

Fall 2012

Idle Times Fall 2012

Idle Times

A publication for the Greater Idlewild Community



Photo by Chris Herring

Inside this issue:

President's Letter	2
Wood Chipper progress	3
Call for Ministers, and recipes	5
ERA zones & Data Management Committee	6 & 7
Map Committee, Pot Luck, Senior Center	8 & 9
Plaques & Memorials	11
Forest Health & Safety, Fire Protection	12, & 13

Special points of interest:

- *High Country Arts Festival p. 4 & 5*
- *Fiber-Optic Service coming p. 10*
- *Idlewild is going paperless p. 12*
- *Track Fire Tour p. 15*

Page 2 Presidents' Letter

To All Idlewilders:

Fall has arrived in Idlewild. The mountain colors are changing from green to mottled yellow-red-green and the morning temperature is near freezing. The dry spring and summer has continued into fall. It was a busy summer for many Idlewilders. Here are some of the highlights of the summer season.

Throughout the summer, Idlewild cabin owners led a substantial fire protection effort. Nearly 75% of our cabin owners participated in a property cleanup program where slash and fallen trees and limbs were either hauled off-site or chipped. Eleven chipping events were carried out over the summer using the Colfax County chipper. Material that was not chipped was hauled away. These efforts have prevented substantial potential fuel from feeding a ground fire should one occur.

Other tasks that were completed include installation of the road signs for EMS, the Eagle Nest Fire Department, UPS, FedEx, and others entering the Community. The fire exit gate on Road 11 has been installed and the road widened to better accommodate trucks and large vehicles. The Road 11 exit joins Highway 127 near the Gallagher Ranch cabins. Other exits—for example, across the Mutz Ranch—are in the planning stages.

Here are a few rumors of future events in and around Idlewild. Kit Carson is planning to replace power poles and power transformers in Idlewild in conjunction with their Broadband Program. Taos Pueblo is planning a forest cleanup program for Valley communities in a year or so. It will start at Taos Pines, address Lakeview Pines, and continue to Idlewild. We have ap-

plauded their efforts to clean up their property and install a firebreak between our land and theirs, since they border us on several sides.

Idlewilders are participating with other organizations in the Valley for our mutual benefit. Our residents directed and participated in the most successful ever High Country Arts and Crafts Festival. The Festival is a major fundraiser for the Eagle Nest Chamber of Commerce. Many Idlewilders also have joined the Colfax County Coalition of Firewise Communities (what a name!!), as has the Community itself. The Coalition is a liaison group among the New Mexico Forestry Service, Colfax County, and Valley communities. Participation in the Coalition keeps us up-to-date with fire protection plans for the Valley.

With the cooperation of cabin owners, as noted above, we have made great progress on the first step of our

fire protection program. We encourage the remainder of the cabin owners to participate as well as property owners without cabins (*note: a lot full of black sticks has little value*). If you haven't participated and wish to do so, please contact our Caretaker, Frank Dodge. Next season we hope to continue the existing cleanup program and address the next phase, defensible space around cabins. This phase is very complex, so we have asked for help from the Forestry Department in implementing it.

Cabin owners are expanding their cabins and adding amenities. They stay longer and come more often. As all of this is happening, we have maintained our strong sense of community and mutual service.

Have a safe and healthy winter. See you on the mountain!!

Paul Fahrenthold
IWCC President



How much wood can a wood chipper chip?



L. to r.: Paul Fahrenthold, Frank Dodge, Rebecca Adkins, Skeeter Plotner, and Ben Denny, and Nikki Fahrenthold.

Starting in April, Skeeter Plotner, an employee of Colfax County, has brought the Colfax County chipper to the Idlewild Community more than to any other area, at least 12 times as of this date, to grind up slash in residents' yards from trees that have been cleared, branches that have fallen or been taken down, and brush. The prime mover of this service has been our president, Paul Fahrenthold. Paul, his wife Denny, their son Ben and daughter-in-law Nikki, Rebecca Adkins, and Skeeter, with the invaluable knowledge and participation of caretaker Frank Dodge, have formed the core of the crew that has run the chipper.

