



Chief's Reports

To: Board of Directors
From: Steve Simons, Fire Chief
Date: August 21, 2019

Meeks Bay Fire:

We are proud to welcome Korie Kromydas as our newest Meeks Bay Fire Board member following the resignation of Director Bruce Massie after more than two decades of dedicated service to the Tahoma/Meeks Bay communities.

We, with huge support and leadership from the State Parks Foundation and all of their volunteers, made it through the 51st annual Meeks Bay Pancake Breakfast. Attendance appeared to be good on Saturday but was visibly lighter on Sunday. I am waiting to hear final numbers from State Parks Foundation leadership. President Miller and I, along with some of our staff, attended several HOA meetings over the last month. Each had good representation, and we took the opportunity to discuss important emergency preparedness, home hardening, defensible space, and communication issues. We also discussed the current status of the District and potential for increased efficiencies. I left several blank ESCI survey forms with self-addressed, stamped envelopes. I am happy to say that we have received over 30% back with good feedback.

Fire Prevention Officer Rodriguez, Mechanic Parle, and I met with the El Dorado Hills Fire Marshal earlier this month to show and discuss the future of the Meeks Bay Tracked Chipper, trailer, and truck. He seemed very interested and will be discussing further with his Fire Chief and staff.

Operations:

The first six weeks of summer have been very busy with what we would generally consider "routine" calls. Essentially what that means is, thankfully, we made it through another month and another 4th of July without any significant events. Engineer/Paramedic/RN Mike Jacob is our EMS Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Coordinator. He recently sent out a nice email to all of our personnel summarizing some of the significant medical and trauma calls over the last several weeks. Our personnel continue to provide excellent medical care to our local citizens and our traveling guests. Personnel have been evaluating, treating, and transporting serious head injuries, skull and spinal fractures, strokes, and heart attacks among many other serious medical issues. One crew even ended up running several 9-1-1 calls and treating and transporting patients down in Carson City while we were down there conducting live-fire training at the academy grounds.

BC Whisler and his training assistants have been helping personnel refocus on some of the important firefighting and rescue basics. They ran many personnel through live-fire training at the Carson City burn buildings. I appreciate the willingness of other personnel to help cover when on-duty personnel were assigned to this important training. We have also been doing some basic "smoked mask" drills to touch up some safety and hose management efficiencies.

Crews have been working to complete company inspections during some of the busiest weeks of the year. They are gaining good knowledge and awareness of many of our local lodging establishments, and they are finding and addressing safety hazards to help keep our personnel and our guests safer when they are here.

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Thankfully we have been able to increase staffing the last couple of summers to help cover the increased call volume. We are running this program again this summer through Labor Day. The Chief and I have authorized one additional firefighter per day, and we will hire back additional personnel to help cover special events and other high volume activity.

As of August 1st, our new, dual response zone communication and protocols are in effect for Emerald Bay. Hopefully, this will lead to quicker and more appropriate responses to calls in that challenging area.

We, along with all our regional neighbors, helped support the Truckee Air Show with emergency response and ambulance coverage. We also had the opportunity to show off our 1922 antique Seagrave engine thanks to Mechanic Joe Parle's skills and abilities.

Fleet/Facilities:

As anticipated, we finally hit some speed bumps with the Station 53 remodel. We got the fire sprinkler connection to the water main, and now the contractor just needs to finish the connection to the new system in the station. The electrician, Ed Beauchamp, and our staff have been working hard to finish, literally, thousands of feet of new, high and low voltage wiring. Hopefully we might start to insulate and close walls in the next week or two. I would like to thank and recognize Will Marshman and several others including Chris Bartow, one of our newest, for all their help with this project! This is good experience and buy-in for them and helps save the District money on labor costs.

