



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

In the West

Newsletter
April 2006

In This Issue

- » President's Spring Message p.1
- » Website Serves Up News p.2
- » *In the West* Publication p.2
- » e-Newsletter p.2
- » YWPHI Board of Directors p.2
- » Library Donation p.3
- » Emergency Telephone Tree p.3
- » Mailbox Shelter p.3
- » **Defensible Space: Compliance with New 100-foot Requirements p.3**
 - » Overview of Guidelines p.4
 - » Hazard Clearance Zone Guidelines p.4
 - » Reduced Fuel Zone Guidelines p.5
 - » Option A - Fuel Separation
 - » Option B - Continuous Tree Canopy
 - » Yosemite Fire Management p.6
- » Fire Hazard Clearance Inspection p.6
- » **Chipping Program (May 30-June 1) p.7**
- » **Memorial Day Weekend Yard Clean-up p.8-9**
 - » **Free Picnic Lunch**, Volunteers p.9
- » Berkeley Fire Research in the West p.10
- » Fire Safe Grants Update p.10
- » Draft Yosemite West Special Plan p.11
- » Sewer Project Update p.11
- » Remembering John Clark p.12
- » YWPHI 2005-2006 p.12

President's Spring Message

by Grace Bartel

YWPHI President (2005-2006)

Greetings from beautiful and very snowy Yosemite West. Late winter and early spring here bring their own joys and challenges. I embrace both experiences!

One of the most frustrating and challenging projects we had to deal with for the past number of years is the sewer repair and the subsequent building moratorium. You will find an article about the Mariposa County Public Works and the Building Department's plans in this issue (p.11). All I can say is, "Yay!" (and perhaps, "It's about time").

On behalf of YWPHI and the community, I would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to Steve and Helen Yates. They have sold the home they built in Yosemite West and are moving to Oakhurst. They have purchased another home here for investment and part-time Yosemite living, and say, "We plan to be up here often." Helen has been active on the YWPHI Board of Directors and Steve has worked with the Fire Safety

committee. They both have been generous with their time to make our lives better in Yosemite West.

This issue of the newsletter focuses on improving fire safety in Yosemite West by complying with new state laws governing defensible space (see p.3-6). YWPHI endeavors to support property owners to meet these new regulations by sponsoring a chipping program (p.7), coordinating expert tree service for anyone interested (p.6), and organizing the annual Memorial Day weekend yard clean-up (p.8-9). In conjunction with these activities, YWPHI is inviting everyone to a Memorial Day weekend picnic on Sunday, May 28th (p.9). I hope to see all of you there!

YWPHI is making this issue of the newsletter available to all property owners in Yosemite West, so everyone can participate in important fire safety activities. I hope that those of you who have not yet joined or renewed your membership will consider doing so after reading this newsletter and seeing how hard YWPHI works to better our community. (Please download a membership form at www.yosemitewest.org/members.pdf, annual dues are \$25 per household.)

Website Serves Up News

The YWPHI website 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. New property owners are encouraged to visit the site and find out about life in our community.

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

In the West Publication

Thanks go to these contributors to this edition of *In the West*: Yosemite West residents Harry Hagan and John Mock, and YWPHI Board of Directors' members Grace Bartel, Debby Hagan, and Tom Lambert.

Archived issues of the newsletter are available to view online or download as a PDF at www.yosemitewest.org/archive.htm.

e-Newsletter

The e-Newsletter is now available online to YWPHI members who have signed up to receive it. When the current issue of *In the West* is published, we will notify you by email with simple instructions on how to download the e-Newsletter from a secure location on the www.yosemitewest.org website by logging on with a unique User Name and Password, which will be valid only for the current issue. Members will be able to choose between downloading hi-res and low-res versions of the

e-Newsletter when the issue contains images or graphics. This secure system improves upon the previous method of sending the e-Newsletter as an email attachment, by allowing members to choose when and how to download the newsletter.

Please email the newsletter editor at newsletter@yosemitewest.org to sign up for the e-Newsletter.

