

WINTER 2015

MOUNT LAGUNA IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

# Cabin Newsletter

Volume 12

Number 52

## Fire Danger Continues Even in Winter

Early on Sunday morning, November 30<sup>th</sup>, a campfire was started off Los Huecos Road on land adjacent to cabin #469. It was not extinguished properly. It appears that hot coals lingered through the night and about 3:30 am ignited a nearby tree and a fire that could be seen from the Shrine Camp. **Carelessness allowed this campfire to start a wildfire!**

Thankfully the Mount Laguna Volunteer Fire Department, the Forest Service and CalFire were notified and the wildfire was quickly extinguished. Damage was limited to an acre or so. Cabin members on Los Huecos road were awakened by the sounds of fire vehicles responding to the fire. The firefighters tended the site throughout the day to ensure burnt trees did not re-ignite.

Talbot Hayes, Fire Chief of the Descanso Ranger District, said the after-fire incident report is in process.

*Continued on page 2*



### UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 7** MLIA Board Meeting  
9:00 – 11:00 am  
Cabin 554
- March 21** Mount Laguna Fire Safe Council  
10:00 am-12:00pm  
Red-Tailed Roost
- April 18** Chili Social  
Watch for flyer!



### *Winter Fire Danger, continued.*

Once the report is completed those responsible will be held accountable for the cost of suppression.

With the right wind conditions, this wild fire could have spread across the mountain engulfing the forest and the cabins.



Had it been one to three days earlier with the high winds and low humidity occurring then the fire would have rapidly spread.

Once again we ask cabin and private property owners to educate their guests: adults, children, grandchildren, friends, about the **high fire danger on the mountain** at all

times and in all seasons. Campfires are extremely dangerous. Also, please do not bury coals from fireplaces or stoves. Coals retain their potency for days, can get into tree roots and cause a fire.

The fire season on Mt Laguna is now almost year round.

**REMEMBER, CAMPFIRE ARE NOT ALLOWED OUTSIDE CABINS.**

## **Fire Restrictions in Cleveland National Forest**

### ***Where are campfires allowed?***

Wood and charcoal fires are allowed only in developed campgrounds and developed picnic areas within designated fire rings.

**Campfires are not allowed outside developed campgrounds and picnic areas at any time of year.**

**When Fire Restrictions are ELEVATED, additional sites within campgrounds and picnic areas may be restricted.**

Check with local Cleveland National Forest Offices for a list of campgrounds and picnic areas open under current Fire Restrictions.

### ***What will happen if I violate fire restrictions?***

**You can be cited for any violation incurred under the current fire restriction level. You may also be charged for any fire suppression costs.**

Violation of these regulations are punishable as a Class B misdemeanor, by a fine of not more than \$5000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization or imprisonment for not more than six (6) months or both.

16 USC §551; 18USC §§3559 & 3571.

## CABIN FEE ACT PASSES DECEMBER 4, 2014

*From Joe Tripathi, NFH President, for the Cabin Coalition 2*

The National Forest Homeowners and Cabin Coalition 2 are proud to announce that Congress **passed the Cabin Fee Act**. The bill was sent to President Obama to be signed. ***This success brings permanent and very welcome permit fee relief to cabin owners all across the country. Ring those bells and break out the champagne!!***

This milestone achievement coincides with the 100th anniversary of the Recreation Residence Program on National Forest lands. Passage of the Cabin Fee Act ensures the continuation of the Cabin Program for generations to come with stable permit fees.

Our efforts as cabin owners received early support from our sponsors Chairman Doc Hastings (R-WA), in the House and Senate. Both gentlemen extremely helpful and dedication throughout the Cabin Fee Act was Senate by many key result of the and telephone calls from We strongly encourage personal 'thank you' to Senators for acting to Program. Contact website.



Senator Jon Tester (D-MT), in the and their staffs have been unwavering in their support and this multi-year effort. Additionally, co-sponsored in both House and legislators of both parties, as a overwhelming number of emails their constituent cabin owners. cabin owners to express a their Representatives and secure the future of the Cabin information is on the NFH

Crucial to the drafting and passage of the Cabin Fee Act has been the cooperation and assistance of senior management of the U.S. Forest Service. The Forest Service recognized the inconsistencies and administrative problems in the CUFFA permit fee process. The passage of CFA is a more equitable and efficient system. We are indebted to Chief Tom Tidwell and his senior staff for their unwavering support of the legislation on behalf of the cabin community and the American public.

