

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

In the West

Newsletter
April 2012

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President's Spring Message

by Kelly Rich, YWPHI President (2011-12)

Greetings all! I always think of Yosemite West as a peaceful and quiet place where one can enjoy the beauty of the mountains. However, lately there's been a lot of activity in our small community.

For starters, I need to point out that the YWPHI Board of Directors has vacancies (see p.2-3). Please consider joining the Board if you would like to pitch in with community-oriented activities.

By now, everybody should have received a notice from Mariposa County Public Works stating that the community burn pile has been closed and that we are no longer allowed access to this area (p.4-6). The YWPHI Board of Directors is fully aware of the problems this raises and is exploring alternatives in order to facilitate a community-wide dialogue (p.7-9). That said, the YWPHI Board of Directors has approved funds to conduct a spring chipping program that will be available free of cost to all community members (p.10). The Board feels this is an excellent use of our funds.

We have also witnessed a dangerous increase in coyote activity in Yosemite West (p.12-13). This has become a real personal safety issue, so please ensure that you and any of your guests are aware of the issue and your surroundings, and don't encourage wild animals by feeding them or allowing them to gain access to dumpsters.

In other news, our neighbor, the Pacific Forest Trust (PFT), has proposed a Boundary

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President's Message continued from page 1

Line Adjustment to Yosemite National Park, which requires an act of Congress (p.15). The YWPHI Board of Directors has been in touch with Paul Mason, PFT's Vice President of Policy & Incentives, who will attend our Memorial Day Weekend picnic (p.9) to present an overview of the BLA and answer your questions.

On the social front, we've planned two events for our community. The Memorial Day Picnic will be Sunday, May 27th (p.9), and we will be joined by guest speaker Paul Mason. In addition, we will hold the 2nd Annual YWPHI Community Barbecue on Saturday, July 7th (p.15). For this event, there's no Yosemite West business. Instead, we want for all to share good times and stories over food and refreshments. I plan to be at both of these events and I look forward to meeting many of you there!

Minutes from YWPHI Board Meetings

Approved minutes from previous YWPHI Board of Directors' meetings are archived online at <http://yosemitewest.org/board.htm>. The minutes from the October 12, 2011 Board meeting are now online.

***In the West* Publication**

Thanks to the contributors to this edition of *In the West*: guest co-editors Kim O'Neil and John Mock; and Rea Jackman, Scott Renfro, and Kelly Rich from the YWPHI Board of Directors who edited, proofread and approved the content for publication.

Since Tom Lambert's resignation as Newsletter Editor more than a year ago, YWPHI has been looking for someone to fill this position. The recent issues of the newsletter have been guest edited.

Please contact Kelly Rich at president@yosemitewest.org if you are

interested in contributing to the newsletter production in any way.

YWPHI Board Member Vacancies

by Kelly Rich

I'd like to inform our members that we have one vacancy on the YWPHI Board of Directors due to Bill Duff's resignation. We'd like to thank Bill for his service on the Board and are looking for someone to fill this vacancy. Meanwhile, current Board member Scott Renfro has graciously volunteered to assume the role of Secretary.

While we currently have all officer positions filled (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer), our beloved Treasurer, Kim O'Neil, is planning to resign from the Board as soon as a replacement is found. She's looking forward to taking a long overdue break from the duties she's been fulfilling (Board member, eight years; Webmaster, nine years; Newsletter Editor, three years; and Treasurer, more than four years). Her pending resignation will open up a second vacancy on the YWPHI Board and we would like to keep the Board functioning at full capacity.

If you have the skills it takes to be Treasurer (such as knowledge of QuickBooks software and basic accounting practices) or are a quick study, then we would be grateful for your participation in that role. Please feel free to email any specific questions you may have about the Treasurer's position to Kim at treasurer@yosemitewest.org. While the duties of Treasurer are not the easiest, they are important and they come with great community respect!

Kelly Rich and Scott Renfro are assuming the shared role of webmaster.

The Board is open to all YWPHI members in good standing (i.e., whose dues are current), whether homeowners or vacant lot owners, new residents or old, full-time or part-time, including *you*.

The YWPHI Board consists of seven Directors who serve three-year terms. Duties as a Board member include attending quarterly meetings, which can be done in person in Yosemite West or via a toll-free conference call-in number from anywhere you choose. Each meeting lasts between one and two hours. Aside from the meetings, you can participate in other activities identified in the YHPHI Bylaws, which you can find on our website, <http://yosemitewest.org/bylaw.htm>.

Currently, we are dealing with community issues such as trash and how it attracts and negatively habituates wildlife, implementation of our fifth National Fire Plan grant, upgrading the community fire equipment and its storage and various other issues that arise in our unique community. Review our past meeting minutes to see just what it is we do, <http://yosemitewest.org/board.htm#minutes>.