The chipper is paid for by a grant from the State of New Mexico and a consortium of insurance companies. Colfax County administers the grant, which supplies the chipper and truck. The county has expanded its program, on the premise that it costs less to prevent fires than to fight them

once they have started. Chipping began in Taos Pines and then became available elsewhere in the Valley. At the moment, there is no permanent truck assigned to the chipper; possible future grants may allow the chipper to come to Idlewild more often.

The crew has done tireless work on each visit of the chipper, often working eight hours a day. The program has also inspired great cooperation from our residents; 75 percent of cabin owners acknowledged participation in clearing their properties, and the percentage of defensible properties is continuously increasing. Volunteers from the community frequently help while their property is being cleared, and often lend a hand anywhere in Idlewild the chipper is working.

Many households have been clearing their properties for years, in order to create a defensible area around their buildings. The concentrated effort that the chipper has provided has made many more areas of Idlewild safer in case of fire. It will continue to come to Idlewild through the fall and starting again next spring.

To dispose of the byproducts of this process, in certain places a thin layer of chips can be spread on the Idlewild roads or the forest floor, to save trips to the dump. Frank Dodge hauls brush and some larger branches to the dump in his truck; homeowners may have to pay for professionals to remove very large loads. The use of the chipper is only one of the first steps in fire prevention. Several years and more than one clearing are expected to be required to meet a maintenance level for being a Firewise community, a status that, among other benefits, allows a community to be eligible for additional grants to improve fire prevention.



Photos by Frank Ray

High Country Arts and Crafts Festival

Idlewild Contributes to the High Country Arts and Crafts Festival

The 30th Annual High Country Arts and Crafts Festival in Eagle Nest the last weekend in July was a huge success, thanks in great part to the extraordinary leadership of Idlewild residents Glenda and Phil Stickney, who recruited a large number of cheerful volunteers from Idlewild to work at the festival. The volunteers joined with Eagle Nest residents to build a fence around Enchanted Eagle Park, checked in more than 65 vendors and made sure they had everything they needed, ran the blind and silent auctions, recorded visitors as they came into the park, and filled in wherever help was needed for the event to run smoothly. The show attracted over 3,500 people, who bought food and fine arts and craft items from the vendors, visited wine and beer tastings, listened to live music, and had a wonderful time. Guests could also buy engraved wine glasses to sample the wine offerings.

This was the largest and most successful festival in its 30-year history. Glenda and Phil left no details to chance, putting in many hours of work, and made both Eagle Nest and Idlewild residents feel a part of the occasion. To thank them, on August 7th, the Eagle Nest Chamber of Commerce presented Glenda and Phil with a beautiful cedar and turquoise plaque to commemorate their contribution. The Chamber of Commerce also expressed its appreciation for all of the Idlewild and Eagle Nest volunteers who helped to make the festival the most successful to date.

The Idlewild volunteers were invited to attend the presentation at the Village Hall. We thank Glenda and Phil for allowing us to be a part of such a wonderful occasion.

Idlewild Volunteers Help Make Art Fest Huge Success

Glenda and Phil Stickney

The 30th annual High Country Arts and Crafts Festival was a huge success thanks to the many volunteers from Idlewild. Local residents and vendors alike commented that this year's festival was the best they could remember.

Idlewilders set fencing around Enchanted Eagle Park, prepared vendor packets, helped with vendor check-in, and served a continental breakfast for vendors both mornings of the festival. Our volunteers were also extremely helpful during the festival, assisting patrons with vendor and food information and vendors with setup and their other needs throughout the weekend. Several vendors told us that they had never seen so many volunteers at High Country or other festivals they had attended.

