

Alpine Meadow Estates Association

amea newsletter | fall winter | 2007 - 2008

alpinemeadowsestatesassn@yahoo.com



Message from the President of the AMEA

This last year saw the number of people who decided to become AMEA members reach an all time high. We deeply appreciate your support and the Board strives to make a positive difference here in Alpine Meadows. A major focus of AMEA this last year has been to reduce the likelihood of a wildfire in Alpine Meadows. A lot of progress occurred in 2007 and we look forward to building on and expanding those efforts through the newly formed Alpine Meadows Fire Safe Council.

This summer a devastating fire occurred in the Angora area of South Lake Tahoe. Many homes were lost and many were spared, often the difference was whether the home had created "defensible space", which is legally required of all of us. We learned from fire officials that sometime in the future a fire will occur in Alpine Meadows, the damage that results will be a function of how well we, as individual property owners and the entire valley, create defensible space. This summer and fall has unfortunately once again seen many instances of bears breaking into homes in some cases causing significant damage. There are steps that we can and should take individually to reduce this risk, but even with all precautions taken there are times when they have not deterred a Bear. We have heard of instances where a part time property owner has returned to their home and found significant damage that has been made worse by the break-in being undiscovered for a period of time.

Communicating to you events and items of interest in Alpine Meadows is a priority of AMEA. A newsletter is mailed to all property owners 2 times a year. Two years ago we established an email address (alpinemeadowsestatesassn@yahoo.com) that is used to provide timely and relevant information to interested persons every 1-2 months. To date approximately 140 people have signed up to receive these updates (to receive the emails simply send an email to AMEA and we will put you on the distribution list). In 2007, we included the e-mail addresses of people who wanted theirs listed in the directory. We are currently establishing an AMEA web site and in the next year we will begin sending the newsletter to people electronically who would prefer to receive it via e-mail. Electronic communication helps preserve resources by not printing as many copies, reduces postage costs and provides more timely information.

The AMEA Board, the Fire Safe Council and the Bear Creek Planning Committee relies on volunteers, people like you who are willing to devote a portion of their time to the betterment of the community. If you have an interest in volunteering please contact us and let us know.

A Special Opportunity ...

This December, Garth Cummings and Chuck Nungester, two of our very dedicated AMEA representatives, will be retiring from the Bear Creek Planning Committee (BCPC). This leaves openings for two new volunteers to follow in their footsteps in the review and approval process for changes to lots and exterior architectural plans for both new construction and renovations throughout most of Alpine Meadows. The beauty of the valley and the thoughtful development in it are at the top of the list for why many of us chose to purchase here. Are you in a position to help continue this legacy started in 1961 by volunteering on BCPC? While reading plans is a definite advantage, the committee "veterans", 3 women and 4 men, offer orientation and ongoing assistance.

Please think about it! The BCPC meets the third Saturday of the month as needed. There are normally between 9 and 11 meetings a year, with March, April and May being the busiest months. Current members report that with fewer vacant lots now in Alpine Meadows, the time commitment to review new projects and renovations has been greatly reduced from the legendary lengthy meetings of previous years. Meetings now generally run between 9AM and 1PM.

Our remaining AMEA representative on BCPC and the three members each from Bear Creek and Juniper Mountain are eager to have you join them in working together with residents to keep our valley developing in positive and beautiful directions. This is a special opportunity to learn more about Alpine Meadows and contribute to it. To volunteer and for further information please contact: Pauline McDowell, 408-220-4235, cpsmcd@aol.com

Snow and Road Conditions

With changing weather and ski conditions, keep these numbers handy for the winter. Alpine Meadows Ski Conditions: 530 581-8374. Road Conditions in CA: 1 800 427-7623. Road Conditions in NV: 877 687-6237

AMEA Board of Directors

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AMEA Board Meetings

January 25, 2008 at 6 pm.
April 18, 2008 at 6 p.m.
July 11, 2008 at 6 p.m.
Annual Picnic: August 2, 2008
All are welcomed at the Water District Offices. All meetings start at 6:00 p.m.

AMEA Mailing Address

PO Box 6653
Tahoe City, CA 96145

High Speed Internet Update

As reported last spring there was a lot of frustration over the lack of dependable high speed internet service that was reasonably priced. At the time of the prior article Exwire was providing most of the high speed internet service in Alpine and the cable company was working on upgrades that would allow them to provide such services as well.

Exwire attended the annual meeting in September and reported on the improvements to their infrastructure that have been made that allow them to offer much greater reliability in their service and increases in bandwidth capacity for the Valley. They also have introduced a number of plans for service that are more reasonably priced than before. Reports from users of Exwire indicate that the service has improved over the last several months.



Suddenlink, the cable company, provided information for the annual meeting that stated they would be offering high speed internet in Alpine by mid September. As of mid October that service is still not available and Suddenlink has not responded to numerous requests for updated information.

