



Yosemite West Property &  
Homeowners, Inc.  
[www.yosemitewest.org](http://www.yosemitewest.org)

## *In the West*

Newsletter  
April 2005

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### **President's Spring Message**

by Debby Hagan

YWPHI President (2004-2005)

This newsletter is strongly focused on improving the fire safety capabilities for the entire Yosemite West community. Consequently, the YWPHI Board of Directors is mailing this issue of *In the West* to all property owners in Yosemite West. I hope that those of you who have not yet joined YWPHI will reconsider becoming a member (p.2) after seeing how hard this organization works to better our community. Also, please consider signing up for an e-Newsletter to facilitate distribution of the newsletter (p.3).

**Wildfire Awareness Week**, which starts May 9th, gives property owners the opportunity to prepare for the upcoming fire season. I want to encourage *everyone* to clean their lots this year in preparation for fire season. Detailed information about the spring chipping program (p.5)

and the annual Memorial Day weekend yard clean-up (p.6-7) are presented in this issue. Exciting information about funding for Fire Safe projects in and around Yosemite West is also included (p.4).

In conjunction with the Memorial Day weekend yard clean-up on Sunday, May 29th, the YWPHI Board of Directors is providing a lunch for our community and sponsoring a very important presentation concerning plans to increase fire protection for all of us. The National Park Service and Wildland Fire Associates will be presenting the *Draft Yosemite West Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)* to the community. Please show your support for making Yosemite West a Fire Safe community by attending the picnic lunch and presentation.

### **Mark Your May Calendars**

- May 7 - Fire Hose Training 9-10:30 a.m.
- May 9-16 - Wildfire Awareness Week
- May 15 - Complete Piles for Spring Chipping Program
- May 29 - Memorial Day Weekend Yard Debris Clean-up 8-11 a.m.
- May 29 - Community Picnic & Fire Safe Presentations 11 a.m.

I hope to see all of you there!

## YWPHI Membership

We thank our renewing members and urge everyone to send in their \$25 annual household dues. We invite everyone who is not presently a member to join. YWPHI is working on many projects that benefit the entire community and welcomes support from everyone with an interest in Yosemite West. If you have a new neighbor or meet someone who recently bought a lot invite them to join YWPHI. You can download a membership form at [www.yosemitewest.org/members.htm](http://www.yosemitewest.org/members.htm) or call YWPHI President, Debby Hagan at ☎ (415) 834-1914 to receive a copy by mail. YWPHI represents the community, so please get involved and let us know what you would like us to be doing.

### Welcome New Members

- » Joe & Gisela Cooper
- » Jonathan Graves
- » George & Betty Gunny
- » Robert & Linda Judd
- » Keith Bischoff & Sherre Gonzales
- » John & Ana Flores

## YWPHI Website

The YWPHI website [www.yosemitewest.org](http://www.yosemitewest.org) continues to be the go-to place for community news and information. The website now averages more than 3,000 hits per month - a 30% increase during the first quarter of 2005 - with the highest visitation this year being more than 3,300 hits per month. We endeavor to update the website on a bimonthly basis.

A feature on the Home page and News page called What's New on the YWPHI Website provides a quick link to read the latest postings. It's our hope that the website enables YWPHI to communicate relevant information in a timely manner.

## YWPHI Has a New Mailing Home

YWPHI has a permanent mailing address at 7585 Henness Ridge Road, which is the address of the mailbox shed. YWPHI owns the unassigned locked mailboxes and is using one of these for business correspondence for YWPHI. Now mail can go to one central place instead of board of directors and committee members using their home addresses.

## Yosemite West e-Group

Email invitations went out in early February 2005 to all YWPHI members to join the Yosemite West e-Group. The Yosemite West e-group is a way for YWPHI members to communicate via email to share ideas and discuss community issues informally. Access to the Yosemite West e-group is restricted to YWPHI members. E-group members are identified by name and cannot be anonymous.