If you are excited or curious about getting involved, please contact me at president@yosemitewest.org.

For further information on the current YWPHI Board of Directors and our assignments and committees, please see <http://yosemitewest.org/board.htm#bod>.

Website Updates

YWPHI has redesigned and simplified the navigation of our website by adding easy-to-use drop-down menus. The site map has been updated and can help you find specific documents. We have also uploaded several historic documents, such as the original 1967 subdivision agreement and multiple Mariposa County Supervisors' resolutions authorizing our Maintenance District. If you haven't visited the YWPHI website, yosemitewest.org, in a while, we encourage you to have a fresh look.

Emergency Telephone Tree Updates

In May 2012, YWPHI will be distributing the annually updated version of the **YOSEMITE WEST EMERGENCY TELEPHONE TREE** to homeowners. Please double check your contact information on the current telephone tree for accuracy. If any of your contact information is inaccurate or has changed, or if you have completed construction of a new house and want to be added to the telephone tree, please email us at info@yosemitewest.org no later than April 15, 2012.

The Board is also researching the use of a service to make telephone tree calls, which has become very affordable in recent years. This would let us activate the phone tree without relying on each individual personally calling the next. Instead, we would call the service to record the message, and the service would call each of us independently. Look forward to a presentation of this new concept at the YWPHI Annual Meeting, September 2, 2012.

About YWPHI

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

Trash Cooperative Openings

The Yosemite West Trash Cooperative, which provides a means to dispose of household garbage, currently has two openings. The cooperative's one four-yard dumpster is on Yosemite Park Way (Lot 207). The current fee is approximately:

\$100 for part-time residents;
\$200 for full-time residents; and
\$300 for transient rental operators, and Bed
& Breakfasts.

The fee is collected approximately every five months and depends on the number of participants and pickups. Space in the dumpster and the number of regularly scheduled pick ups are limited, so preference

will be given to a prospective member who would not generate substantial quantities of garbage. Contact Rea Jackman by email at jerryrea@att.net if you are interested in joining.

All garbage dumpsters in Yosemite West are privately owned since there is no public garbage disposal system. Dumping household waste in the National Park Service dumpsters is illegal and subject to a fine.

Burn Pile Banishment

The community burn pile located at the bottom of the subdivision off Yosemite Park Way is no longer available to anyone for any purpose. **Yes, it's true - no more burn pile.**

The Yosemite West Maintenance District Advisory Committee met March 2, 2012 with members of the public and representatives from Mariposa County's Public Works Department present. The Public Works Director, Peter Rei (prei@mariposacounty.org), explained that Yosemite West Associates (aka "the doctors"), who are the original developers of Yosemite West and the owners of the land where the Yosemite West community burn pile is located, expressed liability concerns in a September 7, 2011 letter (see p.5) about the existence of the burn pile.

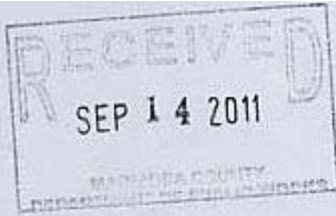
Two community meetings were held to discuss this issue on November 14 and 30, 2011 and were attended by Public Works staff, the County Fire Marshall and residents. Community members commented that the burn pile has been in the same location for at least thirty years, it has always been managed

by Public Works, and that the original subdivision agreement (download a copy from the home page or at <http://www.yosemitewest.org/ywsub1967.pdf>) between Mariposa County and the developers calls for a dedicated dump site below the subdivision, a condition that has not been fulfilled. **However, at the March 2, 2012 meeting Peter Rei said that the burn pile can no longer be used.**

Public Works prepared and mailed a letter of explanation dated March 27, 2012 to property owners (see p.6).

The majority of property owners in Yosemite West opt to haul their pine needles and limbs to the burn pile rather than burning debris on their own property. We understand this news will likely come as a shock and concern to many property owners, and that the timing of the closure is regrettable due to the potential fire danger we all face after this abnormally dry winter.

If you have any questions, please contact the Mariposa County Public Works Department (209-966-5356) and/or the land owners, Yosemite West Associates, P.O. Box 6232, San Jose, CA 95150-6232.



September 7, 2011

Mr. Peter Rei
Mariposa County Public works Director
4639 Ben Hur Road
Mariposa, CA 94338

Dear Mr. Rei,

I am writing to you as President of Yosemite West Associates. The former President, Dr. Jack Herring, whom you may have known, recently passed away. A newly formed Yosemite West Associates Board of Directors has been having frequent meetings in order to update ourselves with the current problems on our land.

