



# SSA Virtual General Meeting

## How Our Local Volunteer Firefighters Helped to Contain the CZU

A PRESENTATION BY  
**CHIEF ARI DELAY AND CAPTAIN ANDY SIEGEL**

The CZU Lightning Complex Fires started in the early morning of August 16, 2020. It eventually spread north to near Pescadero, south nearly to Felton, and east to Pescadero Creek. It was part of the thunderstorms that produced close to 11,000 bolts of lightning and started hundreds of fires throughout California. Both of our South Skyline area volunteer fire and rescue units were quickly on scene starting that day. Chief Ari DeLay of the La Honda Fire Brigade with about 14 volunteers, and Captain Andy Seigel of the South Skyline Fire and Rescue with 8 volunteer firefighters, will be describing their unit's roles fighting the fire, sometimes with little more than a shovel!

There will be time for questions and answers.

**Ari Delay**, Chief of the La Honda Fire Brigade has served as a volunteer firefighter for 29 years. Chief Delay is a veteran of the fire service that has worked for Federal, State and Local Government Fire Departments. In addition to his role as Chief of the La Honda Fire Brigade He is currently Chief of the City of San Bruno Fire Department. Ari has extensive structural and wildland experience as an incident commander from initial attack through major incidents. He chaired the San Mateo County Mobile Technology Committee and understands the importance of a strong community of volunteers.

**Captain Andy Seigel** has been a volunteer with the South Skyline Volunteer Fire and Rescue (Santa Cruz county fire department) for more than 20 years, and a captain since 2011. He's a software engineer by trade, and an avid cyclist.

**Friday February 5, 2021**  
**7:00 pm**  
**Zoom Meeting**

**To join click on the link:**  
<https://clari.zoom.us/j/92930841531>

**A NOTE FROM THE LA HONDA FIRE BRIGADE:** As a result of the fire, the La Honda Fire Brigade is retiring an old truck to be replaced by a light fire truck that can navigate small lanes and over bridges that cannot handle the weight of large fire trucks. This will be a valuable asset in this rugged mountainous area!

The SSA has agreed to grant the brigade \$25,000 for this wildland engine, to be matched by private donations. Please help us reach our matching grant by donating on our website at [lahondafire.org/donate](http://lahondafire.org/donate)

If you have not used Zoom before, allow some extra time before the meeting starts to set up the Zoom components.  
 First-time users may find this link helpful "Using Zoom for the Very First Time"  
<https://my.cgu.edu/it/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2020/07/First-time-Zoom-start.pdf>

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# What the SSA is Doing...

BY EVAN DELLOR, VICE PRESIDENT

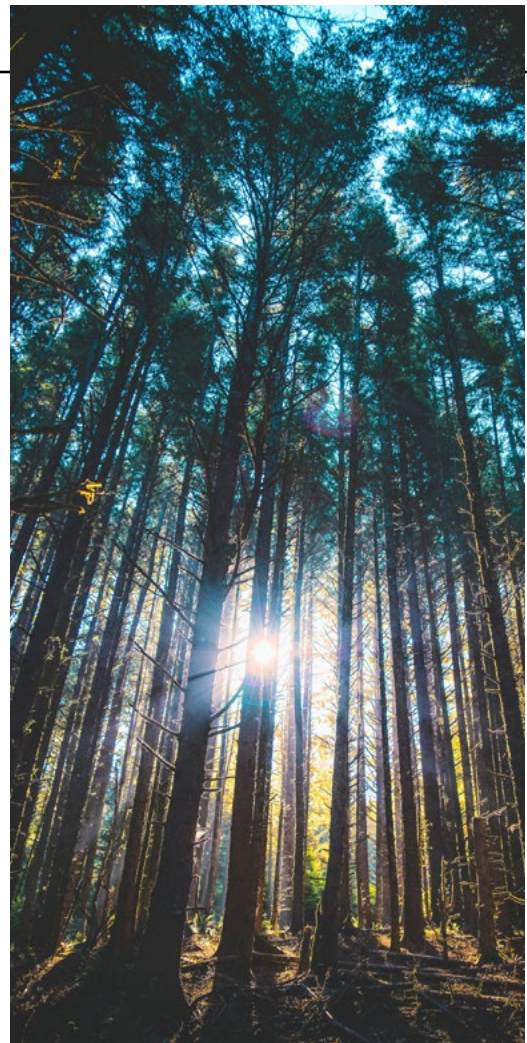
We had a very interesting presentation at our most recent virtual general meeting in November. Dr. Kate Wilkin and Amanda Stasiewicz of San Jose State University spoke about several wildfire related topics, including management of the Wildland Urban Interface and community to agency cooperation and communication regarding wildfire damage mitigation. Many thanks to the South Skyline Firesafe Council for recruiting these speakers to present at the meeting. It has come to my attention that the SSFSC's contribution in this regard was not directly mentioned during the meeting. My apologies for that mistake!