To log on to the Yosemite West e-group visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/YosemiteWest>. Please direct any questions about how to log in and use the Yosemite West e-Group to Randy Reed, the Yosemite West e-group manager ([egroup@yosemitewest.org](mailto:egroup@yosemitewest.org)).

### 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.

## ***In the West* Publication Schedule**

Many thanks go to these contributors to this edition of *In the West*: Yosemite West residents Garrett deBell, Tom Lambert, Don Pitts, Harry Hagan and John Mock; Yosemite National Park Fire Use Manager, Mike Beasley; Kimberly Bullock of the Mariposa County Fire Safe Council, and YWPHI Board of Directors' members Debby Hagan and Kim O'Neil.

We will endeavor to publish *In the West* on a quarterly basis with the issues coming out in January, April, July and October. In order to make this publishing schedule possible, we need to reduce the costs of producing and distributing the newsletter. We can easily do this by sending the newsletter via email (in the form of a PDF file) to as many members as possible.

Please email the newsletter editor at [newsletter@yosemitewest.org](mailto:newsletter@yosemitewest.org) to sign up to receive an e-newsletter. (If you do not email, we will continue to mail a hard copy to you.) We encourage everyone with email to sign up to receive an e-newsletter.

### **e-Newsletter**

The response to the request in the last issue for members to sign up to receive an e-Newsletter was only 10%. In order to publish the newsletter on a quarterly schedule, we need more members to sign up to receive an e-Newsletter by sending an email to [newsletter@yosemitewest.org](mailto:newsletter@yosemitewest.org).

Past issues of *In the West* will be added to the newsletter archive on, and available to download from, the YWPHI website at [www.yosemitewest.org/archive.htm](http://www.yosemitewest.org/archive.htm) when the next issue is published.

### **Vacancy on YWPHI Board of Directors**

We have one vacancy on the YWPHI Board of Directors. Please contact Debby Hagan (☎ 415-834-1914, [president@yosemitewest.org](mailto:president@yosemitewest.org)) if you would like to volunteer.

## **Is a Faster Internet in Our Future?**

by Tom Lambert

As most of you know by now, we still cannot get DSL service in Yosemite West. However, Phil, our neighborhood SBC tech, has said that the phone system we're on has more than enough capacity to handle broadband once we have the DSLM or DSL switch (pronounced "D-SLAM") installed. SBC will not give any answers regarding how many potential customers they would need before they would install the DSLM in our neighborhood, but obviously, SBC is looking to maximize its return on investment. One of the key ways SBC measures interest is by the number of people registered to be notified when DSL service becomes available. I've registered both of our numbers some time ago and this has not resulted in any spam email or telemarketing calls (other than the usual barrage of calls hawking phone services).

Unfortunately, getting registered to be notified is not entirely straightforward as there is no direct URL for the notification form. You need to go to the SBC home page at [www.sbc.com](http://www.sbc.com) and enter your phone number. When you do, you will now fail to qualify (unlike the false positives we were getting before) and you will be presented with a form to complete asking to be notified when DSL service becomes available. Please fill out the form as it seems to be the only way to pass your interest in having DSL service on to SBC.

It doesn't cost anything to register for future DSL service and registering does not commit you to subscribing to any service. We encourage everyone in Yosemite West with a phone line to register every phone line they have with SBC.

## Fire Safe Grants for Yosemite West

YWPHI submitted three “concept papers” to the Fire Safe California Grants Clearinghouse (<http://grants.firesafecouncil.org>) in February 2005, the crucial first step in applying for grants to improve community wildfire preparedness. The Fire Safe Council provides leadership and support to protect California homes, communities and environment from wildfires by supporting public education programs and funding community fire safety projects.

We are very pleased to announce that the Fire Safe California Grants Clearinghouse identified two of Yosemite West’s concept papers, each of which represents a distinct project, for funding by the National Park Service (NPS). The potential grant awards from NPS total more than a combined \$56,000 for work in our community.