YWPHI Board of Directors

Minutes from previous YWPHI Board of Directors' meetings are archived on the Y W P H I website at www.yosemitewest.org/board.htm. You can read the minutes online or download a PDF.

The minutes from the two most recent meetings - October 15, 2005 and January 14, 2006 - are now available. Please contact president@yosemitewest.org or call Grace Bartel (☎ 209-372-8752) to request a copy by mail.

The next board meeting is Saturday, July 1 at 10 a.m. Everyone is welcome to attend; email president@yosemitewest.org for the location.

In July 2006, Tom Lambert is taking over as newsletter editor from Kim O'Neil who has been editor since January 2005. Kim remains the webmaster for www.yosemitewest.org and will become Acting Treasurer for the remainder of this fiscal year.

Welcome New YWPHI Members

- » Tom Allen
- » James & Sharee Barrett
- » Steve & Holly Cislav
- » Dexter & Georgeta Johnson
- » Tom Lambert & Theresa Ho
- » Craig & Diane Mohar
- » Neil & Suzanne Pack
- » Eric Rice
- » Kelsey & Adonia Ripple

Library Donation

Two dozen residents joined the festivities at our second annual Christmas Home Tour on December 3, 2005. Many thanks to our hosts who opened their homes to share good cheer and delicious treats: Grace and Earl Bartel, Helen and Steve Yates, Todd Yates, Carol and Al Ruiz, Carol and Neal Misener.

The partygoers each chipped in a few dollars (\$65), which we donated to the Wawona Friends of the Library. Pat Sischo from the organization sent a thank you note for our donation.

Emergency Telephone Tree

In March 2006, YWPHI updated the **Yosemite West Emergency Telephone Tree** and distributed it to homeowners. The purpose of the telephone tree is to systematically notify everyone in the event of an emergency or when a situation arises that affects the entire community.

Please send an email to telephonetree@yosemitewest.org to inform us of any changes to your contact information, to request a copy of the telephone tree, or to remove your name from the tree for any reason.

Welcome Newest Resident

First-time parents Keith and Sherre Bischoff are proud to announce the birth of Kraemer Keith Bischoff who was born on February 27th at 12:08 p.m in Clovis Community Hospital, weighing in at 7lb.5oz. and measuring 21½ inches long.

Mailbox Shelter

Thanks to the volunteers who cleaned the mailbox shelter in the last half of 2005 - Joseph de Silva, Grace Bartel, Steve Wilkins, Don Donaldson, Malcolm Neal and Larry Newsome.

We still need volunteers to clean the mailbox shelter in April, May and June - look for the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

Defensible Space: Compliance with New 100-foot Requirements

Everyone who owns property in a wildland area in California needs to know about changes in the laws regarding defensible space. These new regulations:

- expand the defensible space clearance requirement around structures from 30 feet to a distance of 100 feet;
- provide for state law, or local ordinance, rule or regulation to specify requirements of greater than 100 feet;
- allow insurance companies to require homeowners to maintain firebreaks greater than 100 feet; and
- give 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.

The intent of the new defensible space regulations is to improve existing fuel breaks to reduce fire intensity, inhibit fire in crowns (tree tops), reduce the rate of fire spread, and provide a safer environment for firefighters to suppress a wildfire.

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

We provide draft guidelines (see p.4-6) for meeting the intent of the California Resource Code (PRC) 4291 (a) and (b) and California regulation 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR) 1299, Defensible Space.

Distance from Structures	Zone	Goal
0-30 feet	Hazard Clearance	Fuel Break
30-100 feet New for 2006	Reduced Fuel	Fuel Separation

Overview of Guidelines

- Property owners' legal responsibility to clear their property has been extended from 30 feet to 100 feet. Owners must now treat all property up to 100 feet away from their structure or to the property line, whichever is less and limited to their land. This new zone between 30 feet and 100 feet is called the **Reduced Fuel Zone**.

- Property owners are not required to clear beyond 100 feet from their structure, but are encouraged to do so to create community-wide defensible space.

