

Banner Mountain News

Spring 2010

2010 FIREWISE MEETING

Saturday, June 26,
11:00 am to 2:00 pm

Third Annual Banner Mountain Firewise Community Program



Inside this issue:

- ▶ How to increase the fire safety of your home!!
- ▶ Keep Cascade trail open
- ▶ New FSC Chipping Update – save\$\$!
- ▶ Manning Our fire lookout
- ▶ New Trail...and more
- ▶ News

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In a continuing effort to promote fire safety and awareness, we are happy to announce the Third Annual Banner Mountain FireWise Community Program. Free food and answers to our fire safety questions will start at **11:00 am at Seaman's Lodge in Pioneer Park in Nevada City.**

This year's theme is "Firewise home safety improvement and construction". Last year Dr. Steve Quarles, University of California Cooperative Extension, presented several fire demonstrations of home ignition sources and discussed fire ecology.

Frans Velthuisen, excellent speaker, licensed contractor and local resident, will present, "Fire Resistance and Home Improvements" with photos to continue this theme.

A number of other participants will also provide examples of new products and provide information regarding retrofitting existing homes to reduce their fire potential.

'What embers can do' -- demo at 2009 BBQ:



Save Cascade Canal Trail Forever – Help Now!

The Banner Mountain Homeowners Association is joining with Save Our Historic Canals (SOHC) and the Nevada County Land Trust (NCLT) to acquire a permanent easement along a stretch of privately owned property on the Cascade Canal. The Cascade Trail is already one of the most popular trails in the County -- it is cooled from summer's heat by towering Douglas Fir, Ponderosa Pine and Incense Cedar.

The easement to be acquired provides a key link of approximately 0.4 mile that will connect public parking on the BLM property off Gracie Road with the Land Trust's Woodpecker Preserve. From there, we will be able to continue on the Cascade Canal Trail or use the new Woodpecker Preserve Trail. This purchase will preserve this trail in perpetuity even if the Canal is abandoned by NID in the future. To help us save the trail, please give your tax-deductible donations to the **Nevada County Land Trust* - Save Cascade Trail, BMHA, PO Box 833, Nevada City, CA 95959** Trust. See below for a special offer.



Re-installed gate on Cascade Canal Trail:

Looking SW from the Land Trust's Woodpecker Preserve; private land on other side of the gate is owned by a family that wants to sell a trail easement; currently there is no easement for this .4 mile part of the trail!

- This is about half a mile from Gracie Rd.
- NID's easement is only for the canal, not for hiking on the trail; most landowners have provided hiking easements.

- ✚ **Contributors of \$40 will receive a free membership in the Banner Mountain Homeowners Association for 1 yr.**
- ✚ **Contributors of \$100 or more will receive BOTH a free membership in the Association and a free membership in the Nevada Country Land Trust* worth over \$45**
- ✚ **All donations are tax deductible as charitable contributions!**

Please use the form on page 4

*The donations are to the Nevada County Land Trust, a 501(c)3 tax deductible contribution organization. But the **checks should be mailed to our address (BMHA, PO Box 833, Nevada City, CA 95959)** for processing. The entire donation will go to saving the trail; memberships are included in the donation. NOTE: in our opinion, the Land Trust enables private land owners to determine the future use of their land without government intervention.

Defensible Space Home Advisor Visits

Willy Kollmeyer and Chuck Staetz, Association Board Members, attended the 6th Defensible Space Advisor training course that was held by the FSC on March 29-30. The course consisted of a day of classroom training and discussions with fire professional and Fire Council staff. On the second day, site visits provided practical application of the information from the previous day. Both Willy and Chuck will be available for home assessments scheduled through the FSC.

Advisor visits are to assist homeowners in assessing the overall preparedness of their home to survive a wildfire. A home can be made more fire safe without reducing the yard to a moonscape. It is possible to have very attractive landscaping and still reduce the fire hazard. Often overlooked things, e.g., leaves in gutters or wood stored too close to the house, can be identified and corrected to substantially reduce the fire hazard.

To schedule a home visit contact (\$25 donation):

The FSC (272-1122), or Chuck Staetz at 478-6510 or email: chuck@bannermountain.org

Woodpecker Preserve Trail – Use with Care and Respect

The new Woodpecker Trail, starting from Cascade Canal Trail, was opened by the Nevada County Land Trust on April 24 – sort of. The unusual weather has left it muddy and unsettled. Until it dries the Land Trust's warning sign will remain in place.

But another concern has surfaced: neighbors are complaining about hikers and bikers leaving the trail, especially for access from Blue Dog Rd. While it's tempting to drive up Banner Mt. Trail Rd. and drive in or park, it is the worst thing users can do. Blue Dog is a private road and is for use only by residents. The trail was never intended to be accessed from the lower end. The Land Trust hopes to extend it back up to Cascade Canal forming a loop, depending on donations and volunteers. In the meantime, **it is imperative that users stay on Land Trust property and not access the trail from the lower end.**



The newspaper photo above is evidence that houses burn even when the trees do not.

Sac Bee: *Angora Fire...*, July 1, 07
Forest Service investigation of Angora Fire

Save Your House To-Do List:

1. Screen house vents, enclose the underside of eaves, balconies and above ground decks to keep out embers.
2. Use non-combustible roofing (Class A).
3. Keep roof and gutters clean.
4. Replace wood decking with composite, fire resistant material.
5. Remove branches of trees that overhang rooftops.
6. Stack wood 30 ft from structures and remove flammable vegetation within 10 ft.
7. Move flammable outdoor furniture, brooms, umbrellas, etc. away from your house (6 ft. min.) when not being used.

