

PINECONE REVIEW Labor day 2020

ANNOUNCING OUR FIRST PINE FOREST ON-SITE DELIVERY!

Please welcome Oliver Bautista, who entered the world right here in Pine Forest on Mother's Day. Belated congratulations to Katherine and Juan, his parents.

THIS IS THE "THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!" ISSUE

There's lots of volunteer work going on in Pine Forest—stuff that we maybe don't even notice: weeds around our pumphouses get whacked, signs put up, repairs completed. That's just everyday life here. In this Review we highlight current volunteer efforts that are/will be improving our quality of life.

HOW MUCH ARE VOLUNTEER EFFORTS WORTH?

We're used to valuing volunteer efforts as contributions to the community, but now and then we get a clear message about their monetary value. WDNR, which has shared the cost of many of our Firewise projects, will be reimbursing Heather Dean and Steve Meyers for 50% of the hours they've put in: total worth of their work—\$20,706, 50%—\$10,353. Heather and Steve are donating the full reimbursement to Pine Forest to help pay off the debt to Saul Labinaskas (our Firewise logger, chipper, maker of burn piles, etc.) from the Zosel mill fire. We're reaping double benefits—both the work Heather and Steve are always doing and now \$\$ too.

GET YOUR PFR PLACARD, THANKS TO THE N. BLACKJACK BRIGADE

There's now a handsome rearview mirror placard that identifies Pine Forest residents. Contact Doug Wolfe (vladimirwolfe@gmail.com) to order your lot's placard (one per lot). Include your lot number and address and he'll deliver the placard, hanging it in some convenient outdoor location.

Why did the Board vote for the placard? In July we asked Pine Foresters to use a PFR dashboard sign if they were parking at a trailhead, hoping to keep outsiders from accessing the trails via Pine Forest roads. We also needed some way to remind ourselves to drive more slowly. That effort achieved some success. The number of non-PF vehicles at the trailheads decreased as did the number of folks exceeding the 15 mph speed limit. So it made sense to upgrade from a paper dashboard sign to the permanent placard.

Thanks to the whole N. Blackjack Brigade—Doug and Sheri Wolfe, Tim Johnson and Jessica Chung, and Brooke and Russell deVlieg—for writing the board, monitoring parking on N. Blackjack, then helping the board to take this one last step.

RECYCLING ROAD WARRIORS

Is there anyone in Pine Forest who doesn't wish we had recycling? It's looking more and more likely that we will, thanks to Rick Gray, our newest board member, and his trusty companions, Catie Barber and Adam Fulton. If all goes as planned, this group's recycling initiative will bring a WasteWise recycling dumpster to Pine Forest by November.

No glass though--we'll all still be taking care of that on our own. If glass of any kind goes into the recycling dumpster, the whole load is ruined.

Rick will send out a longer update on the progress of this effort soon. In the meantime, we thank Catie for the survey of our support for recycling, Adam for organizing our recycling and waste station, and Rick for leading the effort and keeping us all informed.

GOVERNANCE GURUS

Totaling about 20 pages, it's a mass of bureaucratese containing out of date information and language. What is it? Our governance documents: the covenants, conditions and restrictions, and the by-laws. What does it take to update them? Better said, who?

Thanks to Chris Bellas, Harry Burkholder, Andy Maloy, Steve Taylor, Doug Wolfe and committee chair Anne Fox, soon we'll all be working through a draft of the updated documents. Producing the draft has taken months, as the committee hashed out meanings, chose new language, filled in missing information, consulted with experts. Along the way, simply documenting the differing opinions about what the new language should be has taken untold hours of work. Sections have been visited and re-visited, revised and revised again. It takes a special group not only to take on the task of revision but to stick with it over the months.

Soon all of us will be taking on the final part of this project. We'll be asked to resolve differences (no committee ever agrees on everything), then vote to accept or reject the revised governing documents. The bylaws require passage by a majority of the owners (one vote per lot) and the Declarations (now called Covenants) require at least 60% of owner approval (one vote per lot) in order to pass. Thoughtful work awaits us.

PINE FOREST BUSINESS—ONLINE ONLY FOR NOW

Until social distancing is no longer in place all PFOA business will be conducted online. The Board has used conference calls thus far, which work because there are relatively few of us in the meetings. However, the next step in revising and updating of all governance policies will include significant discussion within the whole community. We have some ideas about how that can be done, but are seeking advice before we "finalize" the plan, "finalize" because reality will definitely interfere.

Our fervent hope is that by Memorial Day 2021 the task will be completed and won't have to be done again for another very long time.

AND LEST WE FORGET . . .
FALL FIREWISE AND FOREST HEALTH

Thanks to everyone who responded to the “phone tree” (i.e., emergency notification) survey. Heather will soon publish the tree and explain how it works. We plan to test the system shortly after publication of the tree and are still planning a tour of the upper emergency evacuation route once recreational use of the trails tapers off for the season.

After several months of ladder fuel reduction work, Saul and crew first shut down to avoid pine beetle season. They couldn't pile pine slash—that attracts the beetles. Then they got called to firefighting, from Palmer all the way to northern California. Our area is now in a “partial shutdown” due to fire danger, which is a step higher than “partial hoot owl” and precludes all chainsaw use. The crew completed chipping of slash that was already on the ground, but will likely not return until the restrictions lift. So far, they've reduced fuels on more than 25 acres of lots and common areas this year. Thanks to all of the owners who have been and are going to be participating in this project!

Finally, if your own Firewising efforts have produced any slash, we have an opportunity for another “free chipping day” this autumn, courtesy of the Okanogan Conservation District (OCD). The program will take place sometime between October and December and will chip woody plant material (i.e., trunks and branches), except for bitterbrush (which is too hard on the chipper blades). Dead material is okay, as long as it's still solid, rather than rotten (which clogs the chipper). Final OCD approval is still pending, but if you want to get on the participants' list, let Heather know.