- Vegetation removal can cause soil disturbance, soil erosion, the regrowth of new vegetation and introduction of nonnative, invasive plants. Always keep soil disturbance to a minimum, especially on steep slopes.

- Use safe methods. Chain saws and other small engines must have spark arresters. Be careful of sparks from metal blades striking rocks. Complete any work with this equipment prior to high fire danger season.

- Although the PRC 4291 regulations do not address woodpiles, they should be moved to 30 feet from structures and protected from wind-driven embers by secure tarps or other means.

Learn About More Defensible Space

Visit www.yosemitewest.org/f100ft.htm to refer to an online version of these guidelines and to read related documents.

Visit www.yosemitewest.org/firesafe.htm for further information about defensible space with links to resources.

Hazard Clearance Zone (0-30ft) Guidelines

- ▣ Remove and clear all flammable vegetation and combustible material within 30 feet of each structure. (These are the same requirements that we have been following for years now.)

- ▣ You are not required to remove single specimens of trees, ornamental shrubbery, or similar plants used as ground cover, as long as they do not form a means of transmitting fire to any structure.

- ▣ Remove all dead and dying woody surface fuels and aerial fuels (branches). You don't want to have any vegetation that can form a "ladder" for fire to climb into taller vegetation. This guideline requires eliminating trees, bushes, shrubs and surface debris that are completely dead or with substantial amounts of dry or dead branches or leaves/needles that would readily burn.

- ▣ Remove loose surface litter, such as fallen leaves or needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches.

- ▣ Cut grass to a height of 3 inches within 30 feet adjacent to structures. Keep grass and other vegetation green by watering. If watering is not feasible, maintain a vegetation-free space between dry grass and any structure.

- ▣ Remove any portion of a tree that is within 10 feet of the outlet of any chimney or stovepipe.

- ▣ Maintain any tree adjacent to or overhanging any building free of dead or dying wood.

- ▣ Maintain the roof of any structure free of leaves, needles, or other dead vegetative growth.

- ▣ Provide and maintain at all times a screen (constructed of nonflammable material with openings of not more than half an inch in size) over the outlet of every chimney or stovepipe that is attached to any fireplace, stove, or other device that burns any solid or liquid fuel.

Reduced Fuel Zone (30-100ft) Guidelines New for 2006

The California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection Guidelines are described below.

▣ Remove dead and dying woody surfaces and aerial fuels. Loose surface litter, normally consisting of fallen leaves or needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches are permitted to a depth of 3 inches. This guideline is primarily intended to eliminate trees, bushes, shrubs and surface debris that are completely dead or with substantial amounts of dead branches or leaves/needles that would readily burn.

▣ Downed logs or stumps, when embedded in the soil, may be retained when isolated from other vegetation.

▣ **Implement one of the following two fuel treatments (options A or B) required by CCR 1299 and PRC 4291.** Properties with greater fire hazards will require greater clearing treatments. Combinations of the methods may be acceptable as long as the intent of these guidelines is met.

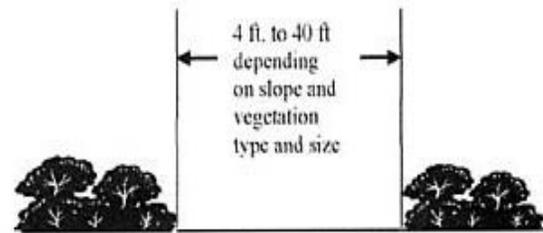
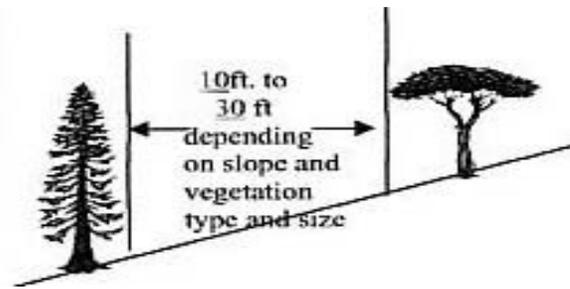
Fuel Treatment Option A - Defensible Space with Fuel Separation (30ft-100ft)

Option A is for more open areas with few trees.