Embers can travel over ½ mile from the fire

Bottom of Woodpecker Trail: stop here!





2010 Chipping Program

The need to reduce the dead wood on Banner Mountain is a serious and ongoing problem. In an effort to address this problem the Fire Safe Council (FSC) chipping program has been revived this year. The FSC now has its own truck, chipper and crew and chipping can be scheduled through the FSC at 272-1122. However, because of funding needs, a \$50 donation will be asked for chipping. For details, see: (www.bannermountain.org)

Don't just stack it – chip it!

Banner Mountain Scotch Broom Removal

Scotch broom is an invasive, non-native plant that is rapidly spreading along some roads on Banner Mountain. This plant is highly flammable and can present a serious fire hazard along evacuation routes. The importation, propagation and sale of broom varieties as ornamental landscaping in Nevada County has been prohibited by Agricultural Commissioner, Jeffrey Pylman.

BMHA participated in this year's Scotch Broom Challenge issued by the FSCNC. On April 10 volunteers learned how to identify broom varieties, effective control techniques and proper use of loppers and weed wrenches. This year's effort was directed at Scotch broom infestations along Gracie Rd.

-----cut off form-----

Mail to **BMHA, PO Box 833, Nevada City, CA 95959**

Name: _____

Street: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ (home) _____ (cell)

Email: _____

Please enclose your check to **Nevada County Land Trust** for a tax deductible contribution

<input type="checkbox"/> Membership in BMHA for a year and contribution to Save the Trail	\$40 or more for both	
<input type="checkbox"/> Membership in BMHA and the Nevada County Land Trust and contribution to Save the Trail	\$100 or more for all three!	
<input type="checkbox"/> Contribution to Save the Trail	Any amount will help	
<input type="checkbox"/> Membership in BMHA	\$15 for 2010 year	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Contact me to volunteer</i>	<i>for the Lookout</i>	<i>For the Board</i>

Our Lookout

The Banner Mountain Lookout is a vital component to the early detection of wildfires in our area. It is personed completely by volunteer lookouts who spend an average of one four-hour shift per week scanning the surrounding area for signs of smoke. Every year Banner Mountain lookouts are responsible for reporting several first sightings of fires to the Emergency Control Center. In addition, they give cross bearing reports when another lookout sights smoke, giving Cal Fire a much needed precise location. Cal Fire invested time and money in tree thinning this past year so that our lookouts have a better view of the immediate area.

If you are interested in being a volunteer lookout this summer, please contact Igor Raven at 478-5821.

Development Watch – big projects in the works

Blue Lead Mine Reopening—Good News

On Thursday, May 27, the County Planning Commission voted not to grant a vested right to mine to the Blue Lead Mine off Red Dog Rd near Greenhorn Creek. The issue was decided on May 27. We had reviewed this issue in detail and concluded that a vested right does not exist. This does not mean that Blue Lead can never mine their property. It simply means that they have to apply for a permit and comply with current regulations. So far these property owners have not shown much regard for any regulations. They have trespassed and damaged adjoining properties and have not complied with required state and county regulations. We will continue to watch this issue as it has the potential to create a very damaging precedent. For current information go to our web site, <http://www.bannermountain.org>, and the CLAIM web site, <http://www.claim-gv.org>.

Idaho Maryland Mine Reopening

The effort to reopen the Idaho Maryland Mine remains stalled since Emgold is essentially broke. However the application remains active and if Emgold can accumulate enough money, they can restart the application process. Right now the initial Draft Environmental Impact Report has been rejected by the city of Grass Valley. It will need to be revised and resubmitted for public comment. Emgold themselves have stated that it will be at least 4 years before they can start any mining. Their estimates have historically been overly optimistic. However we must remain observant as all of the hazards that would be created by this project remain as potential threats to our quality of life.

NID Construction Project: New Flumes for the D-S Canal

NID's flume replacement is requiring a sizable construction effort near Little Deer Creek. In order to access the old wooden flumes, NID has to use an ancient road for heavy equipment such as cement mixer trucks. The road crosses Woodpecker Preserve, owned by the Nevada Country Land Trust. In fact, it's the area on the end of Woodpecker Trail. The Trust appears to have no choice but to grant an easement, but it is to receive just compensation for the use of the land. Negotiations between the Trust and NID have yielded a compromise: they will do as little as possible to the natural landscape and still be able to gain access for heavy vehicles. No large trees are to be removed, although rock beds and excavation are deemed necessary by the contractors. Tonia Herrera, NID's engineer for the project, can be reached at NID Headquarters if need be.



Old Road Across Land Trust Property to be Excavated by NID (rocking, widening, cutting, etc.)

Upcoming Events

June 26, Saturday

Annual meeting: **from 11:00 am to 2:00**

At Pioneer Park.

The third Annual Banner Mountain Firewise Community Program

Expert video on Home Protection

Free BBQ!

July

Lookout opens depending on weather.

Jun 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	<u>26</u>
27	28	29	30			

Membership: To join or renew your membership in the BMHA just go to <http://www.bannermountain.org/becomeamember.html> and fill out the “e-form”. **Or mail in the enclosed form,** contact any board member, or renew at the June meeting. Membership is only \$15 per year.

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 #25

Auburn, CA