

Banner Mountain News

Spring 2011



Are You Prepared?

This winter was one of the most severe that Banner Mountain has seen in years, if not decades. There were five major snow storms and a considerable amount of rain. As a result, a large number of trees, power lines and utility poles came down. This caused thousands of people to be without electrical power, telephone service or internet access for several days. In addition, the depth of the snow resulted in some roads being blocked for extended periods. This winter has served as a wakeup call that everyone in the Banner Mountain area should be prepared to survive for at least four days without power, phone service or internet connections.

Preparedness is the key. It's too late once the storm hits, the power goes off and the roads are closed. There are a number of things that should be done annually to prepare for a winter storm emergency; some of which overlap with preparations for a fire emergency. Good pre-emergency planning check lists can be found on the Nevada County Health & Human Services Agency – Pubic Health Department web page at:

<http://www.mynevadacounty.com/ph/index.cfm?ccs=938>

and the "Emergency Preparedness & Evacuation Guide – Banner Mtn, Red Dog, Loma Rica & Greenhorn Areas" publication available on our web site at:

<http://www.bannermountain.org/EmergPrep.pdf>

At a minimum be sure to have water and food for four days (don't forget your pets), flashlights with fresh batteries, a source of heat, a battery operated radio, prescription medications, items for babies and small children, books and games. Remember, the internet may not be accessible and cell phones or high tech land line phones may not work. Unless the lines are down, an old fashioned telephone will still work without PGE power because they can function on the current they receive through the phone line.

Inside this issue:

- ▶ Emergency Preparedness
- ▶ 2011 Spring Meeting
- ▶ Scotch Broom Challenge
- ▶ 2011 FSC Chipping Program
- ▶ 4th Community awareness meeting
- ▶ Update on our fire tower
- ▶ Update on NID pipeline project
- ▶ Update on Idaho-Maryland Mine

Board of Directors

President

Helene Hall: 478-0538
helene@bannermountain.org

Vice President

Jim Bair: 274-0186
jim@bannermountain.org

Secretary

Sylvia Pichitino, 265-2201
sylvia@bannermountain.org

Treasurer

Hosea Bostic, 265-4467
hosea@bannermountain.org

Webmaster

Bob Bogart, 263-0413
bob@bannermountain.org

Membership

Willy Kollmeyer, 271-1378
willy@bannermountain.org

Newsletter Editor

Chuck Staetz, 478-6510
chuck@bannermountain.org

Mark Your Calendar

Fourth Annual Banner Mountain Community Event

This year's BMHA Community Awareness Event will focus on how to be prepared to survive a four day storm or other emergency. The event will be held at Seaman's Lodge in Pioneer Park on **Saturday, May 21**. The event will begin at 10:00 with a short BMHA meeting followed by the Emergency Preparedness Program. There will be several speakers, a demonstration or two and several exhibits of emergency preparedness procedures and equipment.

Program: Speakers and Topics

Nate Beason, District 1 – Board of Supervisors.

Topic: "Role and responsibilities of the county relative to various emergencies"

Vic Ferrera, Program Director of the Office of Emergency Services

Topic: "What to do and how to be ready"

- How to get emergency help for basic services
- What to do ahead of time so that you're prepared for a 4-day emergency
- County roads: damaged and down trees, limbs, utility poles and snow removal problems
- The new reverse 911 system

Marc Gurgraff, Admiral Electric / Beam Center

Topic: "All About Generators"

- What are the various types of generators available?
- How to select a generator to fit your needs
- Safety concerns regarding the installation, use and maintenance of generators

PG&E Representative

Topic: Power outages, precautionary tree and limb removal, how to make claims from losses due to a power outage and answer whatever questions the audience may have.

Demonstrations:

- Proper selection and use of fire extinguishers (Barry Dorland)
- Burn Table Demonstrations (Fire Safe Council of Nevada County)

Exhibits

- Generators (Beam Center and B&C Hardware)
- Fire extinguishers (Patterson Fire Equipment)
- Defensible Space (Fire Safe Council of Nevada County)
- The proper use of an extinguisher will also be demonstrated on a real fire.
- The American Red Cross

BBQ by Chef Willy (hot dogs, chips, coffee, sodas and water)

Chipping Program – 2011 Update

Grant funding is no longer available for the Chipping program. We need your support to keep the program functional. The Fire Safe Council of Nevada County relies on a suggested donation of \$50 per hour from chipping customers, membership dues and generous donations of local businesses and Nevada County residents to keep the program running.