We wish to offer our heartfelt thanks to the following volunteers: John Driggers, Paul Fahrenthold, Wix and JoAnn Gaston, Helen Hyams, Bob and Joan Kaye, Jim Lambert, Ann Matta, Fred Montague, Julia Putnam, Frank Ray, and Don and Donna Woolsey.

The Village of Eagle Nest and the Chamber of Commerce were extremely grateful for the support that came from Idlewild. Everyone felt that this type of activity goes a long way toward strengthening the relationship we have with the people of Eagle Nest.

High Country Arts Festival; Call for Ministers

Presentation of the plaque: (l. to r.) Eagle Nest Chamber of Commerce President Mike Berne, Eagle Nest Mayor Richard Cordova, and Glenda and Phil Stickney.



Customers at the festival

Photo left by Phil Stickney. Photo above by Donna Woolsey.

CALL FOR MINISTERS FOR 2013

The "call" is out to any of you who would like to submit the name of a minister for next summer. Send to Donna Porter the **NAME**, the **CHURCH** (town, denomination, and phone or email), and **any other information** you have about the person you are recommending. We have already scheduled a few ministers for certain dates in 2013.

You may contact Donna by email at djint@sbcglobal.net; phone 816-363-8105; or mail to Donna Porter, 729 W. 100th St., Kansas City, MO 64114.

Thanks for caring about our worship services. Your input is always important!

Donna Porter

An Idlewild Cookbook Request for Recipes!

Please send your favorite recipes to:

IdlewildCooks@aol.com

or

Casey Bratton

3132 Rosedale

Dallas, TX 75205

We still need lots of recipes in order to produce a cookbook . . . and not a cook pamphlet! We welcome recipes from family, cabin guests, and local Enchanted Circle businesses.

Thank you,!

Casey Bratton

More Than Names and Numbers

A great many of our community's residents receive a free Idlewild Community Directory each June because of their act of timely generosity in submitting their annual assessments (annual dues) by the requested date of January 1st. If you are one of those people who pay timely assessments, please allow me, on behalf of all of us who have a role in working to make our community function, to thank you for what you do.

Also, if you are one who pays timely assessments and therefore receives a free copy of the Directory, you are aware of a critically important enhancement that a significant number of others won't be: that beginning with the 2012 edition, each property has now been assigned to one of several zones for use by emergency responders, which helps the geography of our community make more sense for those folks.

The bulk of this work was done by Paul Fahrenthold, Frank Dodge, and Frank Ray through their collaboration with the Eagle Nest Fire Department. Frank R. has

also incorporated the emergency response accessibility (ERA) zone information into his latest version of our community's maps. You will be able to read more about map changes and activities in a companion article appearing in this newsletter.

The Idlewild Community Center Board of Directors felt that the ERA zone information contained in the 2012 Idlewild Community Directory was so essential that the members of the board voted to accept the Directory Committee's recommendation to reduce the sale price of the Directory to \$5.00, down from \$7.00, in an effort to stimulate sales and, as a result, get the Directory into the possession of as many community members as possible. Despite reducing the price of Directories, sales this summer were decidedly lackluster, which leads to the expectation that many residents remain unfamiliar with their ERA zone assignment.

If you would like to have a copy of the 2012 Directory now, still only \$5.00, please contact me at 1817 St. Andrews Dr., Clovis, NM 88101; 505-352-4785 cell; or jh1008@gmail.com. Directories may also be purchased from Frank Dodge when you are in Idlewild, if you prefer.

In an associated Directory matter, I am renewing my request for *everyone* to provide an email address. After several previous requests, I have given this subject an approximately one-year rest, but I am now resurrecting my efforts. Please consult any recent edition of the Directory to determine if your listing displays your email address. If not, please submit it at your earliest opportunity.