## Please consider volunteering to serve on the SSA board

The board is still currently looking to fill more seats. In particular, we need to find a new Treasurer! If you or anyone you know might have a lead on interested individuals, please contact Evan Dellor at [president@southskyline.org](mailto:president@southskyline.org) or Dick Schwind at [skylinerschwind@gmail.com](mailto:skylinerschwind@gmail.com).

Future board meetings and general meetings will continue to be remote at this time. The February general meeting will include the board elections, so please plan to attend! Details will be elsewhere in this newsletter.

We are looking into creating a sub-category for the annual grant application. This category would be specific to community water reservoirs. Look for updates in future newsletters as we make progress on this program.



# SPUG Quarterly Report

Month/Year	Amerigas	FerrellGas	Kamps	Suburban/SV
December 2020	2.750	2.930	2.850	2.750
November 2020	2.750	2.650	2.545	2.750
October 2020	2.750	2.420	2.250	2.430
September 2020	2.750	2.321	2.250	2.430
August 2020	2.750	2.321	2.250	2.430
July 2020	2.750	2.352	2.250	2.430
June 2020	2.750	2.390	2.250	2.430
May 2020	2.750	2.306	2.250	2.490
April 2020	2.750	2.306	2.250	2.490
March 2020	2.750	2.556	2.500	2.470
February 2020	2.750	2.540	2.600	2.470
January 2020	2.750	2.570	2.600	3.980
December 2019	2.750	2.600	2.400	3.980

Skyline Propane Users Group (SPUG) was formed to benefit SSA members. For information about joining, or for members wishing current information on the agreement go to our website: [www.SouthSkyline.org/spug/](http://www.SouthSkyline.org/spug/). If you have questions, please email [propane@southskyline.org](mailto:propane@southskyline.org).

SSA has agreements with Amerigas, Kamps, Suburban Propane Scotts Valley, and FerrellGas. The open market price is more than \$1.00/gallon higher than the SPUG price. Prices are subject to change as frequently as wholesale prices change. The prices SSA posts are for the first of the month. Our SPUG rate is based on a keep-full basis, not will-call service.

You are not required to pay sales tax on propane if you do not have natural gas available where you use propane. If you get your propane from Amerigas, you will need to submit a sales tax exemption form. Contact Amerigas for the form.

**Membership dues will be due in January.** Those whose SSA membership has lapsed can be disqualified by our propane providers from receiving the benefit of the SPUG price. Membership can be renewed at <http://SouthSkyline.org/membership/>. If paying by check use the Membership Application on the website.

# SSA Membership Report – January 2021

BY DEBRA BORN, MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR

## It's Renewal Time Again – And Time to Look Forward to Better Times

Most of us feel we're glad to have 2020 over, and rightly so as it's been a year like no other. The South Skyline Association Board continued to meet throughout the year over Zoom and tried to conduct business as usual in spite of the fact that meeting virtually is not usual. Fortunately, our membership count has remained at its usual level meaning most of our members continue to support our association even though you cannot participate in our face-to-face General Meetings. Our one virtual General Meeting was a resounding success with more people participating than at any of our historical meetings.

So, thank you for continuing to stay connected with us and your community. And now 2020 is behind us and we can be hopeful of getting back to normal business and events. We hope to see you in person soon to resume our connections which make living in these beautiful mountains so special.

Please remember to renew your membership for 2021 either online via our website or via check sent to: SSA Membership, 400 Skyline Blvd., La Honda 94020. Dues are still a stunningly low \$20 per year, and you can pay for multiple years when you renew. Although we may not see you until later in the year, we wish you well.

<http://SouthSkyline.org/membership/>

## SSA Board Elections – Candidates Needed

The annual SSA Board Elections will take place at the first SSA General Meeting in 2021. The board currently has five openings and is especially looking for a Treasurer.

Board members whose terms are up in January 2021 and are running for another term are: Dave Anderson, Patti Begley, Debra Born, and Jerry Parsons. Gary Gechlik who was appointed in November to replace Kristen Anderson will also be running for a full term.

Outgoing Board Members : Michael Rowe, Dick Schwind and Ruth Van Sciver. They have all worked hard for the South Skyline Association for many years, and we thank them very much for their time and talents.