The topics for the projects were specifically identified by Wildland Fire Associates, the consultants who were hired by NPS in 2004 to study the threat of wildland fire to Yosemite West. You can download and read the draft plan online at [www.yosemitewest.org/wfa50225.htm](http://www.yosemitewest.org/wfa50225.htm).

One project is to complete the *Draft Yosemite West Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)*, a document drafted by Wildland Fire Associates, and begin a Fire Safe program for Yosemite West. The other project is to complete the Yosemite West Shaded Fuel Break along the northern and western perimeter of Yosemite West, creating a 300-foot wide fuel break that will link up with fuel reduction work previously done by NPS along the community’s eastern and southern perimeters.

Both projects have been selected for funding by NPS in fiscal year 2005-2006, which begins in October 2005. John Mock, chair of the YWPHI Fire Safety Committee completed the formal grant applications and submitted them to the clearinghouse in early April 2005. We should receive word on final

approval, which is still subject to provisional funding in the federal budget, before Memorial Day. Visit [www.yosemitewest.org/news.htm](http://www.yosemitewest.org/news.htm) for updates.

Wildland Fire Associates and NPS are planning to attend our annual Memorial Day picnic on Sunday, May 29th at 11a.m. to present the *Draft Yosemite West Community Wildfire Protection Plan* to the community. We encourage everyone to attend this important presentation.

NPS and the Mariposa County Fire Department will also discuss with us about how to move forward to complete our CWPP and begin the Yosemite West Fire Safe program.

## What About Those Piles

by Mike Beasley, YNP Fire Use Manager

In fall 2004, NPS completed a mechanical fuel reduction program along the entrance road to Yosemite West between Wawona Road and the mailboxes.

NPS will start burning piles on south-facing aspects and other dry sites, as soon as the piles dry out this spring. It’s likely, however, that the bulk of the work won’t be completed until the fall.

NPS has received the funding to extend the roadside thinning from along Wawona Road from Bishop Creek to Wawona in 2005. NPS would like to get the work done by late spring, but there is concern about the number of piles out there to burn at that point. It will be nigh impossible to burn that many piles in one fall period, so then we’d be faced with some of the new piles being out for another entire year.

The work will be done by NPS crews and contract fire crews. There is a problem from snow damaged trees between the South Entrance and Wawona, which is exacerbating an already growing fuels condition there, so NPS may have to redirect some funds to do fuel work there.

## Spring Chipping Program

Mariposa County Fire Safe Council - a non-profit, non-governmental, non-regulatory community partnership of residents, property owners, businesses and agencies - works to reduce our vulnerability from the threat of wildfire. They have a two-year grant funding a county-wide chipping program for a chipper and crew to visit every community in Mariposa County for two days.

Yosemite West is on their schedule for late spring 2005 - it is likely to be sometime between May 15 and May 31. We will not know exactly what two days the chipper and crew will come to Yosemite West until a few days beforehand, since their schedule depends on weather. The chipping program is available to every property owner in Yosemite West and is not limited to YWPHI members. Property owners do not have to be present when the chipper comes, although it is very helpful.

The chipping program can help Yosemite West to:

- reduce the amount of dead and downed wood on the ground and improve defensible space around structures; and
- reduce the amount of yard debris that goes on the community burn pile during our annual Memorial Day weekend yard clean-up.

(There is some chance that the chipper may not come to Yosemite West until after the Memorial Day weekend yard clean-up. If this is the case, do not transport your piles for the chipper to the community burn pile - the chipper will still come. We will make an announcement to everyone if this happens.)

Take advantage of this free program to remove yard debris from your property by creating an easily accessible and manageable pile of yard debris on your property at the curb. Yard debris means only brush and small-diameter branches. The brush should be hand-piled only with the cut ends all pointing in the same direction towards the street. The chips will be left on your property.

### What to Do with Chips

The Mariposa County Fire Department recommends spreading the chips on your property. Chips reduce the growth of weeds and unnecessary seedlings, keep soil in place to prevent erosion, and decay slowly forming a nutrient-rich mulch.

