

Minutes of the Palomar Mountain Planning Organization 2012 Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 26, 2012 at the Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department

Board Members Present: Heather Beer, Glenn Borland, Robert Carlyle, Mike Chesney, Donna Dose, George Evangelou, Elizabeth Getzoff, Bruce Graves, Doug Lande, Michael Pique, Alan Serry, Linda Thorne, Michael Walsh.

The annual general PMPO meeting was convened at the Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department 11:00 A.M. Saturday May 26, 2012. In addition to the Board, about 16 members were present. The Chair, Mike Chesney, thanked the Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department for hosting the Pancake Breakfast and Annual Meeting, Susan Humason for editing and producing the newsletter, Donna Dose and sister Pat for organizing the breakfast, and Bruce Graves and George Evangelou for setup. He noted the past year had been productive, with a much closer rapport with the County DPLU on the 2020 plans, a continuing alliance with CHP on traffic safety, the successful continuation of the Palomar Mountain State Park, and keeping of an ever-watchful eye on mountain water resources and the plans for the La Jolla Indian Reservation casino.

Secretary's Report (Michael Pique):

The minutes of the May 28, 2011, annual general meeting were distributed and approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report (Alan Serry):

As reported in the PMPO spring 2012 annual newsletter, our balance carried forward from December 31, 2010, was \$39,639.56. Our 2011 expenses, totaling \$1,728.43, were \$625.31 for annual newsletter printing and postage, \$439.12 for breakfast food and supplies, \$300.00 for safety directory printing, \$308.00 for safety directory postage, and \$56.00 for general expenses. We received \$1804 in donations, we had \$484 receipts from the 2011 breakfast, and we earned interest of \$75.64, giving us an ending balance (Dec 31, 2011) of \$40,274.77. Mike Chesney said an independent audit of the balance sheet checked out with all tallied and agreed. Doug Lande asked if the PMPO had pledged to donate \$3000 to the State Park fund; answered yes. The treasurer's report was approved unanimously.

Special Award to PMPO Board Member Alan Serry

Chair Mike Chesney read the text of a special plaque award to long-time Board member Alan Serry who is retiring from the board this year.

2020 General Plan Update Report (Michael Walsh):

Michael Walsh reported much progress this year working with the county, but noted the work goes way back. Our guiding principle has always been to restore land usage designations to their pre-FCI status. We had meetings by phone and in person; most of the PMPO's recommendations were included in plan revisions, including the Summit, the Woods property, the helipad, the Fire Station. However, the Group Camp recommendation was not accepted (no jurisdiction over Federal land), and the parcels adjoining the Fire Station were too sloped or inaccessible. We got clarification on density vs. minimum lot sizes. The DPLU's Robert Citrano came up to the February 2012 meeting so individuals who had issues could go work with him.

Traffic Safety (Alan Serry):

Alan said we've had much help this year from our Fire Department chiefs George Lucia and Cliff Kellogg - they look out for us with good sense and good comments. The 2/10-mile markers on the South and East Grades have been a big help, as have been the call boxes, which ameliorate unreliable cell service. One rough curve that had several over-the-side accidents now has a new guard rail. On the South Grade, night racing is less of a problem this year, but much is open-range so watch for cattle on the road.

When it snows, we now have an Emergency Plan with CHP, USFS, State Park, and the Sheriff showing up early, enforcement right off the bat, with much less gridlock. Palomar Mountain residents should carry ID and some proof of residency, in addition to chains, in the event of partial road closures.

Motorcycles driving fast around the curves are still a major problem: stay clear of the centerline and beware of the S6-S7 intersection, where inattentive drivers miss the YIELD sign.

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The PMPO is working with the county on new signage, including temporary signs for snow days and more orange 15-MPH “squiggle” signs.

If you see unsafe driving, such as reckless motorcyclists, call the Sheriff or CHP, non-emergency numbers. Otherwise, the complaints will not be documented. Phone (866) 986-9852. Anyone with traffic safety ideas, call Alan, (760) 742-0444.

Fire Safe Council and Tree Removal Program (Robert Carlyle):

Robert Carlyle said that the Fire Safe Council’s goal is to make the mountain safer from fires by getting grants, clearing brush, and taking down dead trees. Robert is working on grant proposals for next year, as the current funding ends next month. The NRCS (National Resources Conservation Center, under the USDA) has funds to help residents needing brush clearing and chipping - call them: you do the work and get reimbursed for a percentage, up to 75%.