Even further, it would be very helpful if each of us would take time to locate the "Directory Changes" form that is a part of this newsletter, then compare the data fields of the form with your

(Continued on page 7)

Data Management Committee

Members: Frank Ray, Jim Herman (co-chairmen), Helen Hyams

The collection of accurate data is central to all the Idlewild publications. The variety of services required by the IWCC and the dynamic nature of our population demand an efficient and thorough treatment of the IWCC database. In the last year, we have developed a more powerful database management system using the program FileMaker Pro, in order to provide new and better services for the IWCC.

To accumulate information, the Data Management Committee uses, among other sources, the Colfax County Tax Assessor and Clerk (including transfer of deed records); IWCC Caretaker, Treasurer, and Secretary; Directory Committee; *Idle Times* Editor; Panhandle Pre-Sort mailing service; U.S. Post Office; Internet "White Pages"; and Board of Directors. Phone calls and/or emails to residents and in some cases cabin-mates or

family members also refine the accuracy of the database.

The database's output consists of, among other "products":

- (1) All mailing lists, including those for Directories mailed to members who paid prior to January 1, the Fall and Spring *Idle Times*, and the annual assessment letter;
- (2) Special lists, for example, ERA zones; special lists for the Board of Directors; "thank you's" for early assessment payers; and various database subsets for use by the board and committees; and
- (3) Typesetting, consisting of printable PDFs, including a single typeset stream for one-step Directory printing and binding, as well as tables to be inserted into *Idle Times* pages.

Database Support for the IWCC Directory

The most strikingly successful use of FilemakerPro has been in supporting the 2012 IWCC Directory. Frank and Helen focus on layout, data collection

and accuracy, and proofreading. Jim Herman manages all of the design, production, and mailing tasks, using a method that he developed several years ago employing Clovis and Amarillo business service providers. Kerry Cross, the printer, is now able to produce the entire Directory directly from one data file, avoiding any hand work and photocopying. Jim, Kerry, Helen, and Frank work closely together to try to produce the best possible Directory.

First, FilemakerPro is used to typeset the Directory pages; then Frank and Helen scrutinize and proofread the entire database for errors, coherency, and completeness. All of the PDF sections are proofread in a few days and sent to Kerry for a hard-copy proof run. Kerry prints the first book proofs and a few sample copies of the finished pages are sent back by email to Frank and Helen to do a final tweaking (missed typos, margins, centering, page numbers, etc.). After these corrections, a final PDF is emailed to Jim and Kerry. Kerry sends the PDF to his printing machine, and in the output tray presently appears a folded, stapled, finished Directory. The overall production process takes about a week, and provides a Directory with increased quality, stability, and usefulness.

Directory Changes

(Continued from page 6)

Directory listing. If you find anything about your listing that needs updating, please fill out the form and submit it to me using the information on the form.

The Directory Committee expends considerable time and energy in its efforts to keep the Idlewild Community Directory as updated and accurate as possible. The best way for that to happen has always been for us to receive updates and corrections directly from our community's residents. Thanks to each of you for your interest and cooperation.

Respectfully,

Jim Herman, Directory Committee Chairman

Free Directories for Early Assessment-Payers

As in previous years, the IWCC is pleased to thank those who paid their cabin's assessments by January 1, 2012. A free Directory will again be offered to those paying their dues by January 1, 2013. These Directories will be mailed to residents' home addresses in May. Additional copies of the Directory will be offered for sale in Idlewild during the summer. If you or others associated with your property have any changes you would like included in the new edition, please send them to Jim Herman, by email or using the Directory Change form included below. Email addresses and current phone numbers are particularly welcome.

DID YOU MOVE, CHANGE YOUR PHONE, NAME, OR EMAIL ADDRESS??

Directory Changes

Send changes to: Jim Herman, 1817 St. Andrews Dr., Clovis, NM 88101. Or email to: jh1008@gmail.com.

Please give information as you wish it to appear in the Directory. Remember that accurate Block and Lot ownership information is also important for the master Idlewild database and the Idlewild maps.

