

Banner Mountain Homeowners Association

est. 1984 www.bannermountain.org



Major issues facing us: Vote now, make your opinion count

Your homeowners association wants to take a position and use our resources to make a difference.

YOU MUST BE A PAID-UP MEMBER TO VOTE. Just circle your choices below and send this page and your \$15 membership dues by July 31 to:

**Banner Mountain Homeowners Assoc.
P.O. Box 833, Nevada City, CA 95959**

Summer 2008

In this issue:

- *GRASS VALLEY INITIATIVE*
- *FIRE SAFE ACTIONS*
- *FIRESAFE*
- *THE PIPELINE*

As a dues-current member, please vote:

1. Grass Valley Managed Growth Initiative	For	Against	Don't know
2. Reopening the Idaho Maryland Mine	For	Against	Don't know
3. Increasing the Loma Rica project on Idaho MD Rd. to 700+ units from 185	For	Against	Don't know
4. Develop a Fire Safe plan for Banner Mt. homeowners*	For	Against	Don't know

*A Fire Safe Plan would require resources and volunteers from our membership to get active community involvement.

Name(s) _____

Address: _____

For new members or changes:

Phone No: _____ Email: _____

Return this page and be heard!

What is the Managed Growth Initiative?

The Board has discussed the *Managed Growth Initiative (MGI)* at some length. While we understand that only people who live in Grass Valley can actually vote on the initiative, the issues surrounding the MGI are relevant to us all. Key projects which the MGI would influence are the Loma Rica Special Development Area project and the proposed reopening of the Idaho Maryland Mine. Below is a brief description of the MGI. We would like to know whether our membership supports the MGI so that we can accurately represent the point of view of our community.

The MGI, which will appear on the November ballot, mandates that the Grass Valley City Council adhere to the Land Use Element of the City's General Plan, unless changes are approved by a vote of the citizens. **The General Plan, approved in 2000 and updated as recently as January 2007, allows and prepares for 46% growth from 2000 - 2020.** Passing the Initiative would mean that any amendments to the General Plan Land Use Element would require approval of a majority of Grass Valley citizens. For example, Loma Rica and the Idaho-Maryland mine projects require such amendments because they change the land uses for their parcels.

The General Plan is a formal statement of the City's public policy about how it will grow. Created through extensive consultation and research, it sets out long-term expectations for citizens, developers, and city authorities alike. It serves the entire community by: (1) giving citizens a way to anticipate how their neighborhood and community will grow; (2) giving developers, long-range, coherent, and steady guidance; and (3) providing long-range stability enables City authorities to invest in infrastructure and services that support existing land-use and accommodate continued growth. The Plan was intended to balance competing needs, and to compromise conflicting interests. The General Plan is the vision for Grass Valley's future upon which community representatives have agreed.

The initiative adopts ONLY the Land Use Element of the General Plan (not the entire General Plan). Enforcing this Element would help keep land use consistent with the General Plan. The initiative proposes no changes to the General Plan. Changes that exceed the Land Use Element's plans for growth would be submitted for voter approval. The MGI will not hinder the goals of the 2020 General Plan.

The Initiative will not stop growth. New projects that are in concert with the General Plan pose no issue. Past and current City Councils

have not taken into account cumulative impacts, as defined by State CEQA* law, when approving projects. If they had, they would not approve projects that exceed legally allowable impacts on traffic and the environment as stated by the law.

The purpose of this initiative is to allow the growth and development of the City defined in the current General Plan (46%) unless changed by a vote of the citizens. Any future update of the General Plan (probably in 2020) will require a vote to approve if Land Use Element changes are made. The MGI addresses concerns by Grass Valley surveys conducted by City consultants. Residents stated that "traffic" and "too fast growth" are their major concerns.

To read the initiative, go to <http://ccatnc.org> or check out a one-page "Title and Summary" by the City Attorney, at: <http://www.cityofgrassvalley.com>.

For more information contact: Grant Cattaneo, spokesperson for Friends of Grass Valley, 477-8458

IF you want to support the initiative you may contribute to:

Friends of Grass Valley
PO Box 3040
Grass Valley CA 95945

Contributing up to the \$99.00 level is totally confidential; names of "small" contributors will not be divulged under any circumstances.

*CEQA = California Environmental Quality Act which mandates the process by which development projects are approved or not.