The FSCNC will chip any brush that is cleared 100' from any permanent structure and/or 30' from any roadside or driveway used for evacuation purposes. Solid piles of leaves, pine needles, yard clippings or decaying wood cannot be chipped.

- Chipping will only be done along a road or driveway frontages which will allow the crew to work from the road or driveway.
- Piles must be placed within 5 feet of chipper access.
- Piles must be placed on the uphill side of road or driveway.
- Piles must be free of roots/stumps, rocks and mud, poison oak, scotch broom and blackberries and other vines.
- Piles must be stacked with the cut ends facing the same direction, pointing towards access route to piles.
- All material chipped will be blown back onto the property.
- The FSCNC will provide service on a first-come, first-served basis.
- The FSCNC cannot clean up timber harvest projects or vacant lots.
- There must be adequate room for the chipping equipment to turn around of back up for a short distance.

To schedule chipping and more information call the FSC at (530) 272-1122 or email at www.areyoufiresafe.com. The Fire Safe Council requests a donation of \$50 per service hour (including travel time) for the chipping service. Typically the timeline for service is 4-5 weeks. Sustaining Members (\$49 per year) of the Fires Safe Council receive priority chipping service – typically within 2 weeks of submission.

Special Needs Assistance Program

Requirements

The Fire Safe Council will provide defensible space clean-up for Nevada County Residents who:

- Are over 65 years old, or
- Physically Disabled: verified by receiving disability, handicap placards for vehicles, etc., or
- Financially unable to hire a contractor and under the USDA Rural Development Department low income definition of
 - 1 person income: \$24,200/yr = \$2016/month, or
 - 2 person income: \$27,650/yr = \$2304/month, or
- Physically unable to create and maintain their defensible space on their own.

For more information or to apply for Special Needs Program phone the FSC at: (530) 272-1122) and leave your name, address and phone number or email at www.areyoufiresafe.com.

Additional details regarding costs and arrangements for chipping will be posted on the BMHA webpage:

www.bannermountain.org

Banner Mountain Scotch Broom Removal

Gracie Road Cleared !!

Scotch broom, an invasive, non-native highly flammable plant can present a serious fire hazard along evacuation routes. Last year the BMHA and neighbourhood volunteers participated in the NCFSC's Scotch Broom Challenge and removed a substantial number of plants along Gracie Road. On April 16th the remaining Scotch Broom plants were removed with the help of a number enthusiastic DeMolay volunteers. Their participation made it possible to make Gracie Road essentially Scotch Broom free. The help of the DeMolay volunteers is very much appreciated.

Update on the Banner Mountain Lookout Tower

The Banner Mountain Lookout Tower is a vital component to the early detection of wildfires in our area. Again this year we will be looking for volunteers to help in the lookout. New volunteers will work 3 to 4 shifts of four hours with a qualified lookout. This is to help volunteers to learn the topography, as viewed from Banner Mountain, and also local procedures. After a volunteer is qualified, we would like them to work 2 to 4 shifts per month; exceptions will be made for emergencies and vacations. Anyone interested in volunteering at the Banner Mt. Lookout can call Igor or Beryl at 470-9181 or e-mail Beryl at berylmoody@yahoo.com.

Over the winter, Cal Fire made the necessary seasonal repairs to the fire tower. Fire season will start around the first of July, depending on the weather. Lookout training will still start around June 15th; the current plan is to staff the lookouts starting July 1.

Please Take Note: Beryl and Igor will be hanging up their binoculars at the end of this fire season after many years of scanning the horizon of signs of smoke. Consequently, one or two volunteers are needed to take up the baton. Neither of them will be available for lookout duty next year. It is definitely time for them to relax and enjoy the summers. We congratulate them on a "Job Well Done".

