

**MOUNT
LAGUNA
IMPROVEMENT
ASSOCIATION**



Photo by Tina Pivonka

CABIN NEWSLETTER

VOL. 21

No. 88

Meet Elizabeth Dunn MLIA President

Happy New Year!

I'm Elizabeth Dunn and I have been given the volunteer opportunity of chairing the water utility for all of the cabin tracts on Mt. Laguna.

I'm happy to report MLIA is having great success partnering with the Forest Service on new endeavors. Our partnership with the folks that oversee our permits is developing positively.

One of MLIA's goals in the new year is to start the process of installing smart meters on the well and the holding tanks. Smart meters allow for a far faster knowledge of how much water is moving and if there are any leaks. This process will be an investment not only financially but an investment in protecting our valuable resource, clean water.



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February 3rd

MLIA Board Meeting
9:00 am, Red-Tailed Roost

April 27th

Chili Fest

May 4th

MLIA Board Meeting
9:00 am, Red-Tailed Roost

June 15th

Community Picnic

August 3rd

MLIA Board Meeting
9:00 am, Red-Tailed Roost

August 17th

Wine and Craft Beer Fest

September 21st

MLIA Annual Meeting
10:00 am, Red -ailed Roost

November 2nd

MLIA Board Meeting
9:00 am, Red-Tailed Roost

Fire Safe Council Meetings

Monthly on the 3rd Saturday
April - November
10:00 am, Red-Tailed Roost

**Coming Up
in
2024**

Meet Elizabeth Dunn, *continued from page 1*

I'm a second-generation San Diegan and have sought lots of peace in these mountains most of my life. It's a lovely thought that all of us cabin owners share love of the mountain enough that we have literally invested in it.

Please stop by for the social events. They are designed to allow us to get to know each other. After all, we share the common appreciation for Mt. Laguna.

Elizabeth

Enjoying cabin winter!

Thank you to all the MLIA cabin owners who are sharing their cabin winter photos for this newsletter.

Denise Mantuai, Joanne Odenthal, Tina Pivonka, Rob Quigle, Sarah Way, and Denise Whisman.



Introducing Kyle Smith USFS Descanso District Ranger

Kyle Smith is the new Descanso District Ranger. Kyle has been in the acting District Ranger position since March and was hired as the permanent District Ranger in July.

Kyle grew up mostly in northern Nevada and western Michigan. He earned his Bachelor's degree in Biological Anthropology from George Washington University in Washington, DC. Commissioned as a Marine officer in 2006, Kyle spent nine years on active duty flying CH-46E and MV-22 Osprey helicopters while stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. He deployed with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit in 2010 supporting humanitarian aid and disaster relief operations in Pakistan. Later Kyle deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

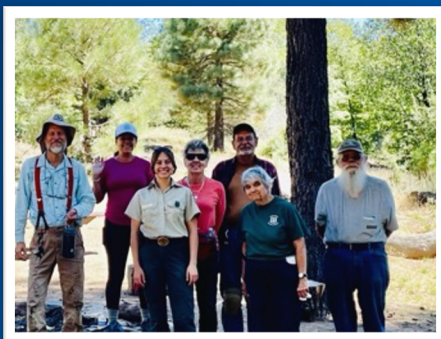


Following active duty, Kyle earned his graduate degrees in Environmental Management and Public Administration focusing on forestry and land management. He had an opportunity to work closely with both the Nature Conservancy and the National Park Service during graduate school before taking a position as an environmental planner for Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. In 2021, Kyle took a position with the Cleveland National Forest as the Forest Planner before moving into the District Ranger position earlier this year.

Kyle's wife, Jennifer, is an active duty naval officer and orthopedic surgeon currently deployed to Iraq. They have two children, Della (10) and Margo (4). Kyle's family enjoys traveling, skiing and spending time outside!

Kyle is extremely excited to be the Descanso District Ranger and looks forward to advancing the agency's priorities of combating the wildfire crisis, improving the quality of recreational opportunities, while simultaneously protecting the valued natural and cultural resources throughout the district.