XTB Tahoe Basin Operational Area:

Fire season has definitely started slowly this season throughout California and Nevada, and we have no complaints about that. It is starting to ramp up, and we have started to send a few resources out. We sent an engine along with three others from our local area to the Jasper fire near Spanish Springs a few weeks ago. I responded as a Division Supervisor with the Sierra Front Incident Management Team and assisted with this fire for three days. Our three Operational Area Coordinator alternates and I attended a pre-season Regional OES coordination meeting in El Dorado Hills a few weeks ago. Thanks to Chief Schwartz's interactions with Congressman McClintock and his staff, we believe we have averted some serious reimbursement issues with the federal government for the remainder of 2019.

Meetings:

- North Tahoe, Meeks Bay, and Alpine Meadows Board meetings
- El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Association
- LTRFCA/SFWC meeting
- Executive and Command staff visioning
- Fleet/Facilities meetings
- Liberty Energy CPUC meeting
- DHS Bi-State Operational Assessment
- Special events meetings
- Development meetings

North Tahoe Fire: (Fire Chief Schwartz)

Fire season is in full swing. Personnel from North Tahoe Fire and Meeks Bay Fire, along with our fire agency cooperators, have responded frequently to vegetation, debris, and other fires. Because of the quick multi-jurisdictional responses, coupled with the increased staffing and available resources, the fires have been kept relatively small; abandoned campfires and dooryard burning are amongst the most frequent requests.



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Out of county assignments: Due to our long winter and extended cold, wet spring, we are seeing a slow start to the fire season locally. USFS Predictive Service shows our most significant fire potential to be August through September, with the possibility of fire season going through to our first significant snowfall. During the month of July, the District sent a single brush engine for a 24-hour mutual aid assignment to assist the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District with a fire in Washoe County, Nevada.

The USFS Tahoe Basin Management Unit (TMU/TNF) and CAL FIRE (NEU/AEU) Units have fire restrictions and burn bans in place. As such, our local fire season officially began June 30, 2019 with our associated fire restriction. California Fire Code 307.43, along with locally adopted amendments and ordinances, place additional restrictions on recreational fires during fire season within the District. Our Public Information Team is educating local residents and visitors about these restrictions and urging them to be prudent with their use of recreational fires. Chief Simons, Forest Fuels Coordinator Horntvedt, Public Information Officer Holland, and I attended over 15 community meetings discussing evacuation, defensible space, forest management, fire restrictions, and personal preparedness. The District has also hosted two showings of the film "Wilder than Wild" with post-viewing presentations. We have reached over 1,000 residents this year.

Fire Prevention staff have been very busy with fireworks displays, project proposals, building plan reviews, construction inspections, and defensible space activities. Our Defensible Space Inspectors have completed over 1,000 free Defensible Space inspections within our communities. We recently completed additional agreements that allow the District to expand its inspection services into South Lake Tahoe. Completion of this volume of community work would not be possible without federal grant funding and our cooperative agreements with the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District, California Tahoe Conservancy, and Tahoe Resource Conservation District.

As summer progresses, it seems to be accompanied by a similar progressive increase in demands for emergency services. It has not been uncommon this month to have two, three, and four emergency incidents happening simultaneously, many in town, others in our surrounding communities. Our fire and EMS crews continually step up to these response challenges. Along with the Battalion Chiefs, Division Chiefs, and myself, we are responding to these frequent simultaneous events, often after hours. In this year's preliminary budget, the Board authorized additional Red Flag overtime. Part of this fund is being utilized to support an additional firefighter at Station 51 during our busy fire season.

Following recent resignations and retirements, the District is recruiting a Fire Prevention Officer and Firefighter/Paramedics.

During July, I attended and presented at several key meetings. Early in the month, I attended and presented some information at a FEMA - Department of Homeland Security meeting which is focusing on studying the feasibility of a Basin-wide, bi-state operational assessment for a consolidated emergency dispatch and traffic management center. The following week, I presented to the TRPA staff regarding local government fire agencies' responses to wildfire across the state in 2018 and this year's local fire season outlook. On Monday, July 25, I presented, alongside Placer County OES and the Sheriff's office, to the Placer County Board of Supervisors regarding the on-going efforts of the Fire District to address the very high wildfire risk in our communities and fire insurance cancellations crisis. During the presentation, I discussed all the items

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mentioned above along with our collaborations with other fire agencies and the Tahoe Transportation District to develop a Basin-wide notification and evacuation system.

