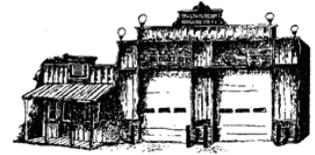


PINOS ALTOS VOLUNTEER FIRE RESCUE

VOLUNTEER NEWS



VOLUME VI SECOND QUARTER APRIL, MAY, JUNE 2013

YOU'RE INVITED TO AN OPEN HOUSE!

Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Rescue
Wagon Wheel Lane Station

Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Rescue, which serves a large territory north of Silver City, will host an Open House on Saturday, April 13th from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm to celebrate the new addition to the Wagon Wheel Lane Station.

The Friends of the Fire and Rescue Volunteers will provide lunch including Red Hot Fire Station Chili, corn bread, rolls, cookies, and beverages.

Ellen Brown, Gila National Forest Fire Prevention and Mitigation Coordinator, will present a talk on the importance of creating defensible space around your home. Tour the station, enjoy a tasty lunch, and learn what you can do to protect your family and property.

DIRECTIONS: Take Little Walnut Road north from Silver City. Proceed past the Little Walnut Picnic Grounds, where the road will turn to dirt. Follow Little Walnut Road past Cleveland Mine and Owens Roads, and then turn right onto Wagon Wheel Lane. The station is approximately 1/4 mile on the left.

For additional information, contact Chief Lucy Whitmarsh at 575-574-8394 or lmwk@dishmail.net.

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Fire and Rescue Volunteers,*

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Ryan Coleman - 1st Lieutenant

David Montz - 1st Lieutenant

Mike Moorman - 1st Lieutenant

Susan Austin - 2nd Lieutenant

Chris Torres - 2nd Lieutenant

Steve White - 2nd Lieutenant

Tami Bates - Secretary

Ellen Cline - Treasurer

Newsletter Editor, Lucy Whitmarsh

Are you interested in finding
out more about Pinos Altos
Volunteer Fire Rescue?

Visit our Web Site at
PAVFR.org. You can make a
donation using Pay Pal or mail
your donation to PO Box
4012, Silver City, NM 88062.

Changing Weather in the Southwest New Mexico Mountain Range: Heat, Precipitation, Drought and Extreme Weather

The first in a three-part community meeting on a Sustainable Silver City took place at the Global Resource Center on Tuesday, February 19. The presenter at the program was Dr. David DuBois, the New Mexico State Climatologist, who heads the Drought Monitoring Working Group that supports the Governor's Drought Task Force. He also manages the New Mexico Climate Center at New Mexico State University, which maintains archives of metrological data collected throughout New Mexico.

According to Dr. DuBois, the Silver City area is entering a period of greater aridity with higher temperatures, earlier and longer fire seasons, and less projected winter precipitation. Silver City is planning for potential impacts to water, energy, local forest health, and emergency and other important services and resources. The town is also developing a long term Sustainability Plan through 2030 that will address reducing vulnerabilities and preparations for the future.

Anyone who follows the news knows that the western United States has entered a period where the wild fires often turn into Mega Fires. In 2012 New Mexico experienced the largest wild fire in recorded history. These large, intensely hot wildfires effect lives, property, businesses, including tourism, and the ecosystem. While the number of wildfires was below average in 2012, the size of the Whitewater-Baldy Fire was one and a half time larger than the previous average.

Dr. DuBois indicated that the familiar La Nina monsoon weather pattern in our area is a thing of the past. He also said we are currently in a neutral phase between the El Nino and La Nina cycles. Ten years in the past have had similar weather patterns: 1948, 1951, 1953, 1956, 1961, 1964, 1972, 1990, 2008, and 2011. In this pattern, the climate is drier with less precipitation than what is considered normal based on the 30 year average. Though it is more difficult to predict, higher average temperatures are also expected.

There are multiple contributing factors to the increased dryness of the area. The mid-latitude storm track is migrating north, so many of the storms with precipitation by-pass southern New Mexico. The snow pack in the mountains is reduced, resulting in less runoff. Also, because of warmer temperatures, more evaporation of the runoff occurs that would normally seep into the soil. On average the frost free season has increased by seventeen to twenty-four days, which also contributes to the earlier snow pack run off.