**If you are a South Skyline resident and would like to volunteer some time to help on the SSA board please contact Evan Dellor: [president@southskyline.org](mailto:president@southskyline.org) or Dick Schwind: [skylinerschwind@gmail.com](mailto:skylinerschwind@gmail.com) .**

The purpose of the South Skyline Association is to foster a sense of community spirit, to keep residents and property owners informed of public agency actions or other items of concern in the South Skyline sphere of influence, to protect the rights and represent the interests of the residents and property owners of our area, and to engage in various projects to enhance the unique South Skyline environment.

## New Fall Grants Awarded

BY DEBRA BORN

In October the SSA Board decided to award three new grants related to fire mitigation. Because SSA did not host the usual in person General Meetings in 2020 the money saved allowed us to be more generous with our grant program this year.

The first grant was awarded to the La Honda Fire Brigade for a new mobile in-vehicle repeater to allow firefighters to amplify low power mobile radios during emergencies. The primary objective is to enhance on-scene portable communications for first responders.

The second grant was also awarded to the La Honda Fire Brigade in recognition of their exceptional service in fighting the CZU fire this summer and their importance to our entire region. That grant was a matching challenge grant of \$25,000 toward the purchase of a new Type V/

VI engine. This small engine will be a more agile and light, capable of making it over many of the bridges that larger fire engines cannot cross. Please consider making your own donation to the Brigade so we are able to match the full amount challenge grant. You can do so by clicking on this link: <https://www.lahondafire.org/donate> .

The third grant is toward the purchase of two 5,000-gallon water storage tanks with fittings which will be placed at strategic locations within the Portola Heights Community for emergency fire-fighting purposes. The Community will provide all of the labor to install the tanks. This grant was awarded as a pilot project with the idea that in subsequent years SSA may with the help of the South Skyline FireSafe Council identify and fund water storage tanks for other communities within our boundaries.

# SSA President Michael Rowe and Treasurer Kristen Anderson Leaving South Skyline

BY DICK SCHWIND

When Michael Rowe and Kristen Anderson came to Highway 9, a few miles down from Skyline Blvd, like nearly everyone coming here they expected it to be their last move. They soon joined the all-volunteer South Skyline Association Board, and 7 years ago Michael became President. Soon Kristen became Treasurer.

When the COVID pandemic resulted in their employers accepting a work-at-home policy, they decided they no longer need to be tied to the Bay Area. They have elderly parents in Oregon, so they are very soon moving to Eugene, OR to be close to them.

Michael's SEVEN years as SSA President is a record term by two or three years. And, what a productive, masterful president he has been (meetings lately on Zoom).

The SSA has gone through a large digital transformation for keeping records as our membership has more than doubled. Kristen's volunteer job as Treasurer involved much more than 'keeping the books.' She has also run the SSA grant program which has provided support to all of our other local volunteer groups (South Skyline Fire and Rescue, for instance).

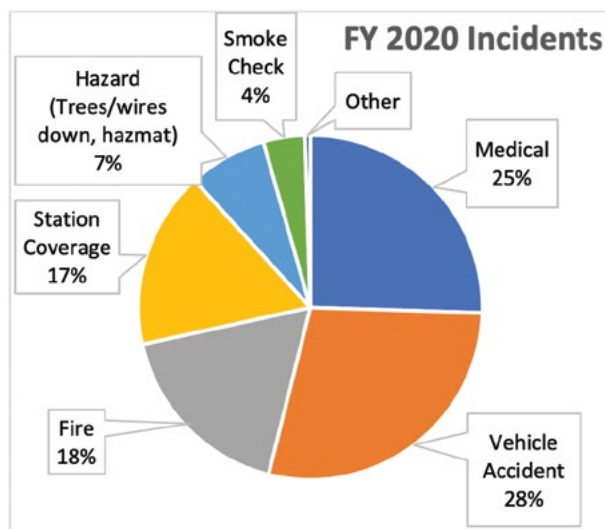
Michael and Kristen's combined volunteer service for the SSA of FOURTEEN years is a record unlikely to ever be matched! Au revoir to two of our good friends and neighbors.

## South Skyline Fire & Rescue News

BY ANDY SEIGEL, CAPTAIN, SSF&R

### Year in Review

We had a very busy 2020 between Covid, the CZU fire, and high call volume. We received 204 requests for service. The call types are summarized here:



We are very thankful for the support we get from the SSA membership and board! Thanks to you, we've had an excellent year with donations. With this funding, we replaced 3 nozzles, changed the configuration of some compartments on Engine 2911, funded a remote water storage project, purchased new chainsaw chaps and wildland hose packs – just to name a few. Thank you!

