



Cabin Tracks

Chinook Pass Cabin Owners' Association

May 2013

President's Message

By: Dave Leinweber

As you can see from the size of this year's CPCOA newsletter, it's been a very busy winter/spring for our organization, what with all the planning, events, programs and challenges to cabins in the Chinook Pass area.

Threats to the continued existence of cabins in the Chinook Pass area continue to present themselves. Early last fall a cabin burned down in the Indian Flats tract causing concern with the owner and others about being able to rebuild. CPCOA was able to help by assisting the cabin owner to cooperatively work with the USFS Naches office staff and the county to obtain the necessary approvals to rebuild. I'm pleased to report that the owner now expects the county to approve the plans for a new cabin in time for it to be built this summer.

Also, we discovered that the Forest Service determined that a special clause was inadvertently left out of the Bumping Lake Cabin's 2009 permits that would enable the Bureau of Reclamation to require cabin owners to remove their cabins within 90 days without any compensation. CPCOA has supported the cabin owners throughout the past 6 months challenge this decision. An article explaining the ongoing situation by cabin co-owner Ralph Berthon can be found on page 5.

Unfortunately the Cabin Fee Act of 2012 didn't make it out of the Senate, so our 2013 fees are being based on the implementation of CUFFA as outlined by the Forest Service a number of years ago. However the C2 committee of the National Forest Homeowners association is continuing to push for passage of the Cabin Fee Act. Up to date information on this issue can always be found on the NFH Website (www.nationalforesthowners.org).

Speaking of the NFH website, a new and greatly expanded NFH website came on line last month. Besides all the announcements, news and updates there is a number of new pages that are accessible only to members. Remember that your membership in CPCOA automatically gains you full membership in NFH as well! However, you will need to create an account before you can access these member only pages. To obtain an account, go to the NFH website, click on the "Need Help" icon on the right side and fill in the form requesting an account. Be sure to mention that you are a CPCOA member and include your tract and cabin number.

By the time you read this, you may already have received your 2013 permit bill from the Forest Service. While we normally receive these bills in the previous December, they were delayed by the implementation of a new Forest Service accounting system. Remember that you are required to pay the Washington State Leasehold Excise Tax within 15 days of receiving your bill from the Forest Service. More information about this can be found on the Washington State Department of Revenue website (dor.wa.gov).

Over the past year I've had numerous meetings concerning cabin ownership with not only the Forest Service but also many other state and national organizations. I can't tell you how important it is for me to say how many active members of CPCOA I represent. This is just one reason why your membership in CPCOA is so very important.

I'm pleased to report that we currently have 135 active members in CPCOA, which is 19 more than at this time last year. However this represents less than half the total number of cabins in our area. Please help us spread the word that CPCOA needs everyone to be involved, even if that involvement is limited to keeping your membership active and reading this newsletter once a year.

Finally, I encourage everyone to attend the June 22nd meeting as it will be full of good information and great interaction with your fellow cabin owners. Also, we have some important decisions to make concerning proposals that the board will present to the membership. So mark your calendars today!



Forest Watch Coming to a Tract Near You!

By: Mark Hevland

It seems that cabin break-ins are a fact of life in the forest these days. Every year there are a number of cabins that are broken into and no tract seems to be immune to the theft and destruction that come with it.

Budget cuts over the past number of years within the Yakima County Sheriff's office have resulted in fewer hours per week for the assigned deputy to spend in the Chinook Pass area. So what are cabin owners to do?



At the NFH conference last year, we learned of a new program being implemented within the Mt Hood Forest Homeowners Association (mhfha.com) that promises to reduce the number of cabin break-ins in the Mt Hood area. We've taken their idea, modified it for the Chinook Pass area and this summer will be rolling it out to any of CPCOA's tracts that want to participate.

The Forest Watch program is modeled after the very successful Neighborhood Watch programs which have been implemented nationwide. The basic premise is that "WE LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER". The simple idea is that if we are all watching out for suspicious activities and report them that the individuals in question will choose to leave our cabins alone.

Our role is ONLY to Observe and Report **not to intervene**. If we all are looking out for each other and we can recognize who should and shouldn't be in and around our cabins we should be able to reduce the amount and severity of the crime that occurs in and around our cabins.

The program is divided into 3 parts:

- **Information.** We've gathered a lot of good information on what cabin owners can do to help reduce break-ins and have created various documents for Forest Watch Tract Sponsors to distribute to cabin owners along with tract specific information.
- **Signs.** CPCOA will be providing "Forest Watch" signs like the one shown above for those tracts who wish to post a sign at the gate.

- **Operation ID.** This part of the program is taken from another nationwide effort to help combat theft by making it harder for criminals to sell our property while also making it easier for law enforcement to catch thieves, prosecute them and maybe even return our stuff!

There is no cost to the tracts for this program other than we require at least one cabin owner from each tract act as the Forest Watch Tract Sponsor.

Please contact Mark Hevland (klamath87@gmail.com or 509-737-1003) for more information.



