



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

# *In the West*

Newsletter  
November 2005

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## **President's Autumn Message**

by Grace Bartel, YWPHI President (2005-2006)

It is another beautiful fall day in Yosemite West. Perhaps it's the additional rain we have had this year, or perhaps it is my age - it just seems the fall colors are especially brilliant. For those of you who aren't able to come up to Yosemite West as often as you would like, I want you to know I'm enjoying the beautiful trees on all of your lots!

As the new YWPHI president, I would like to encourage your participation in keeping our community an area we can all be proud of and enjoy, either as a retreat or as a home. We are currently "standing on the shoulders" of the people who have spent a great deal of time and put in many hours in the past to make Yosemite West the place it is today. We need to keep up the good work.

I appreciate all of the persons serving on the board with me and chairing committees for 2005-2006. Kay Pitts, Debby Hagan, Carol Ruiz, Jim Andrews, Tom Lambert, Linda Andrews, Kim O'Neil, and John Mock each bring a unique perspective and new ideas to our work. I am especially grateful for the "younger members" of our board who are willing to serve with their special skills.

We are always glad for suggestions and ideas from each of you. Communication is so important in our fragmented world. Here's to a great year!

## **Christmas Home Tour**



We've yet to see a flake of snow, yet the holiday season is nearly here!

The *2nd annual Yosemite West Holiday Home Tour* is Saturday, December 3, starting at 3 p.m. The event is open to anyone who wishes to attend, and all homeowners are invited to participate as hosts.

Once again this year the festivities will begin at the home of Don and Kay Pitts at 7509 Henness Circle. Once there, you'll receive a map to the remainder of the homes on the tour and a name tag. We'll be charging \$5 per family, which will be donated to a local charity. For those arriving late, a map will be posted at the Pitts' house. Alternatively, if it's like last year, look for the spot in the neighborhood with all the cars and that's likely where the party will be. So far, we have five homes on the tour. If you wish to have your home on the tour, we request that it be decorated for the year-end holidays and that you serve an appetizer, snack or something of the sort.

Please R.S.V.P. via email to [christmas@yosemitewest.org](mailto:christmas@yosemitewest.org) -or- call Helen Yates (☎ 209-372-4300) if you plan to attend or if you would like to be a host. Mark your calendars and come join us for this festive and fun-filled event!

## Website Serves Up News

The YWPHI website [www.yosemitewest.org](http://www.yosemitewest.org) continues to serve our community with a wealth of news and information. The website has grown into a comprehensive resource for a wide variety of issues pertaining to Yosemite West from bear activity and fire safety to sewers and zoning. New property owners are encouraged to visit the site and find out about life in our community.

A feature on the Home page and News page called What's New on the YWPHI Website provides a quick link to the latest postings.

## Yosemite West e-Group

Well, it's official. The Yosemite West e-Group, which was conceived as a forum for residents to communicate directly with one another, has never had enough interest to make it viable. If someone wants to resurrect it in the future, please let us know.

### 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

Thanks go to these contributors to this edition of *In the West*: Mike Beasley, YNP Fire Use Manager, Jonathan Remucal of The Pacific Forest Trust, Yosemite West residents Harry Hagan, Helen Yates, Carol Ruiz and Steve Yates, and YWPHI Board of Directors' members Grace Bartel, Linda Andrews, Debby Hagan and Tom Lambert.

## e-Newsletter

If you would like to see more of your dues used for projects in the neighborhood rather than on postage and printing of *In the West*, please consider joining the 45% of members who receive the newsletter by email.

Please email the newsletter editor at [newsletter@yosemitewest.org](mailto:newsletter@yosemitewest.org) to sign up to receive an e-Newsletter.

## Membership Dues Are - Due!

Almost forty members have not yet renewed their annual YWPHI memberships. If you haven't done so and wish to renew your membership, please mail us your \$25 check. Membership was at 118 at the end of the last fiscal year, and currently stands a eighty-one, including eight new members.

YWPHI is working hard to help improve our community. Visit [www.yosemitewest.org/dues2004.htm](http://www.yosemitewest.org/dues2004.htm) for a list of projects that YWPHI completed in 2004.

