

PMPO

www.PMPOinfo.com

Summer 2025 - Volume 36

The Palomar Mountain Planning Organization

Board Members: Mike Appelman, Lafe Ball (Chair), Cecelia Borland, Robert Carlyle, Chris Clarke, Ryan Flohr (alternate Josephine Marcelino), Elizabeth Getzoff (Vice Chair), Jim Hamerly, Rosemary Johnston, Sandrine Miller-Montgomery (Treasurer), Michael Pique (Secretary), Toby Roy (alternate Cor Shaffer), Linda Thorne, Yvonne Vaucher, Michael Walsh

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR *by Lafe Ball*



The Palomar Mountain Planning Organization is a non-profit 501(c)(3) public benefit organization whose purpose is not only to provide planning oversight for the Palomar Mountain community but to also organize responses to varied Palomar Mountain needs. The board consists of 15 members elected for three-year terms; five positions come up for election every year. These candidates are comprised of Palomar Mountain residents, property owners, and businesspersons.

Many of the PMPO board members have been involved on one community board or another for many years. For example, the Palomar Fire Safe Council has secured grant monies for dumpster days, chipping, and tree felling. Many thanks to the individuals who lead this group, they are amazing!!! palomarfiresafecouncil.org

Our monthly and quarterly meetings for the various boards have moved into the 21st century and are now not only in-person, but also on Zoom, which allows participants who are not on the mountain. The PMPO has committed funds to update the video and audio at the Community Center so these meetings and events can function even better with the recent donation of a new high-speed internet connection from Fred White @ westb.net.

PMPO 2025 Community Investments to date:

- Upgraded Audio and Video for the Community Center \$1,500.00
- Additional Dumpster Days \$4,000.00
- Remove large rock blocking emergency vehicles \$8,000.00



Internet Installation

New residents, WE NEED YOUR PARTICIPATION. All the dumpsters, chipping, fire retardant, and safety events take a village to organize and implement. Without additional help and participation, we may lose these mostly free amenities and services! If you would like to assist, participate, help on a program, or assist in writing a grant, please do not hesitate to contact any of the board members or send an email to secretary@pmpoinfo.com. We Need You!

It seems like 2024 just flew by, and we are already halfway through 2025. The recent weather has been drier than we wanted, but we did receive some rain and snow in the beginning of 2025, which should help all our wells. Palomar Mountain has a great communicator (Bonnie Phelps), who constantly updates her palomarmountainnews.com site, which is a great place to check in throughout the year.

Continued on Page 11

PMPO Annual Pancake Breakfast & PMPO Annual Meeting



Saturday, May 24, 2025

Breakfast 8am-10am

Annual Meeting at 10am

immediately following Breakfast

at the

Palomar Mountain Fire Station



\$3 - Adults • \$1 - Children 21610 Crestline Road - Palomar Mountain

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Palomar Mountain

Planning Organization (PMPO)

Box 145 • PALOMAR MOUNTAIN, CA 92060-0145

This newsletter is produced annually and distributed in May of each year. Without the help of many volunteers, this newsletter would not be possible.

Coordinator: Michael Walsh

Publisher: Susan Humason

Editors: Michael Pique & Libby Getzoff

Photography: Michael Pique & Bonnie Phelps

Article Contributors:

Thank you to all contributors who make this newsletter possible.

Assemblers:

Thanks go out to the individuals, especially Michael Pique, who help each year with the assembly and mailing of the newsletter.

If you have any information that you would like to contribute to future newsletters, please email the information to

Lafe Ball at:

chair@pmpoinfo.com

attn: PMPO Newsletter

Thank You to Our Paid Advertisers who help offset the production and mailing costs.

SAVE PALOMAR MOUNTAIN TASK FORCE

by Jim Hamerly

The Save Palomar Mountain Task Force, a committee of the Palomar Mountain Planning Organization (PMPO), was formed to oppose a proposed 500,000-volt transmission line across Palomar Mountain by Horizon West / NextEra Energy. We are committed to protecting Palomar's unparalleled public value, critical ecological significance (including endangered species), historical and cultural heritage, and most importantly, guarding against the extreme wildfire risk it faces.

The Task Force is comprised of Steve Bond, Elizabeth D. Getzoff, Jim Hamerly, Alex Isaienko, Sandrine Miller-Montgomery, Bonnie Phelps, Michael Pique, George Ravenscroft, and Yvonne Vaucher. We developed a strategic plan through weekly meetings from June onward. We established a central communication hub for the Palomar community, conducted extensive public outreach, and built alliances with over a dozen like-minded organizations.

Key actions included:

- Formal letters to relevant agencies.
- Cultivating strong relationships with over a dozen allied community organizations including presentations to build support.
- Developing and launching the website savepalomarmountain.org, serving as a central platform for disseminating critical information and gathering public support through signature collection.
- Helped to successfully defeat California Assembly Bill 3238 designed to circumvent environmental review for electrification projects in California.
- Organizing a comprehensive tour of Palomar Mountain for principals from Horizon West/NextEra Energy in early August. This tour aimed to underscore the severe wildfire hazards and influence their decision-making regarding alternative routes.



Photo Courtesy of Bonnie Phelps

While we are hopeful this tour will influence the selection of an alternate route, we remain vigilant and prepared to respond to Horizon West/NextEra Energy's proposed route options, expected in spring/summer 2026.

2025-27 "YELLOW" PALOMAR RESIDENT TAGS

By Lafe Ball



Hello Palomar Residents:

The 2025/27 Palomar Mountain Resident Tags are now available! These easy hang-in-your-window tags have helped access during snow days when there's been lots of traffic. When the sheriff deputy or CHP is restricting access to Palomar, they wave tag holders right through. We have a spot on the tag front where you can write your phone number should someone need your car moved during snow challenges.

2025-27 resident tags are \$7.50 each, mailed direct to you. We recommend one tag per vehicle in your household.

All proceeds go to the PMPO to support the varied activities here on the mountain.

Ways to get these resident tags:

Pay by using Zelle,
Venmo, or PayPal at
pmpoinfo.com/donate

Email:

palomarmountainpmpo@gmail.com
or Call: Lafe Ball at (909) 208-9401



Mail a check to PMPO
PO Box 145
Palomar Mountain, CA 92060

Checks may take a few days to process but we will get them mailed once checks are received.