### Looking Ahead

We are excited to have two cadets in the 2021 Santa Cruz County Fire Academy. One is a South Skyline resident. The other is from Santa Cruz and will be part of our "day tripper" program. We also have a Cal Fire seasonal firefighter joining us as a volunteer. Day trippers and seasonals (who live elsewhere) do shifts at the station. We'll be introducing you to these new team members in future issues.

Although day trippers help us get the job done, emergencies happen day and night, and we cannot build the future of this fire company on members from San Jose and Santa Cruz. We are hoping to recruit 10 local volunteers over the next three years. There is information on our website about the program. We're happy to answer any questions; email us at [interest@southskylinefire.org](mailto:interest@southskylinefire.org). Visit us at <http://southskylinefire.org>.

# Fall 2020 Chipping Program is Largest Ever

BY JOHN DELONG, SSFSC

As we all know by now, the fear of wildfire can have a significant impact on people's lives and behavior. One proof of this cause and effect relationship is the huge increase in participation for the free chipping program provided by the South Skyline FireSafe Council twice each year.

This past Fall, 2020, SSFSC chipped for 73 homes after receiving applications from 81 homes. That is almost double the largest number of applications received previously. We estimate that we chipped over 123,000 cubic feet of brush for these 73 homes, in 9 days, another major record for us.

We want to thank all of you who participated in this valuable program. And please keep it up. SSFSC offers this free chipping program every

Spring and Fall for residents within our boundaries to encourage and assist you with the defensible space around your structures and reduce fuels on private roads.

And while this program is offered free to you, there is a major cost involved. The South Skyline Association does provide some funding each year, and we occasionally receive funds from the other FireSafe Councils in our area for chipping we do within their counties.

We encourage participants to make a tax deductible donation to SSFSC. We are a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. Please visit: <http://www.southskylinefiresafe.org/Home/donations>.



# Goat Trail Project Completed

BY JOHN DELONG, SSFSC

The Goat Trail Fuels Reduction Project was a joint venture between the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council (SCCFSC), which provided grant funding and project management, and our own South Skyline FireSafe Council (SSFSC). This project, led by Jim Young of SCCFSC, reduced hazardous fuels along the roadway and up to 30'-50' from the road edge, limbed up ladder fuels, removed large downed trees, and educated property owners what they can do to make their land safer. The Goat Trail is the southernmost section of Skyline Blvd (Highway 35) between Black Road and Bear Creek Road. It is mostly a single lane road and would have been a very dangerous evacuation route in case of a wildfire. But now, the sight-lines are better and the potential for heavy blowing embers and limbs falling into the roadway has been reduced. Phase I, from Black to Gist Road, was completed in July 2019. Phase II, from Gist to Bear Creek Road, in November 2020.

This project involved coordinating the two FireSafe Councils, CalTrans, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, CalFire, Huerta's Tree Service (our primary contractor), and San Jose Conservation Corps (working for MROSD). CalTrans provided an arborist, tree removal crews, traffic control and other assistance. Three landowners provided invaluable assistance to the project by allowing equipment storage and by taking cut material. Jane Manning, a member of the Board of Directors of the SSFSC, volunteered to be the primary local face for this project. Jane helped with outreach, obtaining permission forms from 76% of property owners. She also helped with biological monitoring and the daily coordination and landowner interface during the work. This effort received a formal recognition from SCCFSC, adding to SSFSC's stature as a local cooperator, and we at SSFSC hold such volunteer participation in the highest regard.

**South Skyline FireSafe Council**

324 Skyline Blvd, La Honda, CA 94020

[www.southskylinefiresafe.org](http://www.southskylinefiresafe.org)

The Skyline Boulevard region in the Counties of Santa Cruz, Santa Clara and San Mateo

# Portola Heights Fuel Reduction Project

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BY DEBRA BORN

The South Skyline FireSafe Council conducted a shaded fuel break clearing project throughout the Portola Heights Community funded by a CalFire grant obtained by the late Mark Haynie. Work started in mid-July and ended early December. Our all-volunteer council coordinated with CalFire to manage the project, obtained property owner permissions, flagged botanical species for saving, and supervised Huerta's Tree Service 7-man work crew. Jeff Solt, a resident of Portola Heights was on site nearly every day of the work and supported by retired firefighter Brian Schindler to supervise the crew's activities.

The scope of the work involved clearing hazardous fuels from along 8.7 miles of roads and creating a 100-foot radius shelter-in-place area within the community and the Long Ridge Open Space Preserve. Mid-Peninsula Open Space supported the project by allowing clearing along portions of roads within their property. The original project

scope funded by CalFire was to clear 7 miles of roadway, however generous donations by community members funded an additional 1.7 miles and clearances well beyond the roadway in places. The community's roads were very overgrown in addition to being very narrow, curvy, and having steep banks on either side. In the event of an emergency wildfire evacuation these roads may have been impassable.

