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News
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*for more information,
check us out on the web!*

www.folbr.org

Mail to:



The Friends of the Lower Blue River (FOLBR) is a volunteer group of dues paying Summit County residents, property owners and other interested citizens who share a concern for maintaining the rural character, quality of life and environment of the Lower Blue River Valley.

contact us at www.folbr.org



With the snow blankets of January, this summer day seems far off. Sunday, July 30th was a delightful, warm and sunny day for our annual meeting.

Brad Udall discussed his research on climate change and the implications for water supplies and our high mountain snowfall.



Since our meeting on July 30, there has been almost non-stop media discussion, organization and government commitment to take action toward limiting greenhouse gas emissions.

Summit County and Summit towns have joined the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization -- a good first step. Frisco is the County leader as the first Summit County town to sign on to the Mayor's Climate Agreement committing to lower greenhouse gas emissions in a variety of ways. Their Summit County specific model can be followed by other towns and the County.

Red trees, Fire Mitigation, Reforestation

Sam Kirk and Priscilla Ledbury live in the two areas identified by the County Wildfire Protection Plan as "Red Zones" or concentrations of attacked trees. Sam says, "It is not just red trees. It is a bigger picture of fire mitigation and reforestation needed in the long term."

The forests are a big part of our Lower Blue environment. In order to maintain the special environment of the Lower Blue, our members need to be educated and involved in the forests' evolution that has been naturally affected by the recent mountain pine beetle infestation. Today is just the beginning of a long transition period for our forests. We must be pro-active, ensuring this natural and human process produces a healthy forest.

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Red trees, Fire Mitigation, Reforestation continued....

It is important to stay informed on this issue so that you can competently act. Some logging projects will be done on USFS land and some have already been executed on Lower Blue private properties. Logging equipment and travel impact the forests, having the potential of increasing noxious weeds, damaging soil stability and altering wildlife habitat. Knowing the facts about impacts and benefits of logging allow us to be good and active stewards of the forests.

FOLBR Board Directors Sam Kirk and Priscilla Ledbury have taken on this issue, attending meetings with the Summit County Mountain Pine Beetle Task Force, US Forest Service. They have continued to learn more about the most suitable steps for fire mitigation and reforestation and the resources available. Recently, Sam has been tapped by the task force to head its education committee, which will organize panels of experts to present information to any interested parties in the Lower Blue. Working with the committee, Sam and Priscilla will expedite experts from the USFS, Summit County, etc. to consult with individuals and/or HOAs on proper fire mitigation and reforestation actions, including auditing defensible spaces.

There has been frustration and exasperation regarding the inability of private landowners to legally and actively do any fire mitigation on the USFS side adjacent to their property borders. The Categorical Exclusion (CE) NEPA study is now completed for a section of the valley. The proposal is awaiting final signatures clearing the way for the USFS AND private landowners to complete fire mitigation work 400 feet into USFS land adjacent to private property. Peech Keller, USFS NEPA coordinator walked the boundaries of USFS land identified in the County Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) as priority locations. The Lower Blue locations targeted for projects for dead tree removal, fire mitigation and reforestation work in this study include Wilderndest, Eagle's Nest, Triple Ck, Pebble Ck, Boulder Ck and Sierra Bosque. Although there is a variety of federal, state and county funding for these projects, it is still quite limited compared to the scale of work. Homeowners organized to support projects will receive priority.

If you are committed to fire mitigation and reforestation, then contact Sam Kirk at samkirk@wildblue.net (or 468-2649) to arrange for a speakers' panel, individual consultation with a wildfire or forest expert, or a meeting with the USFS.



Sun hats galore gathered for the July 30th meetingLEFT



Blue Sky galore! January 2007 RIGHT....

Fire Protection and Water Sources

FOLBR's Fire Protection Committee has been busy this year searching for new Lower Blue firefighting options. Thanks to our Committee: John Hillman, Joe Hostetter, and Frank Isenhart! The Committee has worked closely with Commissioner Tom Long and Lake Dillon Fire Chief Dave Parmley to find, test and map water sources in the Lower Blue that might be available for fire protection. A new map of water sources in the Lower Blue will be available shortly for all the County's firefighters. It includes existing dry hydrants, pond and river locations, and possible water storage tank sites, both seasonal and year round. They are all near Hwy 9 with the exception of one in Pebble Ck. The Pebble Ck dry hydrant was upgraded further, recently, after that homeowner group successfully petitioned into the LDFA district.