## YWPHI Board of Directors' Meetings

Once approved by the board, minutes from previous YWPHI Board of Directors' meetings are archived on the YWPHI website at [www.yosemitewest.org/board.htm](http://www.yosemitewest.org/board.htm). The archive currently contains minutes from all meetings held during 2004 and 2003.

The minutes from the last two board meetings - July 17, 2005 and September 4, 2005 - are available online. Please contact [president@yosemitewest.org](mailto:president@yosemitewest.org) or call Grace Bartel (☎ 209-372-8752) to request a copy by mail.

The next board meeting is Thursday, December 29 at 10 a.m. Everyone is welcome to attend; email [president@yosemitewest.org](mailto:president@yosemitewest.org) for the location.

## Newly Elected YWPHI Board of Directors (2005-2006)

The new YWPHI Board of Directors was elected at the meeting on September 4, 2005. The new board includes Grace Bartel (President), Kay Pitts (Vice President), Debby Hagan (Secretary), and members Carol Ruiz, Jim Andrews, Tom Lambert and Kim O'Neil.

John Mock chairs the YWPHI Fire Safety committee and Linda Andrews is Treasurer and chair of the Membership committee.



Kay Pitts, YWPHI  
Vice President



Jim Andrews,  
YWPHI board  
member



Tom Lambert,  
YWPHI board  
member



Linda Andrews,  
Treasurer &  
Membership  
Committee

## Timber Harvest Update

As reported in the Summer 2005 issue of *In the West*, in November 2004, the Yosemite West community got a new neighbor when the Pacific Forest Trust ([www.pacificforest.org](http://www.pacificforest.org), PFT), purchased the 727-acre parcel known as the Ransome Ranch. Past management on the property led to a shift from forest dominated by sugar pine and ponderosa pine to one dominated by white fir and incense cedar. Significant under story fuel loads were also allowed to develop, contributing to the overall wildfire danger in the area. To begin restoring the landscape, PFT plans to perform a timber harvest.

PFT submitted a Timber Harvest Plan to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). The plan was put together by Joe McGuire, a Registered Professional Forester in consultation with officials from Yosemite National Park as well as Bob Heald, RPF and manager of the University of California's Blodgett Forest. CDF accepted the PFT's Timber Harvest Plan for filing on August 22, which started the review process that involved not only the CDF, but also the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Department of Fish and Game. PFT anticipates approval of the plan this fall and expect logging to begin next year "dependent on a number of factors, not least of which is the weather." PFT will post a notice on the community bulletin board to inform everyone when logging will start.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jonathan Remucal (☎ 415-561-0700, [jremucal@pacificforest.org](mailto:jremucal@pacificforest.org)).

## **Fire Safety Demonstration**

More than twenty residents joined the national park service's Fire Prevention Office, led by Don Coffmann, on September 17, 2005, for a fire safety demonstration held on Choke Cherry Lane. Using a specially equipped Fire Prevention Education Trailer, the 30-minute program simulated a structure fire inside a house and taught those inside how to respond and react.

### **About that smoke . . .**

Yosemite National Park fire managers planned and carried out a series of prescribed burning in the mixed-conifer forest of the park in the fall months. Prescribed fire helps reduce heavy undergrowth and built up forest debris while simultaneously opening the conifer forest structure and maintaining the health of meadow habitats. Fire is also used to enhance native plant communities, cultural landscapes, and improve wildlife habitat. Another goal is to provide defensible space for communities and developed areas within and surrounding the park.

In Yosemite West, two burn units, totaling 235 acres, were ignited by qualified park fire staff under pre-determined conditions. These fires were carefully managed to achieve public safety goals by protecting developed areas and ecosystem restoration by clearing unsafe accumulations of dead and down wood. This burn was conducted immediately adjacent to expensive homes, and we are very pleased with the outcome of that project, with respect to the protection of Yosemite West homeowners from the risk of a future wildfire. Thanks for your patience and support in dealing with smoke issues. To my knowledge, the Yosemite Prescribed Fire program has not received a single smoke complaint this year. This work is vital and does protect homes, as well as forests.

## **Draft Yosemite West Special Plan**

The Mariposa County Planning Commission presided over a public hearing to consider and receive public input on the draft Yosemite West Special Plan on 29 October, in the Mariposa County Government Center. The hearing lasted about three hours. As required by state law, the county's controlling planning document is the General Plan. The county will be considering - and likely adopting - a new General Plan early in 2006. The proposed new General Plan provides the overall framework, but also contemplates localized plans for individual communities. For Yosemite West, that would be a Special Plan.