Finally, a large thank you to CalFire for funding and providing the necessary environmental permitting, to MidPen for letting us clear on portions of Long Ridge Road, the primary access road to the Community, and to all of the supportive Portola Heights residents who so enthusiastically donated and encouraged the work. We've had nothing but positive comments by residents who appreciate that a shaded fuel break can be beautiful.

# Castle Rock Fuel Reduction Project

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Santa Cruz District California State Parks announces a new California State Parks natural resources project, called the Castle Rock State Park Forest Health Initiative, begins January 2021. It will reduce fuel loads and preserve habitat diversity by selectively thinning Douglas firs and

brush from areas that have historically been black oak woodlands. State Parks will treat 266 acres in a ridgetop section of Castle Rock. The expected completion date is Summer 2023.

# Oak Ridge Road Fuel Reduction Project

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BY KEN MACLEAN

Last spring, PG&E's Vegetation Management Operations Team announced its Fire Safe Council Project Funding for 2020. The South Skyline FireSafe Council applied for a \$36,000 grant to do fuel reduction along 1 mile of Oak Ridge Road to create safe ingress and egress in the case of a wildfire. In June we received notice that we had been awarded \$30,000 for the project.

Oak Ridge Road is 1.3 miles long and has 17 homes on 21 parcels. It is located at the southern end of the SSFSC boundary. It's entrance on Skyline Blvd. is a half mile from Black Rd.

The project employed Huerta's Tree Service. The prescription was to

remove the heavy fuel load from 20 to 30 feet on the downhill side of the road and create a shaded fuel break at road level. The grant allowed for 12.5 days of work. The Oak Ridge Road Association contributed \$3,600 to extend the project to 14 days. The work was done in two phases, two

weeks in mid-October and a week in mid-November.

The project was well received by the residents of Oak Ridge Road. In addition to creating a much safer road for evacuation and emergency response, it created clear site lines and aesthetic value.



Before



After

# Sizing Backup Energy and Power Requirements for When the Grid is Down

BY LARRY WATSON

*[DISCLAIMER: When specific products are mentioned, these represent the author's experiences/opinions and does not imply any endorsement by the South Skyline Association.]*

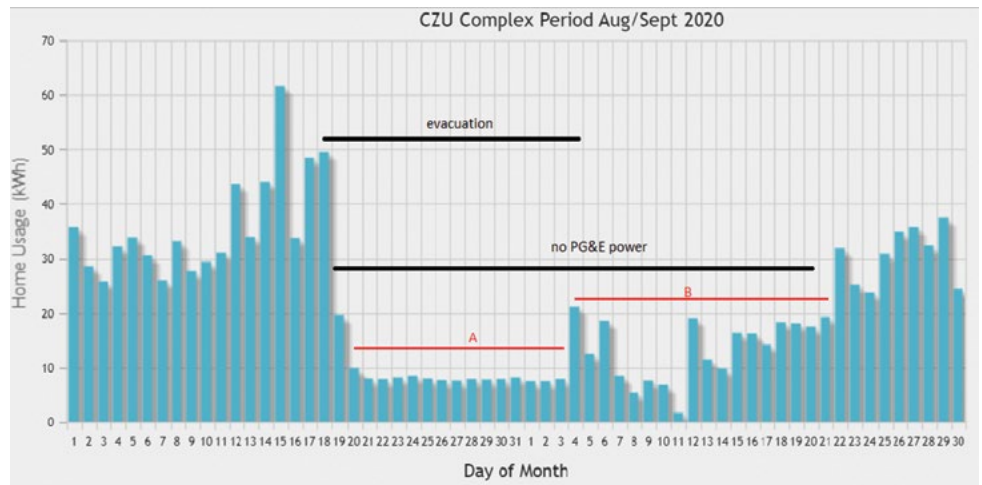
This article is an abbreviated version of a DIY paper available to anyone by request to [larry@solarmatters.com](mailto:larry@solarmatters.com). Questions and continuing communications on this topic are also welcome.

We have had a grid-tied solar system for 11 years but were unable to utilize it during outages until a minimum-configuration Tesla Powerwall 2 was installed in May 2019. Powerwall configurations can be charged either from a solar system, or from the grid, but not both, and not by a generator. Powerwall is not available to off-the-grid homes and so not a solution for everyone.

Sizing a backup power and energy storage system requires balancing four factors: for how long, how much solar power, how many batteries, and how much fossil fuel storage.

A solar-charged Powerwall system could theoretically provide power indefinitely without the grid. The caveat is that if the Powerwall's remaining capacity ever falls below the minimum necessary to start the solar system when the sun comes up, it will remain down until the grid comes back up.