Banner Mountain as a Firewise Community

The 2008 fire season is off to a smoky start. And the devastating Angora fire of last year is still fresh in our memories. Some Banner Mountain residents have taken the fire threat seriously. Here and there one can see the results of recent vegetation management activities. But there is still much more to be done to protect homes and properties from the threat of serious forest fire.

The challenge is daunting considering the number of homes, how dangerously they are built and the density of vegetation here on Banner Mountain. Some even have wooden roofs. It is not likely that all the needed work can be accomplished in one or even two or three years. But as the ancient Chinese proverb states, "A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step."

With that in mind, the BMHA Board has endorsed the goal that we strive to become a Firewise Community. The process will start this summer with a community assessment of fire hazards by a professional forester, David Jaramillo, from the Sierra Forest Legacy. This organization recognizes the equal importance of vegetation management to create defensible space and the critical steps to improve the fire resistance of homes such as screening vents.

BMHA will sponsor a community gathering, hopefully in August, at which time David will share his assessment and suggestions on how to reduce serious fire hazards. This meeting will educate those attending on methods of increasing the fire resistance of the home, achieving good defensible space, and learning about other fire agencies in our community.

With this meeting as a start, we intend to schedule annual follow up assessments combined with Firewise Community meetings and recommended fire hazard reduction activities. If we are diligent, our combined efforts can achieve a meaningful reduction in the severity of our community's fire hazard rating. The ultimate goal is to have Banner Mountain recognized as a Firewise Community.

For those of you who find this message striking a resonant chord, more information on the Sierra Forest Legacy is available at www.sierraforestlegacy.com and at www.firewise.org for Firewise Communities. Stay tuned for future announcements on the Firewise Community program.

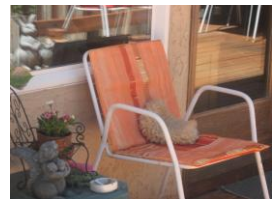
David Jaramillo also writes periodic articles entitled Seasonal Firewise Practices. They describe simple steps to reduce the fire hazard around your home. See Tips from Dave the Forester, such as those below, at the Sierra Forest Legacy website.



Easy Ways to Save Your Home

If your property is typical, you have pine needles, leaves, twigs and branches on your roof and near your buildings. Now is the time to:

1. Remove flammable debris from your roof and the gutters. Check your vents to ensure they are covered with at least a ¼ inch metal mesh to prevent a firebrand entering your home.
2. Mow lawns, and be sure to mow early enough in the day when there is still condensation on the grass. Use caution with power tools that produce sparks!
3. Clear fallen material such as fallen pine needles, at least 5 feet surrounding your home, deck (under deck as well), barn, or any other building.
4. Check for winter storm effects such as broken branches, leaves, and dead limbs and remove them. Prune some of the newer growth.
5. Screen vents and lattices around decks and fences.
6. Remove flammable material from exterior window seals and other areas built up over the winter; this includes decks, fences and the base of the building. Check inconspicuous locations where flammable material could be ignited by firebrands.
7. Remove chair pads and other flammable furniture from near your house when not in use. This material can catch fire from sparks and firebrands. Store these items inside (pads and cushions will last longer!).



When updating your landscape, use Firewise plant choices next to your home. Plants should be fire resistant and well irrigated. Visit the [Firewise Communities](http://www.firewise.org/) website <http://www.firewise.org/>.

This is based on work by David Jaramillo, (david@sierraforestlegacy.org) Registered Professional Forester.



For technically savvy homeowners, see high quality information on protecting your structures and **FIRE PERFORMANCE TESTING** material such as decking at <http://nature.berkeley.edu/forestry/structures/> .

“There are many possible ignition sources for exterior fire exposures in an Urban-Wildland Interface fire. There are often plants adjacent to the structure, and sometimes stacks of firewood or other combustible materials. These materials can be ignited by flying embers (firebrands). On patios and decks one finds plastic or wood furniture that can also ignite from firebrands produced by the fire. All of these items can be considered ignition sources to expose the building or the deck to a substantial flame source for some period of time.”

BMHA Pipeline Committee Settles NID Lawsuit

We are pleased that the lawsuit filed by the BMHA Pipeline Committee against NID has been resolved by pretrial negotiations. The lawsuit alleged that the Lower Cascade Canal/Banner Cascade Pipeline Project and its Environmental Impact Report (EIR) violated the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In the settlement, the Pipeline Committee secured some favorable settlement terms as follows.