You can make a difference in whether or not your home and community survive a wildland fire. Your actions will make it safer for the firefighters who risk their lives to protect your property.

### Chipping Guidelines

Follow these guidelines when making your curbside pile for the chipper.

#### Do's

- Pile yard debris on your property near the curb by May 15th
- Hand pile brush with cut ends pointing towards the street
- Gather dead and downed wood from the ground
- Limb trees up to 15 feet above the ground
- Remove branches within 10 feet of chimneys and roof (branches with green pine needles and cones attached are acceptable)
- Remove trees less than 6 inches at chest height

#### Don'ts

- No yard debris in the street
- No rocks
- No dry pine needles
- No fallen pine cones
- No poison oak
- No branch/tree greater than 8 inches in diameter in pile
- No machine-made or dozer-made piles

If you have any questions, please contact Kimberly Bullock, Mariposa County Fire Safe Council (☎ 209-966-7700, kimberlyb@sti.net).

# Yosemite West

## Memorial Day Weekend Yard Clean-up

**Sunday, May 29, 2005**

[www.yosemitewest.org/firesafe.htm](http://www.yosemitewest.org/firesafe.htm)

In preparation for fire season, everyone needs to remove pine needles, brush, dead and downed wood and ladder fuels (trees six inches or less in diameter at chest height, especially white fir and incense cedar) from their property. California law now requires you to clear 100 feet (or to your property line, whichever is closer) from all structures to improve defensible space (see p.8 for further information). Our CC&Rs require all branches to be removed to a height of 15 feet above ground.

For vacant lot owners, the build-up of flammable material on your property poses a fire threat to nearby structures even though there is no structure on your property. Clearing vacant lots of dead and downed wood and ladder fuels is also required by our CC&Rs. We need your help to reduce the risk of wildland fire in Yosemite West.

The community burn pile, located at the lower end of the development off Yosemite Park Way, will be open on Memorial Day weekend to provide a place for everyone to locally dispose of yard debris. The burn pile fills up quickly each spring and you can ease the pressure on it in two ways:

- by participating in the **Spring Chipping Program** (see p.5 in the April 2005 issue of *In the West* or download from [www.yosemitewest.org/chipperflyer.pdf](http://www.yosemitewest.org/chipperflyer.pdf)); and
- by obtaining a burn permit (visit [www.yosemitewest.org/fowner.htm](http://www.yosemitewest.org/fowner.htm) for details), carefully following all requirements, and burning pine needles on your own property.

If you do not have a vehicle appropriate for transporting yard debris to the burn pile, volunteers with trucks will be cruising the area on Sunday, May 29 between 8 a.m. and 11 a.m., but you must help load and unload all your material into their trucks. In turn, you'll be expected to help with loads from your neighbors' yards.

Please pile all pine needles and pine cones together (completely separate from any branches or other yard debris for the chipping program). Make the piles on your property at the roadside for easy pick-up. Gloves, rakes, pitchforks, wheelbarrows and tarps are very helpful. Please don't leave piles in the street expecting others to take them away – no one will touch them.

### ✓ What Goes In the Community Burn Pile

- dry pine needles
- fallen pine cones
- branches

### ✗ What Stays Out of the Community Burn Pile

- No logs or stumps
- No plastic bags
- No hazardous or toxic materials
- No glass
- No garbage
- No construction debris
- No exceptions!

If you are clearing your lot in preparation for building, you cannot bring this debris to the community burn pile. The community burn pile cannot handle this large volume of material. You must make your own arrangements by renting a dumpster to dispose of the debris.

### Free Lunch & Fire Safe Presentation

YWPHI is sponsoring a picnic lunch for everyone in the community starting at 11 a.m. on Sunday, May 29, on the southeast corner of Henness Circle between the Walls' and Hagans' homes. Food will be served around noon. Please bring your own chairs.