In August and September of 2020, our all-electric, 42-year-old home experienced 32 days without PG&E power during the CZU Complex fire. However, it was continuously powered for the period by our backup strategies. We were evacuated August 18 and returned on September 4 as can be observed in our daily energy usage graph for August/September. The grid went down on August 19, 1 day after evacuation and the Powerwall took over in less than a second. We returned and were home for 16 days before the grid came back up on September 20.



With no one home and the sun shining, period A is our baseline of 8 kWh per day to run the refrigerator/freezers, water treatment (ozone, reverse osmosis), wi-fi/internet/satellite tv, and solar hot water pump. One Powerwall battery with 13 kWh can provide less than 2 days of baseline energy needs without solar charging.

After our return, during period B, the Home Usage reported does not include up to 12 kWh / day provided by electric vehicles and gasoline. Remember the "Martian Day," September 09, and the overcast sky for days during this period? Due to reduced solar power, several times I put our four 5-gallon gas cans in the EV and left home to fill and recharge.

Periods outside of A and B are typical of our average energy usage in August and September, 30 kWh / day.

Our dream configuration would have three times the solar power and two more Powerwall batteries. With it, we might not have needed our secondary strategies.

One near neighbor, also evacuated, utilized the legacy premier solution (automated propane-powered generator) that ran continuously for 12 to 14 days and it was a few more days until delivery was possible. The dedicated 500-gallon propane tank was sized to run for 2 weeks,

however, starting tank content is unknown. Fuel consumption could have averaged as much as 40 gallons per day. In round numbers that is \$100/day at SPUG prices.

Energy and Power, these words from the title are important: sizing a grid-backup system requires considerations of both. As an example, consider a 120V electric space heater that uses 1000 Watts(W), or equivalently 1 kilowatt (1 kW), on the highest setting. The power requirement is 1 kW. Running on high for 1 hour would require 1 kilowatt hour (1 kWh) of energy. So power times time equals energy.

In summary, you need both enough instantaneous power to start all devices on backed-up circuits concurrently, and sufficient production or storage to satisfy each day's total energy requirements.

Determining your historical average daily energy can be done from your PG&E bills or at [pge.com](http://pge.com). Each bill includes averages for three billing periods: current, previous, and last year. Multiply your desired usage by how many days of back up you want, and this is your starting estimate for backup energy storage (batteries and fossil-fuel). Note that some in our area may be eligible for rebates on batteries through the SGIP program <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/sgip/>.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

# Thank you SSA Board and Community

BY PAT O'COFFEY, LA HONDA FIRE BRIGADE

The La Honda Fire Brigade thanks the SSA Board and the SSA Community for their generous support. We were recently awarded two SSA grants for the purchase of an In-Vehicle Repeater System and for a Type V Fire Engine.

During the PG&E Public Safety Power Shutdowns (PSPS) in the fall of 2019, we identified communications gaps that were previously unknown. During certain times, NO communications were available to emergency services, except for local HAM radio operators. During the PSPS events, much of the VHF radio infrastructure that normally receives fire department radio communications was hampered, which obligated firefighters to use more powerful vehicle radios to get communication of critical incident information to dispatchers while away from the vehicle. This grant from SSA provides in-vehicle repeaters for Engine 57. This in-vehicle repeater system would amplify low power mobile radios, providing a more robust radio path to firefighters during times of emergencies. Last year, the SSA provided us a grant for an in-vehicle repeater for Rescue 57. This system has been in use for the last four months and its capabilities have been proven in multiple emergency incidents. This new grant allows us to have this capability in our two primary vehicles.

The second grant awarded to the La Honda Fire Brigade by the SSA is a matching grant of \$25K towards the purchase of a Type 5 Fire Engine. As you know, the CZU Fires were in very remote, difficult to reach areas of our community. This Fire Engine will be able to traverse our rugged terrain, fire roads and light weight bridges that a normal Fire Engine cannot. It can carry up to 400 gallons of water and fire fighting equipment to the source of the fire. It also does not require a special driver's license, allowing more of our firefighters to operate it.

After the CZU Fire, the La Honda Fire Brigade received numerous, very generous donations from our community and beyond. After replacing necessary equipment that was required during the fire fight, the Board of the Brigade discussed what would bring the most benefit in enhancing our ability to protect the community. We decided that it was a Type 5 Fire Engine. Thanks to those many donations, we have already achieved half of the funding required for this special engine. Thanks to you, if we raise an additional \$25K, the SSA will match that amount.

Please help us achieve that goal by going to our website at [www.lahondafire.org](http://www.lahondafire.org) and select "Type 5 Fire Engine" in your donation.