When ordering your June 2025-June 2027 tag please provide:

- 1) Last Name, First Name
- 2) Palomar physical property address to verify eligibility -
 - a) Street address or assessor's parcel number
 - b) Crestline/Birch Hill easement road number, if available
- 3) Current tag number(s), if applicable. We will do our best to maintain your previous number(s)
- 4) Mailing address: where to send the tag to
- 5) Email address* - *Emails will be added to the PMPO distribution list for Palomar Mountain Specific information only.*
- 6) Phone number*

* Voluntary: to be added to the PMPO distribution list for Palomar Mountain-specific information only.

We are working to compile a complete list of residents and property owners to increase our options for communication. If you would like us to share this information with other Palomar Mountain organizations such as the Fire Safe Council and the Community Center, tell us we may.

The PMPO developed the resident tag in early 2019 to promote community engagement and neighbor recognition. If for some reason the Sheriff Deputy or CHP Officer has not seen them before (the personnel changes often) please enlighten them.



ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER ANYONE?

If you would like to receive the PMPO annual newsletter electronically in the future, please email newsletter@pmpoinfo.com and let us know.

Your email address will not be shared or distributed in any way.

PMPO NEEDS YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT...

PMPO, Box 145, PALOMAR MOUNTAIN, CA 92060-0145

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Palomar Mountain
Volunteer Fire Department dba

PALOMAR MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY FIRE ASSOCIATION

REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOARD MEETINGS
9AM
1st Saturday of the
Month

*By Robert Carlyle
& Michael Pique*

Four years ago, the Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department changed its business name to the Palomar Mountain Community Fire Association to better reflect our present situation. Instead of fighting fires and providing medical aid to residents, in 2016 we leased the property to San Diego County and they contracted with CAL FIRE to provide these services to us on Palomar. The PMCFCA acts as a liaison with the County and CAL FIRE for the residents of Palomar. Captains Dean Kowalski and Matt Waters have been doing an outstanding job and we are lucky to have a crew up here that cares as much as they do about looking after us. In August, a fire in Observation Pointe on Conifer Road was put out with the help of a big Chinook helicopter, highlighting the improved fire-fighting coordination.

The new all-terrain ambulance delivered last spring has been invaluable. However, the “full continuous care transport” policy that takes our firefighters off of the mountain for many hours traveling to and from hospitals, has exacerbated fire-fighter staffing shortages. We continue to face the problem that our emergency vehicles can’t travel many of our narrow and rugged dirt roads and driveways.

The PMCFCA meets the first Saturday of every month at 0900h (9AM), at the Community Center (next to the Fire Station). We also provide a Zoom connection for the meeting which I send out on NextDoor with the agenda. All are welcome; see our web site at palomar-fire.org.

TEL: (760) 742-3701

www.palomar-fire.org

21610 Crestline Road • P.O. Box 235
Palomar Mountain, CA 92060



BOARD MEMBERS

Robert Carlyle, President

Tom Mendenhall, Vice President

Mike Pique, Secretary

Keith Ronchetti, Treasurer

Mark Thompson, Member at Large

THANK YOU

for supporting the

**Palomar Mountain
Community Fire Association**

PALOMAR MOUNTAIN GENERAL STORE & MOTHER'S KITCHEN RESTAURANT

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

A Message to Our Community

Did you know that Palomar Mountain General Store and Mother’s Kitchen Restaurant have been a part of this community since Memorial Day of 1977? We have been honored to serve the Palomar Mountain area continuously until the challenges of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic forced us to pause our operations.

During that time, we were able to complete much-needed repairs to the General Store, and we reopened it in June 2020. We also began work on the kitchen, though this aspect has proven to be particularly challenging. Finding skilled, reasonably priced contractors has been a struggle, especially given our location far from the larger cities.

As for reopening the restaurant, staffing remains a significant concern. The smaller population of Palomar presents a unique challenge, and we want to ensure that we can properly meet the needs of our community. Our goal is to reopen the restaurant in a limited capacity, depending on the availability of help and the completion of repairs.

We are deeply grateful for the years of support we’ve received from our local community and visitors alike. The Palomar Mountain General Store continues to thrive, and we couldn’t have done it without your ongoing encouragement and patronage. We wish you all the best, hoping you are well and thriving, and look forward to continuing to serve you.

Warmly, The Palomar Mountain General Store & Mother’s Kitchen Team

2024-2025 TREASURER'S REPORT

By *Sandrine Miller-Montgomery,*
PMPO Treasurer

The Palomar Mountain Planning Organization's financial status continues to be robust and steady, mirroring trends from recent years. PMPO operates efficiently on the financial side, thanks to the commitment of its volunteer board members. This exceptional team, contributing a wide range of expertise without tracking their hours, allows us to minimize expenses on contractors and consultants.

We started the year 2025 with \$67,976.36, an increase of \$7,480.15 over the previous year.

In 2024, PMPO added a new committee: Save Palomar Mountain (SPM). This was done in response to the recently discovered project of a 500-kV transmission line that could cross our beloved mountain. This committee went into prompt action, as you can read in this newsletter, and among many things, accepted donations through social media activities and a new dedicated website. The goal for the donated money is to build awareness and gather support against choosing Palomar Mountain as an acceptable route for the line. In addition, it aims to ensure that we have some resources in case we must hire experts and/or lawyers to assist our cause. SPM received \$4,423.01 from July to December 2024.

Again in 2024, the PMPO was the appreciative recipient of many generous donations from our supporters, totaling \$4,135.59, nearly doubling the previous year's donations! In 2024, the previously opened Certificate of Deposit for \$50,000 arrived at maturity and the 4% APR, resulting in \$1,321.98 in interest.

In December of 2024, the PMPO invested \$45,000 in a 4-month Certificate of Deposit earning interest at 4.25% APR.

Finally, thanks to Lafe Ball for his continued leadership with the Palomar Resident Tags program on top of his

chairman-of-the-board position. The tags program continues to be a great community tool, as shown by its popularity, while also bringing some revenue into the PMPO.

