South Skyline Association

General Meeting

Snakes of the Bay Area

Presented by David Allen

Jaqua Ranch
Saturday, August 11
12:00 noon to 4:00 pm
Pot-Luck Picnic

Bring a potluck dish to share.
SSA will provide plates, utensils, lemonade and soft drinks.

David Allen founded “Got Snakes?”, a snake removal service, in 2004. David is a passionate and skilled naturalist with a strong interest in herpetology (the study of reptiles and amphibians). Since early childhood he has taken every opportunity to study and observe wildlife near and far.

David Allen’s presentation at the South Skyline Association General Meeting will include well-contained and controlled live snake species. You will have the option to see beautiful snakes up close. The San Francisco Bay Area is not a place people typically think of as having many snakes. Did you know that there are around twenty types of snakes that call the Bay Area home? Of the twenty or so species native to the Bay Area, only one poses any real threat to people. The northern pacific rattlesnake (Crotalus oreganus oreganus) is the region’s only dangerously venomous snake. There are many myths and misunderstandings regarding snakes; after hearing David's presentation you will learn about snake behavior and probably be less fearful of snakes. You will learn how to distinguish the difference between a rattle snake and a gopher snake. You will learn how to react when encountering a snake and have it safely removed from your property.

David’s presentation will be followed by a segment to answer your questions regarding snakes and to share your stories. More information about David Allen is on page 4.

This is a community event! You don’t need to be an SSA member to attend.
What Is Your SSA Board Doing?

- **SSA General Meetings:** The Spring General Meeting at Fogarty Winery featuring local authors was well attended. SSA members and guests provided a most enthusiastic, appreciative audience for Speakers Willard Wyman and Joe Cottonwood. The Summer General Meeting will be held on August 11 at Jaqua Ranch. It will be a potluck picnic featuring speaker David Allen on snakes.

- **SSA Donations:** The Board voted to make a total of $7k in donations through June 2012. The following were the donations – 1) $3k matching funds to the South Skyline Fire Safe Council, 2) $3k donation to the South Skyline Fire and Rescue (4 new volunteers went through training) to make the unit more viable and productive, and 3) $1k donation to the Portola and Castle Rock Foundation to help keep Portola Redwoods and Castle Rock State Parks open.

- **SSA Awards:** The Board presented Dick Schwind with a plaque to honor his many years of service to the community at the Spring General meeting.

- **SSA Membership:** SSA Membership is now over 1600. This includes regular and associate memberships.

- **Board Priorities:** The 3 top survey priorities were fire, emergency preparedness, and roads. These topics are driving the board’s focus and energies.

- **Sudden Oak Death Study:** For a second year SSA members participated in the SOD study. Matteo Garbelotto’s University of California Berkley lab staff seemed very pleased with the collaboration. The lab’s test procedure starts with a petri dish culture of the samples collected to check for Phytophthora ramorum-like colonies; second, a protein assay to confirm the genus; and if positive, then thirdly, a DNA test which confirms the species. The 2012 results will be posted around October on the website: [http://nature.berkeley.edu/garbelotto/english/index.php](http://nature.berkeley.edu/garbelotto/english/index.php)

- **Streamlining the Board:** The board is testing out reducing the number of times we meet face-to-face per year. For this year we will meet 8x and then evaluate whether to recommend we continue operating this way. We have updated the by-laws such that we can conduct some business via email and possibly teleconferencing for some of our work. If additional face-to-face meetings are required due to any high priority agenda items that cannot be accommodated via email or teleconferencing, they will be scheduled as needed. In general Board meetings for this year will be held the month before and after a General Meeting.

- **Public Safety:** The South Skyline Fire Safe Council grants for the King’s Creek Truck Trail are in implementation and moving along nicely under the auspices of Steve Daus, the Project Manager, and support from the Fire Safe Council and community.

- **Parks and Land Use:** Both Castle Rock and Portola Redwoods State Parks have been saved for 2012. It will be a continual effort to keep these parks open. Land Use: For One Bay Area Plan, MTC and ABAG are ignoring input they do not want to hear. The impact of this plan will be on zoning for the 9 counties, building permit issuance, and road repair.

Visitors are welcome at board meetings. See SSA calendar on page 14.