The effects of the changing weather patterns on the monsoon season are not entirely clear. The changes could possibly cause a delay of the start of the monsoon season, but the overall amount of precipitation will probably remain unchanged.

Important Wildland Fire Preparedness Concepts

Become a Fire-Adaptive Community

The Pinos Altos Volunteer Fire Rescue District includes multiple high fire risk areas where wildfires could easily spread into populated areas. Many of our homes are in close proximity to the Gila National Forest. With dry conditions, high winds, and temperatures, a wildfire in our area could easily threaten our homes.

Many of us have moved into high fire risk areas and have brought with us the same fire protection expectations that we had when living in an urban or suburban community. Instead of depending on others, it is our responsibility to fully understand and prepare for wild fires. Homes that are not properly prepared pose not only a treat to the residents themselves, but also to neighboring homes and emergency response providers.

A Fire-Adaptive Community supports an environment where individuals have access to information and necessary knowledge concerning protection of life, property, and the community. The people in the community become active participants in creating a safer environment. The following are some concepts that you should become familiar with and should implement to help protect your property from wildfires.

Defensible Space: The required space between a building and the wildland area that surrounds it. This area creates a buffer between the structure and the wild fire, increasing the survivability of the home from radiant heat or direct flame contact. For more information on defensible space, visit the resource page at www.firewise.org.

The Ember Issue: Windblown embers are a concern during a fire in the wildland urban interface. Most structures are not destroyed by direct flame impingement, but rather from embers. Embers may precede the flaming fire front, carried by the winds that distribute burning brands or embers over long distances. These embers fall, or are wind drive, into receptive fuels in or near structures, often going undetected for some time. As the first fire front passes, these small embers may ignite structures and can potentially spread from structure to structure.

Hardening Your Home: This is a conceptual plan intended to protect a home through its actual composition of roofs, eaves, vents, decks, windows, and other aspects. Even making one change can increase a home's possibility of survival.

The Home Ignition Zone: Another concept plan places the home in context of its overall surroundings. In high hazard areas, this zone can extend up to 200 feet from the home and the stepped-zone-focus includes preparedness techniques both to the home and surrounding vegetation.

March 31 to April 6 Proclaimed Wildfire Awareness Week

Governor Susana Martinez proclaimed March 31 to April 6 as Wildfire Awareness Week in New Mexico.

The Governor called upon residents of and visitors to the state to continue doing their part to prevent human caused wildfires, according to a news release from the State Forestry Division.

“While the number of human caused wildfires was down last year, we must not let our guard down in order for this to continue,” Martinez said. “Conditions are in place for another potentially difficult fire season, and I urge New Mexicans to take the responsibility we all have to prevent wildfires very seriously.”

In 2012, New Mexico experienced its largest wildfire in recorded history, the Whitewater-Baldy Complex in the Gila National Forest near Glenwood; and the state’s most destructive blaze, the Little Bear, which burned more than 250 structures near Ruidoso. For this season, local, state, federal and tribal interagency partners continue to stress wildfire preparedness and prevention.

At a news conference at Rio Grande Nature Center State Park, Martinez announced a pilot program that will hire and train 40 military veterans as wildland fire fighters. They will be placed on four fire crews that will be available for assignment on wildfires statewide.

The new program is a collaborative effort between the Forestry Division, the Department of Veterans Services, the Department of Corrections and the New Mexico Workforce Connection.

Local, state, federal and tribal agency representatives discussed preparations for the upcoming fire season, and how residents can prevent human caused wildfires. Since the 2012 fire season, interagency partners have worked to train hundreds of firefighters in wildland fire skills, identify grant funding for equipment, and teach landowners how to reduce their wildfire threat through land treatment.

Since January 1, New Mexico has experienced 59 wildfires on state and privately owned land that have burned about 739 acres. Last year at this time, 68 fires had burned approximately 2,104 acres. “Despite the decrease, fire response agencies expect this to be a very active year for wildfire,” officials wrote.