NID legally commits to install a treated water line alongside the raw water pipeline. Why is this important? Because NID's Board originally approved the treated water line as a separate project independent of the raw water pipeline project. That meant the installation of the treated water line could be cancelled at any time at their sole discretion. More importantly, it was not listed as a mitigation under the raw water pipeline EIR meaning that there would be no recourse for any property owner whose ground water well might be impaired by the process of installing the pipeline. From the beginning, this was a major concern of residents along the proposed pipeline route. Now this has been rectified.

Ultimately, the treated water line promises to be beneficial to many Banner Mountain residents, even those whose properties are not immediately adjacent to the pipeline route. Moreover, Pipeline Committee Members who signed the Settlement Agreement and whose property fronts the treated water line are entitled to a capping of the capacity and connection fee for treated water at the current cost of \$6985. This requires an initial deposit of \$2500 with the remainder being due within 30 days after

completion of the treated water line. The connection fee has escalated significantly in recent years and would otherwise likely increase.

Any Pipeline Committee Member signatory whose property fronts the pipeline route has also had the option to require NID to begin monitoring the performance of their ground water well starting before and extending during and ending about 2 years after installation of the water lines. If well production is significantly impaired, the property owner may connect to the treated water line at no cost.

To address resident concerns about pesticides, NID agreed not to use herbicides during the pre-construction, construction and post-construction or maintenance phases of the project.

NID will consult with the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District regarding the location but not the number of fire hydrants to be installed as part of the project.

Finally, Pipeline Committee Members have legally compelled NID to perform all mitigation measures described in the final EIR.

The Settlement Agreement is the end result of many years of hard work and organizational effort by the Committee and especially Karen Burford, the Committee Chair. This started with informing neighbors of the potential harms of the proposed project, organizing a response to the Environmental Impact Report, deciding to file a lawsuit when it appeared that the final EIR did not provide sufficient mitigations for potential harm and finally, negotiating the Settlement Agreement. Thanks go also to Marsha Burch, attorney for the Pipeline Committee, for her wise counsel throughout this undertaking.

Some Neighbors Love Trees: Nevada City Tree Guide

The new, *free* Nevada City Tree Tour guide featuring 42 trees in downtown Nevada City will be formally launched on Tuesday, May 20, 2008, at 5:30 P.M. at the Nevada City Chamber of Commerce, 132 Main Street, Nevada City. This map of a self-guided walking tour highlights many of the trees that grace downtown Nevada City. Certified Arborist and guide creator, Ellen Solomon will be hand to lead tours along with Consulting Arborist and contributor, Randall Frizell.

Ellen Solomon with the newly-formed Friends of Trees Nevada County produced this guide through a grant from California ReLeaf with assistance from the Nevada City Chamber of Commerce,

sponsorship of Nevada County Land Trust, California Native Plant Society, and the Downtown Business Association of Nevada City.

Recommendations for Members

Gas Savings: Go to our website at www.bannermountain.org and click on the link to the "BMHA Newsletter April 2006", there is a full page description of the Ferrell Gas discount program for BMHA members. A member found this:

Northern Sierra Propane	\$1.92
Ferrellgas	\$1.77 (with BMHA membership)
AmeriGas	\$1.639

Service Provider Advertising: We will list ads for service providers submitted and recommended by a member.

1. HOME CARE service while you are away on vacation including pet and plant care, landscape maintenance, mail and newspaper collection and other services as needed. Call David Denkers at 273-8186; or email at denkers3@hotmail.com (Recommended by Jerry Sakai).
2. DRIVEWAY MAINTENANCE including seal coating and crack repair with hot asphalt. Contact Chris Roderick, 12267 Rough & Ready Hiway #11, Grass Valley, CA 95945; phone 263-6642 (Recommended by Willy Kollmeyer).

Volunteers Needed

The Banner Mt. Lookout will be opening with volunteer lookouts on June 1st. We are short on volunteers this year and are looking for new people. The lookout shifts are four hours once a week or once every other week until the end of fire season. Training will be provided.

Interested persons can contact Igor Raven at 470-9181.

Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Guide for the Banner Mountain, Red Dog, Loma Rica & Greenhorn Areas

All Banner Mountain residents will soon be receiving the Banner Mountain Emergency Preparedness Guide, provided by NCCFD and the Office of Emergency Services. Nevada County has the potential for a number of natural disasters that you should be prepared for. Wildland fire is clearly the number one danger. But other emergencies including wind storms, snow storms, flooding, earthquakes or pandemic flu might necessitate an emergency response. Emergency services will be overtaxed in all of these

emergencies and you may need to be prepared to stand alone on your property for days. Successful evacuations require advance planning and coordination among residents and agencies. Remember, a ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

A Note from FONA: Ember Fires

Fire safety was discussed at a recent meeting of the Federation of Home Owner's Associations (FONA), where we send a representative. Here's a key comment of high value:

"Most structure losses in a firestorm are due to flying embers igniting poorly maintained residences mainly because they collect in brush too close to the house or fence, blow into the eave vents, blow into windows that crack because of the heat from a nearby burning tree or a crown fire, under a car, on patio furniture, etc. Often this happens either well before or well after the wash of the major fire front, and if there are no firefighters around to put out the ember fire, the structure is lost....

This last point is a key most folks miss. It is up to a Fire Team commander to decide when and where to deploy his firefighters. In the peak of a firestorm the smoke is amazingly thick, the ember storm is amazingly thick, and no good commander will send his men into any fire zone where heavy ground cover and thick vegetation might place his crew at risk."

NOTICES

Services

Free Recycling: The NevadaCity_GrassValleyFreecyclers group at Yahoo! Groups, is a free, easy-to-use email group service. To learn more about the NevadaCity_GrassValleyFreecyclers group, please visit: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NevCoFreeshare/>

To start sending messages to members of this group, simply send email to NevCoFreeshare@yahoogroups.com

Recycling: The Department of Transportation & Sanitation has eliminated the need to sort the various materials. If you are receiving curbside garbage pickup and are not recycling, call



Waste Management (274-3090) to request containers. If you do not have curbside service but wish to begin recycling, call the Nevada County Recycling Hotline at 265-1768. For more information call Nichole Dorr (470-2647)

Service Provider Advertising: We will list ads for service providers submitted and recommended by a member.

Any new recommendations?

Come on Board

We encourage any one interested in participating to come to a Board Meeting, typically scheduled every 3rd Thursday of the first month of a Quarter (Jan-Apr-Jul-Oct) or contact:

Banner Mountain Homeowners, P.O. Box 833,
Nevada City, CA 95959, or to:

Willy Kollmeyer, (271-1378

wdkollmeyer@comcast.net),

or Jeff Toff (265-4402, jrtman50@msn.com)



Board of Directors

Willy Kollmeyer, President	271-1378	wdkollmeyer@comcast.net
Sylvia Pitchifino, Secretary	265-2201	pich@oro.net
Hosea Bostic, Treasurer	265-4467	hbostic@chw.edu
Jim Bair, VP and Editor	274-0186	jamesbair@earthlink.net
Frans Velthuijsen	478-1252	qna@earthlink.net
Bob Bogart	263-0413 cell	bob.bogart@gmail.com
Helene Hall	478-0538	queenhelene2@comcast.net

Special thanks to Cecelia Royal for editing and layout help.



Preferred Propane Provider
For:

Banner Mountain Area Residents

Did you know that Ferrellgas is the *only contracted* Preferred Propane Provider for the Banner Mountain area Residents? For more than 60 years, Ferrellgas has been committed to providing customers with hometown service, backed by the experience of an industry leader in safety and technical expertise. Here are just a few of the advantages you will receive as a Ferrellgas customer.

- Dependable propane supply
- Prompt, reliable service from local propane professionals
- Convenient payment and delivery options
- Around-the-clock emergency service

Banner Mountain Area Residents will also receive these additional benefits:

- Special guaranteed pricing of 0.40 cents over Ferrellgas cost
- Free Tank rental for the first year, after the first year only \$45.00 annually
- **FREE** 27-point safety inspection of your outside propane system (a \$49.95 value)
- Guaranteed supply

To start taking advantage of these special savings or for more details, call your Nevada City Ferrellgas team today at:

530-265-5896

Banner Mountain Homeowners Association

www.bannermountain.org

Member of:

Federation of Neighborhood Organizations (FONA)

228 Commercial Street #277

Nevada City, CA 95959

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
Paid
Permit #68
Nevada City, CA