Last Name

First Name

Home Address

City

State

Zip

Cabin Address (for example, #30, Rd. 6)

Eagle Nest P. O. Box No.

Property Owned (for example, Block 20, Lots 6-12)

Phone Numbers (Home)

(Cabin)

Email Address

Map Committee

IWCC Map Committee

Members: Frank Ray (chairman), Sarah Anthony, Paul Fahrenthold, Helen Hyams, Frank Dodge

Since the last map edition in 2008, Frank Ray has collected about 80 changes through various sources, including IWCC Directory updates, Colfax County records, Frank Dodge, the assessment return data, USPS, email contacts, and telephone calls to residents. The largest change was to superimpose on the map the ERA zones that Paul and Chief Gibson designed. New this year is a set of survey stake locations, mainly near Road 11. As Frank Dodge keeps discovering these, they can be added to new editions.

Sarah Anthony designed and produced at her own expense 100 double-sided, laminated 12x18-inch maps. Many of the first set of 100 were given

out to residents who are actively making their cabins more defensible, and the balance were sold for \$5.00 each at the Worship Center. The "Idlewild placemat," as Joan Kaye calls it, is clearly a smash. Another 100 placemats were provided by Sarah during the summer, and they immediately sold well.

Paul Fahrenthold donated printing services for 24x18-inch map pairs and 24x36-inch single maps for sale and for the ENVFD, the latter on heavier stock to be mounted in the Eagle Nest firehouse. Two new maps for the IWCC Community Center have been framed and hung in frames that were

donated by Mary Lib Thornhill. This year we had zero cost for production thanks to donations by Frank Ray, Paul, and Sarah. Sales at the Worship Center since July 4 have been co-mingled with Directory sales; to date there is a net income of over \$400, of which 90 percent are conservatively estimated to be map sales.

Over the winter, maps will be available by contacting Frank Dodge in Idlewild. "Placemats" and 12x18-inch maps are \$5.00; 24x36-inch maps are \$10.00. High-resolution map images can be viewed on the Idlewild website, www.idlewildcommunity.org.

Annual End-of-July Church Service, Potluck, and Annual Meeting

The Idlewild church service and Potluck dinner held on the last Sunday in July were well attended by both Idlewilders and visitors, who brought overflowing bowls of food to be eaten outdoors with friends; the afternoon rain was kind enough to hold off until well after we'd

eaten. The Chair of the Potluck Committee, Joan Hart, with able assistants Joan Kaye

and Sue Dorr, set up the tables beautifully, made ice tea and lemonade, provided utensils and



glasses, and organized the entire function.

Thank you for another smooth event that continues an Idlewild tradition.

The annual gen-

Senior Center serves lunches

The Eagle Nest Senior Center Is Open

The Village of Eagle Nest Senior Center has restored all its services to seniors in the community, and has been completely open since September 1st, according to Lynda Perry, Village Administrator, after it found a new provider; the former provider's contract was dropped in December. The Senior Center is open Monday through Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. It has resumed serving lunches for a donation of \$2.00 to local residents 60 or older and their spouses or other family members, who may be younger than 60; the donation is \$7.00 for other Moreno Valley residents who are younger than 60.

The lunches are served to an average of 30 people every weekday; up to 45 people a day have received lunches. Homebound seniors can receive meals by delivery service during the week, including meals for the weekend.

Jane Salois, owner and chef of Calamity Jane's, is preparing the lunches. Weekly menus are posted at the Senior Center and the Eagle Nest Post Office.



Pot luck and church service photos by
Julia Putnam.

Left: Potluck before the annual
meeting .

Below: the Heavenly Choir sings
during the church service.



Enchanted Light Fiber-Optic High Speed Internet coming to Idlewild

Fiber-Optic Service to Idlewild

You might have noticed a lot of activity from Kit Carson Electrical Coop this past summer in Idlewild. They have been busy adding both overhead and underground portions of a fiber-optic infrastructure that will bring true high-speed Internet service to our area.