By Mike Berriochoa

Cabin owners have given the board of directors of the Chinook Pass Cabin Owners Association clear direction on the direction of the organization in the coming years. A survey was sent to all cabin owners on Chinook Pass, whether they were members of the association or not to gain insight on priorities. Full results of the survey will be shared with association members at our meeting in June.

In a loud, clear voice, cabin owners said the first priority should be cabin owner advocacy and the second priority should be interactions to maintain strong relationships with state and federal agencies....i.e., the Forest Service and the Department of Ecology. Additional priorities include sharing of information with cabin owners, sharing information between cabin groups and improving the sense of community among cabin owners within cabin tracts.

Results of the survey were discussed at the spring meeting of the CPCOA Board of Directors and specific actions are being reviewed and will be discussed with members.



2013 Planned Field Trips



by Carl Buchholz

Rock Hound Field Trip—July 20th

Carl Buchholz will lead the rock hound field trip in the Little Naches area. We will be looking for thunder eggs that range in size from peas to grapefruit, although most of the collectible ones are three to five inches long. I can't guarantee that everybody will find some good ones, but I predict that everybody will. This would be an excellent trip to bring children and grandchildren on, because it will include lots of activity (exploring and digging) and they should be rewarded for their efforts with thunder eggs. Also, it appears that the younger people usually find more than the older people, which is really fun for them.

Cabin owners and friends will meet at 1:00 p.m. at Kaner Flat Campground, so we can car pool and drive to the thunder egg site. At the site there is about a 10 minute hike up a moderate incline from the parking area. People that are fast walkers can make in less time. Things to bring: shovel, stout iron bar, masonry chisel, rock hammer or heavy hammer, gloves, bucket to carry items in and thunder eggs out, lots of water, and sun screen. If you do not have all the suggested hardware, come anyway, because we will share. I have several iron bars.

Bumping Lake History—August 10th

This field trip will be a continuation from 2012 about the history associated with the Bumping Lake area. Suzy Cyr, who led the field trip last year, will lead another one this summer. Suzy, a cabin owner on Bumping Lake, has been researching the history of the Bumping area and is writing a book about it. This should be as rewarding an afternoon as last year. Every cabin owner who visits Bumping Lake should appreciate the area more after learning about its history.

We will meet at the intersection of the Bumping River Road and the road that goes over the dam at 1:00 p.m.

Fall Mushroom Exploration—October (date & time to be determined).

The last field trip of the season will be on fall mushrooms. This will be led by the Yakima Valley Mushroom Society who led a spring mushroom trip for us in 2012 that was very successful. There are even a greater variety and number of mushrooms late in the season after the fall rains start. Plans are that we will probably meet at the intersection of highway 410 and the Bumping Road and collect mushrooms in the Bumping Lake area.

CHECK OUR WEBSITE (cpcoa.com) FOR UPDATED FIELD TRIP INFORMATION



Potential Devastating Change to Bumping Lake Permits

By Ralph Berthon, Bumping Lake Cabin #8

Last November the USFS notified the Bumping lake cabin owners that their permits were going to be rescinded and new ones issued with new language commonly referred to as the E-11 clause in the Forest Service Special Uses Handbook.

The USFS staff reported that it was the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) who is pushing the issue. In short we filed an immediate appeal which caused the USFS to rescind its letter and proposed permit which we were instructed to sign. The USFS reports they plan to issue new permits with the new language. They have also told us if we refuse to sign we will be ordered off the lots, and fined for failure to remove our cabins. At this point, due to our appeals, everything is on hold while the USFS and BOR research their legal standing.

While this language may have been in previous Bumping Lake permits, it was added without consistency to some permits and not others. We are certainly fighting the inclusion of this language in our current permits, and fighting the maintaining of this language which has already been inserted in a few instances. The reason for our fight is the language is in direct conflict with the exiting language in our permits that gives us 180 days to remove our cabins that we may be afforded compensation for our losses, and may be given a lot in lieu within the same forest. There is also the matter that this information was not properly vetted by the appraiser for purpose of the first or second appraisals. If it had been the net effect of the appraised value would have been zero. The issue is not with the raising of the lake, it is simply the inclusion of language that is injurious to the cabin owners.

In an effort to block this action being proposed the USFS and BOR the Bumping Lake Tract has built a defense fund that has raised nearly \$14,000 to defend our cabins and their value. We have retained the assistance of the Menke Law firm and have solicited the assistance of US Representative "DOC" Hastings and US Senator, Maria Cantwell. We have also spoken to members of the committee that oversees the Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (YBIWRMP). In addition, we have the Friends of Bumping Lake applying pressure in Olympia and speaking to legislators at every opportunity they can as well as attend the YBIWRMP committee meetings that are open to the public.

E-11. Authorization Termination of Withdrawn Land. Mandatory for authorizations on lands withdrawn for power or reclamation projects.