The draft Yosemite West Special Plan was developed over the last seven years by a committee of volunteer Yosemite West property owners, with technical support provided by the Mariposa County Planning Department. The agenda for the planning commission meeting stated that the "draft Yosemite West Special Plan contains guiding principles, land use classifications and standards for classifications, and standards for non-conforming uses and vacation rental support businesses, site use, parking and circulation, and lighting."

One main purpose of the October 29 public hearing was for the Planning Commission to receive public input concerning the draft special plan. Yosemite West property owners took advantage of the opportunity to comment. Many submitted written comments to the Planning Commission, and twenty-five of these were photocopied and distributed at the meeting. Comments received after the closing date were available only to the Planning Commission. At the meeting itself, Yosemite West property owners filled most of the seats in the meeting room. Twenty-two property owners and their representatives took the opportunity to speak and presented their opinions about the pros and cons of the draft special plan.

After closing the public comment

portion of the hearing, the Planning Commissioners asked questions of the Mariposa County Planning Department staff. The questions concerned environmental impacts, perpetuation of non-conforming uses (so-called “grandfathering”), variances, and conditional use permits. Staff was directed to investigate and respond to these issues, and to present further recommendations directly to the Planning Commission. A revised draft Yosemite West Special Plan will be prepared by Mariposa County Planning Department staff with a target date is mid-January 2006. If approved by the Planning Commission, the draft special plan, as revised, will be considered by the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors. In order for the Special Plan to be enacted, approval by the Board of Supervisors of this Special Plan and the proposed Mariposa County General Plan must take place.

Please direct any questions concerning the draft special plan, or the approval process, to the Mariposa County Planning Department ([mariposaplanning@mariposacounty.org](mailto:mariposaplanning@mariposacounty.org)). Visit [www.mariposacounty.org/planning](http://www.mariposacounty.org/planning) to read the draft or call ☎ 209-966-5151 to request a copy.

### **Sewer Project Update**

No. That’s the short version for everyone wondering whether or not the contractor managed to finish the Yosemite West Wastewater Treatment Facility by October 21, as previously promised. In a November 7 conversation with Carl Casey of Mariposa County Public Works, he confirmed that the sewer plant was still not completed. The new general contractor has missed the October 21 deadline.

All the major equipment is in place and the new blowers for aerating the pond are now operational. Other major components are being brought online.

However, a representative from the manufacturer must be present for each component that is brought online, and that has

created significant delays. Sometimes this is just a scheduling issue, but there are also some subcontractors who claim that they haven’t been paid and are refusing to work until they are.

St. Paul Insurance Company, the surety company that bonded the project took over responsibility in the wake of the Mauldin-Dorfmeier Construction Inc. bankruptcy and says that all subcontractors have been paid, but so far has not complied with repeated requests from Mariposa County Public Works to provide an affidavit to that effect.

The county has been considering various options, but they would not be able to hire their own general contractor to finish the project, as that would apparently void the warranty on some components. The goal is still to have the sewer plant operational before it becomes inaccessible for the winter, though astute readers may have noticed that it is November, so much will depend on the weather gods.

Having the plant fully operational is not precisely the same as having the project entirely completed with all the odds and ends wrapped up, but it would be far enough along to notify the state, and begin the process to lift the moratorium. Mariposa County Public Works still hopes that it will be possible to issue building permits by spring 2006, but it is certainly not a sure thing at this point.

Please direct any questions to Dana Hertfelder, Director of Mariposa County Public Works Department (☎ 209-966-5356, [dhertfelder@mariposacounty.org](mailto:dhertfelder@mariposacounty.org)).

**YWPHI Board of Directors (2005-2006)**

Grace Bartel, President; Kay Pitts, Vice President;  
Debby Hagan, Secretary; Members Jim Andrews,  
Tom Lambert, Kim O'Neil & Carol Ruiz

**YWPHI Committee Chairs (2004-2005)**

Linda Andrews, Treasurer & Membership; John  
Mock, Fire Safety; Kim O'Neil, Newsletter Editor &  
Webmaster, Randy Reed e-Group. (Committee  
chairs are *not* necessarily members of the board of  
directors.)

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*Address Correction Requested*

