

## Fall/Winter Newsletter November 2022



Hello Neighbors – Time for another information presentation! What an amazing fall we have been having. I still had tomato plants FLOWERING the last week of October. Crazy. I have asked our board and committees to contribute to this newsletter so here it is. We will start with finances first...

### **FINANCE NEWS from Kathi Cherrier, Your Treasurer:**

Happy Fall Ya'll ! What a beautiful one it has been for us here in the valley this year. . .

I get lots of emails with lots of questions regarding this, that, and the other thing. I thought I would compile a list of the top ones with their answers and share them with everyone.

1. Is it too late to sign up for electronic billing?

NO! We have 186 of the 299 lots receiving their invoices and statements electronically now. This is a huge thing for us as it saved us receiving a rate hike in our bookkeeping for 2023.

The fewer invoices the bookkeeping service has to print, stuff, and stamp the less our bookkeeping costs are billed.

2. Can I pay my dues electronically?

The short answer is no. However, you can set SMRC up in the Bill Pay feature of your bank's electronic banking and pay via that route. Just use your Lot Number as the account number when requested in their system. They will send a check to us for the payment.

3. Why hasn't my check cleared my bank account yet?

Our bookkeeping service collects all mail that goes to the PO Box and processes it on a BI-WEEKLY basis. For example, Oct 24<sup>th</sup> is a bookkeeping week for us, so any checks that were in the mail on Monday morning will be posted to your dues balance and deposited at the bank later this week. Then the check will clear your bank account.



The next bookkeeping week begins on Nov 7<sup>th</sup>. So, if your dues check missed this week's cycle, it will not post to your bank account until after Nov 7<sup>th</sup>.

4. How often are statements mailed?

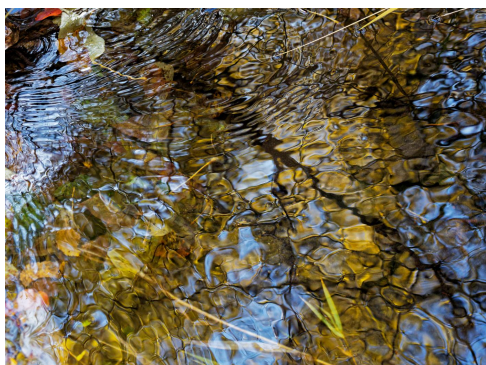
At end of May, statements are mailed ONLY to those people who have the 1<sup>st</sup> half of their dues balance owing, when the late fee is also posted to the account.

And, at the end of November, statements are mailed ONLY to those people who have the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of their dues owing, when the late fee is also posted to the account.

I would like to thank everyone who has been so consistent in paying their dues on time. This saves me a lot of time chasing down past-due payments and nagging people about their balances. That never was my favorite thing to do while working at the bank, and it's not my favorite thing to do while volunteering for the Club.

As always, if you have any questions regarding your dues balance, feel free to shoot an email or give me a call at [treassmrc@gmail.com](mailto:treassmrc@gmail.com) or 425.327.4169.

## **AND SOME VERY IMPORTANT INFO ABOUT OUR GARBAGE AREA** **from your Treasurer**



SMRC charges each lot \$700 per year, which includes the use of our garbage and recycle facility.

Our building is an open pole building with 1 wall and the other 3 are enclosed with 8-10' fencing. Even when we had the 2 dumpsters, the bears could not get to our garbage area. With the compactor we have now, there's no way that they would be able to get to it.

Now for the numbers side. . .

We have 299 lots with 284 lot owners. My best estimate is that approximately 175 are full-time residents in the development. (EDITOR'S NOTE -That's up from about an estimated 70-80 that I was told ten years ago)

In 2021, prior to our compactor installation, we had two 20-yard dumpsters. One of the dumpsters would be brought into the facility empty, then the truck would take the full one out. This happened on at least a weekly basis. Our building opens on both ends and they would alternate ends of the building for the dumpster that would be used. And our dumpster's lids stayed open all the time and the crows were constantly making a mess with the garbage. But the bears couldn't get through the fencing to them.

