



# OFHA Newsletter

Oregon Forest Homeowners Association

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### President's Message

I hope you have been busy doing your spring chores and projects at your forest cabin. Some of us have found winter surprises after the snow has melted to allow access to our cabins. Others experienced relatively light snow this winter and were able to drive to their cabins all year long. Diamond Lake was still snowed in as of May 31st!

There seems to be a perpetual list of cabin chores and projects to accomplish and we like it this way. With Oregon Forest Homeowners Association there is also a perpetual list of responsibilities and tasks that need taking care of. Some of these tasks get put on the back burner too long. Our amended by-laws & Articles are now officially registered with the state of Oregon. We have moved our website duties and updated the information. The delayed ballot for this year is attached to this mailing.

Two cabin owners have stepped up to the plate to take positions as officers of our organization. Scott Letourneau is our nominee for Treasurer and Jean Baecher-Brown is nominated to be our Secretary. The ballot process was delayed in order to bring more candidates to your organization. Please take time to read the biographies of Scott and Jean. Please be sure to vote and return you ballot as instructions indicate.

Thank you to both Scott and Jean for your willingness to serve OFHA. I know that your perspective and attention to the organization will be very helpful.

In the meantime your board has been busy attending tract meetings, bringing you up to speed on C2 and Oregon appraisal action and listening to your needs and concerns.

In this newsletter we touch on several interesting stories. History is revealing that our cabin permit program emerged in the early 1900's and allowed more than the wealthy access to the national forests. At our annual meeting we had a diverse response to the concept of an expanded wilderness designation by Oregon Wild, the former Oregon Natural Resources Council who brought us the spotted owl legacy. Some of our members avidly support the proposed Crater Lake Wilderness proposal ("let it start at my back door") while their neighbors view it as too restrictive and unnecessary. OFHA is considerate to both perspectives and encourages dialogue. There are valid arguments for and against this proposal. What we want to do is to make our members aware of the proposal and we want those concerned to engage.

Please spend more time at your cabin. Find time to turn off the cell phone and take a walk in the woods to listen and take in what it is that brings you back to your favorite place in Oregon.

*Bill Kennedy, Crescent Lake*

## Dates to Remember

### Fall Oregon Forest Homeowners Association Board Meeting

**September 11th, 2010**

9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Crescent Lake  
Details to follow

### Oregon Forest Homeowners Association Annual Meeting 2011

**March 6th, 2011**

10:00 a.m.  
Details to follow.

### National Forest Homeowners Association Meetings

**July 29, 2010**

Area Forum at Bemidji, MN

**September 18, 2010**

Forum at Boise, Idaho

**January 22, 2011**

Forum at Tucson, Arizona

**April 14-16, 2011**

Convention at Irvine, CA

## THE FRONT BURNER ISSUES

Oregon Forest Homeowners Association thanks all of our members and the tract organizations that have contributed to the efforts of Coalition 2. Besides the financial support, many individuals have given countless hours of their time to the cause of improving the Cabin permit fee determination process. The latest report from C2 follows.

A complementary effort to address the current fee – appraisal process has been successful for several tracts. Chuck Ehlers at Diamond Lake shares his experience and perspective on the second appraisal option.

## SUCCESS

How do you achieve a set goal? It's certain you can't wait on it, you have to act. Fortunately, the Diamond Lake tract has an actor. When the forest service completed their appraisals of the three typical lots at Diamond Lake, our actor Bernie Kosola, said: "this appraisal is not correct. Many people, yours truly included, said "...well the increases are tolerable, so let it go...". The problem is, if you accept what is handed to you, then that is exactly what you will get. Fortunately, Bernie and a group of dedicated permit holders pursued a second appraisal under the Cabin User Fee Fairness Act regulations.

Bernie looked at the comparable sales the Forest Service's contract appraiser selected. They were mostly outside of our isolated area and in low elevation locals. The reappraisal group at Diamond Lake had spent many hours locating comparable land sales for submission to the Forest Service contract appraiser prior to the first appraisal at Diamond Lake. A comparable sale is the selling price which is the result of an actual transaction between a willing seller and a buyer. The Diamond Lake Board of Directors chose not to organize a reappraisal effort therefore the reappraisal group set about raising funds from concerned permit holder and hired Glenn Crouch for the second appraisal.

