WILDWOOD HIGHLANDER

Spring 2010

The ***Wildwood Highlander*** is a periodic newsletter providing information to property owners in Wildwood Highlands, near Datil, NM. Hard copy is mailed to all owners. Published at least annually in Datil, NM by the Wildwood Highlands Landowners' Association, POB 87, Datil, NM 87821-0087. For further information contact any member of the WHLA Board of Directors (BoD), listed below. Also consult the WHLA website at www.wildwoodhighlands.org

2010 ANNUAL MEETING:

The 2010 WHLA annual meeting will be held on the 3rd Saturday in May, the 15th, starting at 10 AM MDT. We have a new location this year: it's the Datil Community Presbyterian Church, nestled in between the Datil school's administration building and the school gym, on the southwest side of NM 12 about a block from US 60. As of press time, no bylaws amendments have been proposed. Two BoD slots are open.

WELCOME NEW LANDOWNER:

We welcome Mike Noguera, the new owner of Lot #58, to the Association.

MEMO FROM THE PRESIDENT:

[From BOD President Tom Cook, Lot #7] The board met four times in 2009. The main topics of discussion were road maintenance, the four access easements, and other miscellaneous items.

We continued with road upgrades this past year by widening the part of Yucca Circle where there is a blind turn and a 25 mile-per-hour speed limit sign was installed at the entrance to the subdivision. New culverts and additional gravel will be put down as needed in the future. Suggestions for the placement of culverts and gravel locations are welcomed.

Hopefully, the access easement issue has been satisfactorily concluded. The board contacted the eight landowners affected by the easements, offering to share responsibility for the easements and to minimally maintain the roads that crossed the easements. None of the owners accepted our offer. One owner opted to return the association owned gate and installed a gate that he purchased. Another purchased the existing gate from the association, removed the berm that had blocked another easement, and installed a privately owned gate on that easement. The returned gate was sold by auction to the higher of two bidders.

The board issued a map to all property owners that showed the status of each easement, its location, and contact information to be used for access in case of emergency. That map was also sent to local realtors, neighboring subdivisions, emergency responders, and others. It is the opinion of the board that the owners of the properties affected by the easements are solely responsible for opening the easements for access to all Highlands and Wildwood landowners in case of emergency. As a consequence, neither the board nor any other individual landowner should be liable for damages that might occur if access is not available in an emergency.

On other matters, we continue to enhance the website and are developing a “Welcome Kit” to be sent to new owners.

ROADS MAINTENANCE REPORT: [From VP Fred Shepherd, Lot 11]

Our roads are in surprising good shape considering the "El Nino" winter we just experienced. There is some rutting but during the drying process the roads hardened nicely. Problem was that the ruts hardened also. We expect that our spring maintenance will start the week of April 4th. We will have nearly every road graded this spring. We want to get started with the grading while some of the moisture is still in the soil. This will help pack the roads giving us a smooth hard surface. If anyone needs to have driveways or other work done on private property you can contact Summers Reid, Hometown Construction, at 575-773-4974 (cell 505-331-2317). He will have his grader here during the aforementioned week.

UPDATE ON SAN AUGUSTIN WATER STEAL:

There is nothing known to the BoD to report.

HIGHLANDS WINTERS, 1999-2010: [From resident Chuck Baker (Lot #3)]

I have collected daily weather stats for the years I have lived here (moved onto the land April 1999) and this document provides an overview for the 3 month period Dec/Jan/Feb for each of the 11 winter periods during my residency. I have broken down the stats into the first ten winter periods and then 2009-2010 in order to illustrate just how unusual the most recent winter period has been compared to the previous ten years.

Disclaimer: I originally started out in one measuring location near the house using a simple min/max mercury thermometer for the first year before switching to a wireless digital thermometer and finally to a full wireless digital weather station in 2007 with a location near the garage roof to facilitate open air for the windspeed instrument. Therefore, there is probably some variation in actual temperature readings registered over the years since I’ve used three different devices in two different locations and elevations. With the digital devices I have followed a practice of rounding up the daily temps to the nearest degree, when the decimal reading is .6 or higher, and rounding down when the decimal reading is .5 or lower. When calculating monthly averages I have rounded up/down to the nearest tenth. For yearly averages I have rounded any 3 decimal place figures to the nearest hundredth. Snowfall amounts were averaged from several measuring locations to the nearest half-inch most of the time and “guesstimated” other times, especially for light amounts in the 0-2” range.