The SSA Boards is as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Board Responsibility</th>
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<tr>
<td>Patti Begley</td>
<td>Highway 9</td>
<td>Membership Committee; Communications Committee; Skylines Editor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian Beckey</td>
<td>Rocky Creek</td>
<td>Board Member</td>
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<td>Janice Compton</td>
<td>Black Road et al</td>
<td>Public Safety</td>
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<td>Bo Gimbal</td>
<td>Highway 9</td>
<td>Treasurer; Parks, Land Use policies</td>
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<td>Larry Watson</td>
<td>Highway 9</td>
<td>Board Member</td>
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<td>Gary Gechlik</td>
<td>Highway 35</td>
<td>Vice President; Programs Chair; BAAQMD</td>
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<td>Jer Granucci</td>
<td>Skylonda</td>
<td>Secretary; Membership Services</td>
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<td>Judy Grote</td>
<td>Alpine-Portola</td>
<td>President; Parks, Land Use policies; SSFSC</td>
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<td>Karim Khaldi</td>
<td>Highway 35</td>
<td>Public Works, Adopt-a-Highway</td>
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<td>Kim Hamilton</td>
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<td>Connie Kleinjans</td>
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<td>Larry Myers</td>
<td>Las Cumbres</td>
<td>Public Safety, SSEPO</td>
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<td>Ruth Waldhauer</td>
<td>Portola Heights</td>
<td>Membership; SPUG; Communications Committee; Hwy 35 Fire Safe Corridor</td>
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Skyline Propane Users Group (SPUG) was formed to benefit SSA members. For information about joining, or for members wishing current information on the agreement with Amerigas, Kamps Propane, or Suburban Propane, please contact Ruth Waldhauer at ruth_walhdauer@yahoo.com, or 650-948-1466. Information is also available on our website at www.southskyline.org.

Recent SPUG prices with Amerigas/San Jose are:

July 2011 $2.399/gallon  
August 2.509  
September 2.569  
October 2.549  
November 2.549  
December 2.679  
January 2012 2.599  
February 2.499  
March 2.399  
April 2.399  
May 2.229  
June 2.239  
July 1.84

Recent Kamps Propane SPUG prices are:

July 2011 $2.44/gallon  
August 2.45  
September 2.55  
October 2.608  
November 2.57  
December 2.648  
January 2012 2.69  
February 2.64  
March 2.598  
April 2.498  
May 2.12  
June 1.84  
July 1.79

Recent SPUG prices offered by Suburban Propane/San Jose are:

January 2012 $2.87/gallon  
February 2.78  
March 2.87  
April 2.50  
May 2.30  
June 2.25  
July 2.099

Recent SPUG prices offered by Suburban Propane/Scotts Valley are:

July 2011 $2.49/gallon  
August 2.41  
September 2.49  
October 2.70  
November 2.608  
December 2.85  
January 2012 2.80  
February 2.80  
March 2.50  
April 2.50  
May 2.39  
June 2.349  
July 1.79

Northern Energy is merging with Amerigas. The process will take a year or more. In the interim, Northern Energy will honor the Amerigas SPUG price for SSA members who use Northern Energy.

Do what you can to conserve! The open market price is about $1.00/gallon higher than the SPUG price.

Prices are subject to change as frequently as wholesale prices change. The prices we post are for the first of the month. Our SPUG rate is based on automatic regular route deliveries on a keep-full basis, not "will-call" service. Some propane suppliers offer members 55 years of age or older a 2 cent/gallon discount in addition to the SPUG group price.

Those whose membership in SSA has lapsed will be disqualified from receiving the benefit of SPUG price for propane.

Snake Joke #1:
Knock, knock.  
Who’s there?  
Snakeskin.  
Snakeskin who?  
Snakeskin bite, but we’d rather run away.

Snake Joke #2:
What do you do if you find a black mamba in your toilet?  
Wait until he’s finished.
Red Baneberry
by Sarah Schoen

Red baneberry (Actaea rubra) is a perennial herb that grows 1-3' tall in moist, shady woodlands and along streams. Although found throughout our area, it is not abundant locally. Happening across one or a few plants is a pleasant surprise.

Compound leaves grow 12 to 18” long and are pinnately divided 3 times. Leaflets along the sides of the midvein are sharply toothed and narrow, while those at the tip are maple-like.

When not in flower or fruit, the foliage tends to blend in with other plants on the forest floor.

White flowers bloom May to July in small hemispherical clusters on the upper tips of sturdy stems. The 3-5 sepals drop off as the flowers open and 4-5 spatula-shaped petals drop off a short time later. This exposes several long, white stamens on green pistils and gives the overall appearance of a whitish bottle brush.

Fruits, easily spotted, are ¼” shiny red or white berries. The clusters mature in summer about one month after the flowers are pollinated. There is a black dot at the base of each berry, accounting for the white variety’s alternate name of doll’s eyes. Fruits are poisonous and reportedly extremely bitter. Bane is such a harsh name for a lovely plant. But the name serves as a warning for the poisonous berries. According to my copy of the Webster’s Dictionary, “bane” is defined as 1. Poison of deadly quality, now obsolete except in ratsbane, etc. 2. The cause of deadly mischief, injury, or destruction 3. A disease in sheep, more commonly termed the rot 4. Death; destruction (obsolete). Fortunately, the berries are not poisonous to birds such as American robins and yellow-bellied sapsuckers, which eat the brightly colored fruit and later distribute the seeds some distance away.