Welcome, Kyle! We look forward to working with you on the mountain.



*Frank Kalinoski and Bunny Krall
with Mia Someneck, USFS.*

Descanso Ranger District sponsors a National Public Lands Day event on September 23, 2023

Volunteers from the Mount Laguna Volunteer Association, Mt Laguna Mountain Bikers Association and the Mount Laguna Improvement Association (MLIA) joined Mia Someneck, USFS Assistant Recreation and Lands Officer, to clean up and beautify the Horse Heaven Campground for National Public Lands Day on September 23. Bunny Krall and Frank

Kalinoski represented MLIA. Volunteers worked all morning in cleaning up fire rings, scraping and painting picnic tables at the campsite.

Home sweet winter cabin!



Winston Way

Photos by Sarah Way

Catch up with Mt Laguna Fire Safe Council

The MLFSC annual elections were held at this year's November 18th meeting. The results of this election and the Board and Directors from now until the November 2024 elections are:

President – Doug Reed

Vice President – Joe Cochran

Treasurer – Tom McNicol

Secretary – Meg Moore

Directors – Mike Jacobs, Tina Pivonka, Richard Willis and Dan Krall

Congratulations to all of you and

Thanks for your commitment and hard work.

New hour for brush pile at Old Air Force Station are 8:30 am -4:30pm. Access is subject to closure due to bad weather and/or bad road conditions. Please follow the rules for using the brush pile and keep this area clean.

The brush pile was burned on December 19th, so start a new pile at the same location and in the very back of the area. Thank you to the Forest Service for burning the pile.



Winter is a good time to check your heater, fireplace flues and dampers for proper operation and that they are free of any obstructions and soot build-up. Test all smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors and replace the batteries if they are older than one year. Please check your detector manual for requirements to replace batteries.

As a reminder, SDG&E will set-up power Community Resource Centers (CRC) during a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) or an emergency evacuation of our community. Check the SDG&E website for exact locations of these charging stations, outage maps, weather reports, area cameras and power shutdown status. Be sure to sign up for weather and power outage warnings. Receive alerts to your cell phone and email by signing up through your SDG&E online account.

Thank you to all who made donations to the MLFSC this year.

This money will support our 2024 operations and expenses.

Thanks also to the Mount Laguna Community, US Forest Service, MLIA and Cal-Fire for their continued support of the Fire Safe Council.

Please continue to contact our Equipment Managers, Richard Willis (619-990-1404) or Jack Splinter (858-472-4368), to schedule your usage of the MLFSC equipment.

Have a wonderful and safe winter!

Doug Reed, President MLFSC, ohio0411@hotmail.com

NFH Helps Cabin Owners!

Bunny Krall

Did you know **NFH has a paid lobbyist in Washington representing the cabin owners**. NFH and its representatives actively monitor and respond to key issues affecting our cabins through the recreation residence program. When appropriate NFH challenges the Forest Service when they do not follow their own policies or laws. A recent example is when the Forest Service wanted to insert a new provision in future permits limiting yearly cabin use to five months. **NFH responded to this proposal and got the five-month use limit removed!**

The national organization acts as a conduit for all cabin associations throughout the country for education, sharing solutions, recognizing positive and concerning trends, and advocates to Congress, introducing legislation to preserve and restore the cabin program and protect permit holders.

Cabin fees retained

Permit fees will be retained by the Forest Service beginning in 2025. This means that 85% of the annual permit fees you pay will come back to the Cleveland National Forest in 2025, rather than going into the general Treasury. This money is earmarked to support the cabin/recreation programs. This is part of the Cabin Fee Act that NFH created 10 years ago. MLIA leadership will be meeting with the Forest Leadership in 2024 to discuss how these fees could be used.

Fee Adjustment for days of cabin non-use

NFH is advocating for the cabin program and holding the Forest Service accountable to pro-rate permit fees based on days of inability to use your cabin. MLIA submitted public comment on the draft of Impaired Access Regulation to the Federal Registrar and to our Senator.

