

Mt. Hood Forest Homeowners Association

Fall / Winter 2009



President's Message

by Paula Hoiland

MHFHA

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What an eventful year 2009 has been!

The reason why many of us own cabins is to escape the busy-ness of everyday life and retreat into nature to enjoy the beauty and solitude the forest brings. Unfortunately, to keep our little slice of heaven we have a battle ahead of us. Thanks to the tireless effort of the "Cabin Coalition 2", lead by Pete Bailey who was a guest speaker at the our Annual Meeting in June of 2008, we have just received word that a one year moratorium is eminent.

At press time of this newsletter, the Senate has approved the amendment in an appropriations bill to place a one year moratorium on National Forest land cabin permit fees to

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**Great news – A battle has been won
but the war is not over.**

level. The House has yet to vote although we are expecting the vote to happen any day. While no major opposition is expected, it's not done until it's done. Once the House approves the bill it would then go to the President for his signature. Assuming that this bill passes and the Cabin Coalition feel confident it will pass, it would mean there will be no increase of any kind and no inflationary increase, regardless of where in the appraisal cycle they are at or which appraisal cycle is being applied in 2010. This would mean for the cabin owners in the Mt Hood Forest, we will **NOT** experience the scheduled increase in 2010 based on the 1998 appraisals.

The moratorium brings credibility to our issue with members of Congress, the Forest Service, and others which hopefully translate into action to solve this issue once and for all. C2 is already working on the next steps to achieve legislative change and already have Congressional staffers in key offices ready to work with the cabin owners.

If you haven't already visited our website, www.mhfha.com, to view the proposed changes to the way permit fees are assessed – do it today! Click on the link for "Alternative Fee Model Proposal" and read about the options at hand.

Your donations are greatly needed to continue to work a change at the legislative level. MHFHA donated \$5000 to C2 in 2007 and has pledged an additional \$5000 in 2009. We need your help. The money raised goes to pay for coalition members to travel to Washington DC to meet and work with key Congressional staffers and the Forest Service. Your donations help with other costs in this national campaign to change the permit fee process.

Until there is permanent change, we must continue to stay vigilant in the appraisal process. As you recall, all 24 typical lots on Mt Hood were inspected June 19-21, 2009. Tyler Woods was the independent appraiser hired by the Forest Service to conduct the appraisals. His work is complete and is now in the hands of the Forest Service Review Appraiser. This process is expected to be completed in December of this year. Although the appraisal results will hopefully

not affect the 2010 Permit Fees due to the Moratorium, it is vital that we stay on top of the appraisals and deal with any appeal issues that the results raise. Once the appraisal results have been released to the cabin owners, you have 60 days to appeal the results. MHFHA will request copies of all 24 appraisals and will post details on our website as they become available.

Another topic of concern and interest is the "Residence Tract Historic Management Plan" that the Mt Hood Forest Service is working on to design a plan for the 219 cabins in the Mt Hood area that have been designated with historic significance. This has many cabin owners concerned as to the potential increase in restrictions that may be placed on them for any changes to the historic value in the exterior of the cabin. Stay tuned as we post additional information on our website.

Thank you to everyone that was involved in the spring annual meeting and appraisal inspections. Our goal is having **ALL** 554 cabins owners in the Mt Hood tracts become involved!

See you on the mountain!

Crimes Rates Slide At the Cabins

Reports have been published extolling the fact that crime is down in Oregon. The Clackamas County Sheriff's office crime stats for 2009 concur. There were 10 burglaries or thefts reported, concerning Mt Hood cabins, from Jan. until Sept. During this same reporting time in 2007, there were 23 reported. This is a decrease of 56% from 2 years ago and is a significant reduction, but still if there were only one and it was you, it would be too many.

The first 4 months saw 90% of the crimes occurring. A back door or window was the point of entry for 50% of break-ins. Only one break-in was reported to have had an alarm.

We are hoping the downturn in crime is associated with the effort we put into informing all cabin

owners of our prior findings and the recommendations that were made two years ago.

