

January 28, 2016 BOD Meeting Minutes GRFPOA

Meeting called to order by President, Carol Steinbrecher at 6:00pm and introduced guest speakers from EDC Fire Safe Council-Pollock Pines, Cal Fire and El Dorado County Department of Transportation to give presentations on DOT roadside clearing.

Each speaker will give a 10-15 minute presentation and agency perspective.

After which, If your question has not been answered and is of a general nature, we do not talk about individual's or neighbor's property, we would invite you to fill out a form and turn it in and we will invite you to come to speaker table. You will have 3 minutes because we have a lot of people here to voice your question and get a response. If I have been assured by all speakers if your question is of a personal nature and you would like to address one of the speakers after the meeting they will be happy to talk to you and stay as long as you ask them to. They are all here tonight volunteering to be here as public servants. I hope you can treat them with civil discourse and we can get your question answered tonight. We are videotaping this and we will post a link to the video on the website. We would like to keep the meeting limited to one hour. I would like to introduce Heather Campbell from our Fire Safe Council.

Heather Campbell-my background is, so you know where I speak from, I am career forest service and my schooling is in forestry so I know a lot about the environmental laws. I started my career very early on as a firefighter and then went on to work in timber for 7 years before I got into law enforcement. In that capacity I ended my job as a wild land fire instructor and an investigator. Most of my career in one form or another I have been around fire. When I retired and returned the area I worked on evacuation plans.

What is a fire adaptive community? What are the elements of it and 3 of the components that makes it a fire adaptive community, which relates to the subject of clearing roadside clearing here in Gold Ridge. 1-Vegetation management in your community-reduces the fuel load, 2-access for you leave and access for fire engines to come in and find your residences and 3-defensible space. All three components have to work together to be effective. The fire safe council thru the Cal Fire SRA grant which is your fire fees coming back to your community, we were awarded \$191,000 grant which will be done very close to your community. On the map, here is Highway 50, Sierra Ridge School and Pegasus Rd, on both sides and the east and west we are funded for about 100 acres to reduce fuels. I predict a fire is most likely going to come from the south and the west. The canyons here will drive any fire that starts not just near Webber Creek but over by Starks Grade near Bear Creek. The next fuel break is requested for Starks Grade on the last grant applied for. That community protection plan will not do any good unless Gold Ridge members do their part too. Here is your community with the blue line boundary and our shaded fuel break literally goes right up to your boundary in the greenbelt. Pictures here show fuel breaks before and after in Grizzly Flats shown. Gold Ridge looks just like the before pictures here. A lot of small stems, a lot of vegetation growing very close together and competing for small resources, a lot is not going to thrive anyway. After finished this is the same area, you cannot tell. That is my goal to do something like that just outside of your community. This is for all emergency services, not just fire services. Animal control is the only agency allowed in to mandatory evacuation area that has had training. Fire engines that come into your neighborhood; it is my understanding some of the engines are 10 foot wide now and

cannot get through overgrown streets, or pass citizens driving passing while evacuating. Fire engines can be 15 feet tall. You need to reduce fuels around the homes and reduce fuels along the roads themselves. For the safety of evacuees, the firefighters, sheriffs and animal control and any other emergency services, or PG&E, the roadside brush needs to be cleared. I have flyers to hand out with more information on access. House numbers should be made of metal, minimum of 4 inches, better to be 6 inches. Emergency services entering fire areas could not find addresses when homes burned, street signs and house numbers were wood and burned and gone. Dangerously overgrown roads will not be entered to endanger firefighters. Embers can be miles ahead of the fire to ignite new fires. I took a picture of your neighborhood to illustrate this overgrowth; this is potentially a wall of flame that cannot be entered by fire engines.

Defensible space means no ladder fuels that can hop; correct separation between foliage should be 10 feet. Remove all dead, Manzanita should be trimmed, stumps, anything dead. Home insurance is harder to get and keep in our area. Insurance agents are using Google earth and canopy coverage for eligibility. Cul-de-sacs are becoming an issue for access, fire hydrant location and how far the nearest fire station from your house is; a mile or more is becoming a problem.

Brian Mullens, from El Dorado County Department of Transportation, I am here to speak on the project currently taking place in the Gold Ridge Subdivision, on Gold Ridge Trail itself. I will be here as long as you need me to be to answer any questions following the meeting.