➤ Grass should not exceed 4 inches in height. Where grass and other forbs are necessary to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion, they can be kept less than 18 inches in height above the ground when they are isolated from other fuels.

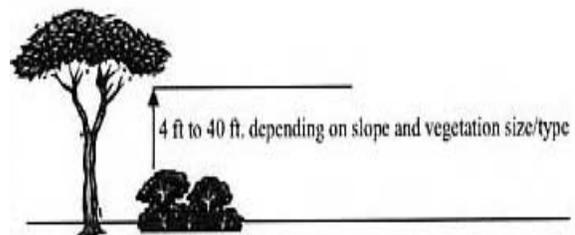
➤ Horizontal Clearance Requirements

Slope	Trees	Shrubs
0-20%	10ft	2x height of shrub eg, 3ft shrub = 6ft space
20-40%	20ft	4x height of shrub
> 40%	30ft	6x height of shrub



➤ Vertical Clearance Requirements

The minimum vertical space between the top of a shrub and the bottom of the lowest tree branches is 3x the height of the shrub (eg, 3ft shrub = 9 ft vertical space between the top of the shrub and the lowest tree limbs).

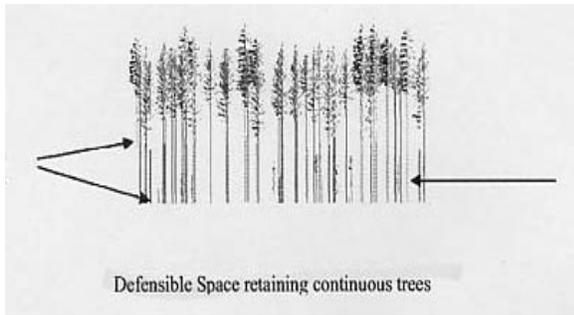


Fuel Treatment Option B - Defensible Space with Continuous Tree Canopy (30ft-100ft)

A vegetation removal option is available for those wanting to retain a continuous stand of larger trees with no space between tree canopies while creating defensible space. Spacing between aerial fuels is not required in a stand of larger trees. In this situation:

➤ Remove all surface fuels greater than 4 inches in height.

➤ Remove lower limbs of trees (prune) to at least 6 feet up to 15 feet (or the lower half of branches of smaller trees).



Properties with greater fire hazards, such as steeper slopes or more severe fire danger, will require pruning heights in the upper end of this range.

Additional Standards for Tree and Shrub Removal Recommended by Yosemite Fire Management

Information on healthy tree limbing and removal procedures can be obtained from the Yosemite National Park (YNP) Forester Brian Mattos (☎ 209-379-1113).

➤ Remove dead or dying trees and shrubs within the Hazard Clearance Zone.

➤ Remove trees 6 inches at diameter (measured 5 feet from base), except:

- Preserve hardwood trees (eg, big-leaf maple, dogwood, cottonwood, birch, willow, oak)
- When considering conifers, give the priority for removal to incense cedar and white fir, followed by ponderosa pine or Jeffrey pine, and least priority to sugar pine.
- Do not remove trees with cultural significance or obvious wildlife occupation (eg, cavities or bird nests) without guidance.
- Leave no more than 1-3 per acre dead and downed trees less than 15 inches in diameter in the Reduced Fuel Zone.

Fire Hazard Clearance Inspection

CDF arranges with U.S. Forest Service (USFS) fire prevention officers from Sierra National Forest to conduct an **Annual Fire Hazard Clearance Inspection** in Yosemite West to evaluate property owners' compliance with CCR 1299 and PRC 4291. The fire prevention team completes a written checklist for residents noting any conditions that require the property owners' attention and may issue citations for noncompliance.

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).

USFS Fire Prevention Officer Pat (Smiley) Tierney is retiring from USFS in April 2006 and in a farewell email to Yosemite West says, "I have had fun working with you folks and have been impressed with the awesome accomplishments that I have seen out there."