This has been made possible due to a \$65 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The money was awarded as a part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and will cover all of Taos County and parts of Colfax County.

Fiber-optic cable is the state-of-the-art means of transporting data. The new system will not only allow for far greater Internet speeds than are now available, but also more reliable Internet phone service, and even high-definition television viewing. All of these services should be available in the spring of 2013 to all of Idlewild, Eagle Nest, and Angel Fire.

At printing time, the New Mexico Public Regulation Committee (PRC) has issued a unanimous ruling in favor of Kit Carson Electric Cooperative Inc. (KCEC).

The PRC had planned to have a meeting to discuss a request by a small group of KCEC protesters. The protesters had requested that a subsidiary be formed to oversee the project. The PRC, however, voted to cancel the hearing due to the benefits and importance of the project to north central New Mexico. They did not want to put any strings on the project. This means that KCEC will be petitioning the Rural Utility Service (RUS) immediately to restore the \$64 million in funding that had been suspended pending the ruling. Thanks to all who emailed our District 5 representative at KCEC to show their support in favor of this project.



Plaques & Memorials

DONATION in Memory of Loved one (NO PLAQUE)

A donation in the amount of _____ has been made to the Idlewild Community

In memory of _____

This gift is given by _____

Name of donor

Address

City, State, Zip

Payable to: Idlewild Community, Attn: Sparky Eckles, , 701 N.Trumbull, Spur, TX 79370

Please provide the information requested above, detach here, and include with your donation. Thank you

Important: Donations in Memory get mailed to Sparky Eckles above, Plaque orders ONLY get mailed to Louise at address below.

Memorial Plaque Order(This is ONLY for a Plaque)

Cost for a Plaque at time of printing is \$70.00 Prices are subject to change according to the supplier. Please confirm with Louise below.

May 15th to Nov. 1st: Louise Montague

General Delivery

Eagle Nest, NM 87718

(575) 377-3847

cell 602 326 8102

Nov. 1st to May 15th: Louise Montague

11536 De La O Rd.

Scottsdale, AZ 85255

(480) 585-6031

Please detach this order form and include with your check.

Each line may be up to 20 spaces total, including letters, spaces between letters, and punctuation.

Line One _____

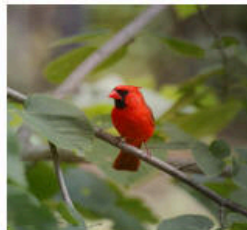
Line Two _____

Ordered By _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Remarks _____

If you know of any deaths in our community of which we are not aware, please notify Frank Dodge or a member of the Idlewild Board.



In Memoriam:
Carol Blair
Newton Richardson

Forest Health and Safety Committee

Forest Health and Safety Committee (FHS)

Members: Frank Ray (chairman), A. J. Beretta, Paul Fahrenthold, Kala Marsh, Frank Dodge

President Paul Fahrenthold has taken an especially strong position regarding fire defensibility practices, and the community seems primed to accept the challenge. FHS has for many years written newsletter articles on this subject, and this year, Paul's active approach has found a willing audience. Paul and his wife Denny have also set a personal example of defensibility on their own property, as have A. J. Beretta and many other cabin owners. One thing people must notice is that despite the removal of quite a few trees, there are enough left to provide shade and a pleasing appearance. We gain more than we lose by increasing defensibility.