We paid mileage, a delivery fee, the actual garbage fee by the ton, and recycling. We averaged 4 trips per month during the winter, then 5 in the spring and the summer bumped to 8-9. Our average "trip" costs had gone to about \$442 per trip prior to compactor installation.

As our CC&R's require all lots are charged across the board the same amount, so full-timers used the garbage all the time and part-timers used the garbage part of the time, but we all pay for it in our annual dues. It's an amenity covered by the annual dues billing.

Our garbage bill in 2020 for the year was \$23,229; 2021 grew to \$28,892; and 2022 YTD is at \$16,108 through August 31st. We upgraded to the compactor in June of 2021. We are now averaging about \$1970 a month. Our big savings is on **the trip fees**, as the compactor only goes out approximately every 5 weeks. And we increased our number of recycling bins and added a large dumpster-type bin for corrugated cardboard.

When I calculated our next year's budget, I estimated that our garbage would be \$24,360, which extrapolated for each lot, we pay approximately \$6.81 a month for garbage per lot. (EDITOR'S NOTE – a great deal no matter how you look at it. Wastewise charges \$11.17 for a once/month pickup of a 64 gallon garbage can, \$20.42 for twice/month and 28.75/month for weekly service - **and you would have to get it to the main Twin Lakes Rd**)

**PLEASE RESPECT THIS AREA – READ THE SIGNS- DON'T PUT STUFF IN THERE THAT HAS TO GO TO THE DUMP, LIKE BROKEN HOUSEHOLD ITEMS – CHAIRS, SINKS ETC.!!! SOMEONE WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH IT AND CHARGE THE HOA. IT COMES OUT OF YOUR DUES.**



### **FIREWISE NEWS from Karen Mulcahy, Firewise Committee chair**

Work will be starting up again in the next week or two on those properties involved in the DNR 50/50 Cost share program. Work was stopped due to the burn bans and chainsaw bans.

To date, Saul of Brothers Fire LLC has completed 149-man hours of work, \$47,105 in total cost, half paid by homeowners!!!! And our two yard waste events disposed of many tons of pine needles and branches that would have been burned otherwise.

Expect burning of slash that can't be chipped and more tree removal and chipping. Your firewise committee will be meeting by zoom soon and planning for the coming year.



Please **SEND/EMAIL/DROP-OFF YOUR VOLUNTEER HOURS SHEETS IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY.** I will be using them to tally our total volunteer hours to keep us in good standing as an NFPA recognized Firewise Community. Email Karen at [smrcfirewise@gmail.com](mailto:smrcfirewise@gmail.com), or drop off at 44 Larkspur!



ALSO NOTE – I HAVE 9 BLANKS LEFT TO MAKE A FREE BLUE REFLECTIVE SIGN FOR YOUR PROPERTY SO 911 RESPONDERS CAN FIND YOUR PLACE! EMAIL ME IF YOU WANT ONE.

### **CWDG – Community Wildfire Defense Grant**

Okanogan Conservation District (OCD) has applied for this grant to help firewise about 2000 acres in our area – they are asking for 6.6 million cost-share dollars to target 9 communities in the Methow – ours is one of them - and 4 in the greater Okanogan area.

Cost Share will be different depending on the situation-

#### **Community owned common property – 100% funded**

Work within 100' radius of home or structure – 100% funded

Work at >100' radius, 75% OCD, 25% property owner.

They are aiming for a start of Feb 1<sup>st</sup> – *in a perfect world.*

That is - if they get the grant and if they can find contractors to do the work.

In the meantime, they highly recommend any property owners intending to participate in the 50/50 DNR Cost Share to proceed. And it doesn't preclude involvement in this grant at a later date.

They will manage the funds and deal with our board and homeowners directly.

MY HOPE IS WE CAN USE THESE FUNDS TO FIREWISE THE COMMON AREAS FIRST – I have had Chris Moore of Hingeport Tree Service look at just one of our common areas and he feels it is doable. But we may have to use firewise funds to survey the common areas first to know where to do the work.