The map was the end result of a car trip down the Lower Blue to investigate possible water sources with Commissioner Long, Assistant County Manager Thad Noll, Chief Parmley, his assistant Kelly Green, and FOLBR Board member Frank Isenhart.

There is an investigation underway regarding the feasibility of using a USFS land site for locating a tank near Boulder Creek for year round fire fighting. Meanwhile, the Lower Blue is indebted to Larry and Gail Allen for allowing their private pond (just off Route 9, with a dry hydrant) to be a year round source of firefighting water in our valley. (FOLBR has promised to assist with the cost of clearing access to that pond if a MAJOR snowstorm were to occur. Otherwise, normal snowfall is handled by the Allen's caretaker.



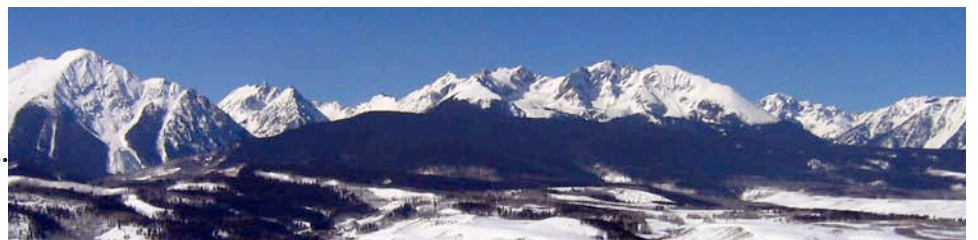
If you have questions, contact Karn@FOLBR.org or 468-9013.



TDR Program & Open Space Fund Renewal

The other County planning basins have finalized their TDR programs. The Lower Blue is very different and will be tackled by both the County-wide Planning Commission and the Lower Blue Planning Commission in the next few months. Karn will keep everyone on the FOLBR email list informed as the process evolves. If you are not on that list, contact karn@FOLBR.org to join.

There is an opportunity to be more creative with both the TDR program and the options for an open space tax fund renewal after 2009. Both could protect more open space in the Lower Blue.



Fire Protection- Where are YOU located??

The Lake Dillon Fire District stretches north of Silverthorne and includes the Everist development, the Triple Creek Ranch and Pebble Creek homeowner properties. Properties north of Ute Pass Road are in the Heeney Fire District that is a volunteer fire department. The Heeney Fire District is totally dependent on available volunteers.

A "No Man's Land" in the center Lower Blue Valley stretches north from that point. No Man's Land includes approximately 300 properties above the Blue River Campground and up to Ute Pass Rd. Property owners in this area would have to pay for any Lake Dillon Fire District response... and that could cost as much as \$20,000.00. Another concern of "No Man's Landers" is that the Lake Dillon Fire District's first responsibility is to homes and buildings within their district's boundaries, so any fire there would rightly take priority over an out-of-district fire. (In-district properties pay fire protection taxes.)

A new Silverthorne Fire Station is projected to be built in '09 north of the new Hamilton Ck. Rd. traffic light. It will be four miles and 12 traffic lights closer to the northern end of the County (including the Lower Blue Valley). Currently, equipment and fire fighting personnel have to come from the Dillon station, because the Silverthorne station on Highway 9 and 4th St. is only an administrative office. The brand new station will allow a faster response time into the Lower Blue, but first priorities are still within the Lake Dillon District (and not in "No Mans Land").



White River National Forest News (WRNF):

An innovative idea for funding needed WRNF work has been developed by Vail Resorts, Copper Mt and the National Forest Foundation. The ski area donation program will fund projects that benefit the the Dillon Ranger District. The USFS will provide some oversight, but the funding will go to non-profit groups for work that will be carried out primarily by volunteers. Fundable projects include trail and trailhead maintenance, fire mitigation and education. If you have a favorite trail and are interested in becoming a trail steward under this program, please contact karn@folbr.org

The long awaited WRNF Travel Management Plan is now complete and available from the Dillon Ranger Station.

Thank you Roger and Phyl Wegner!

On behalf of FOLBR, Roger and Phyl Wegner will continue organizing clean up efforts on Highway 9 between mile marker 11 and 113. Please contact Roger or Phyl Wegner at 262-0457 if you would like to join in on this warm season clean up effort.