Permit Reissuance

EL Dorado National Forest is going through their permit reissuance process now. Cabins have been inspected by the Forest Service and owners have been given letters as to what needs to be corrected to receive their permit reissuance. **We will hear more about this as the process completes.** This will help us all prepare for our permit reissuance in 2028.

MLIA Representatives to NFH
Frank Kalinoski - NFH Stewardship
Bunny Krall - Awards Committee.

Manutai cabin Christmas



Papi and Denise



Who can resist a snowy slope and a sled?

Photo by Eugenie Newton

Meet the new neighbors!



James Cook, Cabin 552, joined the US Navy right out of high school and four years later he received a Navy ROTC scholarship from the navy. He attended the University of San Diego, earned a B.S. in physics and then spent four more years in the Navy as an officer. After the Navy he had a distinguished career with Otis Elevator before retiring in July of 2022.

His first bucket list objective after retirement was to hike the Pacific Crest Trail which he did earlier this year. He highly recommends it as an amazing adventure.

James has four children who he says are all flying quite nicely out of the nest. There is no prouder father than James. So far, the peace and

serenity of the mountain permeates everything he has seen. He states he has met so many kind, inviting and friendly people. He shared to “Feel free to stop by the cabin anytime as all are welcome all of the time”

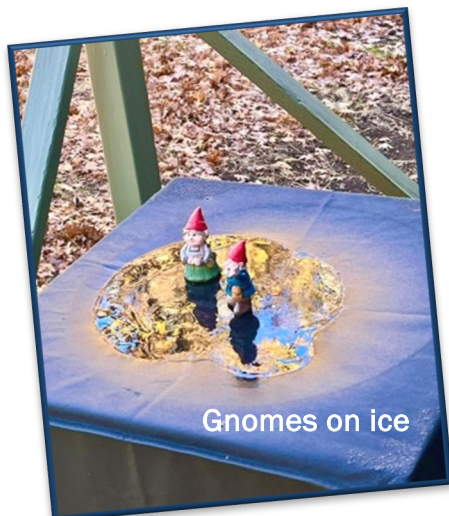
Sara and Keith Mayer, Cabin 562, have been hiking and birding in the mountains of San Diego for many years—always a bit sad when it was time to go home at the end of a day.

They’d been looking for a property where they could build a vacation cabin and would jokingly pick ideal spots in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and the national forest. Then they started looking at forest cabins. Now, they won’t have to go far after a hike, and can wake up to the peace and magical air of the mountain.

Both Sara and Keith are retired. Sara decided to be a teacher when she was six years old and spent most of her career as a computer science professor at San Diego State. She wrote textbooks, read mysteries, and is always on the lookout for birds.



Keith has had a varied career - house painter, Peace Corps volunteer, novelist, journalist, piano tuner, editor, and manager/owner of a variety of small businesses. His long-time hobbies (besides birding) are tennis and furniture making.



Gnomes on ice

Thank you to Bunny Krall for introducing new cabin owners (here and page 8) to our Mt Laguna cabin community with photographs and information.

Photo by Denise Whisman

Winter Wonders

When the oak leaves drop on the mountain things are revealed that have been hidden much of the year. One of these is our native mistletoe that nestles in the oak trees all over Mt. Laguna.

Over 1300 species of mistletoe exist worldwide. Mistletoe varieties native to San Diego County include Oak Mistletoe, *Phoradendron villosum*, Dense Mistletoe, *Phoradendron densum*, Big-Leaf Mistletoe, *Phoradendron macrophyllum*, and Dwarf Mistletoe, *Arceuthobium campylopodum*. The European Mistletoe is a different species, *Viscum album*. All mistletoe use trees as hosts, but the trees vary widely across the world.

The two varieties of mistletoe you will find near our cabins are the Oak Mistletoe and the Dwarf Mistletoe. The Oak Mistletoe is the mistletoe we associate with Christmas decorations and kissing under the mistletoe. The leaves are oval, green and leathery and the berries are white. There are some massive stands of Oak Mistletoe in the Boiling Springs tract on the large oaks near cabins 770 and 771.