In this letter I will address one major problem which is the area on our property being used as a public dump site; apparently with the County's approval. This site has been reported to us by several eyewitnesses who have viewed it and have voiced their concerns about the potential fire hazard and toxic pollution inherent in the situation. The materials accumulated there are burned every fall under full cooperation and knowledge of County personnel. There are two locked gates which should act to prevent entry into this area. They are breached with help of County personnel by them unlocking the gates to allow access. This is a huge possible liability on our property perpetrated in part by your employees. With this letter, you are being informed of this potential liability and will be held accountable.

Now that we are aware of this hazardous situation we feel obligated to officially report it to you and the County officials. We would hope, and expect you to take appropriate steps to eliminate this potential hazardous practice of allowing local residents to dump their refuse on our private property. This is not only hazardous to our property and surrounding properties, but also to Yosemite National Forest and Park.

Sincerely,

Jay L. Dickerson
President, Yosemite West Associates

COUNTY of MARIPOSA



Peter M. Rei
Director

4639 Ben Hur Road
Mariposa, CA 95338
Phone: (209) 966-5356
Fax: (209) 966-2828

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Divisions of:

Administration	Airport
Cemeteries	County Surveyor
Design & Construction	Engineering
Facilities	Parks & Rec.
Roads	Solid Waste
Transportation	Fleet Maintenance

March 27, 2012

ATTENTION

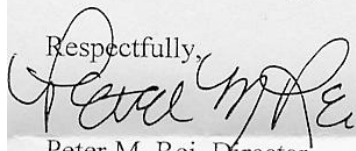
All Yosemite West Homeowners, Property owners, Residents, Rental Management Agencies or Property Caretakers:

Mariposa County has been informed by a representative of the owners of the property where the "residential burn pile" is located that disposal of any kind at this location will no longer be allowed.

Effective immediately each property owner must make their own future arrangements for the disposal of any pine needles, tree branches and other yard debris for the upcoming season. This community burn pile will no longer exist for use.

Mariposa County will no longer be held responsible for opening, closing or for management or assistance of any kind in regards to this issue. We apologize for any inconvenience this will be for all of you however until this matter can be looked into further we can no longer be involved or responsible for any participation in this matter.

Respectfully,



Peter M. Rei, Director

Cc: Dr. Jay L. Dickerson, President, Yosemite West Associates
Lee Stetson, District 1 Supervisor
Richard Benson, CAO
Steve Dahlem, County Counsel
Jeff Hornacek, President, YWMDAC
Pamela Brochini, Facilities Manager

Possible Alternatives to Burn Pile

YWPHI recently asked NPS and others to help us brainstorm alternatives to the burn pile for the community. It is imperative to remind everyone that YWPHI is a voluntary membership organization and is in no way obligated to provide an alternative to the burn pile for the community. YWPHI has never managed nor been responsible for the burn pile in any way; Mariposa County Public Works Department has always had that responsibility.

The reality is that ultimate responsibility for pine needle disposal and compliance with the State-mandated 100-foot defensible space clearance law lies with each property owner (see PRC §4291 Inspections, p.9). As the group representing approximately 50% of all property owners and almost 75% of all homeowners on Henness Ridge, YWPHI is helping to explore alternatives as a service to the community and to help facilitate a community-wide dialogue.

That said, some of the possible alternatives that Yosemite residents may have are (not in any prioritized order):

Alternative #1: Ask Yosemite West Associates to reconsider their position and allow the community and Mariposa County continued use of the burn pile at least for this season.

YWPHI mailed a letter to Yosemite West Associates on behalf of the community and is awaiting their reply.

Alternative #2: Pile and burn pine needles on your own property on permissive burn days in compliance with all permit requirements and other guidelines provided by the Mariposa County Burn Day Information Line (888-440-2876), and with a courtesy notification to Yosemite dispatch (209-379-1999).

Utilizing permissive burn days generally works for most full-time residents and is strongly urged by NPS as the best alternative. It is less

feasible for rental operators and second homeowners who either cannot handle the volume of pine needles or who cannot be present on permissive burn days. These are limited and are only announced each morning on the Mariposa County Burn Day Information Line. Burn days typically end for the season in early to mid-May.

NPS has asked for a courtesy call because in the past, park visitors and/or residents have called in Yosemite West burn piles as wildland fires and NPS has launched an initial attack fire response. The courtesy call will conserve park resources.

Alternative #3: Pay to dispose of pine needles and debris by privately hauling to a dump or County transfer station.

Hauling to a dump or County transfer station is impractical for many property owners. Some do not own or have access to pickup trucks or trailers. Others may find the expense, volume of debris, travel distance, and limited hours of operation of such sites too impractical. The Transfer Station Schedules and contact information are on the Mariposa County Public Works Department's Solid Waste & Recycling webpage,

<http://mariposacounty.org/index.aspx?nid=232>.