Hopefully this downward trend can continue if all cabin owners remain vigilant and look out for each other. If you see something suspicious, please report it to the Sheriff's office at 503/655-8218.

Of the break-ins that occurred, several may have had less lost had they had double keyed deadbolts on their doors. The burglaries occurred by breaking the back door glass and simply reaching in and unlocking the door. The double keyed dead bolts would prevent this as well as preventing an easy access for egress afterwards.

While all crime may not be prevented, we can make it less desirable or more difficult to target our property.

Self Inspection of Cabins is Delayed

After a MHFHA inquiry to the Forest Service regarding the status of the self inspection program, the following information was received from Fran Lanagan, the Permit Administrator.

The self-inspection program is delayed. They hope to have it enacted for next summer.

The Forest Service will notify cabin owners and provide plenty of lead time prior to beginning the program. They really appreciate that cabin owners have been inquiring and are willing to participate. This will allow them to accomplish their inspection requirements more efficiently and will hopefully free up some

time to work on other things, like authorizing projects that people would like to take care of.

In other words, they are hoping to streamline the inspection process. They will still conduct inspections, but having the forms done by cabin owners ahead of time will help out greatly.

In the past we have received inspection reports filled out by the Forest Service. The new self inspection form will focus on many of the same details listed on that form.

When they are ready to launch the program they will notify everyone by mail, and they will also ask MHFHA to use our speedy email notification to let people know.

Cool Creek Cabin Owners Await 20 year Permits

Of the 554 cabins in the Mt Hood Forest, 25 are in the Cool Creek tract. In January 2009, we saw 20 year special use permits issued to all cabin owners **EXCEPT** for the cabins in the Cool Creek track. Cool Creek cabin owners were issued a special one-year permit as the Forest Service awaited an Environmental Analysis. That analysis was completed and Bill Westbrook, District Ranger, thought new permits would be issued by October 5, 2009. However, the timeline was revised to allow the "National Marine

Fisheries Service" (NMFS) to prepare its biological opinion in regards to the possible effects of the proposed re-issuance of the Cool Creek Tract Special Use Permits. The biological opinion from NMFS is expected no later than December 4, 2009. There will be a 45 day appeal period that will take place following the receipt of the opinion. **MHFHA** will keep you posted on this process via our website, www.mhfha.com. Please support Cool Creek cabin owners as they anxiously await news regarding their special use permits.

Have You Recently Moved or Changed Your E-mail Address?

Please don't forget to keep us informed of any changes. You can email us at info@mhfha.com or send a note to:MHFHA ... PO Box 82351... Portland, OR 97202

Make your "Summer Home" a comfortable "Winter Home"

With the concern over increased annual fees and the higher values placed on our cabins, people are beginning to look at their investment as more than just a "summer home." Even though we just experienced one of the hottest summers on record, we have also experienced more snow and colder winters in the past couple of years.

Many cabin owners are looking for ways to heat their cabins quicker and maintain the warmth for less expense. Since most of the older cabins were built with the premise that they would be used as "summer homes," they lack adequate insulation. Some are even built utilizing "single wall" construction methods. While newer renovated or recently built cabins have a central heat system to maintain a constant temperature, the majority do not. So what choices do we have?

First things first

Focus on buttoning up your home to air infiltration and leakage first, including around windows and doors, then focus on investing in insulation. Consider insulating the attic first. Although less heat is lost there than the walls, it is much less expensive to insulate the attic than the walls.

You can easily add additional attic insulation by utilizing Blow-In Insulation. Both Lowes and HomeDepot are a source for a product called GreenFiber Natural Fiber. Generally they will loan you a blower free to install the product. The material can also be used to

fill the walls utilizing a nozzle attachment and blown through small holes in the siding or inside walls. The cost is about \$12 for 16 cubic feet.

The next area to think about is the floor. If our feet are warm, our body seems to feel warmer. The simplest method, but certainly not the least expensive, is a blown on expandable insulation under the floors. This system does not allow habitat for rodents as it offers no food source nor does it offer nesting material as does a fiber batting. This product is available from Spray-On-Foam and could cost about \$1000 for a 700 square foot building. But it is worth it to feel warmer.