The objective of this project is safety driven from our side, it is based off priorities in this area, and I have worked closely with Grizzly Flats Fire Safe Council and Lake Hills Fire Safe Council to improve roadway systems there. This has been on our list of projects to do for several years, the requests greatly increased after the King Fire for vegetation management and removal. Our objectives are to improve sight distance to widen roads out so street signs and stop signs, warning signs, speed limit signs, and residents pulling in and out of their driveways, pedestrians walking on the roadways, and improved visibility for fire hydrants. One of the pictures my supervisor on the project took was a fire hydrant we found during our project here, you can see there is just the top of the hydrant visible and is not accessible during an emergency. Another benefit is the visibility of local wild life and domestic animals. Another aspect is to reduce damage to equipment such as snow removal grader and street sweepers. It is very costly to replace mirrors and windows that are broken from low hanging branches caused by snow load in the area. During a snow storm the equipment is limited as the snow level lowers it spreads the staff and equipment quite extensively. I have an operator grader for this area, if it goes down due to a broken window snow removal ceases until another area is completed to move in another piece of equipment. Other aspects are improved drainage, to keep water in roadside ditches as snow melts, in order to keep the water from running across the roadway and freezing and causing additional traffic hazards. It will help speed up snow removal in the area by not having to slow to dodge trees. On Onyx we have only one and a half lane; it is narrowed to a one lane road. The other thing we look at is damage from tree roots to sections of the roadway; trees that are growing close to roadways have an intrusion of root systems causing damage. One of the big issues we are fighting is when PG&E comes in to top trees under power lines, they top conifers that then grow out to fight for sunlight and we come in to eliminate the branches that are growing out causing a hazard to equipment and by the time we get to them

they may only have one or two branches left on them. There are some areas that look pretty extensive, and we are asked why are removing the trees and not just liming them, this is a big reason. Thank you.

Mike Webb - Cal Fire. I am the division chief and represent the El Dorado Unit north division, which is essentially the west slope of El Dorado County and portions of eastern Sacramento County. I have been a long time resident, I have grown up in El Dorado County, and Georgetown divide and school. I am fortunate to have a career in this community. Thank you Heather for the work you do in this community. You guys are a critical component of the total forest going on in and around the forest community.

I am really concerned and worried for our community. Heather and I talk about the King Fire in our community 2 years ago and unfortunately we spent some quality time in the Camino – Pollock Pines area one summer and about 30 days keeping fire out of the lower end of Camino. We built a line and fighting fire all the way up Deep Canyon and Old Pony Express. You all see where the fire hit Highway 50 and timber all the way down to Bridal Veil Falls and back up to the other side. I know I will tell you right now I will take one hundred of these meetings over the one I had at the school last summer to tell people what was and was not going on around their homes. Thank you for hearing me.

I think we all recognize we have been given a problem. It is nobody's ill will, or nobody's intent that we have high density residential development in an overgrown timber fuel model at the top of a very critical southwest facing creek drainage. Southwest facing is critical in the fire fighting world because in this area in the Sierras our dominant winds in this area are southwest winds. The sunlight and fuels that are exposed on that aspect of the hill become the driest and the most volatile on a hot afternoon with the wind blowing. The potential is very high that some day we could get a fire in the Webber Creek drainage or Starks Grade and will be a real serious problem. We have high density residential, we have urban density housing roads that were built a long time ago, and we have a significant fire problem compounded by residents that love the trees around your house. I tell people to clear as far as you can.

The natural beauty of our forest is not natural. We have been here for 200 years mining, grazing, logging, and developing a forest that at one time you could drive a wagon through; a pine over-story with grass and large trees and open space beneath. That is not what we have. What you see is not natural, anyone interested in the ecology of area, there is a great book by Gruell, it is Western Sierra Ecology and it is photographic documentation of photo shots from 150 years ago to today and how overgrown it is, it is astonishing. Let's take that situation and compound 4 years of drought, and recognize there are many trees that are starting to die.

The Divide, when you go across Chili Bar and the a whole ridge line at Mosquito, dead, right below Placerville on 193 and north slope, 80% dead, and a whole ridgeline near Cool is dead. A beetle infestation experienced in Central Sierra is now coming our way. It is serious, last summer we experienced southern CA Santa Ana fire spread, we saw that kind of fire spread in normal weather conditions. In the Butte fire I was in Jackson the first couple nights and the energy coming out that canyon was nothing like I have ever experienced. It was powerful to see what the fire did overnight, it usually lies down at night. I am very concerned for all of us that live here, we all accept the risk of living in the mountain community, and every one of us has an acceptable level of risk and plan with families and insurance, but our risk has been clearly communicated to leaders. We have all been called to take action to reduce risk. We are all

working hard with resources we have to do the right thing to do what is being demanded of us, You had some great pictures showing the roads. I am responsible for Growlersberg Camp, which is in Georgetown; it is an inmate conservation camp. I staff 5 hand crews of low level offenders, non-violent, non-sex offenders that have had to work to qualify both physically and pass an examination to come out to work on the fire crews. The fire crews get two for one time, they get to get out in nature and work and get some pride and get some money in their pocket and get \$1.00 an hour to fight a fire. They come out and pay their debt to society doing all this work whether it is fighting a fire or roadside clearance. The camp program, if it did not exist, I am skeptical, I am here for the government, I am here to help, the camp system works, the rate of recidivism is about 12%, when they walk away from our program they don't come back and that is a good thing. In the mean time they do a lot of great work both fighting fire and in our community. One thing I am very passionate about right now is putting those crews on roadside cleanup on Right of Ways. I see the 3 R's, ridges, roads and right of ways as targets of opportunities to protect communities. I have refocused a lot of my crew work into an already existing agreement that we have had with DOT for years where we go out and work, but we're putting SRA funds now on those crews and adding 40 crew days to DOT and they are adding their staff to make this all work. We're getting this done not just in your community but in Volcanoville and Cool and Sandridge and we're doing our best to maximize our force efforts. I will stay and answer any questions, thank you.