Yosemite West is not permitted to use NPS burn piles. Deputy Chief Deron Mills of the Yosemite Fire Management office explains,

"We [NPS] are not currently able to effectively manage the biomass already generated by park operations, DNC [the park concessionaire Delaware North Corporation] operations and the additional debris brought in by local [park] residents. The difference between Wawona and Y-West is that Wawona is a park in-holding and Y-West is located outside of the park and not under NPS jurisdiction. Y-West is in a State Responsibility Area (CalFire), but managed under the Direct Protection of the Sierra National Forest with regard to wildland fire. They are the agencies responsible for defensible space compliance enforcement under [§]4291 of the California Public

Resource[s] Code [(see p.9)]. Whereas, Wawona, Foresta, and El Portal fall under NPS Direct Protection and we (NPS) enforce the 4291 PRC laws. There are also financial implications and personnel time commitments to consider in expanding our current burn pile operations which we are not in a position to entertain currently. There are many times throughout the year that we have to close our burn pile areas because they are full, which has impacts on other park operations. We don't currently allow biomass from outside the park from any other communities such as Fish Camp and Sugar Pine either."

Alternative #4: Find a new location for a new burn pile.

NPS has said it is *not* in a position to establish a burn pile for Yosemite West on NPS land. Two possible alternatives to explore are on Sierra National Forest land adjacent to Yosemite West, and on Mariposa County parcels below the community (i.e., the "school lot" and/or near the Wastewater Treatment Facility). When informally asked, however, Mariposa County said it does not have the resources to establish or manage a new burn pile on its land, and Mariposa County views it as the *community's responsibility* to find a solution. Sierra National Forest has not yet been approached.

Alternative #5: Inquire about Mariposa County Fire Safe Council "hauling program."

YWPHI contacted Bob Bartholemew at the Mariposa Fire Safe Council. He said they do not have a "hauling program," but he promised to look into options and reply soon.

Alternative #6: Contact Mariposa County Solid Waste & Recycling Division.

YWPHI asked District 1 Supervisor Lee Stetson to request Public Works to urgently pursue their own disposal alternatives with Solid Waste, which is a division within Public Works. This would likely require a fee, and a place to stage debris would still be needed.

Contact Greg Olivier, Solid Waste Manager (golivier@mariposacounty.org).

Alternative #7: Yosemite National Park may be willing to consider acquisition of an air curtain burner and bio-power generator, which may become a long-term solution available to neighboring communities.

The use of this technology (eg, Air Burners, Inc., Bio Power, etc.), although clean and efficient, raises complex issues of financing, ownership, transportation, maintenance and operation, and liability.

Mariposa County Fire Marshall, Deputy Chief Jim Middleton noted that the Mariposa County Air Pollution Control District is becoming increasingly unable to allow large, open air pile burning. When such burning no longer becomes possible, he said, then an air curtain burner will become the only realistic on-site method for dispersing of biomass.

Alternative #8: Explore Biomass Utilization.

YWPHI contacted a local firm that specializes in biomass utilization. At present the volume of vegetative material generated in Yosemite West is insufficient to make it a viable option, and there presently is no funding source to pay for it.

We welcome additional alternatives to add to the dialogue.

Best Short-Term Solutions

The most viable short-term solutions seem to be either **burning** pine needles on site or **hauling** pine needles to a dump or County transfer station. **Please keep in mind that both burning and hauling will take more time than you're used to.** Hauling to NPS burn piles is *not* permitted.

If you own a vacation rental, we urge you to carefully and thoroughly discuss your options with your property manager to determine what will happen on your property. There will likely be significant implications for any alternative due to a combination of increased labor and transportation costs, liability concerns if someone else burns on your property, and the potential for citations and/or penalties for noncompliance with State-mandated defensible space clearance guidelines. If you don't know, please ask.

Doing nothing is not an option. It will only increase community fire danger.

PRC §4291 Inspections

CalFire coordinates with the USDA Forest Service to conduct annual property inspections for compliance with California Public Resources Code §4291, the State's 100-foot defensible space law. Typically these inspections start shortly after July 4th.

Here are some points to keep in mind to help comply with State law and facilitate community-wide defensible space:

→ Some residents have done fuel reduction, but not debris disposal, and left debris on the property. **To succeed at creating community-wide defensible space, remove debris from the property and the interior of the community.** Raking or hauling debris to the edge of your property does not create defensible space.

→ Some residents raked pine needles in a 30-foot circle around their house, but not to their property lines. Remove *all* pine needles.

→ Some residents have vegetation and trees too close to their propane tanks; State law requires at least 10 feet of clearance in all directions.

→ Some residents have defensible space on some or most of their property, but not uniformly on all of it (especially new construction). **Make sure your defensible space encircles your house and extends out equally in all directions, so as to comply fully with PRC §4291.**

Please contact the CalFire Mariposa-Merced Unit (MMU, 209-966-3622) with any questions you may about the inspections.

The Picnic Will Go On!