Pipeline Project

Construction on NID's Banner Cascade Pipeline project continues on Banner Mountain during good weather conditions. Watch for construction signage and flaggers as they help safely direct traffic through the construction zones. Installation of the 10 inch treated water pipeline and the 48 inch raw water tie-in on Idaho Maryland Road will resume Tuesday, 4/26, between Banner Lava Cap Road and Lee Lane. If possible, use Banner Lava Cap Road as an alternate route to avoid construction delays up to twenty minutes.

Logging activities resumed on Thursday, 4/28, on Wings of Morning Drive between Clipper Creek Road and Banner Lava Cap Road. Detour signage will be set up to direct traffic through the construction zone. No delays are anticipated at this time.

Vault installation, joint sealing, and testing will be scheduled on Idaho Maryland Road and Banner Lava Cap Road, weather dependent. Traffic will be limited to one lane while construction activities are underway; expect minimal delays.

If you need further information, contact Hugh Gordon, Project Ombudsman, at (530) 263-4352 or email: Hugh-lu@att.net.

Reopening of the Idaho Maryland Mine

Background:

There is currently a proposal before the Grass Valley planning commission and City Council to reopen the Idaho Maryland Mine (IMM), which borders our community less than a mile down Idaho Maryland Road just across Brunswick Rd. The BMHA board has voted to oppose the reopening of the IMM. We have studied this project in detail, evaluating both the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and the comments that have been submitted relative to the DEIR. Based on all the information available, we feel that the impacts of the mine on our community will be significant and negative. In addition, we have been unable to devise a project configuration that we feel is feasible and which would remove these impacts. For complete and detailed information on this project go to [the CLAIM-GV web site](#).

There are numerous issues surrounding this mega project but the two that should be of most concern to Banner Mountain are dewatering of the existing mine and increased traffic and pollution. Dewatering of the mine presents a real risk to our residents who have wells for their water supply. Water runs downhill and no one knows how the fractures in the rock on Banner Mountain are interconnected and which ones lead to the mine. If the mine is dewatered some of the water uphill on Banner Mountain may flow down and take its place. As more water is pumped out of the mine, wells many miles away could be drained dry. NID cannot provide water unless there is a treated water pipeline adjacent to your property, which half of the mountain still does not have.

The DEIR was released on Oct 30, 2008 and the response period closed on Jan 20, 2009. To read the BMHA response [click here](#). To peruse all the DEIR responses go to [CLAIM-GV](#) where they are posted online. The project has been dormant since mid 2009 since Emgold ran out of funding, but Emgold has submitted documents to revise the project, supposedly to make it less of an issue to the community. Our first read of these plans does not show much improvement; in fact it may be even worse. Now the purported "ceramics plant" to process mine waste is "optional" and the mine indicates it could bury all the waste back in the mine shafts, which has the potential to lead to Acid Mine Drainage, as is the case at Empire Mine State Park. Also, there is now an integral aggregate plant, which means they want to be able to crush their waste and sell it as aggregate and road rock. So in addition to the mine and the ceramics plant smoke, you will see and hear an aggregate plant with the inherent dust, noise and truck traffic right off Highway 49 just outside Grass Valley.

Do the Benefits Outweigh the Risks and Issues????

What are the proposed benefits to our community? The only possible one is about 100 *temporary* (Emgold says the mine will be open for at most 20 years) jobs that might possibly go to "locals". There is no profit sharing for the local community nor does the City of Grass Valley get anything from the gold either. The high-paying jobs will go to Emgold management and outside experts. The low-pay high-risk jobs go to the unskilled labourer and it cannot be known or guaranteed that even these jobs will go to locals rather than commuters from outside the area. Some of our current high tech companies and even the hospital cannot withstand constant shaking of the ground from blasting and may be forced to relocate or curtail operations. What affect will a 24 x 7 industrial plant have on those who live nearby? What will happen to nearby property values?

Mining is Nevada County's heritage but there have not been any active mining operations near Grass Valley or Nevada City for over 50 years. During that time, our community has evolved and grown around the mine. We all live here for one main reason, Quality of Life. Living next door to an active industrial plant will significantly degrade everyone's Quality of Life.