### **What Happens Now?**

Passage of the Cabin Fee Act has an immediate impact on fees for those cabin owners whose CUFFA fee exceeds \$5,600. The Cabin Fee Act is a relatively short, simple piece of legislation. There are questions about process, implementation, and timing. The Forest Service time will develop and issue administrative directions in accordance with the new Act. See **CFA Frequently Asked Questions and CFA Summary** documents at the NFH website: [www.nationalforesthowners.org](http://www.nationalforesthowners.org).

**We are excited and significantly relieved by passage of the Cabin Fee Act. Our efforts will continue, working in cooperation with the Forest Service to ensure that the CFA is implemented as intended. Thank you all for your persistence, support and commitment to this effort. We could not have completed this journey without you.**



# President's Update

*Frank Kalinoski*



As 2014 comes to a close, we can look back on quite a busy year. We had a full slate of fun social events – the Chili Fest in April at the Community Church, the Progressive Dinner in June with the BBQ tri-tip, the Picnic at Horse Heaven, the Wine-A-Bit with a table-full of snacks and fun auction items at the Turner cabin, and the Oktoberfest with the brats and potato salad sponsored by the Motta's and the Wilkinson's. There were many good times with good people. Thanks to all who worked hard putting these events together.

MLIA made progress on our water system maintenance projects this year. In 2015 we need to service the well and the Los Huecos water tank. We have a bid for rehabilitating the well, which includes pulling the pipe and likely replacing the pump and motor. The pump and motor were last replaced in 2002. Additionally, Superior Tank Solutions has surveyed the Los Huecos water tank and given us bids to rehab the tank on-site or off-site.

Before we can proceed with either project MLIA needs to get the approval of the Forest Service. Unfortunately we discovered that our water system permit expired December 31<sup>st</sup> 2011. Now we have to re-apply for a new permit. The Forest Service is also going through a restructuring of personnel and their

responsibilities across the Cleveland National Forest. So the Forest Service will not be able to begin processing our new water permit until next year.

A few weeks ago I met with Donn Christiansen, our District Ranger, and Spencer Bleadorn, the Recreation and Lands Officer, to discuss our water permit renewal and the two water system projects. I am confident that we can work with the Forest Service to get our new water system permit and our tank rehab and well rehab projects approved. This will be a long process.

We are grateful that the NFH has finally convinced Congress to pass the Cabin Fee Act this year. I am going to apply to the NFH for the Outstanding Communication Award because our website and newsletter is the best, thanks to the many hours Eugenie Newton puts in.

See ya' on the mountain!  
Frank



# Road Access Report

## *Carl Sessions*

Our two-year Adopt-A-Highway permit with the County of San Diego expired November 24th. The required forms have been completed, returned and we are happy to reaffirm our desire to continue trash pick-up along Sunrise Highway between the Visitor Center and Shire Camp at least twice per year.

A delivery of 12.5 tons of road base was recently added to the MLIA store of access road material for future use. A mid-week road maintenance was conducted in early October. The entrance to Escondido Ravine had pot holes filled in, the entrance culverts covered with material, and the culverts themselves cleared of debris. The Western loop from the Northern access to Lower Boiling Springs received a major make over along with the addition of a full load of road base to augment the drainage issues that at time made that stretch impassible for some vehicles. Upper Boiling Springs also received some much needed road material as a deterrent to winter



storm damage.

I want to thank those that participate in these work parties and I hope those of you that live along these corridors find your travels a bit more comfortable.

Enjoy the winter folks!