For this set of stats I started out by retrieving the average monthly high and low temps for each month from my record books (something I calculate and record at the end of each month) and then averaging those two figures for a monthly average temperature for Dec, Jan, Feb of each winter year period. I then added the three monthly averages and divided by three to arrive at an average temperature for the whole three month winter period for each year. Mathematically speaking, this may be slightly skewed as Dec and Jan have 31 days while February has only 28 (29 every four years) days.

Winter ’99-’00: Snowfall total = 9” Average temperature = 36.00
Winter ’00-’01: Snowfall total = 13” Average temperature = 34.56
Winter ’01-’02: Snowfall total = 17” Average temperature = 35.58
Winter ’02-’03: Snowfall total = 25” Average temperature = 37.82
Winter ’03-’04: Snowfall total = 12” Average temperature = 35.26
Winter ’04-’05: Snowfall total = 23” Average temperature = 37.93
Winter ’05-’06: Snowfall total = 3”(!) Average temperature = 40.75 (warmest winter with least snow)
Winter ’06-’07: Snowfall total = 24.5” Average temperature = 35.83
Winter ’07-’08: Snowfall total = 13.5” Average temperature = 33.95
Winter ’08-’09: Snowfall total = 6” Average temperature = 38.25
Average snowfall for above winter periods = 14.6” Average temperature above winter periods = 36.59
Winter ’09-’10 Snowfall total = 32.5” Average temperature = 31.93 (coldest winter with most snow)

If you average the winter ’09-’10 figures in with the previous ten years, it raises the average snowfall about 2” and lowers the average temperature about .4 degrees.

Other monthly/daily figures over the last 11 winter periods:

December with maximum average high temperature ---------- 53.9/2005
December with minimum average low temperature ---------- 17.1/1999
January with maximum average high temperature ---------- 56.4/2003
January with minimum average low temperature ----------17.0/2001
February with maximum average high temperature ---------- 57.0/2006
February with minimum average low temperature ---------- 20.5/2004
December highest daily temperature ---------- 68/2003
December lowest daily temperature ---------- 2/2007
January highest daily temperature ---------- 69/2000
January lowest daily temperature ---------- 1/2000/2008
February highest daily temperature ---------- 70/2001
February lowest daily temperature ---------- 7/2001
Winter months without any snowfall ---------- Jan03, Dec05, Feb06, Jan09

All snowfall and temperature measurements are for Lizard Gulch location (7626' elevation, 13S 0229533mE x 3775199mN) which may be (and probably are) different from readings at other nearby locations due to terrain influences such as cold air sinking downhill at night and tree/ground cover limiting radiation/absorption of air temperature.

OUR PINIONS ARE HURTING:

Last year was a bad one in the Highlands for pinion trees. Many trees were lost, especially in the western part. The following USDA document (published 2004) will provide some guidance for you.

New Mexico Bark Beetle Epidemics

Fact Sheet and Information Bulletin
Southwestern Region, USDA Forest Service

GENERAL:

Much of New Mexico is experiencing ongoing piñon and ponderosa pine mortality due to outbreaks of several species of Ips beetles and the western pine beetle. Low tree vigor caused by several years of drought and excessively dense stands of trees have combined to allow bark beetle populations to reach outbreak levels. These insects are native to piñon-juniper woodlands and ponderosa pine forests of the Southwest, normally attacking only diseased or weakened trees. Healthy trees are usually not susceptible to these beetles.

- The beetles are tiny, roughly 1/8 inch in length, or about the size of a match-head.
- These beetles have multiple generations per year, and when conditions are favorable, they have a tremendous capacity to increase their numbers.
- The beetles attack trees by chewing through the outer bark and laying eggs within. When the eggs hatch, the larvae feed on the soft, nutritious inner bark. The beetles also introduce a "blue-stain" fungus that spreads through and clogs the water and nutrient conducting tissues, hastening tree death. Once the insects mature, they leave the infested tree and travel to a new host. Usually, they travel only a short distance, but are capable of flying a ½ mile or more.
- Tens of millions of piñon trees have already been killed, mostly where piñon and juniper grow together. Juniper is unaffected by the insect attacking the piñons. In some localized areas, up to 80% of the piñons have died, leaving only the smallest seedlings to survive. Even then, small piñons may be vulnerable to another, less aggressive insect, the twig beetle. The large losses of piñon make this worst bark beetle epidemic in New Mexico in almost 50 years. Thus far ponderosa mortality has been more localized, however, if the drought persists, more trees will become vulnerable to bark beetle attack.
- Tree mortality has been heaviest in "stress-zones" such as drier south-facing slopes, the lowest elevation ranges piñon or ponderosa, recent construction sites, and areas heavily infected with dwarf mistletoe. However, slightly higher elevations are now being affected.
- The needles of infested trees will start to turn off-color within a month of attack. Evidence of infestation can include sawdust at the tree's base or in bark crevices, small pop-corn-like masses of sap called "pitch tubes", small

boring holes, and a “fading” of the needles. If the tree is extremely drought-stressed, it may not produce pitch tubes, which are its natural defense against the beetles.