You should have received an email last year asking for your ideas on what would be the best use of the PMPO financial resources. Projects need to support all (or most) of the community and be within our current means, or, if too costly, worthy of doing a special donation campaign. A few examples of what you will see coming this year are: rock removal in places that could jeopardize fire truck access, and an increase in the number of dumpsters by the Community Center during the early spring/summer months. If you have projects that you would like to have considered, please send me an email at sandrinemiller@gmail.com as I am compiling these ideas for the board to review at our meetings.

As a reminder, the PMPO operates as a CA State registered, charitable 501(c)(3) organization, and donations to the PMPO or its committees are tax deductible.



January 1, 2024

Checking Acct. Balance	\$10,146.79
Certificate of Deposit 1 yr.	\$50,000.00
Savings Acct. Balance	\$ 349.42
Total Accts. Balance	\$60,496.21

January 1, 2025

Checking Acct. Balance	\$22,726.94
Certificate of Deposit 4m.	\$45,000.00
Savings Acct. Balance	\$ 249.42
Total Accts. Balance	\$67,976.36

Difference

Total Accts. Balance	+ \$7,480.15
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PALOMAR OBSERVATORY

SPRING 2025

*By Steve Flanders,
Public Outreach Coordinator*



THE NEXT GENERATION PALOMAR SPECTROGRAPH

For forty years, the Double Spectrograph (DBSP) was the most heavily used and the most productive science instrument on the 200-inch Hale Telescope. But higher data processing rates were needed and now DBSP has been replaced by the Next Generation Palomar Spectrograph (NGPS). This instrument is an optical spectrograph like DBSP, but with a throughput rate three times greater and with a number of operational efficiencies that makes NGPS, in the words of Caltech Professor Mansi Kasliwal, “the most efficient of any comparable instrument working at other telescopes.”

Or, more simply, this instrument is allowing us to get a lot more science done at Palomar.

DEEP SPACE OPTICAL COMMUNICATIONS

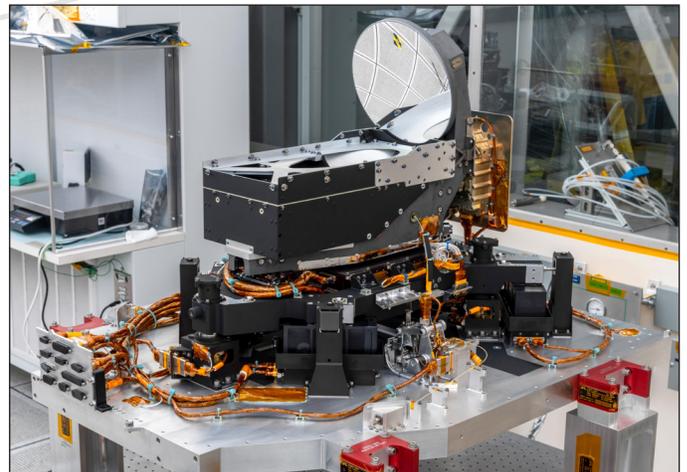
In late 2023, you may have seen the video of a cat chasing the beam of a laser pointer. NASA’s Deep Space Optical Communications (DSOC) experiment streamed this ultra-high definition video from the Psyche spacecraft, then 19 million miles away. Rather than using conventional radio frequency technologies, the transmission was done with a beam of a near-infrared laser light sent from the spacecraft and received by the Hale Telescope at a rate of 267 megabits per second.



The part that stayed on Palomar Mountain.

This is a far higher transmission rate than is possible using radios. Although all electromagnetic waves move through space at the same speed, infrared light waves are much shorter and have higher frequencies than do radio waves. This higher frequency enables more data to be packed into each second of a transmission, enabling the higher rates of data transfer. The signals were then relayed from Palomar to NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, where the 15-second cat video was played in real time.

The first phase of the mission ended when the spacecraft came into conjunction with the Sun. Now, with Psyche out of the solar glare, the team from JPL is concluding their work on the Hale Telescope with a series of follow-up tests and demonstrations.



The part that went into space.

A NEW WELL FOR DRINKING WATER

Palomar Observatory operates a community water system that in November 2022 delivered 151,800 gallons to 50 residents through 14 residential service connections in addition to 13 connections to the work areas — the domes, offices, shops, and other buildings. To supplement the failing existing wells, we are drilling a 450-foot well near the dome of the 48-inch Samuel Oschin Telescope.

FRIENDS OF PALOMAR MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

By Rosemary Johnston, Friends' President

The biggest news for the park this year has been the re-acquisition of the sixth grade camp facilities, which had been vacant since 2010 when the San Diego Unified School District closed the site because of a budget shortfall. The facilities have been maintained regularly and occasionally rented out to various groups since then. The site includes dormitories, a large kitchen, dining hall, classrooms, swimming pool, basketball court, and other amenities. The first order of business for park administration will be to open a visitor center there, so we can 'tell the park's story' with various exhibits detailing the history, geology, wildlife, and plant life in the park. A bookstore and gift shop where we can sell merchandise with proceeds going to the park is also a possibility. We were grateful to receive a \$10,000 donation from the Rincon Tribal Council to be used toward renovation at the school camp facilities. The community, including Friends of Palomar Mountain State Park, will have an opportunity to weigh in on the site's utilization in the coming months.

We had a successful Apple Festival Saturday, November 2 at the park. Visitors made corn husk dolls and applewood necklaces, and helped squeeze apples through the apple press to make cider. We also had potato sack races, birdhouse construction, and a pie-eating contest for the children. It was a chilly day, so we were very appreciative of the hot chili and cornbread provided by the Palomar Christian Conference Center. Next year, we plan to add hot beverages and live bluegrass music. The Friends of PMSP board has approved funding for pruning and grafting of the historic apple trees in the orchard near the park entrance, and also to begin removing the cattails surrounding Doane Pond.