We will all miss the wisdom and humor he has shared with our community in recent years. His replacement has not yet been hired.

Tree Removal

The services of a professional tree expert may be needed to remove certain trees or limbs. Evaluate the trees on your property and target "problem" trees for removal. Start by identifying if your property is in a "hot spot" (too heavily wooded). Then identify for removal any dead or dying trees (one such tree fell on a deck last winter), and any fallen trees. Evaluate any risk to your home by trees on adjacent lots. New property owners are urged to act. Anyone planning to build in future years can and should start preparing their lot now.

Bob Evans of Evans Tree Service will be working in Yosemite West in mid-May. Call Bob (☎ 209-966-4077) for a quotation and to make an appointment.

Chipping Program (May 30-June 1)

Last spring Yosemite West benefitted from a one-time only countywide chipping program, funded by a grant awarded to the Mariposa County Fire Safe Council, through which a chipper and crew visited every community in Mariposa County for three days.

The chipping program was a big success and helped Yosemite West to reduce the amount of dead and downed wood on the ground and improve defensible space around structures, and to reduce the amount of yard debris that went on the community burn pile by Memorial Day weekend.

YWPHI has organized and will be funding a similar chipping program this spring for three days (May 30 to June 1). It is scheduled *after* Memorial Day so the chips are not blown on top of pine needles, and in order to allow participation by those owners who only come on Memorial Day weekend. **The chipping program is available to every property owner in Yosemite West and is not limited to YWPHI members.**

The cost of the chipping program is free to YWPHI members and \$25 per property for non-members. We encourage non-members to not only participate in the chipping program, but to also join YWPHI whose annual membership dues are \$25 per household. We hope that everyone will take advantage of this program to remove yard debris from your property. Property owners do not have to be present when the chipper comes, although it is very helpful.

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.

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

To Sign Up for Chipping Program

Participation in the chipping program requires advanced sign up by May 15th.

For YWPHI members

➤ simply email chipping@yosemitewest.org with your local address or lot number/street name, or call John Mock (☎ 209-372-4325), chair of the YWPHI Fire Safety committee; the chipping program is free

For non-members

Choose one of the following two options:
➤ I/we want to participate in the chipping program and also join YWPHI for \$25
➤ I/we want to participate in the chipping program only for a fee of \$25 per property.

Complete the sign-up form and mail it with your check to YWPHI by May 15th. You can download the form at:
www.yosemitewest.org/signupchipping.pdf

Chipping Guidelines

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

Do's

- Gather dead and downed wood from the ground
- Limb trees up to 15 feet above ground
- Remove branches within 10 feet of chimneys and roof
- Remove trees less than 6" at chest height
- Pile yard debris for the chipping program on your property near the curb in easily accessible and manageable piles by May 28th
- Hand pile brush and small-diameter branches with cut ends pointing in the same direction toward the street

Don'ts

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

Yosemite West

Memorial Day Weekend Yard Clean-up

Sunday, May 28, 2006

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.3-6 for further details). 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 become available again this spring as soon as the snow melts and will be open on Memorial Day weekend to provide a place for everyone to 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 **Chipping Program** and signing up by May 15th (see p.7)
- by obtaining a burn permit (visit 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 28 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.

Make the piles on your property at the roadside for easy pick-up. Please have your piles ready by 8 a.m. Sunday and be ready to help. Please don't leave piles in the street expecting others to take them away – no one will touch them. Gloves, rakes, pitchforks, wheelbarrows and tarps are very helpful.

