

**ALPINE SPRINGS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

Pursuant to notice given, the Special Meeting of the Board of Directors, Alpine Springs County Water District, was held Monday, August 15, 2005, at 5:30 p.m., District Board Room, 270 Alpine Meadows Road

1 **1. CALL TO ORDER**

2 President Danz called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m., Monday, August 15,
3 2005.

4 **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

5 Skipped.

6 **ROLL CALL**

7 Directors Present: Barbara Danz, President; Tony Stefani, Vice President; Janet
8 S. Grant; Jon Northrop

9 Directors Absent: Virginia Quinan

10 Staff Present: None

11 Guests Present: Bric Haley/AMEA; Shirley Ellis/AMEA; Tamara Hall/AMEA;
12 Carole Northrop/JMA; Don Priest/JMA; Lin Winetrub /AMEA; Bryce
13 Keller/NTPFD; Linda Ferguson/USFS; Grace Newell/USFS; Clint Celio/
14 C.G. Celio & Sons, Co.

15 **2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

16 None.

17 **3. ITEMS FOR BOARD DISCUSSION & ACTION**

18 **Community Fire Plan Development:**

19 Clint Celio, C.G. Celio & Sons, Co., the consultants engaged to develop the
20 Community Wildfire Protection Plan for Alpine Meadows, led the meeting and
21 reported on the work of the consultants. The Plan includes the following phases:
22 1-Assess Hazards; 2-Develop Mitigation Projects to Address Hazards; 3-
23 Prioritize Projects. Clint explained that this meeting is to discuss the results of the
24 community assessment and to present initial recommendations for mitigation
25 projects. For the purposes of the analysis, Alpine Meadows has been organized
26 into five communities: Alpine Center, Alpine Meadows Estates, Juniper Mountain,
27 Bear Creek and Chalet. The consultants visited AM two days in July and
28 completed field sheets on fire hazards in each of the communities. The
29 consultants collected data on roofing/siding materials, finding that most of the
30 siding in AM is wood although many homes have treated the siding with paint or
31 other non-combustible substances. The consultants evaluated the compliance
32 with defensible space standards, looking at flammable materials within 100 feet
33 of a structure (non-flammable vegetation, such as aspens and willows, is best
34 around the structure, not flammable vegetation like conifers). The consultants
35 also looked at attached unenclosed structures (decks, overhangs, attached
36 sheds, storage of firewood) since embers and sparks can develop under these
37 structures. The consultants assessed road design, ignition risks, wildland fuels,
38 fire weather and topography, and forest health. The consultants are
39 approximately two weeks behind schedule but hope to make up the time in the
40 last phase. Clint presented the results of the consultants' analysis, as follows:

41 • **Community Assessment:**

42 (1) Alpine Center: 28 structures; address/street signs are not clearly visible;
43 20% of structures are inadequate with respect to defensible space
44 standards; most roofs are made of non-combustible materials; 57% of
45 siding materials are non-combustible; 46% of buildings have attached
46 unenclosed structures.

47 (2) Alpine Meadows Estates: 313 homes; most street signs are visible;
48 addresses are usually visible but poorly placed (addresses should be in
49 contrasting paint, reflective and in a place which is clearly visible from the

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- 1 street at all times of the year; a small electrical fixture which provides soft
2 downward light on address is best); defensible space inadequate (67% of
3 homes are non-conforming); 78% of roofs are of non-combustible
4 materials; 66% of siding materials are non-combustible; 47% of homes
5 have attached unenclosed structures.
- 6 (3) Bear Creek: 97 homes; most street signs are visible; addresses are
7 visible but poorly placed; defensible space inadequate around 87% of the
8 structures; 48% of the roofing materials and 53% of the siding materials
9 are non-combustible; 60% of the homes have attached unenclosed
10 structures.
- 11 (4) Juniper Mountain: 58 homes; visible street signs; visible but poorly placed
12 addresses; 80% of the structures have inadequate defensible space (in
13 Juniper Mountain, the issue is brush and grass growing up under decks);
14 61% and 56% of the roofing and siding materials, respectively, are non-
15 combustible; 59% of homes have attached unenclosed structures.
- 16 (5) Chalet: 17 structures; most street signs are visible; addresses are not
17 usually visible; defensible space is adequate around 94% of the
18 structures; 82% of roofing and 82% of siding materials are non-
19 combustible; 53% of structures have attached unenclosed abutments.
- 20 • Community Summary and Recommendations: The community hazard ratings
21 for the five communities are as follows: Alpine Center: Low; Alpine Meadows
22 Estates: Moderate; Bear Creek: High; Chalet: Low; Juniper Mountain: High.
23 The rating is heavily dependent on defensible space adequacy and
24 potentially flammable fuels. Clint noted that Bear Creek and Juniper Mountain
25 are in the low end of the high spectrum. The recommendations from the
26 assessment are as follows: (a) continue to replace old roofs with non-
27 combustible materials; (b) diligently treat siding; (c) improve defensible space
28 to break fuel continuity between structures (most important); (d) allow 1-1/2
29 times the distance of the tree canopy as space between neighboring trees;
30 (e) remove overstock of trees; (f) enclose open structures; and (g) do not
31 store wood under decks or in open areas under eaves. Clint stated that the
32 likelihood of a major fire in Alpine Meadows is low but the likelihood that a
33 neighbor's house can catch fire and spread to several other structures is
34 likely.
 - 35 • Road Design: Road design is good. Roads are steep but have adequate
36 widths with turnarounds. Parking along the roads did not appear to be a
37 summer problem. There is more than one way in and out of Alpine Meadows
38 Estates and Bear Creek. The chain on John Scott Trail is a concern. In the
39 case of a vehicle fire, which Clint said is the most likely cause of a fire in the
40 community, there are alternative roads for egress and ingress.
 - 41 • Ignition Risk: Risk from utilities is low - Juniper Mountain has underground
42 utilities; utility lines in other communities appear to be well-maintained. Risk
43 from homes and vehicles is high (see above). Risk from tourists is high
44 especially in the summer. Risk from lightning is moderate – lightning is
45 usually accompanied by moisture at this elevation. The history of fires in this
46 area supports these findings.
 - 47 • Wildland Fuels: Wildland fuels occur throughout the communities. Alpine
48 Meadows Estates and Bear Creek have category 8 or 9 fuels, i.e., north
49 facing slopes with timber fuel types. In these communities, a fire will not

