

HUNTINGTON LAKE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

SUMMER 2014

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 1

MAY 2014



Letter from the Chief

Welcome back to Huntington!

We are reminded that summer is not far away as the days grow longer and the weather begins to warm ...and Huntington Fire once again is preparing for a busy season. Due to the limited snowfall our winter call volume was lower than normal, however summer may be busy with the dry conditions and the limited resources of our neighboring departments.

We ask that you be especially careful with fire this spring and summer and prepare your fire clearances as soon as possible. Huntington Fire has already responded to two 'escaped' debris burns so far this season because of the extremely dry conditions that already exist around the lake.

We received a couple of grants this year which have allowed us to refurbish our Hagglunds snow cat for winter & Classen Motor Sports and Kawasaki has loaned us an All-Terrain vehicle for off-highway rescues. **Once again we thank you for all you do that allows us to help others!**

**A FIRE DEPARTMENT'S
EFFECTIVENESS IN
BATTLING CABIN OR
WILDFIRES STARTS WITH YOU!**

Fire Season is Here!

In 2012 we had a large cabin fire and in 2013 we had the Aspen Fire. What is in store for 2014?

Fire is unpredictable. If there are weaknesses in our wildfire protection scheme we are all more vulnerable to fire and the chance of it spreading is greatly increased. Two things can determine the ability of our cabins to survive a wildfire. First is a defensible space around each cabin and second is the cabins resistance to fire. Many of our beautiful lake cabins are very old and highly combustible. We must do everything we can to prepare a defensible space around our cabins to reduce the spread of wildfire as well as reduce the chance of a cabin fire spreading to neighboring cabins or the forest.

Make these tips part of your regular maintenance routine:

- Clear a 30-100 foot safety area
- Rake needles, leaves, & dead vegetation
- Clear 10 feet around propane tanks & BBQ's
- Stack firewood 100' away & uphill
- Inspect your chimney & sweep the roof
- Install fire & carbon monoxide detectors
- Review you homeowners insurance policy to review/update the contents list
- Make entrance to cabin accessible to large vehicles & well marked with name/address
- Ensure family members have knowledge of gas, water and electric shut offs.
- Have a fire extinguisher handy (ABC type)

Kawasaki Donates an ATV to HLVFD!

Classen Motor Sports and Kawasaki have donated a Teryx 4 all-terrain vehicle to the department for us to use for off-highway rescues within our response area. The program includes the free use of the new four passenger ATV from November to October. Gold Arrow Camp has agreed to provide a trailer for us to transport the unit to the appropriate trailheads when responding to 911 calls.

In the past your firefighters have had to 'backpack' into the scene of off-road emergencies carrying oxygen, trauma, and C-Spine, bags defibrillator, stretcher, transport wheel, etc. In many cases precious resources and personnel including the Forest Service, Sheriff's Department, Cal Fire, helicopters, ambulances, and other fire departments have been committed for several hours conducting these rescues. This new vehicle will help us get to patients much faster, bringing vital medical & rescue services to those in need and it will also help to get us back to our normal response area much quicker to be available for other emergencies.

We have applied for a grant that would allow us to purchase this apparatus and a trailer when the loan period is over.

HLVFD encourages forest thinning...

The question is: how best to do it?

The Forest Service continues to work towards the next draft of the forest thinning plan for the Huntington Basin. Once the draft is in place you are encouraged to submit your comments to the Forest Service so that they can be considered before the final document is prepared. Your fire department serves ALL the people of Huntington Lake, and it is clear that there are different opinions about how thinning and forest health is best addressed. We believe that almost everyone agrees that our forest should be thinned, however, several opinions exist about the methods and practices that will best benefit the forest and the people who use it. Although individual members of your Fire Department and the board may hold differing opinions about methods to be used, we are united in the goal of thinning the forest to reduce fire hazards. Please get involved to help move the process along and to help determine our best path forward making Huntington Lake an even better place to live, work, and play!