Roots are small, warty, scaly rhizomes with wiry rootlets. They are dark reddish outside, cream-colored inside. The roots were used medicinally by some American Indians outside California for such ailments as colds and coughs, stomach aches and as a gynecological aid. Modern herbalists use dried roots externally to treat swollen, painful sprains and bruises, and internally as an antispasmodic. Because roots may also be poisonous, only experienced, knowledgeable herbalists should consider using the plant.

Red baneberry makes an attractive addition to gardens and grows best in moist, shady areas with humic soil. Plants can be sown from seed that has been separated from the fruit. Flowering begins by the third year.

Red baneberry is found throughout most of California woodlands below 8400 feet, south to San Bernardino County, and throughout much of the U.S. north to Alaska, and east to New Mexico and the Atlantic coast.

SSA General Meeting Presenter
David Allen

We are looking forward to learning about snakes from our local snake expert David Allen. David will be speaking at the next general meeting on August 11. (See page 1 for details.) David is a Skyline resident and founder of a snake removal service called Got Snakes?.

David’s childhood passion has developed into a career taking him to exotic locations around the world and to the most remote wild lands of the US. David has worked with black mambas and crocodiles in South Africa, tracked chimpanzees in the dense forests of Uganda, and spent countless months in the field studying rattlesnakes and other wildlife throughout United States.

Degrees in Wildlife Management and Natural History and Ecology allow David to provide the most comprehensive and informative Snake Removal Service available. Further experience in Landscape Architecture, Natural Resource Management, and Public Education allows David to tackle each project holistically. He leaves no stone unturned, literally!

David’s diverse background is what sets Got Snakes? apart from more conventional pest control companies.

“ I don’t like to call GOT SNAKES? a business, to me GOT SNAKES? is an education-based Service. I provide this service out of my appreciation of wildlife and my enjoyment of educating my community about snakes.”
Hike Portola Redwoods State Park

By Ruth Waldhauer

For a cool hike on a summer day this park is a good choice. Meander down Pescadero Creek through tunnels of huckleberry bushes on the Sequoia and Iverson trails.

The Sequoia trail begins near the park headquarters. There is a short Nature Trail Loop you might find interesting. Follow the Sequoia trail to the Iverson trail, and turn right at the junction of the two. You cross Fall Creek on a little bridge and continue right to Tiptoe Falls. Here this lovely creek drops over a corrugated shelf of shale or sandstone into a lively little pool in a basin flanked on two sides by high rock walls clothed with overhanging ferns, shrubs, and trees. Upstream in a narrow canyon the creek splashes over a tumble of fallen logs, visible but inaccessible.

Leaving this cool canyon, return to the main trail by going to your right up a bank and through a grove of widely spaced second-growth redwoods. Beyond the ancient stumps with notches cut for inserting the springboards on which early loggers balanced to fell these huge trees, shortly the Iverson Trail crosses a bridge over Iverson Creek and goes uphill to the park service road. Step out onto this road and turn left (north) to see the site of Christian Iverson’s 1860s cabin.

To return to the park office, bear left on the trail just beside the road barricade, descend along the east bank of Pescadero Creek and then cross it on the service road bridge. From here you can follow the paved road back to the park office stopping at a fenced overlook to gaze at the creek flowing below its high northeast canyon wall.

Total distance is about 3 miles. There are lots of opportunities to put your feet into the cool waters.

Maps are available at the park office.

Portola Redwoods State Park and Castle Rock State Park were threatened with closure in July 2012, but through efforts of the Portola and Castle Rock Foundation led by President Judy Grote, funds were raised to keep both parks open for the next year. Please do what you can to help their continuing efforts for the next year’s fund raising.

South Skyline Fire & Rescue News

by Arnie Wernick, Captain, SSF&R

We’ve transitioned into what is expected to be a busy fire season. Saratoga Summit is now staffing two engines, each with 3 personnel. Here are some other things which have been going on in the last quarter:

Pancakes and other Fundraising

We had a great time preparing and serving hundreds of made-from-scratch pancakes on May 27. We talked to many South Skyline residents and generated some interest in joining the team. Thanks to everyone who stopped in and helped make this event a success. A special thanks to Company 29 volunteer Firefighter Les Niles for an outstanding job planning the event. We will be back next year with a challenge to serve even more pancakes.

We are also very grateful to the SSA board for their generous donation to help complete outfitting the new water tender with the necessary suction hose and two additional storage compartments. As Santa Cruz County Fire funds for the original purchase were limited, this donation will go a long way towards these items.

Rookies

We’d like to extend a hearty welcome to our four new rookies: Doug Aumack, Lance Phelan, Austin Rugg, and Danny Shaw. Each has already responded to local incidents. We will be introducing you to them in coming issues. And they need company. We are actively recruiting for next year, and already have several potential candidates. Would you like to join? Please visit our web site for more information and to contact us, http://southskylinefire.org.