The Memorial Day Weekend Picnic has become YWPHI's most well-attended annual community event. We see no reason to stop a good thing, even though there will be no formal community cleanup. YWPHI sponsors the picnic lunch and invites everyone in the community starting at 12:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 27th, on the south side of Henness Circle at Betty Clark's house, 7486 Henness Circle. Please bring your own chairs; we'll provide the rest - we hope you join us!

The picnic is not only time to eat, drink and unwind, but it will be an opportunity for all of us to talk about the recent changes with the burn pile and what it means going forward, so come hungry and come with ideas to share.

Food will be served at noon, and our guest speaker will give a short presentation at 12:30 p.m. followed by a Q&A.

Guest Speaker at Picnic

We are pleased to announce that **Paul Mason, Vice President of Policy & Incentives for the Pacific Forest Trust**, will be the guest speaker at this year's picnic, Sunday, May 27th. Paul will speak about the Yosemite National Park Boundary Line Adjustment that has been proposed by the Pacific Forest Trust (see p.15).

Free Chipping Program

YWPHI is again proud to offer free chipping to everyone in the community. This is the eighth consecutive year that YWPHI is facilitating fuel reduction; YWPHI funded chipping programs 2005-2008, and National Fire Plan grant funding awarded to YWPHI paid for fuel reduction and chipping 2009-2011. However, National Fire Plan grant funding is no longer available for defensible space work and chipping inside the community, so YWPHI will be paying for one day - and one day only - of free chipping for owner-made curbside piles. The chipping crew will make just one pass through the community. Time will be limited, so the process needs to be efficient.

YWPHI decided, in part, to incur the expense for chipping because the storm the last weekend of winter brought heavy, wet snow and strong winds that broke many tree limbs. When the snow finally melts, property owners may find large broken limbs on the ground that are suitable for chipping and otherwise would be difficult to dispose of.

To Sign Up for Free Chipping

Participation takes three easy steps:

1. Make your curbside chipping pile by 7 a.m., Tuesday, May 29th.
2. Flag your pile(s) using the pink flagging tape provided in the mailbox shed.
3. Email firesafety@yosemitewest.org no later than May 15th to inform us that you have a pile; if you do not contact the YWPHI Fire Safety Committee, your pile will *not* get on the work list and it will *not* be chipped.

Chipping Pile Guidelines

Follow these guidelines when making your curbside pile for chipping.

CHIPPING PILE "DO'S"

- Hand pile brush and branches with cut ends pointing in the same direction toward the street on your property near the curb.

- Generate substantial-sized piles; consolidate piles with your neighbors where possible, which will speed up the chipping.

CHIPPING PILE "DON'TS"

- No piles in the street.
- No rocks, pine needles or cones or garbage.
- No limb greater than 8 inches in diameter.
- No machine-made or dozer-made piles.
- No "kindling-sized" piles, which wastes the crew's time (i.e., if it looks like kindling, it is).

Rethinking the Memorial Day Weekend Cleanup

We all owe a debt of gratitude to former YWPHI Board members and residents who many years ago started the Memorial Day Weekend Cleanup and organized the community. Their efforts paved the way to making Yosemite West Fire Safe.

However, times change, and now is the time to rethink the concept of the Memorial Day Weekend Cleanup. The Cleanup provided needed structure and support for pine needle cleanup, particularly for second homeowners who enjoyed the holiday work weekend in Yosemite West.

Full-time residents and vacation rental operators are usually done with pine needle cleanup earlier in the spring, well before Memorial Day Weekend - the cooler temperatures are more conducive to the laborious task, the more regular permissive burn days make it easier and safer to burn pine needles, and fewer lizards and skinks lie lurking in the pine needles when days are cool. Many full-time residents and vacation rental operators also do their pine needles twice a year - once in spring *and* once in fall. In fall, the needles are dry and it's much quicker and easier to burn them - rather than waiting for soggy pine needles to dry out in the spring - and the task is essentially divided in half.

We'd like to urge everyone to consider their own fall pine needle cleanup in addition to the standard springtime activities.

Fire Safety

<http://yosemitewest.org/firesafe.htm>

2011 National Fire Plan Grant Status

YWPHI has been awarded \$94,350, provided by a National Fire Plan grant from the National Park Service (NPS) through the California Fire Safe Council (FSC), to create defensible space on 44.45 acres in Yosemite West Project Area YW-004. In October 2011 NPS signed an agreement with the California FSC and in December 2011 NPS released funding to the California FSC, enabling the project to go forward.

In January 2012, the California FSC released the funding to the project's fiscal sponsor, which enables implementation of on-the-ground work to start. YWPHI put out a Request for Bid to prospective contractors, and completed an agreement with the successful bidder, California Reforestation of Sonora. Of course after sixty-two days with zero precipitation, it then started snowing. Work

will start as soon as weather conditions permit and is expected to take four weeks.

