

MOUNT LAGUNA IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

CABIN NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 23 NUMBER 97



"A fantastic year of accomplishment for the board."

Jay Moser, MLIA President

This has been a fantastic year of accomplishment for the board. The following recap is to remind everyone of our trials and tribulations and give acknowledgements to the individuals who worked hard for you to make this project a success.

In November 2024, the board voted to move forward with a 5 to 3 vote to replace the 460,000 gallon Ole Tank with a smaller 285,000 gallon tank to be built by the Superior Tank Company. By February, the vote triggered three resignations due to disagreement over tank size, cost, and project funding. Each one of the board members who resigned had contributed greatly to the discussion and the general business of the board. They deserve our appreciation for their service.

On February 8th, I was appointed by the remaining board members to fill the vacant term of President, leaving three board positions to be filled. We were in the midst of proposing a \$375,000 project to the general membership. Based upon our **Treasurer, Daniel Morris'** recommendations, this meant that along with our capital improvement fund, we needed to request

a \$1500 special assessment from each cabin owner. Per our Bylaws, membership needed to vote to approve any expenditure over \$50,000 and a separate vote of the membership on the special assessment was required.

The board needed to present the case for the Ole Tank replacement to the cabin owners and layout all the cost estimates which required a special assessment. This was accomplished via informational zoom meetings where I discussed the 60 year old Ole Tank in depth, including prior inspections, structural problems and rehabilitation efforts over the years.

Communications Director, Per Martin, designed a way for our membership to vote electronically on two separate ballots. This allowed cabin owners to participate in voting ahead of our meeting and allowed us to know when our quorums were met. When the voting was completed, we were able to instantly tabulate and report the results during the meeting.

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**Coming
up
soon!**

February 21st
9:00 am
MLIA Board Meeting

April 18th
10:00 am
Fire Safe Council Meeting

May 2nd
9:00 am - Board Meeting
ChiliFest afterward

2026 Key Dates

FEBRUARY

21st - MLIA Board
Meeting

APRIL

18th - Fire Safe Council
Meeting

MAY

2nd - MLIA Board
Meeting and
ChiliFest

AUGUST

1st - MLIA Board
Meeting

OCTOBER

3rd - MLIA Annual
Meeting and
BBQ

NOVEMBER

7th - MLIA Board
Meeting

Group photo at BBQ after the
members' Annual Meeting on
October 4, 2025.

President's report, *continued*

Both the votes to authorize the board to spend \$375,000 on the tank replacement project and to approve a \$1500 special assessment passed by an overwhelming majority. I was able to sign the contract with Superior immediately following the membership vote.

I asked past MLIA President, **Frank Kalinoski to be Project Lead** and main contact with Superior. Frank spent countless hours establishing timetables and lists of critical tasks to be completed prior to the start of construction. The infrastructure committee and **Dan Fritz, MLIA Water Supervisor**, met many times to go over plans and worked to prepare the site.

Vice President, Carl Sessions did the initial research and obtained several bids from tank contractors, resulting in a tank size recommendation and a board vote. Carl took the lead on getting the site cleared of brush and ordered gravel for the tank base from RCP. During all this, Carl recruited replacement directors, **Bill Cleveland, Barbara Bellini, and Kelley McGue**.

Secretary, Bunny Krall, ensured that weekly email updates along with tank progress photos were sent out to membership. She reviewed email on a daily basis and ensured questions were forwarded to the appropriate board members to send answers to membership and keep the lines of communication open.

Jay



Job Well Done!

Week One
October 6, 2025

The water tank ladder, roof and 3rd level panels are dismantled.

Old Ole tank with the temporary tank next to it.



Week Two

Deconstruction of the Old Ole Tank completed. Superior Tank found an additional coating on the bottom half of the tank. This meant each bolt had to be sheared off and the coating removed to separate the pieces. This took additional time and cost.

All existing tank materials were hauled off site.





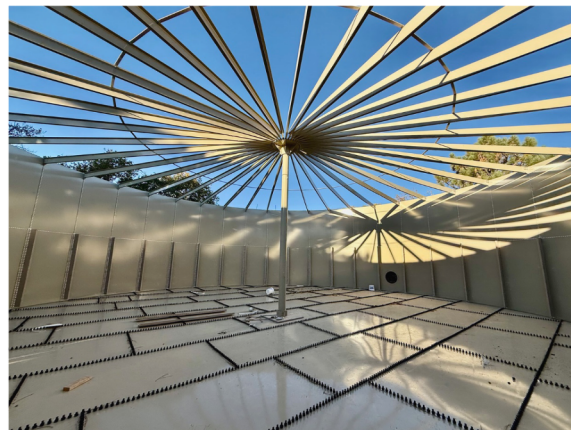
Week Three

The new ring at tank base is built and stones placed inside. Construction of tank sides of tank begins.