2011 Santa Cruz County Firefighter of the Year Awards

Our own Andy Seigel has been awarded Volunteer Firefighter of the Year for 2011! From the announcement by Deputy Chief Scott Jalbert:

Andy joined Las Cumbres Volunteer Fire and Rescue as a volunteer firefighter in October of 2000 and, in 2006, was instrumental in the merger of Las Cumbres Volunteer Fire and Rescue with South Skyline Volunteer Fire and Rescue to form one company known as Santa Cruz County Fire Department - South Skyline Volunteers, Company 29. Andy has taken a leadership role in managing the finances, procurement, equipment, station maintenance, and training records for the South Skyline Volunteers, including personally mentoring new volunteers and assisting with the Basic Firefighter Academy. Andy has held a wide range of operational positions, and was promoted to Engineer in March of 2005 and to Captain in June of 2011.

The award was presented at the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors meeting on May 8, 2012.
South Skyline FireSafe Council
Grant Work in Full Swing

Have you seen the Cal Trans crews opening up the Skyline Blvd corridor, both north and south of Saratoga Gap? These are two separate projects, both using the California Department of Corrections (CDC) Ben Lomond crews directed by a Cal Fire Captain. For the northern project MROSD (Open Space District), and our South Skyline FireSafe Council are sharing the cost of this crew. The southern project is part of the grant funding that is producing an extensive shaded fuel break from Black Road to Rte 9 and down the Kings Creek Truck Trail.

We all owe a grateful thank you to all the Skyline volunteers who took the CDC ‘sponsor’ training a while back and are now monitoring the crew at work!

Our SSFSC vice president John Drew of Las Cumbres has been organizing these volunteers so someone is always there while the work is in progress.

Solving/resolving the raft of problems and demands of the grants is our grant project coordinator Eric Isacson. He has pushed the process along since the grant writing phase.

The fuel break work down the Kings Creek Truck Trail should have started by the time you read this. It will provide a critical fuel break between a wildfire in Castle Rock State Park vicinity and homeowners in the Las Cumbres area and to the south.

Save Our Local Parks—Portola and Castle Rock Update
By Judy Grote

As many of you know, Portola Redwoods and Castle Rock State Parks have been saved for this year. Sempervirens worked with the Portola and Castle Rock Foundation to save Castle Rock State Park. Sempervirens provided $250,000 in funding and the Foundation provided additional support. Save the Redwoods League and Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) worked with the Portola and Castle Rock Foundation to save Portola Redwoods State Park. $100,000 in funding was provided to augment the general revenues coming in to Portola Redwoods State Park as well as setup a capital improvements fund for a long list of projects. A condition of both agreements was that the community support the 2 parks via volunteers, ~ 60 in total. Agreements in future years will depend upon this continued community support

Both parks will have very limited funds for running and managing the parks. The rangers primarily will serve as peace officers. There will be very limited maintenance staff and park aides. This means volunteers are needed for such functions as 1) trail clearing, 2) trail patrol, 3) leading nature hikes, 4) camper programs in the amphitheater, 5) help with the Junior Ranger program, etc.

Stu Langdoc has been setting up and organizing the volunteer program in cooperation with the local Supervising Ranger, Mary Hazel. Training will begin shortly. If you can help out, please let Stu know. His email address is stulangdoc@verizon.net. If you are a MROSD docent, the Foundation would welcome your help.

Because each agreement is for one year only, the Portola and Castle Rock Foundation needs to continue soliciting donations and having fundraisers in order to support these 2 parks and keep them open.

If you can make a donation, you can do so either way below.
• online at http://www.portolaandcastlerockfound.org/help
• mail a check to: Portola and Castle Rock Foundation, 17680 Bruce Avenue, Monte Sereno, CA 95030

This will be a long haul. These park jewels need our continued support in order to remain open.
The following letter from Cal Fire has important information for anyone collecting firewood from the Shaded Fuelbreak Project along Skyline Blvd. If you are collecting this firewood from turnouts you should keep a copy of the following letter in your vehicle, otherwise you could be cited by peace officers.

**Roadside Firewood Rules Clarified**

Recently there has been some concern raised about firewood being removed from along Highway 35 generated by the Caltrans, RCD, CAL FIRE, CDCR, SSFSC shaded fuel break project. Additional concern was raised about some enforcement actions by State Parks. I met with representatives of Caltrans, SSFSC and State Parks to discuss these issues.

