

Fire Safety Task Force

PRELIMINARY REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

October 25, 2007

Much has happened since the first meeting of the Fire Safety Task Force on May 12th, 2007. We began our efforts by reading the many reports and studies done on Fire Safety and Fuel Reduction over the last 20 years or so, including the excellent Eldon Beck material of 1989 and our own Fuel Management Plan of 2002. We had a primer on our Water Company capabilities and weaknesses in relation to fire fighting issues presented by Randy Burke, sheep grazing education by Leland Falk, and updates on our Disaster Preparedness efforts by Louise DeWilder. We also walked with Captain Shelley Spear of Cal Fire and talked about defensible space and PRC 4291.

We have reached some conclusions and developed some preliminary recommendations as requested by the Board.

1. The Board of Directors should move forward on development of Tank #8 for the The Sea Ranch Water Company in order to resolve our major deficiencies and increase our ability to effectively fight fires that may occur here.
2. Education of our membership is primary. Some of our efforts in Disaster Preparedness should focus on educating our members about their roles and responsibilities in case of fire and how best to react and seek information.
3. We feel strongly that the Association should fund another \$40,000 next year to continue the PRC4291 inspections by Cal Fire and The Sea Ranch Volunteer firefighters in an effort to promote and enhance member understanding of defensible space and the need to meet the new 100 feet requirements. This is likely the single most important thing that home and lot owners can do for themselves and their neighbors to truly reduce the risk of and damage from fire.
4. In conjunction with the above effort, the Association should continue to fund increased debris pickup programs for home and lot owners next year.
5. We have developed a series of articles for the *Bulletin* to promote a better understanding and provide more accessible information on how to create defensible space and how to get the proper permits or approvals to do so. Educating our members about fire safety through articles in the *Bulletin* and *Soundings* is extremely helpful in getting the word out.
6. We have asked the Board to develop a procedure to resolve potential conflicts when a homeowner wants to extend his/her defensible space appropriately beyond the property line onto a neighboring property and there is an unwillingness to allow it. We have also asked that this - procedure lean towards resolution in favor of enhancing fire safety. (Editor's note: The requested procedure has been developed and was reviewed by Members and the Board at the Board Meeting on October 27, 2007. It may be reviewed within the October Board agenda package materials at

www.tsra.org and takes effect immediately.)

7. We have asked for a placeholder in the budget proceedings that begins this month to allocate \$150,000 for enhanced fire safety activities next year. We are still working to determine exactly what activities that allocation will provide and need some more time to resolve our choices.

We continue to meet monthly and actively pursue additional educational knowledge on fire safety projects and activities with our own staff, fire officials through The Sea Ranch Fire Safe Council and outside sources. We are working on plans to encourage member input as well as to organize a meeting in March or April 2008 which will offer information on fire safety projects, risk reduction and other pertinent information. We hope to have much more to offer in the coming months. Members are invited and encouraged to attend our monthly meetings to listen, learn and help.

*Jackie Gardener, Chair,
The Sea Ranch Fire Safety Task Force*