The Dwarf Mistletoe is also found on the mountain, but this you will see on our native Jeffrey Pine trees. It looks quite different from the Oak Mistletoe, having scaly yellow leaves on stems like skinny fingers. It looks almost like coral growing on the trunk of the pine tree.



Oak mistletoe



Dwarf mistletoe

The Dwarf Mistletoe is slightly more parasitic than the Oak Mistletoe. You can tell this because it's more yellow indicating it doesn't create as much chlorophyll. You can see Dwarf Mistletoe on many of the pine trees along Los Huecos Road between the Visitor Center and the pump house.

Mistletoe is hemi-parasitic, meaning it isn't a complete parasite. It uses the host plant for water and many nutrients, but makes its own chlorophyll through photosynthesis. Once considered a pest, mistletoe is now thought to be a "keystone species" with important influence on the ecological community it inhabits. A large number of animals, including native birds and butterflies, depend on the mistletoe for food. In return, they distribute the seeds and pollinate the flowers, continuing the cycle of life. There is some evidence that bees depend on the mistletoe

flowers for food in early spring. Many birds nest in mistletoe, including Chickadees and Nuthatches. Seeds are spread by birds such as the Phainopepla.

According to legend, mistletoe was sacred to the Druids. It was cut at the beginning of the year and provided protection from evil. The oak trees on which the mistletoe grew were treated with great respect as mistletoe was considered a healing plant. In Norse mythology, an arrow made of mistletoe killed Baldur, the god of peace. The Christmas use of mistletoe may trace back to Druidic or Scandinavian legend, but it was not really part of British or American tradition until late in the 18th century.

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Septic System Replacement Process Clarified

The septic replacement request form is available now on the MLIA website, <https://mtlaguna.org/our-cabins/>. The form outlines the information a cabin owner needs to provide when requesting a septic system replacement.

Click on “Septic System “ which links to the USFS website. Scroll down to “Improvement forms” to find the request form. Also, the Cleveland National Forest now has a working draft of the septic replacement process which allow the FS and cabin owner know where the request is in the process.



Mariana McCue, Cabin 789, shared that she is an interior designer living in Del Mar, CA. Cooking and entertaining are favorite pastimes and Mariana describes herself

as friendly and “enjoys helping wherever she can”.

Mariana has 3 grown children and is divorced. She has always loved the mountains and is looking forward to meeting other cabin owners.

Welcome to our new neighbors!



Laura and Stewart Dadmums, Cabin 719, describe themselves as “outdoorsy people”. Stewart is a native San Diegan and Laura has lived in San

Diego since 1969.

They have two sons, Jacob and Benji, both in their early 20s,. Both Laura and Stewart are lawyers. Stewart works as a Public Defender and Laura does research law for the Federal Court.

Winter Wonders, *continued from page 7*

Leaves and young twigs have been used medicinally, but can also be toxic. The berries are poisonous. All parts of the plant are toxic in large doses. European mistletoe is used medicinally by trained practitioners and marketed in Europe under names such as Iscador or Helixor.

American mistletoe is considerably more toxic than the European variety. Both the European and American mistletoe are plants to be treated with great respect and should never be used without the help of a trained medical practitioner.

Please don't leave it where children can help themselves to the pretty berries!

Enjoy your mistletoe in a doorway this holiday season or appreciate it in its native habitat. If you look closely, perhaps you'll spot a nest left over from last spring.

*Joanne Odenthal, Cabin 505
Joanne6336@gmail.com*

Laura shared that they have hiked the Mt. Laguna trails and enjoyed all the Cleveland National Forest has to offer for years. It was their dream to own a place in a forest that they could retreat to. They started looking at cabins this past year and found 719.

Both have already been engaged in attending MLFSC meetings and MLIA Social Events.

MOUNT LAGUNA IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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

www.mtlaguna.org



Photo by Rob Quigley

WATER ISSUES?

Call
Dan Fritz
MLIA Water System Supervisor
(619) 405-1452

NEW CONTACT INFO?

Send your new email, address,
or phone number to
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