Bears in the Tahoe Basin Update

This season has left seventy-two bears killed by cars, ten killed by depredation permits given by California Fish and Game and three illegally killed by hunters leaving behind 15 orphaned nursing cubs. There have been two hundred and fifty plus reported bear entries and the BEAR League averaged two hundred calls per day opposed to fifty to seventy-five past seasons. Needless to say it is a tough bear season for all.

The drought-like conditions this season created a lack of natural food sources and available water for the bears, forcing them into civilization to survive. The extreme conditions have marked not only record bear deaths, but skyrocketing numbers of bears being reported in populated areas.

Winter is around the corner, but we are not there yet. Bears will generally hibernate sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas, as long as we get a good snowfall ending their food source. Until it begins to snow, bears are eating twenty hours a day trying to consume the twenty thousand calorie per day their diet requires. Environmentalists are doing natural food drops in the backcountry this year to support hungry bears and help protect homeowners.

As we all look for answers on how best to live with the bears there are resources available that offer suggestions and support. First and foremost, the BEAR League knows our bears and the best ways to work with them. More information is available at (530) 525-PAWS (7297) in Lake Tahoe. There are other options offered by California Fish and Game, at (916) 358-2900 or 916-358-1300, but they are a last resort and extremely unproductive in dealing with the real issue at hand. Choosing to own homes and enjoy them in bear country we have a responsibility to keep our homes bear safe by following all the precautionary measures. There is a list of suggestion on the BEAR Leagues web site (www.savebears.org) on how best to accomplish this. In Alpine Meadows, let's recognize our responsibility in this hard work and celebrate the rewards next season with safe homes and healthy bears.

Membership News

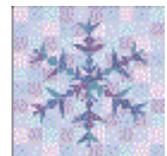
First, a hearty **THANK YOU** to current members for supporting AMEA in record-breaking numbers: 220 this year! Your support and dues have made possible our annual picnic and valley projects. And many of you have benefited from having the current Membership Directory close at hand to alert neighbors about bears and share fire safety updates.

Now a **PLEA**: take a minute - now - to fill out the enclosed membership form and send it with your check today! Don't have your lot and unit number handy? *Don't let that delay you ...* we'll fill it in. That way we won't have to spend volunteer time and AMEA money to send you another mailing! And as much as we like to talk with you, we'd rather not call and hear you say, "Oh, the form is buried in my 'to do' pile!" Sound familiar?? Then, please reply now and we'll send another big thank you your way. Questions? Contact Cindy Ware, cware@aol.com or 510-558-1433

Snow Removal in Alpine Meadows

In the past, Placer County has enforced the existing ordinance concerning commercial vehicles being stored on residential property. The ordinance allows continuous storage of a maximum of one commercial snow plow in residential areas which must be garaged. In response to concerns expressed to Placer County that this restriction made it too difficult for snow plow operators to locate their equipment near their homes and plowing area, the county proposed an amendment to the ordinance which would allow an additional commercial snow plow to be stored outside on residential property from November to May. It was felt that this limited storage of commercial vehicles would be compatible with residential neighborhoods

However, at a Placer County planning commission meeting on September 13 in Kings Beach, there were objections from some snow plow operators that the proposed relaxation of the ordinance was still too restrictive and wanted unlimited commercial snow plow and equipment storage to be allowed without time limitations on residential property. The planning commission decided to conduct further study of the issue and to collect more community opinion because this affects all present and futures snow plow operations in Placer County.



If you are concerned about unlimited, year round, storage of commercial snow plows and equipment at Alpine Meadows you can attend upcoming community meetings when they are scheduled and/or email your comments to: Mike Johnson (head of planning Placer Co Auburn) @ MJohnson@placer.ca.gov, Melanie Heckel (planning dept Placer Co Auburn) @ MHeckel@placer.ca.gov, and Steve Buelna (planning dept Placer Co Tahoe City) @ SBuelna@placer.ca.gov.

Fire Safe Council in Alpine Meadows

Just over a year ago AMEA, Juniper Mountain and Bear Creek Association established the Alpine Meadows Fire Safe Council to reduce the risk of a wildfire in the Valley through education to property owners on what can be done to create "defensible space" around your home and other steps to mitigate the likelihood of fire and mitigate the damage of fire when it occurs.

In consultation with Fire officials we learned that it is only a matter of time until we have a fire event in the Valley. Being surrounded by forest is a beautiful aspect of living here, but also results in our susceptibility to a wildfire event. Fortunately efforts by all of us can reduce the severity of damage when fire occurs. For many the Angora fire, with over 225 homes lost in a few hours, was a wake up call to take action around our homes. An unprecedented number of us created a defensible space zone around our homes that reduced the likelihood of fire reaching your home.

Fire however does not recognize property lines and while we can do a lot to better protect our individual homes we truly are all in this together. A fire on property adjacent to us creates an enormous risk. Accordingly the Council has the active participation of the ski area, the water district and now the forest service has agreed to participate on the council.