Fire Chief Scott Gibson's speech to the community last summer was frank and to the point about our standing fuel situation. Although the defensibility effort has only begun, the community has already benefited from membership in the Colfax County Coalition of Firewise Communities; in addition, according to Paul, the number of defensible properties is approaching the point of passing a Firewise certification inspection. Paul, Denny, and Frank Ray attended the July Firewise meeting in Ute Park on July 17th and the Angel Fire meeting on Aug. 21st, where we learned more about the local coalition's efforts and tours, and about becoming an official Firewise community. Several members of Lakeview Pines were also in attendance at Ute Park, showing a vital interest in defensibility in their neighborhood. In September, Frank Ray traveled to Raton to participate in a tour of last year's Track Fire. *(See Frank's article about the tour in this issue.)*

In 2011, Paul and Chief Gibson drew up a plan of Emergency Response Accessibility (ERA) Zones, which has been incorporated into the 2011 Idlewild Community map edition. The 2012 IWCC Directory has also been modified, replacing the former GRID coordinate with an ERA zone for each property with a cabin. According to Chief Gibson, the ERA zones will be more useful in the field than the grid was. An ERA zone field was added to the database and has been incorporated into a table that was first published in the Fall 2011 *Idle Times*.

Chief Gibson requested some new large maps to hang in the Eagle Nest firehouse. These were generously printed by Paul and mailed to the ENVFD. Frank Ray purchased a box of Rite-in-the-Rain ink-jet stock, a very tough porous plastic similar to Tyvek house wrap, and donated 30 11x17-in. maps to the ENVFD and other emergency services for use in the field. These should last much longer than paper maps.

A new plan this year is to install a 42x32-inch fire danger sign near Trail's End Road and Hwy. 127. The Forest Health and Safety Committee conferred with Paul and Frank Dodge regarding the location and responsibility for setting the indicator arrow, and the sign is now under construction. *(See the article on the new sign on the next page.)*

IDLEWILD IS GOING PAPERLESS

To receive the Spring Newsletter by email send an email to:
FrankRay@swbell.net with one of 3 words in the Subject Line:

Email only; print only; or email and print. If we do not receive anything from you, you will continue to get the printed version only just as it has been.

Five Steps for Property Protection

Five Steps for Property Protection

Following are five steps for defense of property from fires that are recommended by the Eagle Nest Fire Chief and many other fire protection professionals. It may not be possible to comply 100 percent with all of them, but the security of your property increases with the extent to which you are able to implement them.

1. Remove pine needles to a distance of 10 to 20 feet from your cabin on all sides.
2. Remove limbs on trees on your property up to 8 to 10 feet from the ground.
3. Store firewood at least 30 feet from your cabin.
4. Remove trees that are closer to your cabin than 10 feet.
5. Thin trees on your property, remove dead trees, and pick up slash and fallen limbs for disposal.



Our New "Fire Danger" Sign

During the summer, Idlewild resident Raymond Stahl mentioned how useful a "Fire Danger" sign would be to Idlewilders as they approach the community. This would be a sign like the multicolored one that stands at the entrance to the pass from Taos to Angel Fire, with a movable (and lockable) arrow that shows the current level of fire danger. The 42x32-inch sign, of powder-coated aluminum, has reflective lettering that indicates five levels of danger. Donations by Raymond Stahl and Frank Ray paid for the sign itself. Local District 4 state officials have offered to build a frame for the sign and to install it per state regulations. Ngiare McNaghton, owner of the Gallagher Ranch, has given her full support to the placement of the sign at the intersection of Hwy. 127 and Trail's End Road.

Raising the awareness of our daily fire danger status benefits everyone in the Idlewild area, including our Moreno Valley ranching neighbors, the Mutz and Gallagher families; the Taos Pueblo; Eagle Nest; and neighbors beyond. A state permit to place the sign within the highway right-of-way has been approved; Frank Dodge is heading up our liaison with highway officials.

