thankfully the tank did not explode, there was no property damage, and no one was injured. We'd like to encourage all homeowners with propane tanks to physically inspect their tanks or ask your propane company to inspect it for you before winter. Examine the supports - concrete support blocks themselves can deteriorate over time, soil underneath the supports can erode, and snow plows can inadvertently bump into tanks or push heavy piles of snow toward tanks.

Evaluate the vegetation and firewood near your propane tank; State law requires 10 feet of clearance around propane tanks. Many homeowners with propane tanks have already participated in the Yosemite West Defensible Space Project, but not all who participated gave permission for crews to reduce or remove vegetation near propane tanks and others did not participate at all.

Maintenance District Update

Yosemite West water, sewer and roads are operated by the Yosemite West Special District, which pays for these services from monthly user fees and a percentage of the annual property tax receipts. The district is not independent and is governed by the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors.

For more information, please visit <http://www.yosemitewest.org/ywmdac.htm>.

Much of what goes on with our essential infrastructure is discussed at meetings of an advisory committee. Members are appointed by the Board of Supervisors, but have no actual authority. If you want to know how our infrastructure ticks, it's vital to follow the committee's meetings.

Below is a report from the most recent meeting; this information is a committee member's summary of discussions and is not intended to be official minutes.

Welcome Peter Rei

First, YWPHI would like to welcome Peter Rei, Mariposa County's new Director of Public Works as of this week. Peter has been Acting Director for the past couple of months and has already made multiple visits to Yosemite West to familiarize himself with the community.

YWMDAC 10-5-2011

The Yosemite West Maintenance District Advisory Committee (YWMDAC; <http://www.yosemitewest.org/ywmdac.htm>) met on Wednesday, October 5, 2011. All committee members were present as were Peter Rei, (Acting) Director, Pam Brochini,

Facilities Manager, Darryl Nielsen, Water & Sewer Plant Technician; and Rick Benson, Mariposa County Administrative Officer.

The committee noted that no minutes from the previous meeting existed, and decided to use a voice recorder at the current meeting and have the recording transcribed into minutes by the County, so that an official record of the meeting would exist. (Peter Rei later reported to several committee members on November 14, 2011 that a Mariposa County employee will be present at future meetings to take minutes, which will be easier than transcription.)

The committee reviewed the Yosemite West Maintenance District Operations budgeted and actual revenue and expense reports for the past ten years. It was noted that maintenance costs for water, sewer and roads are steadily increasing as the infrastructure and systems age. The sewer system has been showing a loss for the last eight years, and the committee asked Rick Benson to prepare a revised sewer rate schedule for the next meeting.

The committee then addressed several concerns that YWPHI members voiced at their annual meeting on September 4, 2011.

Road Signs

Public Works said that road signs would be replaced, repaired, or repainted as necessary. Public Works emphasized that parking on roads is not permitted during snow removal conditions and that signs would be added to better inform residents and visitors.

Public Works also noted that parking longer than 72 hours at any time is a violation of California law. Vehicles parked longer than 72 hours are considered abandoned and subject to ticketing and/or towing. Please report any vehicles parked

long-term on roads to the California Highway Patrol (CHP).

Culverts

Public Works said that California Department of Corrections (CDC) crews would come and clean roadside gutters and culverts (including those between houses). Typically, CDC crews work on roadside brush removal, but because the YWPHI grant-funded crews have removed most roadside brush, this year the CDC crews could concentrate on gutters and culverts. Public Works thanked YWPHI for that.

Potholes

Public Works said that two truck loads of patching had been applied in Yosemite West, and that another half truck load would come before winter.

Mapping Water Connections & Valves

Public Works said that mapping water connections and valves is vital for reference during future breakages and noted that California has mandated a video survey of the sewer system, which is in progress but will take time and money to complete. Public Works said it would request PG&E to mark all electrical lines in Yosemite West and share their map with Public Works. Public Works is also relocating water pressure relief valves to better regulate water pressure in Yosemite West.

Water Filter System

Public Works said that the water bubbler that will remove dissolved carbon dioxide and maintain a neutral pH is installed and nearly operational. Acidity resulting from the carbon dioxide dissolves water pipes, resulting in high levels of copper and other minerals in the water, which exceed

California standards. A chlorinator will also be added to the water system to mitigate any potential contamination from the bubbler.

Damaged Fire Hydrant Markers

Public Works plans to install new hydrant markers and map them for agency use.

Trash Disposal

The YWMDAC noted several issues of trash disposal and handling in Yosemite West. Trash has been dumped along roads and behind the mailbox shed, and left next to the privately owned dumpsters. In Mariposa County, the only company licensed for trash removal is Total Waste, which has a monopoly on trash removal. Community members said that Total Waste service in Yosemite West is irregular and insufficient to handle trash during peak usage periods. Rick Benson noted that without a financial incentive to handle trash properly, residents and visitors will likely continue mishandling trash. The County cannot legally create a new transfer station by placing dumpsters on County property. The YWMDAC noted that the County has a Bear Preventive Ordinance (Ordinance 8.44) mandating bear-proof containers for trash, and requiring owners or business operators to place all garbage in private bear-proof containers for collection. Community members asked if this ordinance could be linked to issuance and renewal of Transient Occupancy Permits. The County suggested that Yosemite West work with Mariposa County Solid Waste Manager Greg Oliver to address any issues with the existing trash franchise operator, Total Waste, and to develop a better trash system for the entire community.