After submission of the second appraisal to the Umpqua National Forest the Diamond Lake District Ranger sent a certified letter to Bernie Kosola accepting the appraisal for determining values for permit fees. The resulting reductions in value are 42%, 35% and 30% for the three Diamond Lake typical lots.

This process worked to achieve an equitable fee for the Diamond Lake permit holders. It wasn't easy and it wasn't fast but it worked! If your tract is not out of time and you feel like working for your own reappraisal, contact OFHA President Bill Kennedy or myself and we will provide the information you need.

*Chuck Ehlers*



## WHILE WE'RE LOOKING THE OTHER WAY

These are busy times for most of us. Some of us are focused on new legislation to replace the Cabin User Fee Fairness Act. Some are focused on the annual maintenance our summer homes need. While some of us are waiting for the snow to melt so we can access our cabins (Diamond Lake). What no one seems to be focusing on is the sweeping wilderness designation proposal by Oregon Wild.

Oregon Wild, formerly The Oregon Natural Resources Council, wants wilderness designation for a tract of land extending from Crescent Lake at the North to Lake of the Woods at the South. Whether your initial response to this is for or against the proposal, let's take a closer look at the Crater Lake and Diamond Lake area impact.

Currently the forest in the Diamond Lake Basin is beleaguered with a pine beetle infestation. If left unchecked, the net result will be a catastrophic forest fire. The wilderness designation will effectively forestall current plans by the Forest Service to remove the affected trees and thin an already overcrowded forest.

Oregon Wild extolled the virtues of their plan at the Oregon Forest Homeowners meeting in Clackamas earlier this year. When asked what effect the wilderness would have on the potential for fire in the

Diamond Lake Basin, Oregon Wild Spokesman Erik Fernandez replied "...there are good forest fires and there are bad forest fires...". This author would have to classify a fire that burns in a wilderness less than a hundred yards from the Diamond Lake Cabin tract as a bad fire.

When Mr. Fernandez was asked to comment on the anticipated winter closure of the Diamond Lake Lodge because the wilderness designation will close the areas important for snowmobiling, he answered, "...they'll just have to concentrate on the cross country skiing trade.". That is an unlikely alternative. The question asked was this: "Diamond Lake Lodge supplies a 12 to 15 million dollar economic stimulus to five Oregon Counties yearly. One third of that stimulus is generated directly from the snowmobile trade during the winter. The winter closure of the Lodge at Diamond Lake will eliminate eighty full time jobs. Is it responsible in these straightened economic times to propose a wilderness designation with this result?"

Mr. Fernandez also implied that one of the pressing reason for the Crater Lake Wilderness designation was to protect Crater Lake National Park from logging. There are few sure things in life but this is one of them: wilderness designation or no,

there will never be commercial logging in the Park.

In an other statement, Mr. Fernandez stated that only four percent of Oregon Land is in wilderness designation. What he failed to state is that 16 percent of that four percent is in forested land.

I am sure that Oregon Wild is dedicated to the preservation of wilderness. However there may be more to consider. Oregon wild is an organization with paid employees. It follows that it is in the best interest of their continued employment to seek areas of perceived threat and protect them. This is not to say that certain features of the public lands are not worthy of protection. They are and the most worthy are already set aside.

One other consideration: it is anticipated by a ranking U.S. Forest Service employee that the Crater Lake Wilderness designation would be achieved without public comment by use of the Antiquities Act by the current Federal Administration. If the designation is a good idea should not there be discussion and comment by the owners of the land? Or should we leave it up to the people who make their living from this sort of enterprise?