Idlewild Community Board of Directors

		Term expires
President	Paul Fahrenthold	2013
Vice President	Chris Herring	2013
Treasurer	Sparcky Eckles	2014
Secretary	Lisa Henthorn	2014
Members	Bill Bratton	2014
	Skip Johnson	2014
	Jeffrey Tidmore	2016
	Joan Hart	2013
	Rick Palmer	2016
	John Forbis	2016
	Nancy Junkin	2016
	Kathleen Michael	2013
	Don Reavis	Lifetime Member

Committee Chairs

Worship	Donna Porter
Directory	Jim Herman/Frank Ray
Roads	Jim Herman
Maps	Frank Ray
Beautification	Mary Lib Thornhill
Facilities	Jerry Thomason
Newsletter	Kathleen Michael
Historian	Ann Knupp Matta
Forest Health & Safety	Frank Ray
Music Ministry	Bill & Helen Goodwin
OHV User Group	Jim Herman
Webmaster	Craig Sutton
Nominations	Lewis Palmer
Property	Robert Kaye
Preacher Cabin	Donna Porter
Chapel and Community Center	Sue Dorr
Data Management Committee	Frank Ray & Jim Herman

Track Fire Tour

Fall 2012 Track Fire Tour

Report by Frank Ray

The Southwest Fire Science Consortium (SWFSC) hosted a tour of the 2011 Track Fire site north of Raton on September 27th. Frank Ray joined the tour to take notes, see the aftermath, and learn, from firefighters who have been through many such incidents, what is available to Idlewild to reduce the chances of a disastrous fire. Also present were city, county, state, and federal officials; academic professors; and students of fire and environmental sciences.

On June 12, 2011, glowing carbon flakes from an ATV exhaust pipe ignited grass on Burlington Northern–Santa Fe railroad property northwest of Raton. Driven by a light easterly wind, embers were carried (a phenomenon known as “spotting”) across I-25. Within 15 minutes, the westward slope of the hills to the east were involved in a hot, uncontrolled blaze. In the first 24 hours, almost 22,000 acres had burned. After four days, the fire had consumed vegetation on 28,000 acres in New Mexico and Colorado. Burn severity varied across the spectrum from unchanged (12 percent) to high (38 percent). A significant portion of the Raton Watershed, the main feeder of Lake Maloya, Raton’s water supply, was critically compromised. Eight homes and 11 outbuildings were destroyed.

We can learn much from the preparation steps taken by foresters in the decade prior to the fire, the effectiveness of these steps, the fire operations activity during an intense week of very difficult fire control work, and, finally, from the post-fire restoration and reclamation efforts by a coalition of agencies and departments from two states, the federal government, Raton, and Colfax County. The full development of a reasonable report for Idlewild from this tour is much larger than a few *Idle Times* articles, but we can begin in this issue by at least listing a few salient points for our membership:

1. Wind, even moderate wind, is the main driver of wildfire. Given the Track Fire’s rate of spread and its broad-jump across I-25, we may have only a few minutes, in a similar situation, to evacuate all residents from the area.
2. We’re currently headed in the right direction by reducing standing fuel. Where thinning was carried out prior to the Track Fire, the level of damage to the forest was somewhat reduced. Because of the continuous wind, no firebreaks were effective, but after a year, it is evident that the forest ground cover, largely composed of Gambel Oak, is returning and helping to control soil erosion.
3. There are better methods, with more favorable long-term effects, of reducing fuel, opening the canopy to sunlight, and returning the organic materials to the soil or using them as raw material in various industries. Some of these methods will work nicely in Idlewild.
4. In forests far from populated areas, fire is the most economical tool for reducing fuel load. Since we cannot safely do this in Idlewild, we can look for mechanical methods that accomplish the same result. Thinning and chipping slash during the summer is a very good start.
5. Help is available from the SWFSC in the form of more free tours. In addition, an extensive set of practical forestry articles, including tour reports and information on the effectiveness of various practices, is available from New Mexico Highlands University; the University of Arizona; and our New Mexico rangers in Ute Park, Ernie Lopez and Arnie Friedt, who both were on this tour. We need their advice and opinions as our forestry practice develops.

Some useful links are:

- Northern Arizona University–Ecological Restoration Institute: <http://www.eri.nau.edu/>
- New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute: <http://www.nmfwri.org/>
- Southwest Fire Science Consortium: <http://swfireconsortium.org/>