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1 proceed quickly but, if it does, there will be little that can be done about it.
2 Pockets of riparian space (Bear Creek) break up the wildland fuels. Juniper
3 Mountain has category 5 fuels, i.e., brush, small trees, more open space. In
4 this model, fire burns quickly so that defensible space is critical. Clint
5 recommended that each of these communities try to decrease its category by
6 1, that is, from 9 to 8 (thinner, more open space) and from 5 to 4 (brush more
7 widely spaced and lower).

- 8 • Fire Weather and Topography: Clint stated that, at our elevation, large fires
9 do not typically occur. Linda Ferguson from USFS brought a map of large
10 campaign fires in the region from 1908-1955; there were none in the Alpine
11 Meadows area. North facing slopes have more vegetation and are wetter
12 which means that the ignition and rates of spread are lower. However, some
13 slopes are steep which, if a fire gets started, will allow it to spread up the
14 slope; fire crews will have difficulty fighting the fire. Winds in the area are not
15 bad; the likelihood of a large wind-driven fire is not as probable as in other
16 areas. The prime consideration in this area is a fire that spreads from home
17 to home. The key is to look at homes which are above pockets of fuel.
18 Another consideration is to look at tree canopies which connect homes to one
19 another.
- 20 • Forest Health: Clint stated that overstocked stands of trees result in
21 significant tree mortality. Thinning increases the vigor of the residual trees by
22 giving them more sunlight and water and allowing them to repel insects more
23 easily. In Bear Creek and upper Alpine Meadows Estates, there are a lot of
24 trees. Clint opined that fewer, healthier trees would be better. Smaller trees
25 next to larger trees should be removed.
- 26 • Fire Protection: Fire Protection is provided by NTFPD; the Alpine Meadows
27 Fire Station is not staffed. There are no volunteers in Alpine Meadows. The
28 fire suppression response time is approximately 10 minutes from Tahoe City.
29 Shirley Ellis expressed concern that nothing was being done to improve the
30 level of fire protection services in the valley. Director Stefani stated that the
31 Board is in the process of developing a plan for fire protection services. Chief
32 Keller stated that the community fire plan will recommend levels of service.
33 He also stated that USFS has the responsibility for wildland fire suppression,
34 which will also be addressed in the plan. The plan is needed to obtain grants
35 to implement fire prevention measures, although there are more critical areas
36 in the Western United States which need the Federal funding. Chief Keller
37 noted that Placer County also can grant funds under Title III once the plan is
38 complete. Clint stated that many different agencies can obtain these grants.
- 39 • Evacuation: One of elements of the plan is to develop evacuation maps for
40 the area. The refuge area is at the ski resort. If necessary, fire protection
41 services will coordinate evacuation from the ski resort. The staging area for
42 fire operations is at Alpine Center. Chief Keller stated that the goal is to make
43 the community safe to stay and shelter in-place. If a home is built correctly
44 and maintained correctly, and defensible space is adequate, it is best to stay
45 at home. The homeowner will be able to douse small embers easily before
46 they grow. Clint emphasized that the homeowner must be sure to address
47 siding, roofing and defensible space issues to make this a safe alternative.
- 48 • Recommendations: Clint recommended three projects for mitigation:

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- 1 (1) Home and structures: Create appropriate defensible space; use
2 appropriate building materials.
- 3 (2) Area above and around Juniper Mountain: The northern side of the
4 community has fuel and forest health issues. A buffer needs to be created
5 from a potential large fire above the community. Don Priest asked why
6 the area above Juniper Mountain was in danger since Clint had stressed
7 that downhill areas were more critical. Clint responded that southwest
8 winds could come down the ridge above Juniper Mountain and propel a
9 fire into the community.
- 10 (3) Area below community fingers: There are two large privately-owned open
11 areas in Alpine Meadows Estates and between Bear Creek and Chalet
12 where forest health should be improved to reduce wildfire hazards. These
13 areas are below the community so they create a greater risk. Uphill areas
14 are not as critical since it is unlikely that fire will come down into the
15 communities. Director Grant asked whether it is likely that a fire can run in
16 the Bear Creek open space. Clint responded that the likelihood is low
17 since it is a riparian area. Director Grant asked about the District's policy
18 of leaving open space in its "natural state". Clint responded that the
19 "natural state" may actually mean removing conifers and replanting
20 aspens. He also suggested that watershed restoration grants might
21 achieve the same goals as fuels reduction grants. Grace Newell from
22 USFS suggested that this may be part of the Truckee River Watershed
23 plan. Director Northrop asked if the plan will address open areas which
24 need treatment. Clint responded that all the open areas need treatment.
25 He suggested that the District treat its open areas to a desired level so
26 that the community can understand what needs to be done in all areas.
27 Director Grant asked about the space around the District office. Clint
28 responded that the creek outside the District office precludes a major fire
29 event.

30 **4. DIRECTORS' COMMENTS**

31 None.

32 **5. ADJOURNMENT**

33 The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

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37 Respectfully Submitted,

approved w/amendments 9-13-05

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39

40

41 Pam Zinn

42 Recording Secretary