*Chuck Ehlers*

## Some Timely Perspectives

Putting our lives into perspective with our pasts and where we hope to be in the future is always a good exercise. Our recreation in the wilds of Oregon goes quite a way back in time. In the book *Cabin Fever*, Rachel Carley (Simon & Schuster) touches on the past interests in getting away from the heat and headaches of modern life and relaxing in the woods. In the chapter "A refuge from Routine", Carley says:

By the 1930's, the national income tax and the onset of the Great Depression had spelled the end for America's most extravagant wilderness getaways. At the same time, however; the Works Progress Administration initiated many reforestation projects and in 1937, at the heights of the Depression, produced the rustic Timberline Lodge, tucked into the southern brow of snow-crested Mount

Hood in Oregon. The timber-frame mountain hotel, stretching 360 feet along a rocky ridge six thousand feet above sea level, was an ambitious public project. Oregon's largest WPA building and one of the largest of Franklin D Roosevelt's New Deal constructions.

During the same period, federal and state governments began leasing permanent building sites in forest and park lands and selling timber at cheap stumpage rates. Wilderness living thus grew even more within the reach of the average American.

We have two stories from cabin owners that touch on the past. One story is from the beginning days of the Crescent Lake Tract and the other story is on the award winning Marion Forks Tract.

## A Tale for the Generations

*By Linda Steppan*

It was the fall of 1954 and my father and uncle, John and Robert Baecher were returning home from a vacation to the Century Drive lakes when John remembered his friend Joe telling him that the Forest Service had opened up more lots for lease at Crescent Lake. He thought that would be a great place for a cabin because he loved fishing the nearby streams and lakes and besides, the leases were only a dollar a year! When they stopped at the ranger station in Crescent to investigate, they were dismayed to learn that no more lots were available. But the ranger took John's name and address anyway, just in case. About 6 months later in March of 1955 he

was contacted by the Forest Service and was very surprised to learn that a lot had become available. Apparently a California dentist who had been assigned the lot was not making plans in a timely fashion so he lost his option for a lease.

My parents had until May 30th to submit their decision regarding the lot. So in March, John and my mother Rose hiked in over an enormous amount of snow to see if they could find the lot. From the road they could not see any cabins so they trudged down to the lake to see if they could spot them. They subsequently discovered that they had walked over the snow-covered roof of a cabin to get down to the lake. One of the cabins had collapsed that year due to the weight of heavy snow.

Many weekends during the summers of 1955 and 1956 were spent by my family and our friends making space for a cabin in the dense brush and fallen trees. One huge old growth fir log lay across the lot so my Dad cut it up using a 5 foot Titan chain saw and got 20 cords of wood for his efforts.

During the winter/spring of 1955-56 Robert drew the plans for a cabin and had them approved by the Forest Service. The cabin design included a shake roof, so during the summer John set out to find the perfect cedar log, well aged but without beetle damage. A perfect specimen was found along Salt Creek. The log was cut into 100 bolts and floated downriver to a spot closer to the road. John's assistant was a family friend named "Butch" who was 15 years old. Butch's task was to catch the bolts after John threw them in the river in one-minute intervals. But the bolts got hung up along the way, broke loose and came down in large groups so Butch had "a devil of a time" getting them out of the creek! John hand split the shakes throughout the summer.

Cabin construction began late in the summer of 1956. Robert, along with his building partner Jerry and friend Herb poured the foundation, framed the cabin, put up the siding and roof all before the end of fall. Dad remembers carrying many buckets of water uphill from the lake for the concrete. Electricity was borrowed from the Hardins, our new next-door neighbors who were also building their cabin.

More than half a century has now passed, the cabin stands as if untouched by the passage of time and soon a fourth genera-

tion will be grateful that John and Robert Baecher stopped by the Crescent Ranger Station in the fall of 1954.

## **Marion Forks Receives the NFH Outstanding Tract Association Award**

*By Sharon Karr*

Where is Marion Forks? Anyone driving Oregon's Hwy. 22 is familiar with the restaurant that has been a mainstay along Marion Creek on the west side of the highway for the last 35 years. On the east side, right next to the new bridge over Marion Creek, is a narrow road that goes to Marion Lake. A short way up the this road on the creek side is a small tract of 18 cabins that date back to 1934, owned by a dedicated group of cabin owners, committed to serving their Marion Forks Summer Homes Association and working with OFHA and NFH.