The Friends of PMSP board expressed concerns that the ongoing lack of staffing at the entrance kiosk reduces visitor services and park revenues. Park visitors often have questions about hiking, fishing, and other activities, and might enter the park without paying day use or camper fees. In addition, no firewood or Friends merchandise could be sold because it is locked in the storage shed adjacent to the kiosk. Those sales, which amount to several thousand dollars each year, benefit the park. Board members suggested scheduling and training volunteers for weekend staffing, but we were told park regulations do not allow volunteers to staff the kiosk. Although the kiosk was scheduled to be closed until July 1, we are now happy to report that it will be manned three days a week—Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, beginning in mid to late April. We are grateful to our supervising park ranger Levi Pior, and our park interpreter Will Meyst, for facilitating this development. Will is planning a busy calendar of park hikes, lectures and tours during the coming months. We will keep the community informed of the schedule.

We welcomed two new board members earlier this year. Sandrine Miller-Montgomery, who has a background in business planning and the pharmaceutical industry, will replace Michael Walsh as our treasurer, and John Bruce, a retired firefighter, will also serve on the board. We are grateful for Michael's longtime service on the board as president and treasurer over the years and as one of the Friends of PMSP founders.

Our annual fundraising campaign in December netted about \$20,000. We may plan additional fundraising to assist in the renovations at the sixth grade camp site once utilization plans

are finalized. Thank you to those who continue to support our work. Please remember to check out our Facebook page and website www.friendsofpalomarsp.org for photos and info about recent and upcoming events at the park.

Rosemary can be reached at:
(619)384-6852
jnstm@gmail.com



Photos Courtesy of Michael Pique



THE COMMUNITY CENTER OF PALOMAR MOUNTAIN



By Cecelia Borland

Our Community Center has had an eventful year.

Long-time Palomar residents Rosie Lopresti, Jack Weisgerber, and their son Frank, who have been such a vital part of Palomar for so long, decided to retire from public service. We are grateful for their many and varied contributions to Palomar society, including several years of heading up the Community Center Board. Thank you, Rosie, Jack, and Frank, for a great job! Robert Carlyle heads up the new board with board members Miriam Munoz, Christine Locken, Dylan Healey, Mike Pique, and Cecelia Borland. The CCPM is a 501(c)(4) non-profit corporation.

Palomar Mountain has a long-standing tradition of hosting a special event on the Saturday of Labor Day weekend. For 2024, the CCPM again organized a Mountain Hoedown and BBQ, featuring a delicious lunch from The Wrangler BBQ in Escondido, all paid for by Bailey Resort and served up by Mr. and Mrs. Tom Mendenhall. Foot-tapping live music was provided by The Chris Clarke Band. A Silent Auction was a financial success, supported by so many wonderful donations from the community. Thank you, Christine Locken, Colette Hazlet-Davis, and Mike Pique, for your help organizing. Thank you, Robert Carlyle, for your time, tractor, and expertise in cleaning up the grounds.

December found the Community Center transformed into a winter

wonderland by the capable hands of Bonnie Phelps and Teresa McCarthy. Christmas carols rang well into the evening, accompanied by Rita and Bruce Druliner on keyboard and guitar, and we all feasted on the many sweet and savory goodies brought by participants. A joyful time was had by all.

February brought the Super Bowl and much food and merriment for Eagles fans. We were all glad when the Chiefs made a valiant effort to come from behind. Thanks, Mike Pique, for spearheading the event and to all who came, brought food, and enjoyed the fellowship.

The Community Center is available to local groups who would like to meet there regularly or occasionally. Palomar Mountain Community Church meets there Sundays at 9:30. It is a non-denominational Christian fellowship.

Please schedule your event(s) by contacting Robert Carlyle at 760-742-1891.

Photos Courtesy of Michael Pique



BBQ Hoedown



Christmas Party



Christmas Party



Superbowl Party



Stan Hill leads the "Dead & Dying Tree Removal" Meeting



Christmas Party



PALOMAR MOUNTAIN FIRE SAFE COUNCIL (PMFSC)

A 501(c)(3), non-profit organization dedicated to helping keep Palomar Mountain fire safe

By Yvonne Vaucher

**BOARD MEETINGS
9AM
4th Saturday
of the Month**

Our mission is to reduce wildfire risk and promote fire safety in our Palomar Mountain community. The PMFSC had another busy year in 2024. Our monthly dumpster and on-site chipping programs continued throughout the late spring and summer, steadily improving our defensible space at no cost to residents by removing 13.8 tons of debris and chipping 2880 cubic feet of vegetation. These activities were generously funded by a San Diego Regional Fire Foundation SAFE grant supplemented by contributions from the PMFSC Board and private donors. Palomar residents provided 105 volunteer hours to support the dumpster and chipping programs, contributing “in-kind” donations valued at \$3885!

We are now beginning the third year of our five-year California Climate Investments CAL FIRE grant to improve emergency access to, and evacuation from, homes on Palomar Mountain by removing obstructing trees and flammable brush on either side of the many narrow, unimproved, privately maintained roads. In 2024 we worked on maintenance of previously improved roadsides in the Crestline/Birch Hill area while awaiting environmental CEQA approval to begin similar roadside improvement on the west side of the Summit. We have just received approval to proceed, so we are now contacting landowners for permission to begin work.

New this year is the Dead and Dying Tree removal grant sponsored and administered by the San Diego County Resource Conservation District (RCD). These trees will be removed for free to improve defensible space around habitable structures in the Crestline/Birch Hill area. Mapping of dead and dying trees is nearly complete. If you have such trees on your property, please submit a permission letter, available at tinyurl.com/PAL-DDT. Be a good neighbor: do this even if your property doesn't have any structures. Tree removal is expected to begin this summer. We hope this program can be expanded to other areas next year. For further information about the Dead and Dying Tree grant, contact Stan Hill, RCD Forestry & Fire Prevention Project (619) 562-0096 Ext. 110 www.rcdsandiego.org.

This year we hope to continue, pending receipt of grant funding, our PMFSC on-site chipping and PMFSC dumpster programs. The dumpster, located near the Fire Station on Summit Circle next to the US Forest Service Crestline Group Camp area, is available on the first Saturday of April-October

from 8 AM-12 PM. Announcements are posted on Palomar Nextdoor. The dumpster usually fills up fast so arrive early to be sure there is still space for your load. Our PMFSC contact for dumpster information is Cecelia Borland (760) 594-4688. We chip when we have enough sites scheduled to completely fill a chipping day. Robert Carlyle (760) 742-1891, coordinates and schedules all our PMFSC on-site chipping. Visit our PMFSC website palomarfiresafecouncil.org for PMFSC program updates.