## **ROADS COMMITTEE NEWS from Jil Wickander**

### **DOWN THE GRAVEL ROAD**

Can you believe 2 years ago we had snow already?! With this long lingering fall weather no one is probably thinking about snow.

But it is the perfect time to make that call to your snowplow service and get on their list for the upcoming winter. And dig out those snow poles to mark everything you don't want to have the plow run into.

Marking one side of the driveway helps keep the plow on the drive. It is always a bit of angst in those few first plows for the plow driver. Without a 'snow floor' the plow driver has the delicate job of getting a base built. They may not take as much as you want off. That is because they want you to help keep your gravel on the driveway by building a solid snow floor. After that you will have a well plowed driveway.

Look at your tires. Are they going to get you around in the snowy Methow Valley winter? It not just in SMRC that you will encounter hills and icy patches.

Subarus and 4 wheel drive vehicles are the true snow vehicles here. After trying snow tires that were siped(?) I went back to studded snow tires. Having weight in the back of the vehicles also will help get you up the hills.

And Good Samaritans multiply here in the winter when you are stuck alongside the road. We are all in this together!!

A quick note - we have a great new road committee, look for news from them at each board meeting. You can reach them at [smrcroads@gmail.com](mailto:smrcroads@gmail.com)

Have a safe winter driving! Jil Wickander

## **COMMON AREA NEWS from Jil Wickander**

### **TRAIL TRACKS**



This will be a fall to remember, long and warm. It is a good time to think about the coming cold weather and what it will bring.

Lots of wildlife here in the neighborhood over the summer. Those fires of last year really took out the animals' range for foraging for something to eat. Lots of sightings of bears here. A few of you had the bears get into things at your home. Remember, a fed bear may become a dead bear if they become too habituated to trash cans.

This last winter I put out alfalfa hay for the deer. A flake every few days. The Fish & Wildlife website has recommendations for feeding the winter animals here in the valley. The main thing they say is "don't feed".

But if you do, remember corn and fruit changes the gut digestion ability, and can lead to problems for the deer digesting their native feeds. Turkeys just get fat and aggressive. Talk to the folks at Twisp Feed, they can help with recommendations for wildlife and winter bird feed.

Over the summer with the help of the Firewise crew a few of the 'greenbelts' (editor's note – these are officially named "common areas") did get marked with (removable) little red flags. The equestrians are riding the same paths to get a dirt path established. We took care in keeping it in the center and not near homeowners back property lines.

The terrain is hilly, rocky, and quiet. Try a walk after dinner when the night sounds start. It is so peaceful.

Next spring the volunteers on the Greenspace (Common Areas) committee will again be out establishing more areas to walk on our common areas. There have been requests for the next marking of an area to be the one that goes East to West between DIV 1 & 2 and Rodeo Trails. I hear it is quite steep in places.

This last summer the worst of the noxious weed areas have been mapped. So look for a noxious weed program to start next spring. We may be able to get a grant to pay for some spraying of the worst sections. And there will be handouts and voluntary home visits if you want an assessment of the plants on your property.

Another thing that has been mentioned at some of the Board meetings is about the Dark Sky Initiative here in the valley. There is a local chapter that has formed with the hopes of joining the International Dark Sky Association. Go to [darksky.org](http://darksky.org) for more information.

Take a walk in the neighborhood after dark. Look up at the stars in the dark of the moon. This is why we want dark sky here. It is interesting to note most homeowners have their yard lights on motion sensors. Very few leave porch lights on all night.

The Board renamed the Greenspace committee to Common Areas Committee, so if you want to contact me, you can reach me at: [smrcccommonareas@gmail.com](mailto:smrcccommonareas@gmail.com)

Keep on Trekking! Jil Wickander



## **EDITOR HAS THE LAST WORD**

Thanks for reading your neighborhood news. We welcome your comments and contributions.  
Karen Mulcahy [smrcfirewise@gmail.com](mailto:smrcfirewise@gmail.com)

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