The project will be completed by July 15, 2012. For updates on the implementation of our National Fire Plan grants, visit <http://yosemitewest.org/grants.htm>.

Hose Lay DVD

Last July, YWPHI's Fire Safety Committee arranged with the Mariposa County Fire Department and the National Park Service to conduct a "hose lay," a training session in basic fire hose handling and fire hydrant operation where participants learned how to open/close a fire hydrant and operate a fire hose. Malcolm Neal, the Fire Safety Committee's Fire Equipment Manager & Hose Lay Coordinator prepared a DVD of the training, which YWPHI mailed to homeowners in December 2011. We thank Malcolm for preparing the DVD for distribution. Please email Malcolm at coordinator@yosemitewest.org with any questions you may have.

Yosemite Bear Update

Hello, it's spring. The park's online *Daily Report* reminds us all:

"Yosemite's bears are awake and hungry! With low precipitation over the winter, natural foods such as grasses may be harder for bears to find. As spring quickly approaches, it is time to check our vigilance against attracting bears into our neighborhoods, and even into our homes! We all have the responsibility of doing everything within our capabilities to minimize the contact our bears have with human food and trash. Failure to do so could not only result in fines but could also result in a bear becoming aggressive, which could lead to the death of a bear. Please use these reminders to help keep both you and bears safe this year.

→ Make sure freezers are only stored inside your home, or in garages that are hard-sided and made of sturdy walls and doors. Freezers in garages must have a minimum of two widely-spaced locks on the freezer doors, and all windows to garages containing freezers must remain shut and locked at all times.

→ Store pet food and recycling in a secure part of your house. Feeding pets outside can attract bears and other wildlife including [coyotes,] raccoons, and skunks to your home. We recommend feeding your pets indoors.

→ Although it may still be too cool to leave your windows open, warm weather is just around the corner. Remember that bears can act like burglars. Take the same precautions you would if you lived in an urban area. Keep all downstairs windows and doors closed when you are not home. You can leave windows open in occupied rooms for ventilation, but please close them when you go to sleep, or leave the house.

→ Look around your house and clean up or put away things that would be of interest to bears, such as a greasy barbecues, ice chests, bird feeders, and recycling.

→ Your vehicles should be free of all food, trash, and other scented items.

To report any bear activity [in the park] or possible attractants, call the Save-a-Bear Hotline at 209-372-0322. The welfare of Yosemite's bears is in all of our hands."

Around the Neighborhood

Don't Feed Wildlife

Feeding wildlife creates what wildlife biologists call "habituated wildlife" that can pose physical danger to humans. Last fall and throughout this winter, there have been several incidents with coyotes in Yosemite West:

- a coyote was bit on its right rear leg by a resident's unleashed dog and the coyote has been seen on a regular basis limping through the neighborhood;
- a coyote attacked and injured another resident's dog, which then required surgery;
- several residents on foot and on bicycles have reported coyotes stalking them and approaching within a few feet (Robert Kroon can attest to that!); and
- residents and tourists have been seen feeding coyotes.

YWPHI took a proactive response in December 2011 by creating and mailing to all homeowners in Yosemite West an educational overview of the situation and its dangers, a two-page Coyote Q&A, and a **KEEP ME WILD** brochure from the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG). YWPHI also translated this material into Spanish and arranged for its distribution in February 2012 to the Spanish-speaking employees of vacation rental operators who live in Yosemite West.

Despite these efforts, the incidents seem to be escalating; coyotes are still accessing human food at dumpsters, and people continue feeding the coyotes. This behavior is harmful to the wildlife and to the community. If you didn't understand the literature or the danger feeding wildlife creates, or if you've lost the material, never got it, or just want another copy, please visit either of these links to download a copy:

for the English version,
<http://yosemitewest.org/coyote2011-12-eng.pdf>;
or for the Spanish version,
<http://yosemitewest.org/coyote2011-12-spa.pdf>.

We encourage *all* vacation rental operators to distribute this information to guests on an ongoing basis as well. If you are a vacation rental owner who does not know if your guests are receiving this information, please ask your property manager.

What coyotes are exhibiting in Yosemite West is habituated behavior, not wild behavior. Coyotes are by nature fearful of humans. When coyotes come around houses and yards during daylight hours, or are following people and threatening pets, there is a problem.

Coyotes become habituated when people feed them, either intentionally or unintentionally. When coyotes gain access to human food and garbage, their behavior changes. They lose caution and fear, and increase their daytime activities. Habituated coyotes pose a threat to people and especially to children. Coyotes become aggressive toward humans when they have been protected and allowed to coexist with people. In these cases, coyotes can become quite bold.