Other resources for Palomar residents: The Fire Safe Council of San Diego County (FSCSDC) offers wildfire prevention programs for Palomar Mountain residents and landowners. A FSCSDC resource is the Defensible Space Assistance Program (DSAP) designed to assist homeowners who need to create defensible space and are not able to do so because of physical, economic, or other barriers. For more information, go to: firesafesdcounty.org/dsap.

The American Red Cross provides free smoke alarms for homeowners who are 62 years of age or older: burninstitute.org/applications/smoke-alarm-application.

All Palomar landowners and residents are members of the PMFSC Foundation, a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization. We appreciate your ideas and welcome your participation at our monthly Board meetings held at 9 AM on the 4th Saturday of each month in-person and by Zoom at the Community Center of Palomar Mountain. Notifications of PMFSC activities are posted on the Palomar Post Office bulletin board, Nextdoor, and at palomarfiresafecouncil.org.

A very special thanks to everyone who participated in our PMFSC programs this past year and to those who have generously contributed to support PMFSC Palomar Mountain activities!

PMFSC BOARD MEMBERS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Yvonne Vaucher, President</i> | <i>Michael Pique, Member at Large</i> |
| <i>Robert Carlyle, V President</i> | <i>Linda Thorne, Member at Large</i> |
| <i>Gina Aven, Treasurer</i> | <i>Libby Getzoff, Member at Large</i> |
| <i>Cecelia Borland, Secretary</i> | <i>Miriam Munoz, Member at Large</i> |

palomarfiresafecouncil.org

Together we can protect our Palomar Mountain community from wildfire!

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

Palomar Mountain Community,

Are you ready? Your San Diego County Fire Community Emergency Response Team (SDCF CERT) will be at community events to share information about how to prepare for wildfires, earthquakes, snowstorms, and more!

Upcoming activities for SDCF CERT will include:

- Hosting a community education event on Defensible Space updates
- In-person education and outreach at community events
- Hosting a community education event on weather awareness.

At the **educational events and community activities**, look for our green pop-up canopy and sign where we'll have preparedness and fire season safety information for you.

As summer approaches, our fire risk increases. Before the warmer temperatures and Santa Ana's return, make sure your home is ready. While all the vegetation is green, now is the time to clear your defensible space and get your evacuation plan updated.

Go to www.readyforwildfire.org for more details, and to sign up for wildfire notifications by text.

For more good information on disaster preparedness, try this site:

- San Diego Office of Emergency Services – www.readysandiego.org
- Sign up for AlertSanDiego (reverse 911)
- Explore the San Diego County Emergency App –
download it for free, so you know what to do before, during, and after an emergency
- See how to: Make a Plan, Build a Kit, and Stay Informed
- Download the Pulse Point Emergency app, pulsepoint.org.

By Bill Leininger



For more information,
visit our booth
at upcoming community events
(announced on NextDoor)
or contact:

Bill Leininger

E-mail:

sdcfcert_northern_palomarmtn@sdcfd.com

Cell - 760-807-6923



*CERT and Fire Safe Council
representation
at the Mountain Hoedown*

US FOREST SERVICE REPORT

Update on Palomar Mountain Fuels as of March 12, 2025

Our prescribed fire season got off to a late start with extra dry fuels & fire weather continuing into December and January this year. Since February, we've completed 64 acres of pile burning in Jeff Valley and 22 acres of pile burning in Birch Hill. Our top priority project is Birch Hill but we will also continue in Jeff Valley. Later in the spring, we plan to target broadcast burning on the Aguanga fuel break (near High Point lookout - 161 acres). We will continue to monitor and execute our prescribed burn windows well into the spring, usually completing prescribed fire work by June.

Fuels Planner Dana Barre (619) 873-7119
Fuels Officer Chris Brenzel (760) 415-4910
Fuels Tech Jonathan Polansky (619) 930-6577



Prescribed Burn

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR *by Lafe Ball (Continued from Page 1)*

For all of you who wonder about the Community Center located right next to the fire department, well, the CCPM is open for business and looking for people who would like to use the Community Center for classes, a book club, craft activities, etc. There was a small 2025 Super Bowl party, and it was nice to get people back in the Community Center that was out of use by the community for years. If you are interested in using the facility, contact: Robert Carlyle at 760-742-1891.

Captain Dean Kowalski and all the firefighters who staff the Palomar 79 station continue to be highly involved in the community, and we appreciate knowing they are there. We now have a new 4-wheel drive ambulance placed here on the mountain. This should help immensely during poor weather and allow life-saving access to some of the tougher properties.

Additionally, I would like to personally acknowledge the ever-present vigilance, support, and partnering of CAL FIRE, the US Forest Service, and Bill Leininger, our “CERT” (Community Emergency Response Team) leader. They are all critical for our community.

The Fire Safe Council continues to support the community by sponsoring workshops, safety courses, and dumpster days. Serious commitments to fire prevention and brush clearing on our properties must remain a high priority. Continuous communication between landowners and the Fire Department to ascertain where work needs to be done is critical. We have many dead and dying fir and oak trees on Palomar Mountain due to prolonged drought and the Gold-Spotted Oak Borer (GSOB) infestation, which increase our wildfire risk. Stan Hill, Forestry & Fire Prevention Project Manager, worked hard and has secured a “dead and dying tree removal” grant that will allow Crestline and Birch Hill property owners to have their property cleaned up; see the Fire Safe Council article. The question is not whether we will have another fire, it is simply when and how prepared we will be.

Many thanks to the PMPO Newsletter contributors of articles and photos, with a special thanks to the work of publisher Susan Humason, editors Michael Pique and Elizabeth Getzoff, and article wrangler Michael Walsh. Many heartfelt thanks to them and to all the other people who have contributed to the activities of the PMPO.

The PMPO website (PMPOinfo.com) is maintained by Betsy and Charles Gettys, and they will continue to do so. Thank you, Betsy, and Charles. I am hopeful that in 2025 we start to get more clicks on our website for information. If anyone has anything they need to post, please let us know, and we will get it up there.