A few words can be used to describe this tract: dedicated, volunteers, teamwork and cooperation; the following stories provide insight into the workings of this small but active tract.

This small tract has no electricity, a community-built water system dating back to 1951, and a phenomenal cadre of volunteers, going back many decades. The tract association officially organized in 1952 and has met for an annual meeting every year since, for 57 years. Marion Forks joined Oregon Forest Homeowners' Assoc. (OFHA) at its inception in 1969 and joined NFH in 1982.

In 1951, the tract met and came to a consensus that they needed to build a community water system, progressively adding cabins to the system and bringing water to all 18 cabins. Previously, in 1940, the tract had obtained a Special Use Permit for the water system. With a \$25 per cabin assessment, all the cabins were added to the system over the next 15 years. In 1980, the EPA required an installation of a chlorinator for the system, so another \$25 special assessment was collected to install and maintain this addition. Then in 1993 the EPA determined the water system was a non-community system due to the small size and was not under the jurisdiction of the EPA. The chlorinator was abandoned and each cabin became responsible for the purity of the water they use. Later a holding tank was added and the degree of fall

was increased to provide more pressure to the gravity-flow delivery of water. All this work is completed by volunteers from these 18 cabins and their dedicated water masters, turning the system on and off each year, including Norm Morgan, father of the current president. Today the water system is in need of an upgrade, replacing and burying pipes. Guess how Marion Forks will get this done? Volunteers. Each cabin providing material and time as they are able, working with the Forest Service in the event any burial sites or artifacts are encountered when digging to move the pipes underground.

Another example of the cooperative workings of this tract; important decisions are made by consensus. As an example, in 1969 the power company was extending electricity delivery to the fish hatchery up the road and asked Marion Forks if they wished to join. The tract unanimously replied with "no thanks. We want to stay simple and rustic."

Their annual gathering includes a meeting and a barbecue just as many tracts hold, but Marion Forks has gone one step further, selecting a permanent site within the tract. Together the cabin owners constructed a community barbecue to share and for all to enjoy and where they mount plaques that recognize the service of their tract and its volunteers.

Marion Forks has fostered goodwill between permittees and government officials and has promoted a better understanding of the positive role played by permittees, working closely with their Forest Service Permit Administrator, Penny Keen. They have an excellent working relationship with the Forest Service, across multiple generations of cabin families. The Forest Service began attending their tract meetings in the 1960s and have said, "We (Forest Service) look to this tract as an example of what the recreation residence program was meant to be and should be."

This tract has worked together through events affecting their local area and the recreation residence program as a whole:

In 1966 the Forest Service announced a new fee system, appraisals. Cabin owners prepared and submitted an appeal. The Forest Service denied it because it was prepared by the tract as a whole, and not by individual permit holders. The appeal was refilled by individual permit holders and

was accepted by the Forest Service. Fees were adjusted down by 40%.

In 1972 Jefferson Wilderness Area was designated, a few miles east of the tract, bringing changes in use and access to the area.

In 1983 a signal system was worked out with the county sheriff's office. When a cabin owner is in residence, a specific colored flag is displayed at the cabin so the sheriff can see from the road that the occupants are informed thus supposed to be using the cabin.

In the 1990s the tract held a work party to install the posts and cabin numbers required by the Forest Service.

In 2002 they implemented a forest fire response system due to several fires in the area. Each cabin has an air horn and a signal blast system is set up to notify anyone in the area of a fire. An evacuation plan is in place for the entire tract.

In 2008, with their tract's annual dues of just \$20 per year, they were among the first to step up and send a tract donation to C2. They support NFH and C2 goals, understanding that the appraisal method has not served them well, staying informed on the progress of C2, writing letters, and sharing information among their tract's families.

Marion Forks has a website, <http://www.marionforkscabins.com> where each cabin can be viewed and owners can contact each other. The website has been used as a sample of recreation residences for C2, helping congressional staffers and lobbyists understand the simplicity and remote nature of the program.