As a result, we all left the meeting in agreement with the following consensus:

- This is a worthwhile project and it is in our best interests to continue it in the future.
- All four entities are very happy with the work being completed.
- Processed firewood left on the side of this public road within safe turnouts should be removed and the public may remove it if they can do so safely.
- Public Safety and protecting both Public and Natural resources are our main objectives.
- Wood left on the ground that is outside of the flat portion of a turnout should not be taken by the public.
- Many of the lands around this project are State Park Lands with special laws prohibiting wood gathering.
- The public should not be cutting anything still attached to the ground.
- Generation of firewood is not an objective of this fuel reduction project.
- Caltrans and all of the other entities participating in this project are not in the business of transporting, processing or otherwise producing firewood.

The circumstances and justification of some of the recent citations or enforcement actions relating to firewood were discussed. One point shared with the group was; currently there are significant amounts of firewood poaching/trespassing off of both private and public property in the local area. This is a problem we are dealing with throughout the Santa Cruz Mountains. Several citations have been issued to individuals trespassing on public or private property cutting down trees and taking the wood to sell as firewood in town. This is against the law; it is timber trespass, timber theft, and violates several sections of the California Public Resources Code.

One law that was discussed at the meeting and alluded to in previous emails was California Penal Code 384.5(a)(1). This law requires someone removing "minor forest products" (firewood and burl) from a property and transporting more than 20 cubic feet of it on a public road, to have a bill of sale or removal permit with them. This is to prove that they have the right to have that wood in their possession. Without that documentation, it is very difficult to prove that the wood wasn't stolen.
Another disclosure made during our meeting was that several of the people State Parks Rangers encountered were going beyond simply picking up the wood piled in the turnouts. Some were found pulling logs off of hillsides along the road (sometimes as far as 100’ from the road) and a couple are suspected of taking chainsaws and cutting down additional trees for firewood. Wood left in the turnouts are fair game, wood on the hillside is likely left on the hillside for a reason. The general consensus was that if someone received a ticket, it wasn't just for removing wood from the turnouts.

So how to proceed.

We want to get rid of the wood left in the turnouts. We need to do that in a safe manner and comply with current rules and laws. The public may remove fuel wood left in turnouts along Hwy 35 as part of the Shaded Fuelbreak Program if the following conditions are met:

- The wood is in a pile on a turnout along the highway within the project area.
- The wood is already cut and in a pile, not attached by roots to the ground.
- No wood collection outside of the turnout.
- Your vehicle must be completely off the paved road within the turnout and you must be able to safely enter/exit your vehicle and load the wood without entering the road. (If your open door can be hit by a car going by, you are not complying with this provision)
- This must be for non-commercial use only. To ensure this we ask that individual loads be kept to less than 20 cubic feet. This would be the upper limit of a safe load for most small pickups. What we don't want are large dump trucks or overloaded pickups hauling huge loads off of this highway. That is outside the scope of this program.

**Those picking up and moving this wood should have a copy of this memo with them in their vehicle in case they are stopped by a peace officer.**

Our plan is to implement this process and evaluate it periodically to see if modifications are necessary. If you have any questions, please contact me. Richard.Sampson@fire.ca.gov

Rich Sampson
CAL FIRE

June 2012
Biomassive Effort

By Larry Watson

Apparently Bay Area residents considered the South Skyline area unsuitable for year-round habitation for several thousand years. However, it was great for game and other seasonal food harvesting, spectacular views of the sun setting into the ocean, and camping en route to the ever-popular Año Nuevo. The availability of water, food, and suitable shelter could be limited at times, but the South Skyline area has never been without abundant energy whether as real-time solar radiation or solar radiation previously captured in the form of flammable biomass.

Today we can use that energy plus other energy resources to pump water, grow food, and remain comfortable most of the time. But in the last 160 years or so, due to the absence of reoccurring fires above the upland redwood forests, the mixed evergreen forest habitat has continued to replace the oak woodlands, knobcone pine, chaparral, and grasslands. These mixed evergreen forests are increasing dominated by Douglas Fir (dougfir).

The region roughly outlined by Skyline and the coast could possibly become sustainably energy self-sufficient through increased solar photovoltaic production and a clean, wood-fueled biomass power plant in Santa Cruz or San Mateo county. Devoting a tiny portion of current open space to photovoltaic generation could provide financial support to parks in perpetuity. State and federal guidelines require 33% of California’s power from renewable sources by 2020. In 2009, biomass was supplying approximately 2%. I invite further discussion on this topic.

In order to establish and maintain pv power production, defensible space, solar hot water, and gardening in addition to the removal of falling hazards, it has been necessary for us to remove many, many tons of biomass, primarily dougfir. There will be a follow-on article about our 3-year experience producing photovoltaic power for our home.

In this article I will share our experiences for dealing with all this biomass that no one seems to want but which could help fuel a firestorm of disastrous proportions. We have come up with several ways to deal with the biomass generated by all these activities. These include:

1. Eliminate dougfirs when they are seedlings or maintain them as hedges or shrubs while they are still small. The later technique is challenging due to the lack of dormant buds below or behind the green growing parts. The trick is to form a cylinder of foliage that allows light from above to pass through the tree near the trunk and penetrate to the ground.