Membership

The residents of Banner Mountain are a very diverse group with a wide range of incomes, political views, recreational interests and life styles. However, we are all bound together in being fortunate enough to call Banner Mountain home. It is a large forested mountain with an abundance of wildlife ranging from rabbits and squirrels to deer and bears. There are many miles of good hiking trails and an abundance of readily accessible cultural opportunities. In fact, we live in an area that many people go to on vacation.

The Banner Mountain Home Owners Association is a voluntary non-partisan organization whose primary goal is to improve life on Banner Mountain. As with any forested locale fire is an ever present possibility during the dry months. The BMHA works closely with the Nevada County Fire Safe Council to reduce the fire hazard. It participates in the Scotch Broom removal program along evacuation routes. Banner Mountain has been designated a "FireWise Community" as a result of these efforts. Over the last several years The BMHA has sponsored an annual "Community Awareness Event" at its spring meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to provide the residents of Banner Mountain with information that can be used to reduce overall fire potential and to help ensure that homes will be spared in the event of a fire.

In addition, the BMHA has a website which contains valuable information and links to sites of interest to Banner Mountain residents. Two of the most recent areas of interest have been the NID Cascade Canal Pipeline construction project and the possible re-opening of the Idaho-Maryland mine. The webpage provides up-to-date information on these projects as well as information on other areas of general interest.

Why should you join or remain a member of the BMHA? It is an opportunity to give something back to this special area where we live. It also offers a chance to meet other residents and become involved in projects that are dedicated to keeping Banner Mountain a place where we want to live. No one is forced to belong to the BMHA and it has no authority to create rules that everyone on the mountain must abide by. The membership dues (\$15 / year or 4¢ / day) are used to support the annual meeting, provide information on items of general interest, postage, fund projects of value to residents living on Banner Mountain, e.g., repairs to the fire tower, etc.

Therefore, we ask you to renew your membership, join the BMHA and encourage your neighbors to do the same. You can join online at www.bannermountain.org, or by sending a check to BMHA, PO Box 833, Nevada City, CA 95959.

Membership: Dues are only \$15 per year (4¢ per day). To join or renew your membership in the BMHA just go to:

<http://www.bannermountain.org/becomeamember.html>

and fill out the "e-form", mail in a membership form that's available on the website, renew at the spring meeting or contact any board member.

Election Results

BMHA Board of Directors

The Board terms expire on alternate years to provide continuity on the Board. This year the following Banner Mountain residents stood for election: Helene Hall, Jim Bair, and Hosea Bostic. All three were re-elected and will serve two year terms.

Our mission is to support the Homeowners on Banner Mt. by protecting us from fire, unwanted activities, undesirable government action, and misinformation.

Election Results cont'd

The terms of the remaining Board members: Hosea Bostic, Willy Kollmeyer, Sylvia Pichitino and Chuck Staetz and Bob Bogart will expire this year. Elections for the Board of Directors will be held during the 4th quarter of this year. If you wish to be considered for a seat on the BMHA Board of Directors please submit your name to Helene Hall at helene@bannermountain.org or to the BMHA Nevada City address so your name can be placed on the ballot. Candidates must be current BMHA members in good standing. Board of Director Members serve two year terms.

By-laws

The original by-laws, written in 1994, were examined and it was found that several changes needed to be made to bring them into line with the current technology and practice. Ballots containing the proposed changes and current text were sent out to BMHA members to provide them a chance to adopt or reject the proposed changes. All the changes were approved. The new BMHA by-laws can be found on the webpage at: www.bannermountain.org.

Important Dates

2011

- May 21..... Fourth Annual Banner Mountain Community Event (**Emergency Preparedness**) and Annual Membership Meeting
- October 1 Send out request for nominations for Board of Directors.
- October 25 Board of Directors Meeting; Send out Fall Newsletter and ballots for Board of Directors election
- December 15... Deadline for ballots for new Board members to be returned

2012

- January 24 Board Meeting and election of Board of Directors
- March 20 Board meeting