And finally, thank you to all the members involved in the various boards and support groups that commit personal time to the community. I urge everyone to see where they can get involved. It is a small commitment to your small town.

Please remember, the Palomar Mountain Planning Organization is a recognized tax-exempt organization under 501(c)(3), which means your contributions may be tax-deductible in accordance with U.S. federal and state tax laws. All donations will be used within the Palomar Mountain community.

Photos Courtesy of Michael Pique



Halloween at Bailey's Resort



2024 PMPO Board of Directors



PMFSC Dumpster Day

GIANT SEQUOIA SEEDLINGS *by Jim Hamerly*

Each year in spring we distribute live sequoia seedlings for planting on Palomar Mountain and surrounding areas. To increase the chances of successful growth, plantings must be at an altitude of 4,000 feet or above and in areas at least 50 feet from roads and homes. West-facing properties that receive coastal fog do best.

In 2024, we distributed approximately 150 seedlings to 20 landowners.

See two of our volunteer teams planting here:
[youtube.com/watch?v=JGPNTliKDnI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGPNTliKDnI).



It's too late to order for 2025 but to express interest for spring 2026, please email info@sequoiasentinels.com and we will add you to our interest list.



COMMUNITY TIDBITS *By Bonnie Phelps*

As most of you know, we have a lot of history on Palomar. We moved up in 1975, sold a few years later, then bought the same house back in 1998. That is when PalomarMountainNews.com came to be. It brings me a lot of joy to tell people about our favorite mountain, and that led me to a career in real estate.

Spring on the Mountain should be extra special this year with all the rain and snow we've been treated to. Looking forward to seeing you 'round the mountain and always glad to get your questions answered!

Many of you promise me you'll be staying on Palomar forever. I can sure understand that as we love it so much, too. Over the past 25 years, there have been a growing number of requirements with prepping property for sale. Whether you are considering selling or just keeping up on maintenance, all property owners should remove dead and dying trees. Many neighbors have had notices from their insurance companies, so this is great timing to satisfy insurance requirements, too. If you are in Birch Hill or Crestline, be sure to get in line for the tree work to be done; see Fire Safe Council article.

TAKE A LOOK AROUND

Those big, beautiful fir trees die from the top down. Cedars die from the bottom up. Most insurance inspectors now require that no branches overhang a habitable structure. Some allow no tree to be within 10 feet of a structure nor branches within 10 feet of a chimney. Trees have a much better chance of surviving a drought when they are thinned to a minimum of 20 feet apart. Some properties have so many 'baby cedars'. People have referred to them as our 'mountain weed'. It is much easier to thin out a bit with loppers while they are small than deal with chain saws as they get to be 'teenagers'.

CAL FIRE conducts an annual defensible space inspection for all

properties. Moreover, all real estate transactions now include a document stating that either the seller or the buyer must agree to have the required work done. One of the requirements states, "if you have dead or dying trees on your property, the entire tree needs to be removed". Be sure to have all stumps taken down to 8 inches on the tall side. See the informative CAL FIRE brochure at fire.ca.gov/dspace.

MICE OR RATS SQUATTING?

Palomar used to have a lot more outdoor cats, so now we seem to have LOTS more mice and rats setting up housekeeping. One home had them chew through the heating ductwork and had a raceway up through the vents. That was a very hard-working family of mice! When I happen on these growing families of critters, we first set up big buckets of water. Put them tight in a corner and fill the water to about an inch from the top, then prop a branch on each side for ramps. A very successful bucket caught three dozen non-swimmers over a two-week period! Rats don't seem to be as drawn to water, so you may have to resort to traps and peanut butter. Then, go to work finding the nests and doing an EXCLUSION: Use caulk, or stuff coarse bronze or steel wool to block all plumbing and electrical entrances. You can also have a pest company come to do exclusions; they set traps, have monthly checks, and warranty their work. Good luck!

PHYSICAL ADDRESS HELP?

Last summer when "Detour" signs were installed in a confusing way for the road work, it was quite an eye-opener to meet with the crew doing the work. They were going by the county maps that were decades old and not current. We got it puzzled out and corrected. There are a few other areas where the street names or addresses don't make sense. If you need a correction or change for your address, there is no charge and I'm glad to walk you

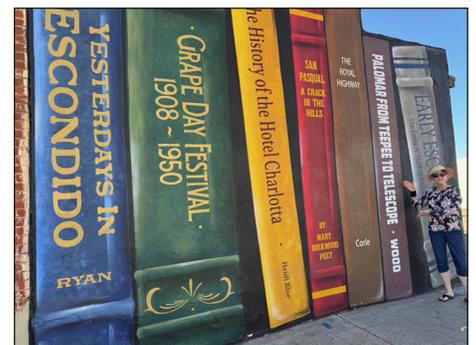
through it. Do you get deliveries? It could make it much easier for delivery people as they occasionally give up and leave packages in pretty creative places.

PALOMAR HISTORY

Have you seen the treasure trove of Palomar history waiting for you? Our Palomar historian is Peter Brueggeman. He and his wife owned a cabin up here for years. When their kids grew up, they let it go, but he has continued to invest countless hours over many years, sourcing all known historical info for this mountain. It is available for your reading pleasure at no charge at PeterBrueggeman.com/PalomarHistory.

TEEPEE TO TELESCOPE

Recently, I was delighted to discover this beautiful mural depicting historical books. Of course, it was very exciting to see the very first book published about the mountain was included on the mural - 'Palomar: From Teepee to Telescope'. Author Catherine Wood loved her cabin named 'Wood Pile Inn'. She was a teacher and enjoyed her friendships up here so much that she wrote her book and had it published in 1937. You can get her book at The Palomar Mountain General Store, of course. It is also available online through used bookstores, and Peter has a PDF available through the link above. Where is the mural? In Escondido, on the west side of Kalmia, just north of Grand Avenue, painted on the side of a building. Guessing that book is about 11 feet tall. Wouldn't Catherine be pleased!