Week Four

Dan Fritz, MLIA Water Operator, identifies where the tank flanges and valves should be located for Superior Tank so they are placed appropriately. Dan fills the tank with 2 inches of water and Superior Tank checked for any leaks around each bolt in the base.



Jay Moser,
MLIA President
on site.

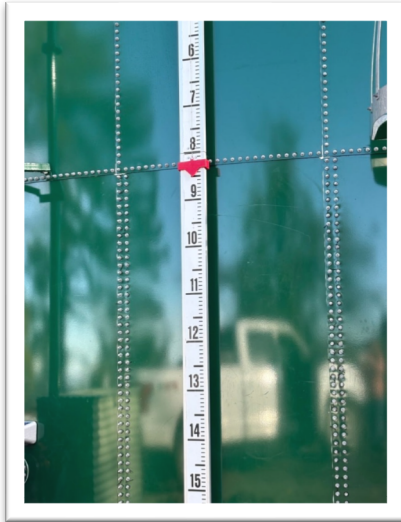


Per Martin, Board Director, and Dan Fritz,
MLIA Water Operator, standing inside the old Ole.

Week Five

Superior Tank completed construction of the new Ole water tank. The pieces of the old tank that were saved for reinstall – roof rail, security ladder, water level indicator – were put into place.





Week Six

The Ole Tank work was completed. This allowed us to start filling the new tank to check for leaks.

All cabins now have water.

OLE TANK UP AND RUNNING!
12/3/2025

Thank you to MLIA Board Members and all our cabin volunteers this past year. You ensured 2025 was a success.

Bunny Krall, MLIA Secretary.

MLIA is successful due to a dedicated Board and Volunteers from our cabin community. Board members roles are all voluntary. Endless hours have been put in this past year to ensure success of the Ole Water Tank Project so that all of you can enjoy uninterrupted water service to your cabins. Thanks to all the cabin owners who supported this process with a positive vote and/or provided positive feedback to Board members to keep all motivated and moving forward – It made a difference.

Thank you too, to all the cabin owners who are engaged with MLIA. Engagement includes attendance at Board meetings and social events, reading water meters for annual billing, road clean up, newsletter editor and/or contributor, MLIA Historian, Social Coordinator, oversight of vendor webpage to name a few.

We'd love to see more of you engaged in 2026. Please let me know of your interest and we will find a role for you. Email Bunny at MLIA@mtlaguna.org.

Cabin Fee Bills - Important to Know!

Recreation Residence permit fees are normally billed In December. Because of the Government Shutdown, billing for 2026 annual fees have an **extended payment due date of February 1.**

It is the permit holder's responsibility to notify the USFS of any changes to your contact

information, including your billing mailing address, phone number and/or email address.

If you have questions regarding your annual special uses bill, please contact the **USFS National Billing Team** directly via email at SM.FS.WONBT@usda.gov or by phone at (202) 205-1144.

Forest Service Fee Retention Action Plan



Last year, 2025, was the beginning of Fee Retention as most of you know. This means the permit fees we pay now go to the Forest Service to administer the residence and other recreation programs. As we were looking ahead to this 2026, NFH cultivated an ongoing dialog with the Forest Service leaders in the Washington Office about our priorities for use of these funds.

Recently, the Washington Office came out with guidance to the field called the Fee Retention Action Plan. *NFH reviewed this plan and are pleased to read in its pages clear support for use of the funds to administer the cabin program as a top priority.*

Cabin Program Restoration Act

NFH is currently lobbying to introduce a bill in Congress. The bill is called the Cabin Program Restoration Act (CPRA). As drafted by NFH, it will protect and restore the Recreation Residence Program.

NFH Outreach News: The Invaluableness of Our Cabin Community

Letter from Desiree LaMaggioire, NFH Outreach Coordinator

At NFH, we get a bird's-eye view into all the work cabin owners do to maintain their cabins and contribute to their tract and the surrounding communities. It's potlucks and picnics, family time, lifetime friendships, and instant bonds that feel nearly the same. It's a neighbor removing a tree that fell across the cabin driveway next door, or another texting to let you know they've patched a broken window to secure your cabin until you can get there. It's watching wildlife from a cozy chair by the fire or from a sunny spot out on the deck. It is sitting quietly with a favorite cabin memory, and other times, laughing out loud with family and friends, remembering, "that time when ..."

One of the greatest gifts of the cabin program is the community it creates.

Throughout 2025, we've had the opportunity to visit cabin owners across the country. In all the tracts, we've seen a common thread – our cabins and the public land they occupy are dear to us. This coming year, we encourage each of you to get to know someone new in the cabin community – someone who might be learning about the program. Maybe take a drive to another part of your National Forest to connect with a nearby cabin tract.

Having a community to turn to when questions arise about the cabin program is worth the investment in making connections.

Hope your holidays were full of cheer and included a sprinkle of cabin memories!