#### **Current and past volunteers include:**

Sally Morgan – tract president for the last 17 years, was previously an Oregon Forest Homeowners' Assoc. (OFHA) board. Sally's father, Norm Morgan (deceased), served as president and water master in years past.

Judy Odell – tract secretary/treasurer for the last 38 years. Prior to Judy, Chip and Shirley Johnson served this post from 1952 – 1971.

Donna McNeil – Willamette Natl. Forest representative to OFHA. (Her grandfather, Don McNeil, Sr. was the first tract president; her father, Don McNeil, Jr. compiled and wrote the tract history in 2002.)

Henry Childs, Jr., and Henry Childs, III, have served as tract president and vice president for a total of 22+ years.

In 2002, on the 50th anniversary of forming the Marion Forks Cabin Association, a history of the tract was compiled and written. In this history, Don McNeil, Jr., wrote:

...the solidarity and dedication to our Association continues with many second and third generation members of original permit holders' families maintaining the legacy they have been given. In reviewing this history, the reader's attention is directed to the overwhelm-

ing number of permit holders who have consistently attended the annual meetings and contributed their time and energy to making the association a model of cooperative effort. The association is widely praised by the Forest Service for its cooperation and efforts in promoting harmonious usage of the Summer Homes permit concept.

Don McNeil, Sr., the Association's first president, wisely suggested the annual meeting and barbecue potluck as a means to generate the camaraderie and cohesiveness that is the hallmark of this Association. His legacy lives on with the Marion Forks Cabin Association.

### **Cabin Coalition 2 Update June 22 ,2010**

C2 continues to work closely with Oregon's political delegation, asking for their support of the Cabin Fee Act (CFA), H.R. 4888, the legislation that will replace the CUFFA appraisal method of setting permit fees. Currently, the bill's 23 co-sponsors includes Rep. Greg Walden who has 756 cabins in his Oregon district, many belonging to tracts with the highest appraisals in Oregon such as the Lake of the Woods, Rocky Pt., Odell Lake and Crescent Lake.

Throughout the spring, meetings have been held by C2 and cabin owners with the staff of Oregon representatives DeFazio, Schrader, Wu, and Blumenauer, in addition to Senator Merkley. Congressman David Wu has signed on to H.R. 4888 as well. The main focus in each meeting is answering their remaining questions, addressing revenue from permit fees and asking for their support. Assisting C2 in Oregon is the firm Ball Janik, thus engaging the support of local lobbyists. Ball Janik's involvement is beneficial to bringing focus to political meetings by briefing cabin owners on the interests and agenda of politicians and their staff beforehand, helping us address the important issues.

Without the letter writing and the generous support of tracts and cabin owners across Oregon, we would not be on the cusp of change. C2 has received donations from many Oregon tracts and individuals, some donating multiple times. Thank you for your continued support for the Cabin Fee Act, H.R. 4888. Please stay abreast of our continued efforts by referring to the OFHA and NFH websites. Be ready for more action alerts issued through your tract associations.

*Sharon Karr*

*C2 Representative – Diamond Lake*



## Your Continued Support - Join OFHA Today!

OFHA is an organization all about you. We are formed to address many of the concerns you face with holding your recreational residence permit. Since our inception, OFHA has run on volunteer time and energy. A bit over a year ago we doubled our dues from five dollars a year to ten dollars. We have a very lean operating budget of less than \$8000.00 per year. We get a lot done for this small budget. My plea to you is to keep your membership current. Many of our members recognize the importance of our work. They have given beyond the annual dues to support our C2 involvement. I thank the Tract contributions to OFHA and to our C2 involvement.

## Current Membership

Please check your mailing address to make sure your membership information is current.

***Please join OFHA! We need your support!***



Check out the OFHA web site:

[www.oregonforesthomewners.com](http://www.oregonforesthomewners.com)

Visit the NFH web site at: [www.nationalforesthomewners.org](http://www.nationalforesthomewners.org)

If your tract has a web site or blogspot, or other online communication, let OFHA know at [contact@oregonforesthomewners.com](mailto:contact@oregonforesthomewners.com).

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