FOREST FIRE LOOKOUTS ...*Eyes in the Sky*

By Ernie Cowan

As winter storms soon fade to summer heat, a dedicated group of volunteers will venture to remote mountaintops throughout Southern California to serve as eyes in the sky to watch for wildfires.

These dedicated lookouts with the Forest Fire Lookout Association will be in mountaintop towers every day until the end of fire season, sometime in the fall or early winter.

Two towers on Palomar Mountain are manned daily by these volunteers, who reported over 100 fires last season, allowing firefighters, engines, planes, and bulldozers to quickly respond. The season began at those towers on April 16. The Palomar lookout towers include High Point, east of Palomar Observatory, and the Boucher Hill Lookout, located on the west end of the mountain in Palomar Mountain State Park.

Lookouts are on duty from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. daily, but often their shifts are extended to 8 p.m. when fire weather conditions are extreme.

Lookouts undergo several days of training that includes classroom instruction and tower training before they are certified to work on their own. In addition to being constantly alert for any sign of fire, lookouts take weather readings and interact with the public to stress fire safety or offer information about local trails, wildlife, or local points of interest.

Using an instrument known as the Osborne Fire Finder, lookouts can accurately determine the compass direction of a smoke, and with knowledge of local landmarks and accurate maps, determine a distance. That information is quickly radioed into the U.S. Forest Service Dispatch Center, and that begins the process of sending fire equipment.

During summer thunderstorms, lookouts must keep track of lightning strikes that may erupt into a fire days later when conditions dry out.

The public is welcome to visit lookout towers, but access to the High Point Tower requires a long drive over unpaved fire roads and visitors are restricted from climbing the 96 stairs to the cab that sits 70 feet above ground.

Boucher Lookout, however, is easy to reach on a paved road, and the public is welcome to climb the 42 steps into the tower to see how lookouts work and to enjoy the spectacular view that extends from the Los Angeles basin to Mexico on a clear day and west to Catalina Island, 90 miles away. Boucher Hill lookouts also serve as docents for the state park and can provide visitors with information on trails, birds, wildlife, and the many colorful wildflowers found on the mountain.

While lookouts are constantly scanning for that tiny puff of smoke in a distant canyon or along a remote highway, they also spend the season enjoying the beautiful forest as it changes from leafless winter to budding spring, the warm days of summer, and then the hues of fall as oaks, ferns, and deciduous trees prepare for the coming winter.

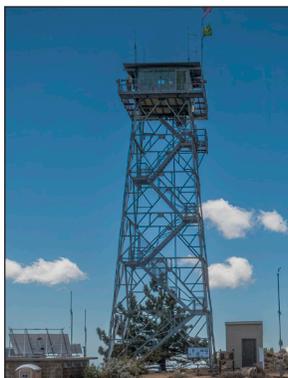
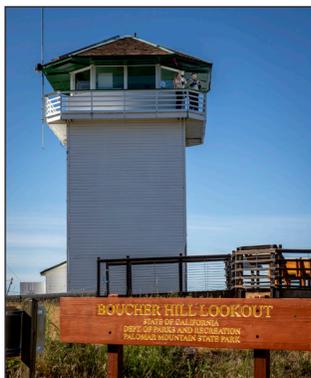
It's not uncommon to see courting red-tailed hawks put on a sky show, or thrill at the passing of a magnificent bald eagle. Baby quail following protective parents, a flock of wild turkey, deer, or a bobcat may bring a little excitement as they pass by the tower.

The chilly days of spring or fall might find lookouts in the tower cab with the door closed, but on summer days they may spend a lot of time on the catwalks, enjoying a gentle breeze and the most spectacular office view one can find.

If you'd like more information about the Forest Fire Lookout Association, visit ffla-sandiego.org.

Visit "Updates from Mt. Hoo" on Facebook for the latest happenings.

Ernie Cowan, 760-518-8050
author of "There's a Marmot in My Pack,"
available at Amazon Books



Photos Courtesy of Ernie Cowan

PALOMAR MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

By William Meyst, Interpreter I, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park & Palomar Mountain State Park

It was a mild winter this year for Palomar Mountain State Park. We had fewer snow days and fewer storms, but plenty of foggy days with 10-yard visibility (if that)! Nonetheless, the park was not spared its yearly quota of overturned trees. Trail crews and maintenance have been busy clearing debris and bucking downed trees from our roadways and trails. The snowfall that did arrive did not last long, and it turned icy and hard-packed rather quickly. Not too optimal for sledding or other winter activities, unfortunately for our winter visitors.

Also with us this winter was a crew of young foresters from the California Conservation Corps, contracted to clear vegetation around critical structures. These crews stayed with us for a few weeks, camping through the cold at Cedar Grove Group camp, canvas tents and all. Fuels mitigation was made top priority for the district after the park's maintenance shop was destroyed during the Poomacha wildfire in 2007. The Dyar House in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park (the district's then-headquarters and visitor center) also burned in the 2003 Cedar Fire, which marked the beginning of a pattern of mega-wildfires that we've seen emerge in the past 20 years.

To further prepare the park in the event of a wildfire, CA State Parks Forestry Technicians (our wildland firefighters) and the Native American Conservation Corps (NACC) have once again been teaming up to conduct prescribed burns in the Myer's Fire Road region at the north end of the park. Burn piles are the primary method that crews utilize to reduce fuels on the forest floor. They gather the woody material, piling it into heaps about 4-5 ft in diameter. While wearing full personal protection equipment (PPE), our crews ignite and tend to the piles until they are completely cool to the touch. Winter makes the best conditions to conduct prescribed burns.

Speaking of wildfire, our volunteer fire lookouts are back in service at Boucher Tower. Our volunteers are members of the Forest Fire Lookout Association (FFLA), which partners with CA State Parks. Members of the FFLA also man High Point Tower, making them an invaluable resource to everyone living on the mountain and the surrounding lowlands. In addition to constantly surveying the surrounding landscape, our volunteers also conduct short tours for park visitors who come to the tower.

Camping reservations are back online (as of April 1, 2025) after going first-come, first-served over the winter. Anyone can book a spot by going to reservecalifornia.com.