WITHDRAWN LANDS. Any lands described in this authorization which have been withdrawn for waterpower purposes under the Act of March 3, 1879, or Act of June 25, 1910 (or are Federal Power Act of June 10, 1920), or have been withdrawn under the Reclamation Act of June 17, 1902, are subject at any time to use in connection with the development of hydropower or for reclamation purposes. This authorization, therefore, is issued with the specific understanding that (1) its use shall not interfere with such hydropower or reclamation development and that (2) the authorization may be, if necessary, terminated upon ninety (90) days notice when in the judgment of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, or of the Bureau of Reclamation in the event of reclamation withdrawals, the lands occupied are needed for use in connection with the generation of hydroelectric power, reclamation developments, or other purposes contemplated by the act or acts under which the lands have been withdrawn. No claim shall be made against the United States or power licensees for or on account of prospective profits or for any injury or damage to properties improvements or operations due to such development. The holder will

Our fight centers on the legal authority to impose such language. To date neither the BOR nor USFS has provided us definitive authority to impose the language. And, they have yet to issue the new permits with the new language.

We remain cautiously optimistic in our efforts to maintain the existing language in our permits and keep the BOR proposed language out. This effort will have local, statewide, and national impact for cabin owners on any BOR influenced land. Consequently the CPCOA, RCOA, WSFHA and NFH are all monitoring our efforts and providing assistance to our cause.



Fire protection in the Wildland/Urban Interface



By Steve Smith, Nile-Cliffdell Fire Chief

Fire season is soon approaching our fire district. I recently attended a four day course sponsored by the Forest Service and DNR. Many of the students were part of the Taylor Bridge Fire that occurred in the Kittitas Valley last summer. Many homes burned and thousands of acres were torched. What is amazing to everyone involved in the fire was that no lives were lost.

At the start of the fire, winds were clocked at 50 miles per hour, with the fire front approaching 20 to 30 miles an hour. The initial priority from incident commanders and on the line firefighters was simply to get people evacuated and out of harm's way. They simply did not have the resources to control the fire in the first days of the fire. The weather and fire behavior ruled the fire's progress.

After talking to a seasoned instructor who was an incident fire commander with many years of experience, it was most of the homeowners who had done the work of preparing their homes for wildfires that were saved. I can't stress this point of my class strong enough.....when the fire is burning, it is too late sometimes to protect your property. The time to mitigate the loss is to do it now, when you have the time.

I have lost a home and everything in it. I would not wish this on any of my neighbors. I also learned that "people" are more important than "stuff". I refuse to put my volunteer firefighters in harm's way when the fire moves beyond our resources or capability.

We have learned some valuable lessons following the loss of a cabin last year. New equipment is being purchased that will ease our problems with access and water supply. A new mutual aid agreement with DNR and the Forest service is proceeding well. If we have a fire in our district, we will do everything we can to save lives and property.

What can you do? Glad you asked.

Your Roof: the most vulnerable part of your cabins. If you have wood-shake shingles, you are at high risk from windblown embers. Blowing embers are the biggest danger to structures in a wild land fire. Clear your roof from leaves, pine needles, and other debris. Cut any tree branches within 10 feet of your roof.

Home Site and Yard: ensure you have at least 100 feet of defensible space, (cleared vegetation) around your cabin. This of course is difficult for cabin owners for various reasons. Cut dry weeds and grass before noon when temperatures are cooler. Trim the lower parts of trees of ladder fuels. Landscape with fire resistant plants that have high moisture content. Keep woodpiles, propane tanks, and combustible materials away from your home and other structures. That seat cushion on your porch could start a fire on your patio deck.

In case of a fire, be ready to evacuate. Close your windows when you leave, leave your home unlocked, fire fighters may need to make entry to stop internal fire starts, caused by the fire.

If you would like more information about preparing your property, we are happy to visit and assess if you have defensible space, and have prepared for a fire that will come, not if, but when. Feel free to call 658-2445 to schedule a visit from the Nile-Cliffdell Fire Department to help you be prepared. We live in beautiful country, let's try to keep it that way, and keep you safe.



2014 Dues Increase Proposal

Jim Lundeen, Treasurer

At our June 22nd meeting and potluck, the local membership will be discussing, and voting on, a proposed 2014 dues increase, from \$50 to \$60. The reasons for this are twofold:

1. National Forest Homeowners (NFH) have raised their dues from \$35 to \$40 in 2013. After our objections to the lack of notice, NFH agreed to postpone the increase to 2014 (for Chinook Pass owners). We need to raise our local dues to offset this increase, since we forward those funds directly to NFH. Also, Washington State Forest Homeowners' Association (WSFHA) has increased their dues from \$1.00 to \$2.00.
2. The CPCOA board will propose raising our dues to \$60.00 per year to be distributed as follows: NFH \$40.00, WSFHA \$2.00 and \$18 for association use to cover operational expenses such as hall rental, web site costs and mailings.

We have not raised our dues since 2002. Since that time, we have taken on several projects that benefit our local cabin owners; including membership directories and Forest Watch signs.

Please attend the June 22nd function to have your voice heard.



REMEMBER

Chinook Pass Cabin Owners' Association

Summer Potluck/Meeting

Saturday, June 22, 2013

11:30a.m.-2:00p.m.

Nile Valley Community Church

Bring a hot dish, salad or dessert to share.