Once again, we thank the marvelous South Skyline Community for their continued support of the La Honda Fire Brigade.



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## SIZING BACKUP ENERGY CONTINUATION

Estimating your power requirements requires adding up the power requirements of each appliance, pump, motor, or whatever you need when the grid is down. It is safest to assume they all might start at the same instant. There are several ways to determine or estimate the power requirement of a device. Our kitchen's refrigerator nameplate states 5.0A at 115V. Multiply those together to get 575W. However, like well pumps,

booster pumps, and other motors, refrigerator/freezer compressors require more power (perhaps 2-3 times as much for a very short period) at startup compared to this sustained usage. This must be considered in summing up your power requirements. To more accurately determine a device's power requirement, measurement or vendor specifications can be used.

We had power available for a month utilizing a 5 kW Powerwall 2, a 3 kW solar system, a 3 kW inverter generator, and a 500 W microinverter for the EVs.

Our energy storage of 121 kWh was provided by the following: 13 kWh Powerwall, 40 kWh Rav4EV, 6 kWh Yamaha G2E, and four 5-gallon safety cans providing 62 kWh.



## Take A Hike... Coal Mine Ridge

BY KIM BORICK

One of the best places to hike in our big backyard during the “winter season” is Coal Mine Ridge. Located on the eastern flank of Skyline this property is owned by Portola Valley with a public easement. California native people, collectively known as Ohlone, lived here for centuries before European contact. They were the first people to establish a route, traveling from the foothills of today’s Portola Valley to the ridge where tribelet groups would trade, gather foods and material, or perhaps participate in spiritual ceremony. When a young Ohlone neophyte, known as Pomponio, tried to escape the Mission system in 1823, Spanish soldiers are said to have pursued him along this trail to his hideout in a deep, rocky gorge west of Skyline. The route eventually became known as the Old Spanish Trail and was incorporated into a modern trail system largely and lovingly created by volunteer residents of Portola Valley.

A popular loop hike begins at the intersection of Willowbrook Drive and Alpine Road in Portola Valley along the Toyon and Old Spanish Trails. Visitors will find a small parking lot and some roadside parking here. Trail information is posted but it’s a good idea to come prepared with your paper map (or download a trail map ahead of your visit.) There are several trail alternatives. From Alpine Road, head up the hill to the junction of Toyon and Old Spanish Trails; turn right onto TOYON.

As you make your climb through a variety of colors and scents of the mixed woodland, the trail narrows into single track. Along the way you’ll catch long views including a wonderful perspective of Windy Hill. Watch for signage of the Old Spanish Trail and turn left continuing up hill. As



you near the top of the ridge, take a break by the stunning, venerable oak tree and explore your options. You can return downhill via the Old Spanish Trail (2.5 mile) or take the Sunrise/Arroyo trails for a 4+ mile walk. Think about returning to explore all trails in this preserve.

Following winter rains, keep your eyes open for the many species of colorful and fabulous fungi to be found here; it’s a theatre of decomposition in action. In late winter you’ll encounter flowering trillium, warrior’s plume, milkmaids and hound’s tongue. Take care to admire these from the trail; off-trail inspection can sometimes lead to a mean case of poison oak even when stems are bare in winter.

Before you go please check the Portola Valley Town website for winter updates as well as further information for dog owners, cyclists and equestrians. **Happy Trails!**

MAP: <https://www.portolavalley.net/home/showpublisheddocument?id=120>

TRAIL INFO: <https://www.portolavalley.net/for-residents/portola-valley-trails>

## All Hail the Old Haul Road

BY JANET SCHWIND

During the recent CZU fire, it might have been the first time you heard of The Old Haul Road in Pescadero Canyon. Where did its name come from and what was hauled on this road?

The answer is “timber.” Around 1923 the Santa Cruz Lumber Company established a mill at the head of Pescadero Creek not far from Highway 9 near Waterman Gap. As usual, the company first removed the timber close to the mill. When that supply was exhausted, they went after the virgin redwoods and Douglas fir far down the canyon. To access this area, the company constructed a seven-mile-long broad gauge railroad parallel to the creek. A steam engine shuttled

back and forth on these tracks until 1950. Later the company abandoned the rails and brought in trucks. Some of these trucks, up to ten feet wide and carrying up to 100 tons, were so large they were not allowed on public highways. A wide road was carved out along the old rail line to accommodate them. It’s no wonder that recent firefighters were able to draw the line at The Old Haul Road.