2. For large dougfirs, consider hiring a sawyer with a portable mill to produce rough lumber. Lumber from our logs lacked the quality to be graded for use in construction requiring permits. A small percentage was suitable for trim wood and most of the remainder suitable for outbuildings and other utility purposes. Unfortunately, you’re unlikely to save money compared to buying kiln-dried, graded lumber from the Northwest.

3. Chip, grind and haul to the landfill or wood waste recycling center. Home composting of this material is challenging and basically impractical. What can you do with a mountain of mulch?

4. Until we have a nearby biomass power plant, and as a last resort, burn it as safely and as cleanly as possible.

Indoor Burning

An article in the January 2012 issue of Skyline emphasized the dangers of increased particulates from space heating with sustainable fuels (wood) compared to using fossil fuels. I personally think wood-burning should be eliminated from homes that have access to natural gas and minimized in all other locations. On-the-other hand, wood from your defensible space is both local and sustainable unlike fossil fuels and pellets produced out of the area. I would recommend that readers review the epa.gov/burnwise site referenced in the January article for best burning practices.

Based on my experiences and research I suggest the following guidelines:

1. Burn only in a manner that no one will have to breathe the smoke.

2. Use wood from your defensible space: Dry and well-seasoned.

3. Use fire-starter biomass pellets made from waste wood and recycled vegetable oil rather than using paper to start a fire.

Assure that atmospheric conditions are acceptable. If a woodstove is hard to light or smoke rolls off the roof onto the ground, we are under the influence of high pressure where the air over the greater area is moving downward on-the-average. Whereas under low pressure conditions, surface air is moving upward. (Continued on page 10)
4. Use an EPA-certified wood stove. From the list of EPA-certified stoves, our stove is certified for a maximum particulate emission of 4.19 g/h and is 63% efficient. I estimate that our annual particulate emissions are less than 12 pounds per year to heat our home using approximately 2 cords of dougfir. A 5-pound “dougfir pellet” (2”x6”x18”) has the same potential BTU content as one-half gallon of propane. EPA certification specifies dougfir as the test fuel used in 2”x2” and 4”x4” cross-sections. Like a pellet stove, smaller fuel size and lots of air improves efficiency and reduces emissions.

5. The EPA-certified woodstove should burn outside air and lots of it, typically requiring an optional outside air kit. The use of indoor heated air for combustion can reduce beneficial air flow and force outside air to enter the house when burning.

6. Add small pieces frequently rather than packing the stove full and shutting down the air damper.

References:
1. http://epa.gov/burnwise/
5. Sawyer: http://santacruzsawmill.com

San Mateo County Update: County Vegetation and Brush Clearing
By Judy Grote

The goal of this article is to 1) inform the SSA Community who lives in San Mateo County about the County’s road vegetation and brush clearing for this time of year, and 2) give folks a contact where they can provide input on this for future years.

We live in the Portola and Alpine area. We periodically pick-up garbage along Portola State Park and Alpine Roads. The objective in doing this is to discourage littering and dumping of garbage. Lately, we’ve noticed quite a few cigarette butts along the road. This is not good because the field next to the road has been the source of 3-4 fires due to PG&E issues (lines dropping, arcing, etc) in the past.

This week we observed that the County was out with the masticator trimming back vegetation along these 2 roads. We noticed a tanker truck that accompanied the pick-up and the masticator and thought it might be spraying Round-up. So we went down and asked the supervisor if Round-up spray was in the tanker. He stated that it was water just in case a fire started in the dry vegetation.

We commented on how much better the roadside clearing was this year than last. He told me that they could only do 1 round with the masticator last year due to some complaints. The 1 round only covered about 6 inches from the road edge. This year they were given permission to do 2 rounds on both sides of the road with the masticator. They actually can do up to 21 feet.

Public Works would really like to do the 3 rounds for several reasons: 1) it cuts down on the vegetation, which can potentially be a fire hazard, 2) it makes it easier for the fire crews to come in because this 3rd round also gets rid of higher brush and very low hanging tree branches which are a problem for the fire trucks, 3) it gets in the ditches to remove the poison oak, which means crews that clean the ditches do not get as many poison oak cases, and 4) during the winter the vegetation is less heavy so there are not as many slides. While most of the vegetation does grow back, it is lower but still looks very nice.

What folks should know is that before they do any road masticator work in San Mateo County, a biologist comes through to make sure bird nests, rare plant species, or endangered species will not be impacted.

(Continued on page 11)
Adopt-A-Highway  
by Ruth Waldhauer

Our volunteers will be out July 21 to pick up litter on the section of Skyline adopted by the South Skyline Association.