Colorado Desert District staff have been pruning The Historic Apple Orchard throughout the winter and early spring. Our team is aiming to tame some of the more "feral" of our 120-year-old apple trees, and we generally reduce tree canopies by about 25% every year in order to bring the trees closer to their conditions seen in historic photographs. Last year was a low-yield year for us in the orchard, which echoed the conditions at other orchards in Julian and Wynola. Interestingly, the apple tree next to Doane Valley Campground, likely planted by George Doane himself, produced fruit last year after many years with blossoms but no apples. Hopefully, 2025 is a better yield year for our orchard.

We'll have new tools at our disposal thanks to the support of our cooperating nonprofit, Friends of Palomar Mountain State Park (FOPMSP). Recently approved funds for pruning shears and an orchard ladder will make the job that much easier. We're also planning to host a pond clean-up and invasive species removal at Doane Pond this year with the support of FOPMSP. Looking to the future, we hope to secure funding for Boucher Tower's scrape and paint, as well as new interpretive signage throughout the park. We are so lucky to have the support of FOPMSP, especially at a time when CA State Parks budget has been cut by 8 percent across the board.

Nevertheless, we will still be able to offer regularly scheduled programming this year. We will be hosting Star Parties, Nature Journaling programs, Junior Rangers, and Guided Hikes. To kick things off in summer is the third annual California State Parks Week, our new annual Interpretive celebration of California's amazing state parks and natural landscapes. This year, Palomar Mountain will be hosting a Nature Journaling and Art Show on Friday, June 13, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Then Old Mission San Luis Rey (4050 Mission Avenue, Oceanside) will play host to the 25th Annual San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians Inter-Tribal Pow Wow on June 14 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. and on June 15 from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

PALOMAR CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE CENTER



Hello Neighbors,

By Aaron Nelson

Palomar Christian Conference Center will be celebrating our 75th anniversary next year. We have the privilege of hosting thousands of campers each year that seek to connect with the Lord and His creation. We are currently conducting Science Camp for both private and public schools. As residents, we get to enjoy the beauty of the mountain on a regular basis, but there are many children that do not venture out of the city very often, if at all. Bringing the classroom outdoors during Science Camp is an experience that children will often remember for a lifetime. Not only do we teach them about the science behind our ecosystem, but we also teach them what it means to be good stewards of the land.

Although the snow just finished melting, we are gearing up for our Summer programs. We have an amazing Adventure Camp program where boys get to learn how to survive in the wilderness. We have a horse camp for young girls where they spend a week learning about horses, going for trail rides, and lots of other equestrian activities. We also host a Labor Day retreat that is open to all ages and families. We feel privileged to steward a place where people can come experience the Great Outdoors and make lifelong memories.



Sincerely,

Aaron Nelson, Executive Director

PALOMAR MOUNTAIN MUTUAL WATER COMPANY

By James Marugg

The Palomar Mountain Mutual Water Company is a water system owned and run by its shareholders for their mutual benefit. We aim to ensure that our water supply is safe, dependable, and sustainable for now and the future. One of the greatest challenges in running the Company as we do is staying current on California Water Board regulations that are in effect to keep our water safe and clean.

Water systems in San Diego County were monitored by the County of San Diego until a few years ago. Now, the Water Board of the State of California has assumed the responsibilities, and with that change came a myriad of changes and differing interpretations of the regulations. As a part-time board trying to keep up with the changes and meaning of regulations, we struggled. This past year, we have contracted with a water system management company, Choice Water Solutions. Choice Water brings 25 years of experience in the operations and management of water delivery and treatment systems across Southern California. They have been an invaluable partner in our goal to be in complete compliance with all regulations, and their expertise will help us develop plans for modernization of our water system to meet current and projected needs.

We recognize that all members of the PMPO aren't within our service area, but we are all partners in conservation and preparedness. As none of our systems are connected to any municipal grid, all our water comes in the form of snow and rain. This year has left us below normal, and it will be even more important to be "Water-Wise".

We saw the terrible events unfolding to our north with the Los Angeles area fires. Our hope for a speedy return to normal for all affected is strong. Strong, too, is our desire to examine our system with an eye on preparedness for similar events. We will be conducting a system analysis of our infrastructure and developing plans to ensure our water system is capable of handling current and future needs. Our Mutual Water Company will never have sufficient supply, distribution, or capability to handle suppression efforts for a large-scale wildfire. Our goal is to ensure we can return to operation in a timely manner to support recovery efforts if the need arises.

To try to end on a happier note, we all cherish our properties and time on our mountain. We have been given a gift and we must be good stewards of the land and resources. Working with the PMPO and Fire Safe Council to provide clearance around buildings, removal of dead or dying trees, and general property management are all important factors as neighbors helping neighbors to ensure a fire-safe and resilient community.



Thank you and have a wonderful Spring on Palomar!

**Local Postal Customer
Palomar Mountain CA 92060**

PMPO BOARD ELECTIONS



*By Michael Pique, PMPO Secretary
secretary@pmpoinfo.com*

The PMPO Board consists of 15 volunteers, five of which are up for election every year.

Membership on the PMPO Board is open to any individual resident, property owner, or business person in the Palomar Mountain area of San Diego who wishes to contribute time and effort to achieve the purposes of this Organization. Members may be elected for consecutive terms. Board members serve without compensation. Board members must meet the attendance requirements as stated in the PMPO By-laws article 7.6. The Board meets a minimum of four times a year. A description of the PMPO and its various Committee activities, Articles of Incorporation, and By-laws can be viewed on the PMPO website, PMPOinfo.com.

Election of PMPO Board Members will be accomplished at the Saturday May 24, 2025 Annual General Meeting, 10 AM, following the Pancake Breakfast.

We need to elect replacements for the following board members whose terms are ending or are leaving the board for other reasons:

- 1) Mike Appelman
- 2) Lafe Ball (*agreed to run again*)
- 3) Cecelia Borland (*agreed to run again*)
- 4) Rosemary Johnston (*agreed to run again*)
- 5) Toby Roy (alternate Cor Schaffer)
- 6) Linda Thorne

To nominate a Board candidate, including yourself, email secretary@pmpoinfo.com.

Please visit:

PMPOinfo.com for information on the PMPO, and its Annual General Meeting and Elections.

Thank You For Your Service to the
Palomar Mountain Community