## 2015 MLIA Events

**February 7 – MLIA Board Meeting**  
*Cabin 554*

**April 18 – Chili Social**

**May 9 – MLIA Board Meeting**  
*Cabin 802*

**June 27 – MLIA Community Picnic**  
*Horse Heaven Campground*

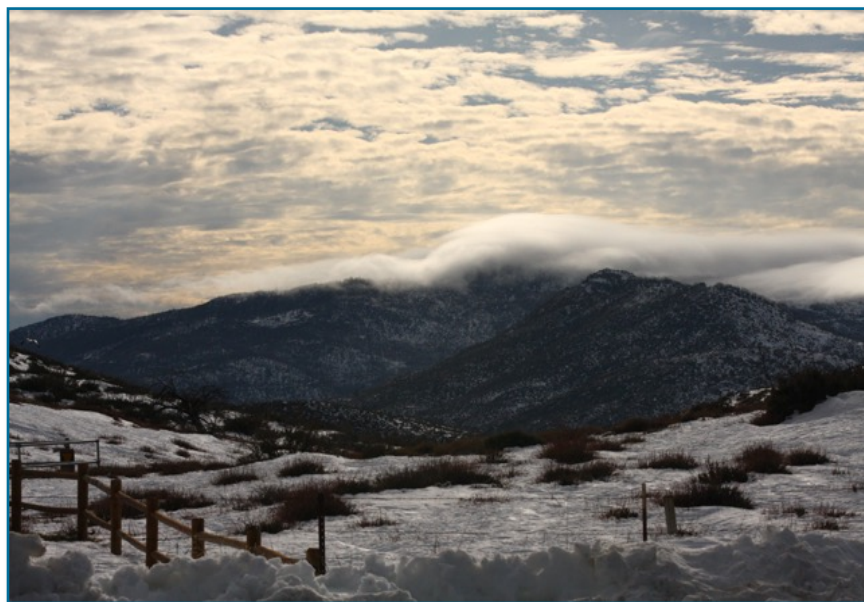
**August 1 – MLIA Board Meeting**  
*Cabin 569*

**August 15 – Wine-A-Bit**

**September 19 – ANNUAL MEETING**  
*Red-Tailed Roost*

**November 7 – MLIA Board Meeting**  
*Cabin 751*

# Starry Nights and Snowy Days



Donna  
Crossman

Eugenie  
Newton



Mike  
Margolis







# Mount Laguna Pines

*Joanne Odenthal*

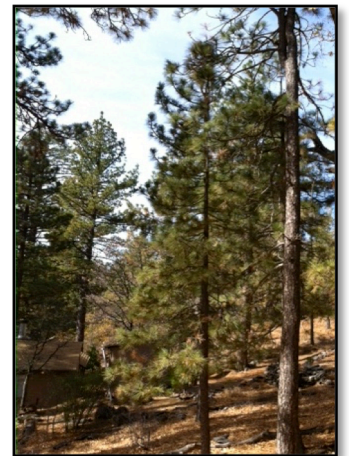
San Diego County forests are home to a variety of conifers, including trees in both the Pine and Cypress family.

Pines are definitely the conifers you see most on the mountain. On Mt. Laguna, the most common pines are Jeffrey Pines, with some Ponderosa Pines, Coulter Pines, Sugar Pines, and Pinyon Pines also present.

Jeffrey Pine and Ponderosa Pine are both also known as Yellow Pines. They interbreed so sometimes it's hard to know who's who. The bark of the Jeffrey Pine often has a sweet scent like vanilla or butterscotch. This is most present on a warm day when the bark releases its essential oils. The Ponderosa Pine smells more like turpentine and the cones are smaller than the Jeffrey. Pinecones on the Jeffreys have spines that face inwards, while the Ponderosa spines face out and feel quite prickly. All of our pines have been dangerously impacted by the combination of drought, forest fires, and bark beetle we have experienced over the past two decades.

The pine tree was an important food and medicine source for the local Indians. Pine nuts were harvested, eaten raw or roasted. The best pine nuts came from Pinyon Pines, and harvesting trips were made annually to harvest the best nuts. Nuts were also harvested from other pines, depending upon what was available. There are a few Pinyon Pines left near Kwaaymii Point and you can access them via the walking trail behind the Visitor Center. There were many more Pinyons on the mountain before a fire (I believe in the 1940s) burned most of them. Those behind the Visitor Center are the last to survive.