Ami Jaqua and her friends worked on Thursday, July 13, gathering litter along Skyline Boulevard from Rapley Ranch Road to Old La Honda Road. With Ami were Helen Haydon, Rosemary Watt, Jennifer Heit, Jane Mackey, and Robin Pinckard.

South Skyline Association and Skyline Historical Society volunteers are responsible for gathering litter every two months. The sweep takes about an hour and a half. Please contact Ruth Waldhauer at ruth_waldhauer@yahoo.com or 650-948-1466 to volunteer.

So far there are 140 names on the honor roll listing all who have participated. We love getting new recruits. You will find that it is rewarding and fun.

Skyline is our paradise!!! Let's keep it beautiful.

San Mateo County Update: County Vegetation and Brush Clearing  
(Continued from page 10)

The supervisor also said that when they used to do the 3 rounds with the masticators there were no cases of poison oak when they cleaned the drainage ditches. Now they have quite a few cases every year.

This service is something we already pay taxes for so does not cost us extra. This also means we don’t have to ask for a grant to get the other brush and lower tree branches removed, so we have good road clearing on our county roads. It is a win-win for the community as well as Public Works and the fire crews that help us.

He said that if we wanted the County to do a more thorough masticator job (like used to be done), they would do it. However, we would need to write letters to or call Steve Fisher, who is Road Maintenance Supervisor for the Coastal area of SMC. Contact information for Steve Fisher is:

Address: Grant Corporation Yard  
Attention: Steve Fisher  
752 Chestnut St.  
Redwood City, CA 90063  
Phone: 650-363-4100  
(ask for the Grant Corporation Yard)

Request: Please write or call Steve Fisher in the San Mateo County Public Works Dept. and let him know if you would like a more thorough masticator job (3x pass through) on our county roadsides. Public Works suggested that we also cc Joe LoCoco (Deputy Director of Road Services). Voice your opinion either way.

Local Email for Community Members

Community members (both property owners and renters) are invited to join the local YahooGroup "SouthSkyline", as a way to share and become aware of local information.

This is a community list for community purposes; individual, commercial, non-profit, public lands agencies, CalFire, etc.

Membership to this list is open to local residents, people interested in moving to the area, people who have left but still want to stay connected, etc.

This YahooGroups forum is an appropriate place to advertise services and products of local relevance and/or created or provided by locals and/or recommended by locals.

As examples, appropriate topics include:
Fundraisers & benefits for local schools & non-profits, events of local organizations & entities including CalFire, memorials & funerals, people seeking or selling or giving away goods & services, weather, wildlife & plant questions & sightings, pet concerns & advice, jobs wanted/offered, recommendations for service providers sought & given, music events, local businesses info & events, gardening info, local government & public lands issues, fire & earthquake safety, emergency preparedness and so on.

Please avoid posting non-local politics or other non-local topics that do not directly affect us (there are plenty of forums for that), info with no local relevance at all (if it seems a stretch it probably is), and so on. If you're not sure, just ask by emailing the group owner directly.

This Yahoo Group is NOT affiliated with the South Skyline Association (SSA) or any other organization and you do not have to be a member of SSA or any other organization to join this group.

Feedback, suggestions and constructive criticism are always welcome so that we can keep this a valuable community resource.

To join the SouthSkyline YahooGroup send an email to SouthSkyline-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Email traffic on this list is light, so it's recommended that you choose "individual messages" for your settings (rather than the digest, which can delay time-critical event announcements.)

Questions or problems? Contact Georgia Stigall at georgiastigall@yahoo.com
Letter to the Editor

Expansion of Los Altos Rod and Gun Club

Dear SSA members:

A few months ago, one of our neighbors was notified that the Los Altos Rod and Gun Club (LARGC) intended to build a 3,200 square foot clubhouse and additional parking on their property adjacent to Castle Rock State Park. Word slowly spread to a few additional neighbors. As this proposed expansion was discussed, it became clear that many neighbors near the gun range felt that the impacts of the range had increased markedly over the last several years. There seemed to be more and more noise from more and more shooting as time went by. Since we all knew that the range existed before we moved into the neighborhood, we had to ask ourselves if it was fair for us to insert ourselves into their plans and attempt to halt further expansion of the negative impacts to our shared environment. How much expansion is okay in this situation? Should the range be able to build more shooting stations (there are over 120 shooting positions today), should they be able to increase their hours, should they be able to allow louder firearms? Do we have a right to impose a rational limit?

After several one-on-one discussions, we realized that we needed a neighborhood consensus, so we pulled a meeting of neighbors together. At this meeting we discussed the dilemma of the gun range’s right to expand versus our right to have the same noise levels that we bought into when we moved into the neighborhood. By the end of the meeting, we decided to insert ourselves into the process and provide the county with our collective experience and feedback. In short, we suggested that the gun range’s proposed expansion plans needed to provide for additional mitigations of noise, particularly since we believed that the range had already been expanding for many years without putting any mitigation in place.