The DFG is aware of and concerned about the situation in Yosemite West and recommends the following actions:

- leave an injured coyote alone and do not try to approach or help it by offering food or water;
- do not feed wildlife or leave garbage or pet food available where coyotes can scavenge;
 - secure pets at all times, leash pets when out for a walk, and bring pets indoors at night;
- do not leave young children or pets outside unattended;
- haze any coyote that approaches or follows you by throwing light objects (sticks, pine cones, rocks) or by making loud noises (yelling, clapping); and

- consider carrying pepper spray when walking in the neighborhood, particularly with a small dog.

Report any aggressiveness displayed by coyotes to DFG regional headquarters in Fresno (559-243-4005) or DFG Wildlife Biologist Tim Kroeker (559-641-7592, tkroeker@dfg.ca.gov) soon after an incident, so that DFG can interview you, monitor the situation, and take appropriate action. Report any incident occurring within the national park's boundary to park officials. In the event of an actual ongoing or imminent attack by wildlife, call 911.

We need everyone to be aware and diligent. Please inform your guests accordingly.

Feeding Wildlife is Illegal

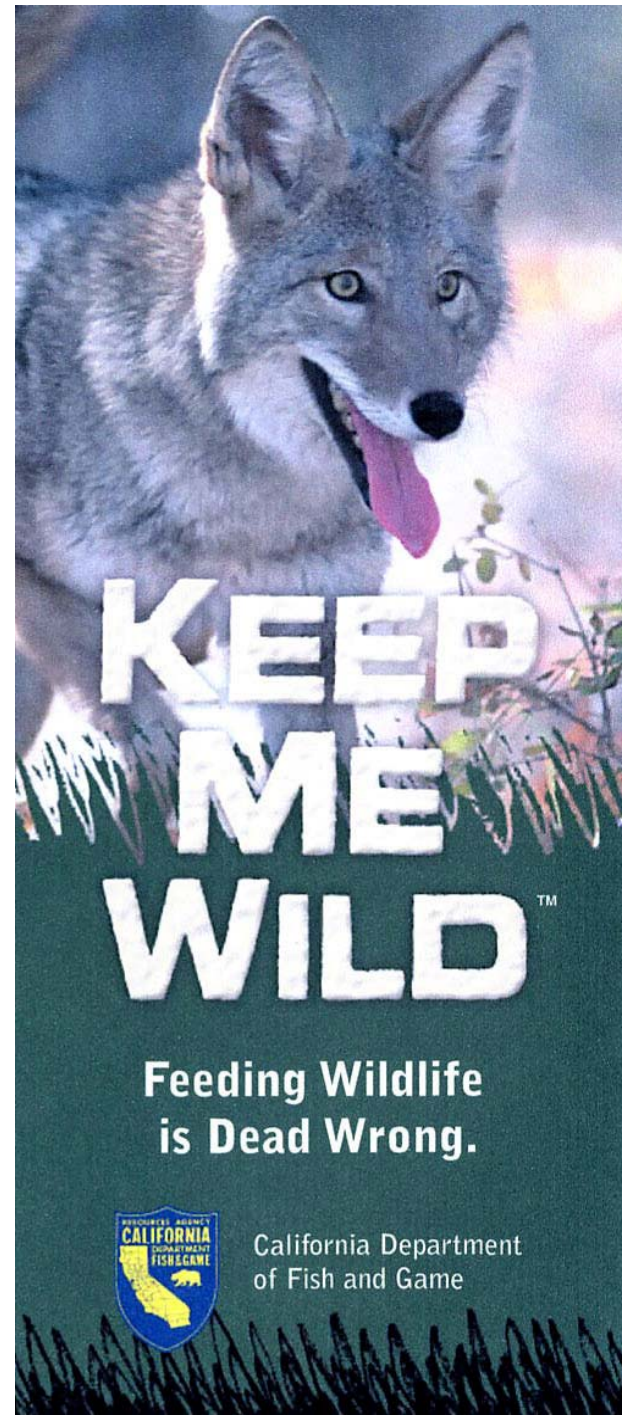
The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) informed the local warden of the situation in Yosemite West. **If you see anyone feeding coyotes, gather as much information as possible, and call the DFG's dispatch CAL-TIP hotline at 888-334-2258.** A warden can then investigate.

Feeding coyotes is a violation of the California Code of Regulations, 251.1 Harassment of Animals, which reads:

"Except as otherwise authorized in these regulations or in the Fish and Game Code, no person shall harass, herd or drive any game or nongame bird or mammal or furbearing mammal. For the purposes of this section, harass is defined as an intentional act which disrupts an animal's normal behavior patterns, which includes, but is not limited to, breeding, feeding or sheltering. This section does not apply to a landowner or tenant who drives or herds birds or mammals for the purpose of preventing damage to private or public property, including aquaculture and agriculture crops."

The DFG reports that you can be cited for feeding coyotes; it is a misdemeanor with up to \$1,000 fine and six months in jail.