The National Park Service and Wildland Fire Associates will be presenting the *Draft Yosemite West Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)*. Please join us for this important presentation and educational opportunity. To read more about this project, see p.4 or visit [www.yosemitewest.org/wfa50225.htm](http://www.yosemitewest.org/wfa50225.htm).

### Volunteers Needed on Sunday, May 29, 2005

We need volunteers to provide pick-up or dump trucks and to help load and unload the trucks. Please contact Grace Bartel (☎ 209-372-8752, [secretary@yosemitewest.org](mailto:secretary@yosemitewest.org)) with any questions or to volunteer. All volunteers will be picked up by the trucks as they drive by starting at 8 a.m. Your participation is greatly appreciated!

## New Defensible Space Law

Effective January 1, 2005, if you live in a wildland area in California you need to know about changes in the following laws. Governor Schwarzenegger signed into law on September 23, 2004, Senate Bill 1369. This bill amended both Public Resources Code (PRC) 4291 and Government Code (GC) 51182 by:

- increasing the minimum clearance (defensible space) requirement from 30 feet to 100 feet (or to the property line, whichever is less);
- provide for state law, or local ordinance, rule or regulation to specify requirements of greater than 100 feet;
- allowing insurance companies to require homeowners to maintain firebreaks greater than 100 feet; and
- giving the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) the authority to clear a property and then bill the property owner or lien the property.

CDF will use this new power for site specific situations. CDF also states that the guidelines and policy for this new law are not yet clear. CDF will approach the new law with common sense and low-key enforcement for the first year or two to allow property owners sufficient time for compliance.

Direct any questions you may have to the CDF, Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit (☎209-966-3622), 5366 Hwy 49 North, Mariposa, CA 95338.

## Fire Hazard Clearance Inspection

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) arranges with U.S. Forest Service fire prevention officers from Sierra National Forest to conduct an Annual Fire Hazard Clearance Inspection in Yosemite West. The purpose of the inspection is to assess property owners' compliance with clearance of flammable vegetation (brush, pine needles and dry wood) from within 100 feet of structures and LPG tanks, the existence of spark arresters, the condition of electrical wiring and lights, the storage of combustible materials and other fire risks.

The fire prevention team completes a written checklist for residents noting any conditions that require the property owners' attention and may issue citations for non-compliance.

The Annual Fire Hazard Clearance Deadline, which is around July 4th, will be posted on the USFS signboard along the entrance road to Yosemite West (between Wawona Road and the mailboxes).

### Learn about Defensible Space

The Spring 2005 issue *Fire and Fuels Information*, a newsletter published by Yosemite National Park and mailed to every property owner of record in Yosemite West, features a discussion about defensible space - what it is and how you can achieve it. Please visit [www.yosemitewest.org/firesafe.htm](http://www.yosemitewest.org/firesafe.htm) for further information about defensible space with links to resources.

## Fire Hose Training

Five training sessions will take place this year where everyone can practice how to open fire hydrants, and operate a fire hose and other fire equipment for emergency use until a fire company can arrive. The equipment is owned by YWPHI and stored in four locations throughout Yosemite West. The volunteers who attend the training and become qualified to operate a fire hose can receive the combination to the fire hose houses to access the equipment.

The training sessions will be held on the first Saturday of the month starting in May. Each session starts at 9am and lasts about 1½ hours. Mark these dates on your calendar:

- Saturday, May 7th, 9 a.m.
- Saturday, June 4th, 9 a.m.
- Saturday, July 2nd, 9 a.m.
- Saturday, August 6th, 9 a.m.
- Saturday, September 3rd, 9 a.m.

Please check the monthly calendar on the YWPHI website at [www.yosemitewest.org/calendar.htm](http://www.yosemitewest.org/calendar.htm) and look for notices on our community bulletin board at the mailbox shed for reminders and the location of each training. Come learn how to take an active role in protecting your property from fire.