Pine needles are high in vitamin C and can be made into a refreshing tea. Brigitte Mars, a noted herbalist, reports that Indians of the northeast fed pine needle tea to French explorers as a treatment for scurvy. A strong infusion of pine needles in water can be used as a steam inhalation for respiratory congestion. Pine needles in the bath are said to relieve aches and pains. Michael Moore, a specialist on herbs of the west and southwest, reported that the inner bark and pitch are both useful as expectorants.



If you want to try a simple "herb" tea, take a handful of fresh pine needles and break them up. Place them in a pot with 2 cups of water. Bring to a boil, then turn off the heat and let it sit for about ten minutes. Strain and drink. You can also add honey. Enjoy!

Sources: Balls, *Early Uses of California Plants*. Foster & Hobbs, *Western Medicinal Plants and Herbs*. Mars, *IPlant* (iPad app). Moore, *Medicinal Plants of the Mountain West*.



# Mount Laguna Fire Safe Council

[mtlaguna.org/fire-safe-council](http://mtlaguna.org/fire-safe-council)

*by Pat Spinetta*

**Our "Dumpster" project** is a success thanks to all who participated. Over 10 ton of leaves and an equal amount of brush and branches were taken to Camp Ole thus reducing the fuel load in the cabin/private property area. The dumpster was removed in October because of a renovation project by the USFS at Camp Ole. Once that project is completed, we will resume the placement of a dumpster. Thanks to a grant from SDG&E and your donations we are able to continue the project in 2015. Again, we salute Jason Kraling, USFS and Bob Olsen (cabin 587) for working together to make this project a success.

**Election of Officers and Board Members** was held at our last FSC meeting on November 15. The Officers and Board members remain the same with the addition of Cal Turner (583) and John Wallar (718). We thank Cal and John for volunteering to serve. At the November meeting it was the decision of the Board to sell the MLFSC chain saws. The decision was based on limited use and liability. John Wallar volunteered to handle the sale of the saws. The truck, splitter, and weed whackers will remain for the use of cabin and private property owners. A Hold Harmless document will be included in the sign out process.

**John Truett's (USFS) presentation** was the highlight of our November meeting. John is a long time private property owner on Mt. Laguna and supporter of the MLFSC from its inception. John was the Battalion Chief when the FSC was formed, and now is one of four incident USFS commanders based in Washington, DC. He was on every major fire in the West in 2014.

First, John thanked the Mt. Laguna Community

for our commitment to fuel reduction. Our efforts are a model for other mountain areas and cabin tracts throughout the country. John emphasized that what we do not only protects our property and lives but also the lives of the firefighters. During a fire, the Incident Commander makes decisions as to when and where to send his crew based on multiple variables including terrain, wind, and fuel load, and most importantly on whether or not he can get his crews out safely.

John showed several videos of the 2013 Yarnell Fire near Prescott, Arizona in which 19 Hotshots lost their lives. The Hotshots were one of two independent Hotshot crews not associated with either the USFS or the BLM. At one point in the fire, they were in a safe location atop a ridge. The Hotshots went down the mountain to help protect homes and residents. The wind shifted and fire raced up the mountain. 19 firefighters, fathers, sons, husbands, and brothers, lost their lives and 200 homes burned. John was one of several agency representatives who prepared the After Incident Report.

We are grateful that John with his knowledge, experience, judgment and sensitivity is in a position to make decisions to handle a major fire and protect his crew and all of us.

**Michelle Barrios, USFS Law Enforcement**, spoke about what is involved in an evacuation during a fire. Different agencies, timing, and communication all must be coordinated. Please let me know if you are interested in helping to create a Mt Laguna fire evacuation plan.

We thank John and Michelle for taking time to meet with us.

# MOUNT LAGUNA IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1935, the Mount Laguna Improvement Association acts as liaison between cabin owners and the Forest Service Addressing roads, water, and wood removal.

[www.mtlaguna.org](http://www.mtlaguna.org)



**First snow 2015**

## Water Maintenance

Please report any problems with the MLIA water system to Dan Fritz at (619) 405 – 1452.

## Have You Moved? Let Us Know!

Please send your address and email changes to Karen Motta at [RKMotta@cox.net](mailto:RKMotta@cox.net) or call (760) 440-9554.