Make three types of piles:

- pine needles and pine cones that will be transported to the community burn pile Sunday, May 28th - **please have your piles ready by 8 a.m.**
- brush and small-diameter branches for the chipping program that will be chipped *after* Memorial Day weekend
- any tree trunks 6 inches or greater in diameter that can become firewood; volunteers organized by Todd Yates (☎ 209-372-4243) will come by to pick it up *after* Memorial Day weekend

✓ What Goes In the Community Burn Pile

- dry pine needles
- fallen pine cones
- branches

✗ What Stays Out of the Community Burn Pile

- Piles for the chipping program
- 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 Picnic Lunch

YWPHI is sponsoring a picnic lunch and invites **everyone in the community** starting at 11 a.m. on Sunday, May 28, on the southeast corner of Henness Circle (between the Walls' and Hagans' homes). Food will be served around noon. Please bring your own chairs. As a courtesy, please let us know if you're planning to attend the picnic by sending an RSVP to picnic@yosemitewest.org.

The picnic is not only time to eat and unwind after a lot of hard work, but it is also an opportunity to learn more about fire safety from guest speakers. Agency personnel will be on hand to answer your questions about protecting your property from wildfire.

Volunteers Needed on Sunday, May 28, 2006

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, president@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!

Berkeley Fire Research in the West

by John Mock

Last fall, the YWPHI Fire Safety committee contacted the Center for Fire Research and Outreach in the College of Natural Resources at the University of California, Berkeley. They are interested in integrating the data on wildfire danger to Yosemite West that was prepared by Wildland Fire Associates (www.yosemitewest.org/wfa50225.htm), together with the Geographic Information System (GIS) data (www.yosemitewest.org/mcfdgis.htm) collected by Mariposa County Fire Department, into a parcel-based risk assessment system.

This would be a great educational tool - a real way for us to “see” what happens if we have a wildfire in Yosemite West, and to see how specific actions we take as individual property owners can alter the likely outcome. In other words - how we can protect (or not protect) our property. Dr. Max Mortiz and Dr. Faith Kearns at the center are moving forward with this great work, and both Wildland Fire Associates and Mariposa County Fire Department are also cooperating and supporting it. They are currently working on a “roof map” employing one-meter resolution aerial imagery for Yosemite West, along with a review paper and field assessment approach, which includes a rating system.

The center will “map” the rating system to the data already collected, and some time this spring will be able to present to YWPHI and all interested people, including the National Park Service and county fire department, a concrete example of how the GIS they are preparing can help us understand the risks we face from wildfire.

We will announce the date and place for this meeting soon, and hope to see you all there. For those who may not be able to attend the meeting, the center may also be able to place the data on their website (<http://firecenter.berkeley.edu>) so you can access it.

Fire Safe Grants Update

by John Mock

In the April 2005 issue of *In the West*, we announced that the Fire Safe California Grants Clearinghouse awarded us two grants, totaling \$56,000 to fund two programs identified in our *Draft Yosemite West Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)*. The two programs are:

- to complete the Yosemite West CWPP and establish a community Fire Safe Program; and
- to complete the Yosemite West Shaded Fuel Break Program on the area’s perimeter.

California Fire Safe Council (FSC) is responsible for sending us status updates on the two grants, which were selected for funding by the National Park Service (NPS) for the 2005/06 fiscal year.

Our two grants are moving forward. The California FSC is in the process of preparing a grant agreement with NPS. In the meantime, YNP Fire Ecologist Jan Hooke and YNP Forester Brian Mattos are preparing documents to certify compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which are necessary for the shaded fuel break program. Hopefully, these two processes will be completed at about the same time, after which funding can be released and we can get to work.

There’s lots of work to be done, so anyone interested in helping make these programs a reality should contact John Mock, chair of the YWPHI Fire Safety Committee at firesafety@yosemitewest.org. These projects benefit our entire community, so please, everyone get involved in making Yosemite West a Fire Safe community!

Visit www.yosemitewest.org/firesafe.htm to learn more about building a Fire Safe community. To refer to the *Draft Yosemite West Community Wildfire Protection Plan*, visit www.yosemitewest.org/wfa50225.htm.

Planning Commission Recommends Adoption of the Draft Yosemite West Special Plan

by Harry Hagan

The draft Yosemite West Special Plan was unanimously approved by the Planning Commission at a public hearing on March 4. The Planning Commission made only minor changes, including adjustments to proposed maximum size of future structures.