Highlands Timber Harvest Plan

Public Works said that the timber harvest plan (<http://www.yosemitewest.org/thp-highlands.htm>) on private land adjacent to and west of Yosemite West is planned to begin this fall, but that the County has not yet received any start notice from the operator. The timber harvest is regulated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the harvest plan is available for viewing on the CalFire website.

Road Repairs

Rick Benson outlined the cost of repaving all roads in Yosemite West. He noted that before starting any road work, all underground infrastructure issues (sewer, water) need to be resolved, which would take substantial time and money. Benson said that the preferred method for repaving the roads is “cold in place recycling,” which grinds existing pavement, treats it, and compacts it in place as a base. A two- to three-inch layer of asphalt is then placed on top. He stated that the cost to do this would be \$1.2 million and would require forming a new Yosemite West Assessment District. Forming a new assessment district requires a ballot, and there are two ballot options; either a majority of all Yosemite West property owners or a two-thirds majority of all Yosemite West registered voters would be required for approval. The County would need to see a petition indicating sufficient support in Yosemite West before the County would proceed with a ballot to form an assessment district. Benson assumed that the required \$1.2 million could be obtained as a twenty- year U.S.D.A. loan at 4% annual interest. Each parcel owner would make an annual payment, and the per parcel loan amount would be recorded as a lien on

each parcel until fully repaid. Developed parcels would pay more than undeveloped parcels. The YWMDAC asked Benson to prepare per parcel estimates for all Yosemite West parcels plus the condominiums, which are included in the current Yosemite West Maintenance District. The YWMDAC requested that the estimate should include repaving, annual maintenance and snow removal, with cost-of-living index increases, and should also roll the current \$8 monthly fee. There was no discussion of how the allocated percentage of annual property tax receipts used for roads would fit into the estimate.

Next YWMDAC Meeting

The next YWMDAC meeting will be on Wednesday November 30, at 10:30 a.m., at a location to be determined in Yosemite West. The public is welcome to attend. The focus of this meeting will be to discuss the burn pile (see p.15).

Roles & Responsibilities

As a reminder, YWPHI reports about the activities of and topics of interest to the YWMDAC as a service to the community and is *not* involved with the committee’s activities. YWMDAC is a liaison between Yosemite West property owners and the Public Works Department, which is responsible for daily operation of the maintenance district. YWMDAC’s recommendations are not binding; Mariposa County Public Works Department reviews any recommendations and proceeds with those they feel have merit. Any major activities or policy issues generally go before the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors for approval. Mariposa County posts official minutes of YWMDAC minutes after they are approved.

Burn Pile

Mariposa County Public Works Department invited everyone to attend a meeting at the burn pile, held on November 14, 2011. Peter Rei, Director of Public Works, Pam Brochini, Facilities Manager, Deputy Fire Chief Jim Middleton, and a dozen residents attended the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues about the community burn pile, which has been in its present location since before 1985. The County recently received a letter from Yosemite West Associates (a.k.a. “the doctors”) who own the land where the burn pile is located. In the letter, they expressed concern it is “being used as a public dump site” and want to eliminate “this hazardous situation” (use of the burn pile) due to the possible liability.

The residents who attended the meeting provided background and context for the County. Issues of promises made, land ownership, and future development were identified. It was decided that the next YWMDAC meeting, scheduled for November 30th (see p.14), would be used to assemble information from the committee and the public for the County to use to reach resolution with the property owners.

Please direct any questions or comments you may have in advance of the meeting to Mariposa County Public Works Department, 209-966-5356. YWPHI has provided information about these meetings as a service to the community and is not involved in the management of the burn pile in any way.

YWPHI Board of Directors (2011-2012)

Kelly Rich, President; Mike Stepien, Vice President; Bill Duff, Secretary; Members Todd (Kipper) Caranto, Rea Jackman, Kim O'Neil, and Scott Renfro.

YWPHI Committees (2011-2012)

position available, Newsletter Editor; Kim O'Neil, Webmaster and Treasurer (*looking for replacements*); and John Mock, Fire Safety.

Yosemite West Property & Homeowners, Inc.
7585 Henness Ridge Road
Yosemite National Park, CA 95389-9108

Address Correction Requested





Yosemite West Property & Homeowners, Inc. **2011 In-Kind Contribution**
www.YosemiteWest.org

Yosemite West Defensible Space Project

The hours of volunteer labor that you put in each year for fire safety activities on your property have a dollar value. This value and any out-of-pocket expenses is called an *In-Kind Contribution*. It is used to satisfy the community match required by our 2011 National Fire Plan grant from the National Park Service through the California Fire Safe Council.

Landowner Name(s): _____

Local Address (☒ House or ☐ Vacant Lot): _____

Indicate your 2011 <i>In-Kind Contribution</i> for fuel reduction that improves community-wide defensible space through the two options below. Include only hours or expenses after 1-1-2011.		
#1 Time volunteered to conduct fuel reduction valued at a fixed rate of \$18 per hour.	# Hours worked	Amount
Brushing the forest floor - raking pine needles, picking up pine cones, removing dead/downed wood, increasing space between shrubs Thinning the forest - removing dead trees, reducing ladder fuels, increasing space between trees Improving access to your property - reducing vegetation/trees near driveway and/or parking areas Debris removal - hauling to the community burn pile, burning on your property, piling for curbside chipping		\$
#2 Out-of-pocket expenses incurred for hiring independent labor to conduct fuel reduction.		
Name payee(s) and briefly describe services provided:		\$
Total 2011 In-Kind Contribution:		\$

Please complete and submit your *In-Kind Contribution* form to:

YWPHI, 7585 Henness Ridge Road, Yosemite National Park, CA 95389-9108.

Email any questions to firesafety@yosemitewest.org.