La Jolla Indian Reservation Update (Elizabeth Getzoff):

Elizabeth Getzoff says that plans for neither the casino nor the water project can be found on the LJIR web site. Their suit against the Nevada Gold casino developers was won by LJIR on their “sovereign nation” status. Their current casino developer appears to be Panther Partners. LaVonne Peck, the tribe’s project manager, is known to have met with Fish & Game and with other tribal leaders. The BIA web site is back on line after vanishing for some time, so it should now be possible to get phone numbers again.

Ground Water Monitoring (Linda Thorne):

Mike Probert was hurt in a traffic accident about a year ago so he is no longer measuring wells periodically. He will soon be ready to go back to that. We are still receiving Palomar Mountain Mutual Water and the Yoga Center data.

The PMPO would like to have permission from residents to monitor more wells, currently are monitoring one well on Observation Point, two on Birch Hill, and six along the East Grade road; contact Michael Pique (858) 354-4391 or email secretary@PMPOinfo.com if you are willing to have your well measured every two months. The goal is to have a 5-10 year record of well water levels to be able to evaluate any impacts from the La Jolla Indian Reservation pumping project or other man-made or natural stresses on the water supply.

Mutual Water Company (Linda Thorne):

The Mutual Water Company is in good shape, with lots of water. The Pedley Valley wells have been high for several years, and demand is down to 50% of 2000 levels from loss of full-time residents. A new tank is installed in Pedley, and hope to add an 80,000 gallon tank on Birch Hill.

Goldspotted Oak Borer (Doug Lande):

Doug said there’s little change in the “GSOB” story: the beetle was recognized as the cause of “sudden oak death” in 2008, and is known to attack both deciduous (Black Oak) and evergreen (Coast and Canyon Live Oak) trees. Repeated attacks occurring over several years can kill mature trees, and the beetles hit the biggest and oldest trees first - bigger than 8 inches. Most oaks die within three years of an attack and outbreaks typically cause 6 to 12% annual mortality and 70 to 90% eventual mortality. Watch for symptoms: D-shaped holes and crown die-off; see color photos and a guide “Oak Borer Community Preparedness Planning” at <http://ucanr.org/sites/gsoinfo>

The only thing you can do with infected trees is to cut them down and burn the wood as promptly as you can. The beetle spreads largely by people moving infected firewood, and has been found as close to Palomar as Morettis Junction (Highways 76 and 79), three miles southeast of Lake Henshaw.

Doug has heard the county is trying to introduce a beetle predator, but that stopping firewood movements is the only current action. He says the State Park prohibits importing firewood, but doesn’t know if they really check thoroughly. Linda Thorne noted it would be a huge effort, needing bi-lingual signs at the bases of the mountain.

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Fire Ecology (Doug Lande):

Doug said there are lots of opinions in the county; he has been a wildland firefighter for 10 years and offers the following: The simplest point is that fires are a part of nature, always been here. Since fire is part of the environment here, best to not build in the worst fire areas. Avoid the south face of the mountain; can put yourself and firefighters at risk. You are on your own if you rebuild in dangerous areas: build in flatter, less steep areas instead. Every year a few new houses on the south face, but government and community should not support that. More fire clearance is required, which leads to erosion, loss of wildlife. We've done some nice prescribed burns up here, reduces fuel, improves ecology (grasses feed animals). The State Park burning, in conjunction with pile burning, reduced the fire hazards above Doane Pond and in Fry Creek. Doug concluded his presentation by stating that we need to be doing ten times the burning we're doing now to keep a healthy ecology in timber areas. Doug's remarks sparked a lively discussion with Jerry Fisher disputing many of these points.

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT):

CERT participants help free up the volunteer fire-fighters for their difficult mission. Bill Leininger, Palomar Mountain CERT Coordinator, reminded us to work on maintaining our defensible space, and keep our "5-minute evacuation checklist" up to date. Bill is being transferred out of the area, but Greg van Idsinga has offered to be the next CERT coordinator.

Community Center of Palomar Mountain (CCPM):

Bruce Graves said that the CCPM and the Fire Department are working together on permits for remodeling the modular buildings to be usable as firefighter bunk houses. Even though the firefighters are now staying in the Community Center, community activities are possible with two available meeting rooms - call Bruce at (760) 742-3027 to schedule. Gordon Madison said he understood permits weren't needed. Bruce said that was true for the "house", but not for the modular buildings in the back; they were the problem now.