By the time the neighbors were organized (holding meetings and even naming ourselves: CALM--Community Association for Life in the Mountains), the Santa Cruz County Planning Department had already issued a permit for the clubhouse, so an appeal would have to be filed. We contacted our county supervisor, Mark Stone, District 5, who listened to our concerns and filed an appeal. Since then, the appeal has come before the county supervisors three times. Each time, CALM has presented data obtained by our own investigations and each time, the supervisors have thanked us for bringing clear information forward for their consideration.

The data we collected and presented includes quantification of the levels of sound experienced at our homes and of lead in the soil and water in Castle Rock State Park below the gun range (more on this later). We also researched best management practices (BMPs) at gun ranges and discovered that there are credible sources for how this should be done. The National Rifle Association and the Canadian Royal Mounted Police have both published guidelines for managing gun ranges. As it turns out, these BMPs are not implemented at the LARGC.

Regarding sound levels, we hired an independent consultant to measure sound levels at one or our residences. As a baseline, consider that current county regulations allow no more than 60dB at the property line of the noise source (higher “dB” levels means louder sounds, with every 6dB representing a doubling of the sound level). Our measurements logged 6 continuous days of sound levels and found that there were as few as 45 (on Monday) and as many as 1607 (on Sunday) sounds between 65dB and 95dB during the eight-hour operating day; and all of this was from 1.5 miles away from the range’s property line. As a reference, the range is open to its 165 members and their guests Monday through Wednesday and is open to the public Thursday through Sunday. Their hours are 9:00 to 5:00 (closing at 4:00 in the winter).

Our initial soil samples obtained from Castle Rock State Park below the gun range showed lead levels more than 6 times the Environmental Screening Levels (ESLs are set for different contaminants and represent the maximum level for residential land use). Since our initial measurements, the Santa Cruz County Department of Environmental Health has sampled the area twice, and data from these tests show lead levels in the Castle Rock State Park soil at 3 times the “total threshold limit concentration for hazardous waste determination,” and lead levels in some water samples at 14X “the metal concentration not to be exceeded in aquatic life habitats.”

At this time, there are two independent efforts being pursued, one by the Environmental Health Department to address lead levels outside the range property and the other by CALM to address expansion of the range through the building of a clubhouse. The LARGC has asked for and been granted an abeyance of their building permit while, as we understand it, they engage consultants to address both the lead and sound issues. They have pledged to work with both the county and the neighbors going forward. The next hearing of the gun range’s clubhouse permit will take place in September. The Board of Supervisors urged the gun range and the neighbors to work together and produce significant progress by the September meeting. CALM awaits their proposals and looks forward to a mutually beneficial outcome. We welcome any of like mind who wish to join us in these efforts.

Sincerely,

CALM task force

info@CALMSkyline.org
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Next Deadline: September 2, 2012
Consider Getting Your Skylines by Email

For those members who receive the Skylines through the Post Office please consider the option to receive it on-line. This will save paper as well as postage. If you sign up for this option you will be notified by email when the next issue is released. Sign up and update your email address with Ruth Waldhauer at: ruth_waldhauer@yahoo.com or 650-948-1466.

Those members who live locally where we stuff mail boxes will continue to get a paper copy.

SSA Calendar

Summer General Meeting - Saturday, August 11, Jaqua Ranch 12:00 noon

October General Meeting - Friday, October 5, Saratoga Summit Fire Station

Business Meetings at 7:15 pm:
Thurs. September 13
Thurs. November 8
Thurs. December 13

(Call Judy Grote for location and directions)

President Judy Grote 650-949-1437
Editor Patti Begley 408-867-3973
SPUG & Membership Ruth Waldhauer 650-948-1466

Join SSA Today

For just $15 a year, your membership dues to the South Skyline Association will provide the funds to publish the Skylines newsletter, offer free classified ads, allow membership in the South Skylines Propane User Group, and provide speakers for our general meetings. Send your dues to:

SSA Membership Chairperson
22400 Skyline Blvd. Box 35
La Honda, CA 94020

Membership forms can be found in on www.southskyline.org.

Skylines Is Published Once A Quarter

Skylines invites individuals to submit articles and artwork.

Policy on Classified Ads: Ads are free to SSA members. No continuing ads will be accepted. They must be resubmitted for each issue.

Skylines Ads and News Articles: The deadline for submitting ads and articles for the next issue is September 2.

Send all ads and articles to: Patti Begley c/o 22400 Skyline Blvd #35, La Honda CA 94020, or SkylinesEditor@earthlink.net, 408-867-3973

We reserve the right to edit all submissions. We assume no responsibility for omissions, incorrect information or personal opinions.