Cheers,
Desiree

*Submitted by Bunny Krall,
MLIA representative to NFH*

Mount Laguna Fire Safe Council Winter 2026 Updates

*Doug Reed
MLFSC President*



The MLFSC annual elections were held at the 2025 November 15th meeting. The following are the election results.

Board and Directors Nov 2025 - Oct 2026

President –	Doug Reed
Vice President –	Joe Cochran
Treasurer –	Tom McNicol
Secretary –	Meg Moore
Directors –	Mike Jacobs, Tina Pivonka & Richard Willis.

Congratulations to all of you and thanks for your commitment and hard work.

The last dumpster of the year was removed on December 22nd. Thanks to all who filled the dumpsters and helped to reduce the amount of wildfire fuels in our community.

NEW hours for Brush Pile are 8:00am to 4:30pm. Our access to the brush pile 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. Thank you to the Forest Service for providing the space for our brush pile and dumpster.

SDG&E will set-up power Community Resource Centers (CRC) during a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) or an emergency evacuation of our community.

The SDG&E website (SDGE.com) shows these CRC locations, outage maps, weather reports, area cameras and power shutdown status.

Be sure to sign up for weather and power outage warnings and alerts to your cell phone and email through your SDG&E online account.

**Next Mount Laguna Fire Safe Council meeting will be on
April 18, 2026, 10:00 am at the Roost.
We will send out an email with more details.**

The Forest Service will perform their prescribed burns this winter and into the early spring. Please watch your email for notifications of these prescribed burns and avoid the areas during the burns.

During this winter, it is a good time to check your heater and 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 or the detector itself.

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.

Thank you to all those people that made donations to the MLFSC this year. This money will help to support our operations and expenses.

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

Have a wonderful and safe new year.

*Doug Reed
ohio0411@hotmail.com*

A bit of earlyish cabin history

Joanne Odenthal, Cabin 505

Not only am I the Historian for the Mount Laguna Improvement Association, I realize at this point in my life, I'm a piece of living history. Life on the mountain when I was a kid was a different experience than it is now.

My parents bought the cabin in 1956. At that time, the cabin had two previous owners. It was built in 1926, if the records in the Forest Service book are accurate. Since they're not accurate on a number of other details about the cabin, who knows.



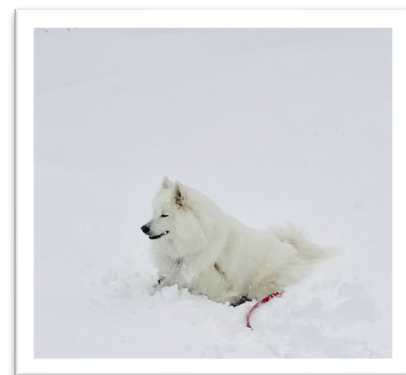
The cabins on our hill, numbers 523, 516, 512, 509, 505 and 504, were all built around the same time. The owners of 512 had built a new cabin on the property sometime before we got our cabin. The larger cabin seemed luxurious to us. It had indoor plumbing and a fireplace! The original cabin was still there, tiny compared to the new one, it was just a small one room box.

Our cabin, also a small one room box, had an outhouse up the hill and a faucet outside the front door. There was no indoor plumbing of any kind. There was no wood stove or fireplace.

My father brought up an old kerosene stove that his mother had in her house in the early 1900s. We used that for cooking and heat. The cabin had 3 beds at one end and a table and chairs at the other end. We did dishes either outside under the faucet, or inside, in a plastic tub set on the table. Water was brought in and heated on the stove. There was a garbage pit at the southeast corner of the cabin. It really was camping except we didn't have to pitch a tent.

We didn't see many people when we came up on the weekends. My brother and I would walk up to the store, looking for discarded soda bottles on the way. We'd use the rebate from the bottles to buy our own sodas or a comic book. No one worried that we were a couple of kids wandering around the mountain by ourselves. No cell phones, no phone at the cabin. We never did have a phone. If we needed to make a call we went up to the store and used the pay phone. That didn't happen very often. There was no need.

Gradually, cabins got septic tanks and indoor plumbing. 512 was the first on our hill to have the amenities. 505 got indoor plumbing, a wood stove, and a tiny kitchen unit when my parents rebuilt the cabin in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At that time, the Forest Service was still giving permission for major rebuild projects. The last cabin on the hill to get a septic tank and indoor plumbing was 509—and that was less than 10 years ago.



Life on the mountain has changed, but it is still Mount Laguna.

Jesse, Cabin 505

MOUNT LAGUNA IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

MLIA Mission: Providing cabin owners with clean and reliable drinking water



Keep MLIA Up-to-Date!

Have you moved recently?
Changed email or phone number?

**To make changes
use the
"update preferences"
link at the bottom of any
MLIA email.**

Water system problems?

Immediately call

**Dan Fritz
MLIA Water Operator
(619) 405-1452**

*Eugenie Newton, Editor
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