By way of background, the draft Yosemite West Special Plan was prepared by the Yosemite West Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), nine volunteers appointed by the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors. The draft special plan addresses zoning and land use issues in the developed portions of Yosemite West. The draft plan proposes modest height and size limits to new homes, and makes adjustments to the setback requirements. The plan also calls for controls on outdoor lighting, which are intended to reduce nighttime glare. It also proposed limitations on the scale of commercial activity in Yosemite West.

Next, the current draft of the Yosemite West Special Plan will come before the Board of Supervisors for consideration. However, that is not likely to take place until after the adoption of the county's new General Plan, which makes specific provision for localized zoning and land use plans such as the Yosemite West Special Plan. The General Plan has been repeatedly delayed, and adoption will not take place before June 2006 at the earliest.

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

Sewer Project Update

by Tom Lambert

This column is not yet an obituary column for the building moratorium, but the light at the end of the Yosemite West sewer tunnel is getting brighter. Based on conversations with Carl Casey at the Mariposa County Public Works Department, it looks very likely that the moratorium will be lifted for the upcoming season and the county will start taking building permit applications beginning May 1, 2006.

The new Yosemite West Wastewater Treatment Facility has been up and running since November 2005 and is functioning as expected. There have been a few operational kinks, but everything basically looks good and the system shows every indication that it will be able to run without problems at its rated capacity.

In February 2006, Dana Hertfelder sent a letter to the California Regional Water Quality Control Board informing them that the county believes that it is in full compliance with state regulations and intends to lift the moratorium. Dana has asked the County Counsel to draft an ordinance that would rescind the ordinance calling for the moratorium. The Public Works Department had hoped to have it on the agenda for the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors' meeting on March 28, but the agenda item for the supervisors to vote on lifting the moratorium was continued for two weeks to the April 11th meeting.

If all goes according to plan, the ordinance should call for lifting the moratorium on May 1, 2006, at which time the Mariposa County Building Department would begin accepting applications for building permits.

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

Remembering John Clark

John Jonas Clark, a longtime Yosemite West resident and YWPHI member, passed away on February 16, 2006, at the age of 85. Surrounded by his family and loving wife Betty, John succumbed to pervasive cancer. John was a wonderful, fascinating friend and neighbor who will be greatly missed.

John and Betty were early condo residents prior to building their Henness Circle home in 1980-82. At that time, there was no mail or telephone service in our community. John subscribed to a credo of preventive home maintenance, and frequently was seen working outside. Remarkably active throughout his life, John rose early to begin his daily tasks. For many years, John and Betty graciously hosted the annual YWPHI Labor Day weekend pot luck and meeting. Their yard's park-like atmosphere has been ideal for community meetings and we're grateful for their hospitality.

Many Yosemite West residents may recall seeing John riding his classy BMW motorcycle to work at the Wawona Living History Village. Who could forget the image of John on his motorcycle, dressed in an early 20th-century military uniform, with a WWII-era helmet, sporting a long flowing white beard or dapper white mustache? John enthusiastically greeted visitors to the History Village dressed as Cavalry Major Harry Copeland Benson, the acting Park Superintendent in 1905. For more than 20 years he brought to life the spirit of older times in Yosemite for thousands of visitors. John's historical knowledge and his delight in storytelling made him popular with tourists, and he was fond of surprising German-speaking visitors by addressing them in their native tongue. He also learned a few words in many other languages in order to make foreign visitors feel welcome.

John was a decorated WWII veteran who served in the U.S. Army 184th Infantry California National Guard in the Pacific Campaign. He was wounded on the island of Leyte, for which he received a purple heart. Unusual for WWII veterans, John would willingly share detailed stories of his war experiences. He had a gift for bringing to life scenes of Pacific islands, comrades, commanding officers, and the hardships and misery of war.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to Yolo Hospice, Yosemite Fund, Yosemite Association, or a charity of your choice. A memorial service will be at the Wawona Pioneer Center, Saturday, May 20 at 10 a.m.

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Address Correction Requested