## Brush Removal from Easements

The Mariposa County Public Works Department in conjunction with crews will be clearing brush from the county easements along roads in Yosemite West during June. The crews will remove brush and debris 10 feet along both sides of the road. Please cooperate with the crews as they work to further protect our community from the risk of wildfire. Please direct any concerns to public works' director Dana Hertfelder (☎ 209-966-5356, [dhertfelder@mariposacounty.org](mailto:dhertfelder@mariposacounty.org)).

## Community Burn Pile

The community burn pile is located near the lower end of the development off Yosemite Park Way. The burn pile is intended to provide residents with a place to dispose of the pine needles and pine cones from their lots each spring. In recent years, however, the burn pile has grown in size with residents dumping tree limbs, logs and stumps.

The burn pile will become available again this spring as soon as the snow melts. See the **Memorial Day Weekend Yard Clean-up** (p.6-7) for further details. Please also take advantage of the **Spring Chipping Program** (p.5) to dispose of as much brush and other yard debris as possible.

✓ **What Goes In the Burn Pile** - dry pine needles, fallen pine cones and branches only

✗ **What Stays Out of the Burn Pile** - everything else; no logs or stumps, plastic bags, hazardous or toxic materials, glass, garbage or construction debris.

No exceptions!

If you are clearing your lot in preparation for building, you cannot bring this debris to the community burn pile. It cannot handle this large volume of material. You must rent your own dumpster to dispose of the debris.

## Fish Camp Transfer Station

Residents can haul oversized household trash, recyclables, appliances, furniture and other materials to the Fish Camp Transfer Station (open 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday), located on the Mt. Raymond Road next to the Goat Meadow Snow Play Park, two miles north of Fish Camp on the east side of Hwy. 41. Charges apply to some materials. No construction debris or hazardous materials are accepted.

## Fire Safe Native Landscaping

by Garrett deBell

Landscaping your Yosemite West property with native plants is aesthetically pleasing, inexpensive, low maintenance and relatively Fire Safe. Yosemite West lies in the mixed conifer forest, one of North American's most admired forests. It's characterized by a mix of widely spaced mature ponderosa pines and sugar pines and smaller numbers of mature California black oaks, incense cedars, white firs, and many varieties of shrubs and flowers.

If you're lucky, you already have a nice assortment of mature trees. All you need to do over the years is remove dead, damaged or overcrowded trees; trim the lower limbs within 15 feet of the ground; and remove the annual crop of reproduction (seedling young trees, especially shade tolerant incense cedars and white firs). This will contribute toward improving defensible space by mimicking the open forest that was originally maintained by frequent low intensity wildfires. The goal is a modest number of well spaced mature conifers with no fuel ladders from the ground up into the canopy.

While the forest trees are the same throughout Yosemite West, the smaller plants fall into two distinct groups or plant communities, the moist and dry plant communities.

The lots in the southwestern part of Yosemite West are quite moist thanks to the small tributaries of Indian Creek that originate in and near Yosemite West. This area has abundant dogwoods, azaleas, ferns, currants, gooseberries, elderberries and thimbleberries. If you're in this habitat, the main task is protecting existing plants from damage from construction or use. Just delineating pathways with rock borders can be sufficient and the paths serve as firebreaks for small fires. You won't need to do any planting, seedlings will just appear. A little watering the first couple of years can help, but isn't essential. If you do water, do it infrequently and deeply to help

plants establish their root system.

Nutrients and organic matter are gradually reduced when we rake pine needles and leaves each year. An annual application of a fertilizer designed for acid-loving plants is helpful and is labeled as a mix for rhododendron, camellia and azalea. I also add about a quarter of an inch of a forest humus mulch, which I buy at the nursery in Oakhurst. Some products are just composted ground fir bark and work fine. Even better soil amendments have fir bark as the major constituent and then much smaller amounts of chicken manure, guano, mushroom spawn, etc.; sort of an organic witches' brew that the plants like. Avoid cedar and redwood bark as they inhibit growth of small plants.

Even though the moist community plants are quite fire resistant, you want to remove dead growth and prune the plants to eliminate a fuel ladder up into the trees. When a particular plant gets unruly, simply cut it off at soil level and it will regrow from the roots. This works for all of the shrubs, but not the dogwoods which should only be pruned of dead, damaged or excess growth.

