



The Fire Safe Council



Alpine Meadows Fire Safe Council

March 4, 2009

Joanne B. Roubique, District Ranger
Truckee Ranger District - Tahoe NF
9646 Donner Pass Rd.
Truckee, CA 96161

RE: ALPINE MEADOWS FIRE SAFE COUNCIL COMMUNITY WORKDAY PROPOSAL
Sent by e-mail to jroubique@fs.fed.us

Dear Joanne,

As we discussed earlier this week, I am providing a proposal for the Alpine Meadows Fire Safe Council Community Workday. The Alpine Meadows Fire Safe Council has educated the community for the past two years and positive results have been shown on our private land (which will continue, of course). Now, we would like to expand our efforts to include some public land in our valley.

This summer, we would like to operate a Community Workday Project to reduce fuel loading on a select USFS land. We would work within any guidelines required by the USFS to qualify under a Categorical Exemption, or preferably, a stewardship or volunteer program that may be approved directly from your office. To meet this goal we could modify our plan as appropriate to obtain administrative approval.

The following proposal provides a starting point for a discussion, which we could have in Alpine Meadows or your office in Truckee. We realize we will need to plan quickly, so we're available anytime to review the plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Gracey".

Ken Gracey
kgracey@parallax.com
(530) 277-8333

Background

The *Alpine Meadows Community Wildfire Protection Plan* (Geoarch Sciences Inc., 2005) identified the overall risk around Alpine Meadows neighborhoods as low to moderate, with the highest threat being the south-facing slopes above Juniper Mountain. The Plan also identified the Bear Creek valley and a vacant lot between Snow Crest Road and Mineral Springs as needing treatment. Fuel reduction is currently planned for the former area as part of Dave Jaramillo's project, so it is part of this proposal as that project appears to be underway if the funding returns. The Plan includes several specific projects and this one is the only one on USFS land.

The Plan also indicates that areas of undeveloped fir stands with homes situated above and below them could transmit a fire from one area of residences to another. And in areas where there is less water, fir trees have succumbed to insects and disease, leaving a large amount of down and standing dead material. One general objective of the Plan is to reduce fire intensity in these stands by removing the fuel.

Objective

The objective of the Alpine Meadows Fire Safe Council Community workday project is to choose a fuel-loaded USFS area of interest to the community and perform some fuel reduction work. Since the project must be completed in a few days, the area must be small yet continuous to other areas that we could treat in following years if this project is successful. Given the fact that the community workers would all be volunteers and that they are likely over 30-40 years of age, the type of treatment proposed would be considered fairly light compared to other treatments using heavier machines, tools and processes common in mechanical treatment. This assumes that some level of fuels reduction is beneficial.

Additionally, a proposal from the Fire Safe Council must be light by design out of respect for community members who may not support fuels reduction of any type.

Project Area

The Alpine Meadows Road corridor at the entrance to the valley has many condominiums and businesses. Proceed on Alpine Meadows Road uphill you pass the Alpine Springs County Water District [who recently conducted their own defensible space project]. Both sides of Alpine Meadows Road have dense trees and dead downed trees, specifically the area between the horse stables and Snow Crest Road. This greater forested area connects the lower Water District and condominiums to the valley's single-family homes.

Within this region, the specific Project Area is directly adjacent to the northern edge of Alpine Meadows Road, and the area between the horse stables and Snow Crest Road on the southern side. See Figure 1. The northern (creek) side has minimal dead and downed trees mostly because the creek is nearby, but a significant amount of dense, small fir trees. The southern side is dry, and has many dead and downed trees. The southern side is the main focus of this project.

One secondary benefit of treatment in this area is improved beautification as a travel entrance to the valley. At present it is difficult to see the forest through the dense stands and dead trees.

The edges of the Project Area are accessible by vehicle and foot. An abandoned road extends alongside of Alpine Meadows Road in the southern project area, too. The majority of the dead and downed material could be carried downhill to either road, where it could be placed in biomass dumpsters or chippers.

Figure 1: Project Area (shown in red)



The proposed Work Plan is on the following page.

Work Plan

The following approach is proposed:

- **May or June:** A registered professional forester (we could contact either Stewart McMorrow or Dave Jaramillo) marks select trees in the area for removal. Given the limited resources of volunteers and unknown number of people who would remove the material, the RPF would mark no more than 20 dead trees (of a certain size, over 12" DBH for example) and up to 100 small trees that could be carried in one to two pieces from the forest. The amount of marking is intentionally low so the project can be achieved in entirety.
- **July 7 to 10:** Local chainsaw volunteers work together to drop, limb and buck the trees. This would consist of approximately four (4) volunteers and would be accomplished in two days, before the community work day. The perimeter of the work area would be marked with flagging.
- **July 11:** Full day of community work.
 - ✓ Volunteers would be organized with leaders for specific geographic locations. Their objective is to carry the dead, downed and loose material to the NT Fire woodchipper parked alongside of Alpine Meadows Road. If it is too large to be chipped, it would be moved to one of several 30-yard biomass dumpsters next to the stables where it would be placed or taken home as firewood.
 - ✓ The Fire Safe Council would provide free lunch. We would identify a lunchtime presentation topic from a forestry person. *Living with Fire in the Tahoe* Basin and related Fire Safe Council Literature would be available on tables by the stables nearby our lunch meeting. Alpine Meadows Ski Area would provide another season pass for a drawing. Work would resume after lunch or until the job is finished.

The Alpine Meadows Fire Safe Council would obtain an encroachment permit from Placer County on our own, if required. Volunteers could also sign any liability release agreements required by the USFS.