Folks, "This ain't Disneyland" - it's the buffer zone of the Yosemite Wilderness and those are wild animals! You need to be responsible for your actions and those of people you invite onto your property.



Mailbox Cluster has a New "Roof"

We'd like to thank Jerry Jackman for volunteering to design, arrange for the manufacture of, and install a metal roof for the new mailbox cluster. The postal carrier alerted us to a problem last winter; snow and ice would build up on top of the boxes either preventing them from being opened and/or allowing moisture to drip down into the boxes. The simple, but clever, sloped overhanging roof design (see below) has solved the problem. YWPHI paid for all the materials.



Milestones

In March 2012 long-time second homeowners and active community members Pete and Joan Ulyatt sold the Yosemite West home they enjoyed and lovingly maintained. YWPHI and the community would like to thank them for the time they committed to Yosemite West over the years; Pete served for almost a decade each on the Planning and Maintenance advisory committees, and Joan served as YWPHI Treasurer for many years.

Maintenance District Updates

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://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.

YWPHI has reported on recent YWMDAC meetings. However, as of the most recent meeting on March 2, 2012, Mariposa County arranged for and provided a Public Works staff member to take minutes of the meeting. YWPHI will not summarize that meeting as the County will be able to make minutes available to the committee and public once they are approved.

Roles & Responsibilities

As a reminder, YWPHI reports about the activities of and topics of interest to the Yosemite West Maintenance District Advisory Committee (YWMDAC) as a service to the community. YWPHI 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.

Yosemite National Park Boundary Line Adjustment

The Pacific Forest Trust (PFT, pacificforest.org) has proposed a Boundary Line Adjustment for the western part of Yosemite National Park. Their website explains that:

"Since 2004, PFT has been working with willing sellers to purchase and conserve nearly 2,000 acres of forests, meadows, rocky ridges, and streams on Yosemite National Park's western boundary. These three parcels of lands were part of the original design of the national treasure envisioned by John Muir in 1906, but were excluded from the Park's boundaries due to political pressure at the time. In 2012 Congress can remedy this exclusion with a slight adjustment of the Park's boundary lines. A Boundary Line Adjustment (BLA) will enable the Park Service to add these key tracts of land, decreasing the development threat along the western border, enhancing wildlife habitat, scenic vistas and recreational opportunities, and completing the original vision of John Muir."

The BLA does not sell, transfer, or otherwise convey land to the Yosemite National Park. It merely allows for two willing landowners to have the option to do so in the future. The area within the BLA was once inside the original park boundaries, but was excluded in 1906 due to timber interests. View a map showing the 1906 exclusion at http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/yosemite_resources/images/illustration_55.jpg.

Should the BLA proceed, its impact on property values is unknown. However, local realtors currently list properties adjacent to the national park at a higher value than parcels not adjacent to the park boundary.

Visit the PFT website at <http://pacificforest.org/Yosemite-Anniversary-BLA.html> to read more about this initiative. The proposed BLA is supported by the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors, California legislators Olsen and Berryhill, the California

Natural Resources Agency, the Yosemite Conservancy (whose Executive Director is former Superintendent Mike Tollefson), and Yosemite West Associates (the original developers of Yosemite West), all of whose letters of support are listed in the upper right-hand corner of the PFT website.

PFT expects to hold public meetings on the topic this summer, including a Q&A session with Paul Mason, PFT Vice President of Policy & Incentives, at our annual Memorial Day Weekend picnic (see p.9 for details). Meanwhile you can learn more about their proposal by following the links on their website. If you have further questions you can contact Paul Mason (916-214-1382, pmason@pacificforest.org).

You can also contact our legislators if you wish to express support for the proposal at:

Senator Dianne Feinstein's Office

James Peterson, Legislative Assistant
U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Telephone: 202-224-3841

Representative Jeff Denham's Office

Ryan Hanretty, Legislative Assistant
Representative Jeff Denham
1605 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Telephone: 202-225-4540

Summer Barbecue

YWPHI invites everyone to our 2nd Annual YWPHI Community Barbecue on Saturday, July 7th from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. in Mike and Barbara Stepien's backyard, 7595 Azalea Lane.

All you need to bring are chairs; YWPHI will be providing everything else - food, drinks, etc. We can kick up our heels, relax and just enjoy each other's company.

YWPHI Board of Directors (2011-2012)

Kelly Rich, President; Mike Stepien, Vice President; Scott Renfro, Secretary; Kimberley O'Neil, *Treasurer (looking for replacement)*; Todd "Kipper" Caranto, Rea Jackman, members; and *one Board vacancy. Vacancy, Newsletter Editor*; Kelly Rich, Webmaster; John Mock, Chair, Fire Safety Committee; and Rea Jackman and Barbara Stepien, Hospitality Committee.

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

Address Correction Requested