In 1986 the Santa Cruz Lumber Company was reorganized under the name of Redtree Properties which continues to harvest mostly second-growth timber in the canyon. Since the mill had closed in 1971, the logs are now transported out of the area. Redtree demonstrates a modern

approach to forest management and has been certified by the SmartWood program of the Rainforest Alliance. Only 25 to 35 percent of the standing timber is harvested once every ten to fifteen years. All work is done according to a management plan, which addresses not only tree cutting but also road maintenance, replanting, and habitat restoration. If you are curious about this area, please remember that the upper part of the canyon is on private property.

You might have noticed that this material was plagiarized from The South Skyline Story (pages 33-34). No crime here though, because I wrote the book also.

# Miner's Lettuce Changes Its Shape

BY SARAH SCHOEN

Miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*) is a winter and spring annual with a familiar emergence of differently shaped leaves. In late winter, plants begin as a basal rosette of leaves on the ground. As the stems grow upward and outward from the base, their leaves are at first linear, then become spade shaped. And at flowering the two top leaves fuse to form a solid disc below the flower stalk. The species name *perfoliata* refers to the appearance that the stem perforates the disc.

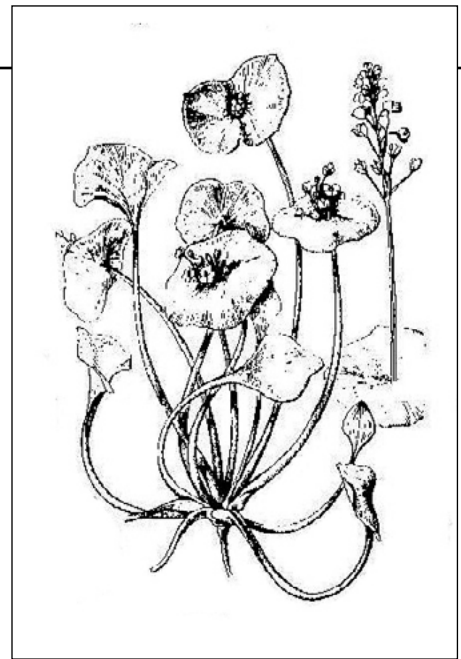
Flowers are in slender, downward-curved clusters of 5 to 40 tiny white to pale pink blooms. They have 5 notched petals, 2 separate, reddish-brown sepals, and 5 stamens, blooming from mid-February to May. The flowers are mainly self-pollinated, but may also be pollinated by insects, including very tiny flies. Fruits are small, roundish or egg-shaped capsules (pods) with 2-6 shiny, black seeds 1-2 mm in diameter. Seeds are mainly distributed by explosion, the pods building pressure as they dry out and then bursting. Ants may provide a secondary method of dispersal. They can collect the seeds and eat the tiny, nutritious white tips, called elaiosomes, leaving the bulk of the seed to germinate.

Seeds are long-lived and banked in the soil. Germination is most successful in disturbed areas, including after a fire. Peak numbers of plants are found between years 1 and 3 after a fire, depending on a location. The seeds are an especially important post fire source of food for some birds such as quail, doves, and juncos.

Miner's lettuce (along with other species in the genus *Claytonia*) is a larval food plant for the day flying owlet moth *Annaphila diva*. For many years, I observed a tiny and lovely, black, rust, and white moth on some of my spring hikes. The moths were in large numbers and flying low. When viewed very close up, the tiny scales looked like sparkling bead work. I had no idea until recently what the moths were up to – laying eggs on miner's lettuce. Adults are in flight from mid-March to early June. The early instar caterpillars eat the buds and flowers. Late instars eat the leaves as well.



Owlet moth *Annaphila diva*



Miner's Lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*)

A number of California Indians used miner's lettuce for food. Ohlones ate the whole plant raw in the spring and boiled or steamed later in the season. Gold miners ate the plants, which are high in vitamin C, to prevent scurvy. Miner's lettuce is crisp, succulent, and tastes like lettuce. As the plants age they can use excess sugars to produce a red pigment, and may become slightly bitter. Two groups of Indians used the plants medicinally. Shoshone applied a poultice for rheumatic pains. The Thompson Indians in British Columbia used miner's lettuce to treat sore eyes or to "help someone to see the right."

Miner's lettuce is found from southern Alaska and British Columbia, south to Central America in woodlands, grasslands, and chaparral. In California it grows below 6500'. The plants do best in areas with relatively abundant moisture in the spring.



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## Monthly SSA Board Meetings

At this time, future board meetings are scheduled to be held remotely at 7:00pm until further notice.

**February 11**

**March 11**

**June 8**

For further updates contact  
Evan Dellor:  
[president@southskyline.org](mailto:president@southskyline.org)

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*Skylines* is published once a quarter: January/April/July/October

*Skylines* invites individuals to submit articles and artwork.

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