Heat sources within the cabin ...

Most of the old cabins had a large river rock fireplace in a single room used for heat and cooking. While these may be esthetically beautiful, they can be a real heat drain. Consider a good wood stove or better yet a propane heater that could give you almost instantaneous heat upon arrival. Some of these units are totally vent-less and mount on a wall taking up not much more space than a 26 inch flat panel TV. They provide more than adequate heat for a 1000 square foot building for less than \$250. The beautiful thing is that they require no electricity, therefore, they are silent and will keep you warm even during a power outage. Some units are thermostatically controlled. These are some areas that could make your cabin toasty warm on a cold winter night and hopefully entice you and your guests to enjoy your cabin all year.

Check it out: Sources for items mentioned in this article as well as web sites mentioned in this newsletter are listed on our site under Quick Links

Where is the heat loss:*	
▯	Infiltration / Air Leakage: 35%
▯	Windows and Doors: 18%-20%
▯	Floors and Below Grade Space: 15%-18%
▯	Walls: 12%-14%
▯	Ceilings: 10%

* homerepair.about.com

Last Minute Winterizing Reminder For Your Water System

Ever had a broken water line at the cabin? Many of us have.

Now is the time to take preventative action to ensure no "spring time" surprises. The forecast for this coming season is expected to be just like last year.

Check our "Spring 2007" Newsletter at our web site for details to protect your system. (www.mhfha.com/documents/MHFHA07.pdf)

A leak from a broken pipe can be expensive, not only for you, but is a drain on the total system and reduces the available pressure for your neighbors.

Forest Service says “Don’t call us, we will call you.”

As most of us are well aware, the Forest Service has a very limited staff and they have been working very, very hard the past two years on getting the inspections done and working with the appraisers. Staff time is severely limited.

The appraisal inspections were done in June over a Saturday and Sunday by an appraiser hired by the Forest Service. He inspected the

24 “typical” lots that represent all 554 cabins in the Mt. Hood tract.

To date, the results of those appraisals have not been received by the Forest Service. Therefore, it has been requested there be no calls, letters or emails to Fran Lanagan or Christy Covington at the Forest Service for appraisal information. They will let the cabin owners know as soon as they know. At this point, no news is good news.

38

Percentage of cabin owners who signed up for e-letters.

12

Percentage of owners asking for e-letters but have not contributed to MHFHA this year.

25

Percentage of cabins we have not heard from for several years.

Your Financial Support Is Needed

With the help of many generous donations from area cabin owners, MHFHA has been able to give financial support to the efforts of the “Cabin Coalition 2” (C2) in our continuing struggle at the legislative level in Washington DC., in order to keep our cabin fees from skyrocketing. With the initial success of the Senate passage of a one year moratorium, we need to realize that there is more hard work ahead.

Please send a donation to MHFHA today so that we may continue to support the C2 efforts. When sending in your MHFHA dues, please add a generous donation!

We must all stay engaged!

Donations may be sent to: MHFHA PO Box 82351 Portland, OR 97282-0357

Notes from the Treasurer:



This newsletter is our first edition to be sent by electronic mail. If you had asked to be put on our e-list for the newsletter and you had sent a member contribution for the current year you should have received an email with this fall letter.

The benefit of the e-letter is that all persons that have given us an email address can now be informed. This allows all members of a family to receive the information. The “snail mail” letters are only sent to the person officially listed on the permit. At this time we have no restrictions on the number of email addresses to be allowed for a cabin.

In the future the added benefit of the e-newsletter will be that it may have additional pages that are not in the “snail mail” copy. We had limited our mailed letter to four pages due to cost. Our Spring Newsletter will continue to be sent through the mail to check for current addresses and also will be used to request contributions to maintain the organization.

If you would like to receive future Fall Newsletters by e-mail, or if you have family members that would be interested in being on our e-list, send a request to info@mhfha.com and please specify your road and cabin.

Visit our web site at: www.mhfha.com

If you do not have your e-mail address on file with the association, now would be a good time to visit the site and send us your address so we can keep you informed when important issues come up.

Email us at info@mhfha.com