The shrubs of the dry plant communities are also easy to establish and the main task is keeping growth in check. The manzanitas, chinquapins and various Ceanothus species, such as buck brush and buckthorn, grow quickly. Just remove surplus plants and keep the remaining plants under control by cutting one-third of the plants down to ground level every year or two.

You can have a nice looking and fire resistant landscape by just thinning out the plants that get started on their own, protecting them from trampling and adding a thin layer of mulch. Optionally, a bit of fertilizing and watering help young plants get established in marginally suitable habitats.

The *New Western Garden Book* by Sunset magazine is probably the one reference that can help you identify the plants on your lot and give you more detailed advice on how to care for them.

## MARIPOSA COUNTY COMMITTEES

YWPFI reports about activities of the Yosemite West Planning Advisory Committee (YWPAC) and the Yosemite West Maintenance District Advisory Committee (YWMDAC) as a service to the community and is *not* directly involved with the activities of either committee. The committees act as a liaison between Yosemite West property owners and Mariposa County Planning Department and Public Works Department, respectively.

### **YWMDAC - Sewer Project Update**

Construction on the Yosemite West Wastewater Treatment Facility is approximately 90% done as of April 2005. Most of the physical construction is complete and two remaining projects are the electrical work on the transformer pad and the telemetry systems that will control the water and sewer systems. The entire electrical system and the computer system to operate the sewer plant will be installed after the snow melts and the site is readily accessible. PG&E needs about five weeks to complete their work.

The contractor Mauldin-Dorfmeier Construction Inc. has officially filed for bankruptcy. Mariposa County had the job “bonded” both on a performance and a financial basis to ensure its completion. The surety company that bonded the project has hired consultants to take over the project management and hire contractors to finish the work. Dana Hertfelder said, “We currently hold \$600,000 due the contractor and we have identified about \$490,000 owed to subcontractors.” Work was shut down for the winter and is expected to resume in May after the subcontractors are paid. Although the situation is unfortunate, Mariposa County assures the residents the sewer will be built as planned. If all goes as planned now, the construction could be completed as early as late July 2005.

Once the sewer repairs are completed and the system is online, the system will be tested. When the system is operating satisfactorily, then the California Regional Water Quality Control Board will be notified. Assuming the California Regional Water Quality Control Board approves the sewer system, the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors will then determine when building permits will be issued and also when the building moratorium will be lifted. Dana Hertfelder said it will probably take three months from when testing starts until the moratorium could be lifted.

Further information about YWMDAC, including details about the Yosemite West Wastewater Treatment Facility and water quality, is on the YWPFI website at [www.yosemitewest.org/ywmdac.htm](http://www.yosemitewest.org/ywmdac.htm) with links to meeting agendas, minutes, etc. and related documents.

### **Proposed Amnesty Resolution**

The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors has proposed a county ordinance for establishing a limited amnesty program for certain land use violations in Yosemite West. The proposed limited amnesty relates to operation of transient occupancy rentals without proper permits and underpayment or nonpayment of transient occupancy taxes (TOT). The program would apply only to those operations that have been in continuous transient rental use since before the imposition of the moratorium. A prerequisite is payment of all back taxes.

You can download 10 pages of public documents, first circulated on February 14, 2005, from [www.yosemitewest.org/amnesty.pdf](http://www.yosemitewest.org/amnesty.pdf) to read more about the issue. Please direct your comments and questions to Mariposa County officials (☎ 800-736-1252): Lee Stetson of the Board of Supervisors ([lstetson@mariposacounty.org](mailto:lstetson@mariposacounty.org)), Tax Collector Marjorie Wass ([taxcoll@mariposacounty.org](mailto:taxcoll@mariposacounty.org)) and County Counsel Tom Guarino ([tguarino@mariposacounty.org](mailto:tguarino@mariposacounty.org)).

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