Juniper Mountain led the way last summer with a coordinated effort to establish defensible space on all properties in their area. Neighbors met together and with the help of fire officials identified risks and addressed most of them. We will be building on this model in 2008 in the AMEA area through individuals who are willing to become neighborhood coordinators. The coordinators will be individuals who agree to initiate contact with their immediate neighbors to address fire risks around their homes. Once the neighborhood group is formed the Fire Safe Council will assist in obtaining an assessment by fire officials of the risks that exist and steps that need to be taken to reduce those risks. If you are willing to be one of the neighborhood coordinators please contact John Moise at jmoise@yahoo.com or 583-9417.



Through the efforts of the Fire Safe Council in Alpine Meadows the following progress has occurred in 2007:

- A 2 day "Firewise" assessment identifying risks was conducted throughout the Valley by State, local and federal fire officials in May. The assessment culminated in a meeting on a Thursday night where the results were presented to over 55 people.
- Coordinating a fire education day in early July at the fire station where lessons learned from the Angora Fire was presented. Over 70 property owners attended the education day and obtained valuable information concerning our Fire Risk and what they need to do to mitigate fire risk.
- This summer there was a significant increase by property owners in creating defensible space on their property. North Tahoe received and responded to over 200 chipping requests to dispose of debris from the creation of defensible space. It should be noted that there were additional efforts through private contractors that are not included in this total.
- Juniper Mountain association and property owners led the way with extensive removal of materials and the creation of defensible space in virtually all of the properties in that association.
- The Water district, in conjunction with NTFPD is preparing a grant application that is supported by the Council for funding to reduce the fuels on the Greenbelt areas along Bear Creek.
- After meeting with the valleys architectural committee (BCPC), the committee expressed their support for creating defensible space in the valley and adopted streamlined procedures in instances where a property owner seeks to remove a tree to create defensible space.
- Bear Creek Association allocated \$20,000 for fuels reduction in their area.

Goals for 2007

Continue education efforts to encourage individual property owners to create defensible space on their property.

- Develop a new program that emphasizes neighbors working with each other to address defensible space issues in their area.
- Enlist the ski area to be active members of the Council (that has already happened and they will be at the November 4th meeting).
- Encourage the Forest Service to reduce the fuels on their lands that surround the Valley.
- Obtain designation as a Firewise community.
- Continue advocacy, coordination and assistance with local, State and Federal fire officials.

Changes in Ownership at Alpine Meadows Ski Area

AMEA welcomes a new neighbor to the valley. JMA Ventures purchased Alpine Meadows Ski Resort from Powdr Corp earlier this year. Alpine Meadows is one of several properties owned by JMA Ventures in the Tahoe-Truckee area. Homewood Mountain Resort was purchased last year. The Tahoe Inn, near the Cal Neva, will be converted to workforce housing. A small upscale hotel is planned for downtown Truckee near on the river. As for Alpine Meadows, JMA President Art Chapman hopes to return Alpine Meadows to the stature it held 10 years ago as the locals' ski resort. The developer will modernize current facilities like the lodge, expand food and beverage services and eventually replace some of the chairlifts. Future plans for development have not yet been released.

Of the 2500 acres, 500 acres are privately owned by JMA, 2000 acres leased from the US Forest Service and California Tahoe Conservancy Jim Kercher has been named general manager. Jim returns to Alpine from Beaver Creek in Colorado and brings with him decades of ski management experience. His focus is to make the locals feel like this is where they want to ski. Doug Pierini will manage Resort Services, and Jeff Goldstone (Ski Patrol), Ken Larson (Competition Services), and Scot Swietanski (Mountain Management) return to their positions as do other employees of Alpine Meadows. Pass information has been posted with new combination passes for Alpine and Homewood and the new lower age of 62 for the senior passes. Look forward to a renewed neighborly ambience at the new Alpine Meadows Ski Resort.

Too Much Snow on Your Road?

Timely snow removal by Placer County has been a priority for the last 2 years and we are pleased to note that at the annual meeting there was agreement that there has been some improvement in this area. The county now has a number of new plows and attempts to plow the roads at least once every 12 hours during periods of significant snowfall. If you notice that the roads are have not been plowed with that frequency, please call the Placer County Road Maintenance division at (530) 581-6220 between 7:30 am – 4:30 pm, Monday thru Friday

Be a Watchful Neighbor

The bear problems, home invasions, suspicious people and fire risk necessitate each of us helping each other out. When you can, please check on the houses around you to see if there has been a questionable activity. Contact information for all property owners can be found in the AMEA Directory, which is provided free of charge to all members. Neighbor cooperation will also be essential in 2008 in the creation of defensible space in your area and a safe neighborhood.

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**Alpine Meadows Estates Association
P.O. Box 6653 Tahoe City CA 96145**

Annual Membership Form Enclosed.