Carol Steinbrecher-I have questions given to me for Brian Mullens, can you explain Right of Way? People are saying you are cutting trees down on "our" property.

Brian Mullens-In 1969 phase 1 of Gold Ridge was offered up to the county and then in 1970 and 1971 were phases 2 and 3, the developer offered to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors and was accepted the titled Right of Way to the roads in Gold Ridge Forest. It was accepted by the board and it became county property. That Right of Way is defined on maps in different footage. Universally it is approximately on Gold Ridge Trail is a 70 foot Right of Way. From the center line of that road, 35 feet to the right and 35 feet to the left is fee title county property for us to maintain. Are we going to clear 35 feet to one side and to the other? Not necessarily. We will clear what needs to be cleared to achieve our objectives brushing project. There are areas that we were working in today around the guardrail that was opened up to 95 feet of Right Away through that corner. It varies throughout, if there are specific concerns of where exactly is the Right of Way, for example at lot 173 on Gold Ridge Trail, I will be happy to either send my supervisor to the project out to speak with you and show you where that is, or I will personally come out and make an appointment with me and personally come out and assist you in locating it approximately, without having a surveyor out to set a post in the ground. We won't do that, but we will get within several inches of that Right of Way.

During the Question and Answer period the meeting is open for member's questions. Please see www.goldridge.org for the link to view the video for member comments and speaker's response.

Rick Hammonds- El Dorado Department of Transportation-Gold Ridge Members can fill out a form to request chips to left on site at their houses.

Judi Brady-There are large piles of chips left in the parking lot behind the lodge available for all members on a first come first served basis.

Carol Steinbrecher- we put into our Gold Ridge budget about \$29,000 for clearing. We have had estimates based on what the county is doing to do the entire subdivision's road sides, their estimates are between \$80-100,000. We do not have this in budget, the money we had slated for this we can now move to more greenbelt clearing.

Leslie Melendez- 2 years ago my homeowner's insurance carrier denied my insurance renewal after I had it for a year, not because of my property or the neighbor on either side of me. It was denied due to the vacant lot across the street that was overgrown.

Judi Brady- I want to ask all members to be kind to the workers, do not try to run them over, yell obscenities or throw things, they are they to do a job and following supervisor's orders.

Carol Steinbrecher-thank you to our speakers, if you have a specific question see them at the back of the room.

Break

Carol Steinbrecher- next agenda item, meeting minutes approval.

Judi Brady-motion to approve 11/19/2015 Board meeting minutes, second-Melendez, all in favor: Smith-aye, Brady-aye, Melendez-aye, motion approved.

President's Report-

Carol Steinbrecher-as part of the report I would like to recognize Karen Grabowski who has been with the association for 10 years. She has provided to us support to no end; she answers all the phone calls that we get when someone is upset, she calmly will answer questions. We as the group of directors wish to honor you and to thank you for being a part of Gold Ridge for the last 10 years.

For the New Year the board is planning for the next few months, please contact the board with ideas. There are a lot of new things as evidenced by all you here. We are always open to new ideas. My goal is for the members to see the association as open and welcoming organization and always looking for new ways to involve our members.

Architectural

Leslie Melendez- we were asked to approve 2 fences, one was approved, one denied.

CC&R

Judi Brady-winter and quiet

Finance

Carol Steinbrecher-Dianna Feuerhelm is home on an emergency, you all got a copy of the profit and loss report thru the end of December. We are in a good position, dues are being paid, we do not have a lot of late dues which relates to the economy.

Greenbelt

Jim Smith-Pretty much everything has been said about the greenbelt. We will have more money freed up to care of the greenbelt.

Recreation

Carol Steinbrecher-we are reviewing the data collected from last summer. I am hoping we will have a preliminary schedule reflecting the number of people, the temperature and sunrise and sunset. Any ideas let me know.

New Business

Greenbelt Contract for 2016 –Carol Steinbrecher-We will contact the 3 vendors who submitted bids to resubmit based on a per acre cost.

Judi Brady-motion to table the greenbelt contract talks until another meeting after receiving revised bids, second-Melendez, all in favor: Brady-aye, Smith-aye, Melendez-aye.

Open Forum

Member question-GRF sign on Diamond.

Judi Brady motion to adjourn at 7:24 pm.