- Once beetles have left a tree, it no longer poses a threat to other trees as a source of beetles.

TREATMENT:

- There is nothing that can be done to save a tree after it has been successfully attacked by bark beetles and infected with the blue-stain fungus. If the goal is to kill the beetles under the bark, then infested trees must be cut-down and treated by one of the following means:

  o Peel the bark from the logs.

  o Burn, chip, shred, or bury logs (Note that fresh pine chips can attract Ips beetles and should be immediately removed from the site or at least spread out to dry in direct sunlight.)

  o Pile logs in direct sunlight and cover with clear plastic to produce a beetle-lethal high temperature greenhouse effect. The plastic must remained sealed to be effective. Fresh pine debris over 4-inches in diameter, created during tree thinning operations, must be removed from the forest or treated as noted above to prevent it from becoming breeding material for Ips beetles.

- There is no effective insecticide treatment for infested trees. Injecting trees or drenching their roots with systemic insecticides is not an effective method of control or prevention due to the feeding location of the beetles within the inner bark.

- Be aware that removal of actively infested trees may not be an effective treatment option during an epidemic because of the difficulty in detecting and removing all green infested trees, the asynchrony and rapidity of beetle reproduction, and the sometimes overwhelming opportunities for re-infestation from adjacent untreated properties.

- Due to the extent of the outbreaks and the tremendous capacity of bark beetles to reproduce, the implementing of effective large-scale control actions to prevent further tree losses is not feasible.

PROTECTING HIGH-VALUE TREES:

- Trees not yet infested can be protected by annual applications of a preventive insecticide. Carbaryl and permethrin-based insecticides are specifically labeled for this purpose, but carbaryl is the preferred material because it provides longer protection. Typical home and garden insecticides should not be used. The entire surface of the trunk and large limbs must be thoroughly sprayed. Ips beetles will attack any limb or trunk 3 inches in diameter or larger, so care must be taken to treat material this size and larger.

- Over the long run, reduction of tree density, disposal of the resulting woody debris, and appropriate use of prescribed fire, will not only improve forest health, but also greatly reduce the probability of bark beetle outbreaks and catastrophic wildfire.

For further information contact:

- Federal lands: Debra Allen-Reid, USDA Forest Service, Forest Health New Mexico Zone Leader, at 505-842-3286.

- State or private lands: Stephani Sandoval, New Mexico State Forestry at 505-476-3351 or your local New Mexico State Forestry District Office. Local county extension agents can also provide assistance.

Or go online to:

http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/resources/health/beetle/index.shtml (Forest Service Southwestern Region bark beetle site)

http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/forestry/factsheets/barkbeetles/beetles.cfm (State of New Mexico Forestry Division bark beetle site)

http://www.cahe.nmsu.edu/ces/yard/1997/090897.html (SW Yard and Garden addresses why systemic insecticides are not effective against engraver bark beetles)

Produced by Forest Health Staff, Southwestern Region, USDA Forest Service, March 2004

ERRATA:

In his December 2009 assessment letter the secretary (the fellow writing this) stated that the interest charged on unpaid assessments etc. was "…2% per month…" That is in error: that rate was changed to 10% annual, compounded monthly, some time ago. So it's less than 5/6 % per month now.

NOTES REGARDING THE WHLA WEBSITE:

Our website's "Landowners" page has been empty for a long time. At the last BoD meeting we decided not to list addresses of our landowners, even though the information is available at the Catron County courthouse. If you wish to contact an owner, and want help, any BoD member (listed below) will be happy to serve as an intermediary. Also, remember the new "Community News" page, for your use.

POLICY ON MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS:

Our policy is that all "significant" (such as this newsletter) communications will be by surface mail. Electronic mail will still be used for "less important" and time-sensitive matters. Please keep the secretary [jfs(at)gilanet.com] appraised of your physical, snail, and email addresses.

BoD MEMBERS & CONTACT INFORMATION:

PRESIDENT:	Tom Cook	575-772-5350	tomcook(at)gilanet.com
VICE-PRESIDENT:	Fred Shepherd	575-772-5603	shepherd(at)gilanet.com
TREASURER:	Kathy Kanely	575-772-5599	KathyK878(at)wildblue.net
SECRETARY:	John Schaefer	575-772-5776	jfs(at)gilanet.com
AT-LARGE:	John Kell	575-772-5929	johnkell(at)shaw.ca