State Park (Michael Walsh): Michael Walsh noted that this time last year we were expecting the park to experience partial closure in September 2011 and full closure in July 2012. This year, the park is open with full campgrounds. Working on a three-year extension now, thanks to great team led by Rick Barclay. District Park Superintendent Nedra Martinez is a great ally. Thanks also go to CRISPIA - the Cuyamaca State Park Interpretive Association, and to the PMPO board for putting us over the \$30,000 matching donation barrier.

Relevant web sites are <http://palomarsp.org> and <http://www.parks.ca.gov> .

Rick Barclay has made a video summary of the Palomar State Park story, which REI will show on June 14 along with videos of 70 other State Parks made by volunteers.

Water, Watershed, and Fire Issues (Jerry Fisher): Jerry Fisher, longtime Palomar Mountain resident, recounted his efforts with DPLU and the county supervisors to restore to pre-FCI status the land-use designation of his Highway 76 property (half of which is within the PMPO area of representation). In January 2012, he went before the supervisors in this attempt.

Jerry said the county wants to "down-designate" his land, which has abundant water, because it is not within an organized water district or attached to a mutual water company. He noted the struggles in California for water - the "water wars" - with both the Feather and Colorado rivers over-subscribed. An article Friday in the North County Times said the amount of available water this year is short, by as much as 70%. He said our Crestline sign "No Water Restrictions" was one of the few places in the state that could say that, and that we need to protect our water.

Michael Pique read excerpts from the Valley Center Chamber of Commerce letter of November 30, 2010: asking for 1. Fire watch volunteers to man main highways 76, 78, and 79 during Santa Ana conditions; 2. For transparency, allow the Press 24/7 access to the Incident Command posts during all fires; 3. For clarity to all local and out-of-town firefighters, due to San Diego's unique habitat of few trees, chaparral, wildlife, watershed, conservancies of many kinds, that *all* of these should be looked upon the same as homes and lives during any fire, whether it is a declared emergency or not. Further, because of the above, any form of excess firing be done under environmental rules. (signed) Shawneed Brudick, 2009 Valley Center Chamber President.

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A PMPO member said she had called her insurance agent about fires and the agent said to call the Forest Service office and ask about protection. She did, and was told that the Forest Service would not attempt to save her home from fire.

Jerry Fisher said his property on Palomar Mountain's south slope, about 2 by 10 miles, first burned in 1999 then again in 2007. It has gone through chaparral to grass conversion and is now very flammable, far more at risk than before. After the 2007 fire, with just dirt left, Highway 76 experienced mud slides and road closures, and obvious loss of quality watershed.

Administration of PMPO 501(c)3 Status (Mike Chesney):

Mike Chesney said the PMPO, like many other similar groups, was blindsided by legislation changes in 2008. He had to go through all our records and file tax returns retroactively from 2008 to 2011, reviewed by Alan Serry. He also had to complete a "Form 1023" and post it for public review, along with about 20 supporting documents "inches thick". He offers to help the PMPO on this in future years, even though he is leaving the board at the end of his term.

Elizabeth Getzoff expressed our thanks to Mike for his huge contributions to the Board's procedures, communications, and the web site <http://www.pmpoinfo.com> .

Election of PMPO Board Members:

Mike Chesney, Steve Clark, Alan Serry are leaving the Board. The incumbents who are up for re-election are Michael Pique and Linda Thorne. Nominations were received for four persons: Brenda Fromlath, Kym McClary, Mike Stevens, and Yvonne Vaucher. Except for Kym McClary, who was not present, each offered brief statements of their qualifications and viewpoints. Paper ballots were distributed, collected, and counted. Brenda Fromlath, Michael Pique, Mike Stevens, Linda Thorne, and Yvonne Vaucher were elected to terms expiring in 2015.

The 2012 Board roster is:

(terms expiring May 2013):

Donna Dose, George Evangelou, Bruce Graves, Doug Lande, and George Lucia

(terms expiring May 2014):

Heather Beer, Glenn/Cecelia Borland, Robert Carlyle, Elizabeth Getzoff/John Tainer, and Michael Walsh

(terms expiring May 2015):

Brenda Fromlath, Michael Pique, Mike Stevens, Linda Thorne, and Yvonne Vaucher

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 PM.

Michael E. Pique, Secretary. secretary@PMPOinfo.com Minutes approved by PMPO membership May 25, 2013.