Off Highway rescues: The Kawasaki ATV & the newly refurbished Hagglunds Snow Cat

Special points of interest:

- Aspen Fire
- Water Levels
- Fire Prevention
- Grants

In this issue:

Letter from the Chief	1
Fire Season is here	1
ATV Donated	1
Aspen Fire	2
Message from Board	2
Low Lake Levels	2

NEW ADDRESS !!
We are moving our Business address

125 E. Barstow Avenue, Suite 109, Fresno, CA 93710



Put in the article on the Auction Here!!!

Record Low Water Levels

Southern California Edison held a meeting in late March with business and camp operators, at the new division headquarters in Big Creek, to explain how the current drought will impact water levels at Huntington this summer. Edison is projecting that the lake will be about one-third full for most of the summer. At just under 30,000 acre feet the lake will be approximately 50 feet down from the full level, leaving all fixed docks on the lake ‘high and dry’.

2014 is becoming a contender as the driest year in recorded history. In late March we had received 14.2 inches of rain for the fiscal year (October 1 – September 30) and the two driest years of 1976-77 and 1923-24 recorded 15.4 and 14.8 inches respectively. The projected lake level this summer will set a new record low due to the fact that our winter lake level is lower than normal because of the lack of rain last year. Additionally, any water entering the lake from now on must be released to downstream users thus keeping the lake at its current level of one-third full.

The good news is that there is a lot of lake left on which to have fun. The water stretches from the College campground nearly to dam 3 and we estimate the lake to be skiable/boardable from “Thursday Island” on the west end of the lake to around Lakeshore. Rancheria, Lakeshore and Huntington Lake Resort are all working on their plans to serve you and the community with their quality programs, food and drink, boat rentals, etc. to contribute to our summer fun!

The “Official Position” of your fire department is, while we do not support any particular set of methods or practices, forest thinning should be done as soon as possible both for fire safety and for forest health.



Aspen Fire

The lightning-caused Aspen Fire was discovered Monday, July 22 burning in the Sierra National Forest 7 miles north of Big Creek below Stump Springs Road north of Aspen Springs. The South Central Interagency Incident Management Team assumed command on July 24th. The fire continued to burn within the Kaiser Wilderness Area well into August. China Peak was home to Incident Command and a multitude of firefighting equipment was utilized. Helicopters were a regular sight on the lake as they collected water to drop on the fire. Rancheria and Badger Flat campgrounds were closed to house many of the firefighters. The Kaiser wilderness was closed well into the fall. The blaze burned over 22,800 acres and at its peak, there were over 1,800 firefighters all working to contain the fire at a cost of over 26 million dollars. We are grateful that there were no major injuries to firefighters.



A Message from the Board...

In light of what we know about the current water availability and the likelihood that Huntington Lake will not be even near full capacity this Summer, the HLVFD will face a more challenging fire season than usual. Fortunately, the Board’s past efforts to augment the capacity of the HLVFD to serve the

community will assist in dealing with whatever may happen. This of course also has had a beneficial effect on the property insurance rates for our cabins and condos. However, the anticipated conditions make our fundraising more important this year than ever before. It has been 15 years since the HLVFD increased the annual contribution to \$140.00. After consideration of the increase in operating expenses that the HLVFD, like any organization, has experienced over that period, the Board has concluded that the annual contribution we request of our community members must be increased to \$200. As you know, the sole source of operating funds for the HLVFD is the annual appeal, which is supplemented by the Pancake Breakfast and Silent Auction. The exceptional quality of the HLVFD is a consequence of the exceptional support of our community. As always, we will be attending the annual tract meetings to hear from you and respond to any questions. Please let us know the time and place of your meeting by e-mail at Chief@hlvfd.org or call the Chief at 925-364-0699.

Increase in Giving Levels

The Board of Directors of HLVFD recommended recently an increase of the recommended giving levels to more appropriately reflect the true cost of operations. Since the department’s reorganization more than 15 years ago, the financial plan was to collection adequate donations to operate the department, set aside funds for apparatus replacement, and improve the overall quality of service. *We have not raised the giving amount for over 15 years* and now find that our income will not fully fund replacements as we look to the future.

Due to your overwhelming generosity and successful grant applications, we have made wonderful strides allowing us to remain one of the best fire departments in the state. We hope that a slightly increased gift from you will allow us to continue to serve the people of Huntington for years to come!