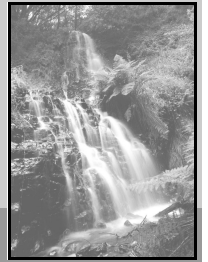


BPUD PIPELINE



Summer 2009

270 Elm Road, P.O. Box 390, Bolinas, CA 94924 (415) 868-1224

In Brief...

BCPUD Board Approves 2009-2010 Operating Budget

At its regularly scheduled meeting on July 15, 2009, the Board of Directors of the BCPUD approved the district's 2009-2010 operating budget. The budget does *not* include any increases to the annual charge for water service or septic/drainage service, but it does enact an increase of \$88 to the annual charge for sewer service and increases to the district's tiered water rate structure. The increase to the district's annual service charge is necessary to fund continued operations and to pay for facilities improvements. The increases to the tiered water rate structure are designed to encourage conservation at the highest consumption levels and more equitably charge customers for water based on their actual consumption. A copy of the budget is available on our website at www.bcpud.org.

**Water or Sewer-Related emergency?
Call 868-1224**

BCPUD and the Bolinas Fire Protection District to Conduct Joint Vegetation Management Project on the Bolinas Gridded Mesa

After three years of drought, the Bolinas Gridded Mesa is tinder-dry. Although many property owners do their best to maintain the state-required 100-foot "defensible space" around their homes, the public rights-of-way on the Bolinas Gridded Mesa are not so well tended. As they drive the Mesa responding to emergency calls, Bolinas Fire Protection District ("BFPD") Chief Anita Tyrrell-Brown and her volunteers are increasingly concerned about the extent to which encroaching vegetation (i.e., trees, brush and the like) is choking off the public roads, posing significant problems for the BFPD when responding to calls for assistance. Moreover, in the event of a wildfire or other emergency, it would be virtually impossible on many parts of the Mesa for BFPD engines to respond to the fire *and* for residents to evacuate. Faced with this unacceptable threat to human health and safety, Chief Tyrrell-Brown appealed to the BCPUD for assistance.

Chief Tyrrell-Brown attended the July 15, 2009 regular meeting of the BCPUD Board of Directors to request the BCPUD's help to reduce the amount of encroaching vegetation in the Bolinas Gridded Mesa rights-of-way. She advised the BCPUD Board that most of the roadways currently can support no more than one vehicle driving in the right-of-way (*see the photo below of a small BFPD vehicle on a typical Mesa road*) and stated that her primary concern at this point is for the public health and safety during a wildfire. Chief Tyrrell-Brown observed that the majority of the 25 deaths that occurred during the Oakland Hills fire in the 1990's were caused by the fact that



fleeing residents were unable to successfully navigate the narrow Oakland roads in their cars during the rapidly spreading fire. Chief Tyrrell-Brown stated that there are many neighborhoods on the Bolinas Gridded

Mesa where the rights-of-way are literally subsumed with vegetation; she said that this vegetation *must* be cleared a sufficient distance back to allow for emergency ingress and egress and in the interest of public safety. Chief Tyrrell-Brown presented a prioritized map of the Mesa for the BCPUD Board to review, which identifies the specific roads that are an immediate priority for egress purposes; the goal is that residents will have no more than one block to travel before accessing an egress road that has been sufficiently cleared of encroaching vegetation. Chief Tyrrell-Brown emphasized that she does not seek to implement a “road improvement” project -- she is not asking to widen or improve the existing roads, but rather simply to clear encroaching vegetation so that the rights-of-way could be accessible via both fire engines and residents’ vehicles in the event of a wildfire.



Mount Vision Fire, PRNS 1995 - photo from BFPD Website

The BCPUD Board of Directors considered the BFPD’s request for assistance, as well as the BCPUD’s independent need to maintain access to its water lines, which are located in these same public rights-of-way. The BCPUD Board noted that the rights-of-way on the Bolinas Gridded Mesa are subject to a dedicated public easement for street purposes and the BCPUD has the authority to enforce that public easement (and control the use, maintenance, repair, demolition and improvement of the public rights-of-way) pursuant to its authority as a public utility district. The BCPUD Board was supportive of the BFPD’s request to clear encroaching vegetation in the interest of public health and safety in the event of a fire, and noted that its own interests (i.e., access to its water lines, as well as access within the rights-of-way for garbage company trucks) also compel action. The BCPUD recognizes that this will be an on-going project as vegetation naturally will re-encroach in the rights-of-way if not maintained. The BCPUD Board resolved to form a joint committee comprised of board members and staff from both districts to finalize and implement a plan to clear encroaching vegetation from prioritized areas of the Bolinas Gridded Mesa as soon as possible.

What does this mean for you? We anticipate that the joint BCPUD/BFPD vegetation management project will get underway on the Bolinas Gridded Mesa as soon as mid-August 2009. Work will be performed and completed as staff time and resources permit. If you live in a priority area and/or near a right-of-way designated for vegetation removal, you will be contacted either by the BCPUD or the BFPD prior to the target clearing date so that you have advance notice of when the work will occur. We realize that you may have questions about this program; if so, please contact either Jennifer Blackman, General Manager of the BCPUD at 868-1224 or Anita Tyrrell-Brown, Chief of the Bolinas Fire Protection District at 868-1566.