Legislatively, things are quiet as elected representatives are on recess. As they return, we will be re-engaged on any bills potentially affecting the Districts. Most of our governmental efforts are currently focused on meetings with stakeholders and residents affected by the non-renewal of fire insurance policies. This has included local insurance brokers, Verisk (ISO), county officials, local constituents, and the California Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara and his staff. We also launched a community survey regarding the scope of these non-renewals, which led to Placer County distributing the same type of public information survey countywide. The information gathered, when allowed, is then shared back to the Insurance Commissioner's office to enable them to open cases for investigations.

During the past month the Fire Chief (designee*) represented the Districts at the following external meetings and events:

- 7/2 DHC Bi-State Operational Assessment Meeting
- 7/6 Community Meetings
- 7/7 Meeks Bay Pancake Breakfast and community meeting
- 7/9 Presentation at TRPA
- 7/10 Lake Tahoe West Stakeholders Meeting
- 7/11 CA/NV Fire Hire Consortium Meeting
- 7/12 Alpine Springs Board Meeting*
- 7/12 Bi-state Fire Boat program
- 7/16 Lake Tahoe West Executive Team at CTC
- 7/18 LTRFCA-Joint Meeting w/Sierra Front Meeting
- 7/19 Fire Prevention Meetings
- 7/20 NLTFPD Retiree Engineer Norm Songey's Funeral Service
- 7/23 Fire Districts Association Board Meeting
- 7/24 Meeks Bay Board Meeting
- 7/25 Budget Road Show PDB meetings
- 7/26 Budget Road Show PDB meetings
- 7/29 Budget Road Show PDB meetings
- 7/30 District Exec. Strategic Planning Meeting

Fire & Life Safety Division: *(Division Chief Conradson)*

The engine companies have completed their assigned R-1 and R-2 inspections. Chief McNamara completed one of the inspections for his shift and discovered some significant life safety hazards involving commercial cooking equipment and exiting deficiencies which are now being addressed. The engine company inspection program has been very successful in revealing serious hazards that, if left unchecked, could lead to devastating consequences in the event of a fire. There have been numerous examples of this over the last year and the engine companies have directly contributed to improving the safety for our community.

Training & Safety Division: *(Battalion Chief Whisler)*

Training:

The months of June and July were a fairly mild month to train due to the amount of calls the District ran. Crews continued to get out and do basic firefighter and engineer training when they weren't on calls. We currently have three probationary firefighters that continue to meet the District training standards and are preparing for their upcoming bi-annual test.



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I would like to thank Engineers Meadows and Perhacs for assisting with our lateral fire academy. The academy lasted ten days, and the recruits were able to run through multiple evolutions. The academy ended with a live burn in which we were able to bring down two on duty engine companies to participate in the training. In addition to our own instructors, I would like to thank Truckee Meadows Fire Department for sending additional instructors.

Currently, the District is participating in the Consortium testing process. The Departments that are participating in the testing process are: North Lake Tahoe, Tahoe Douglas, Carson City, and Central Lyon. The application process ends in the middle of August, and the testing process starts the week of September 10. The tentative start date for the academy is October 21.

Technical Rescue Team:

On July 11, the Technical Rescue Team responded to Black Wall in Truckee for a climber rescue that took an estimated 70-foot lead fall while climbing. The victim could not self-rescue after the fall and sustained serious multi-system trauma. The team arrived around 2130 which included Captains Lagano and Wagner, and Engineer Perhacs from our District. After lowering the patient to a platform, a Blackhawk helicopter with night vision capabilities performed the hoist operation.



Safety & Logistics Division: *(Battalion Chief Smith)*

The Homewood fire station remodel is progressing very nicely. The new fire sprinkler system is almost finished. A large portion of the HVAC, electrical, and plumbing work is complete to the point we hope to start drywall and insulation work next week. Opening up a nearly 60 year old building offers up many and varied treasures. Not all are *really* treasures but more like things in need of being addressed before they are buried behind the walls for future generations. In this case, it was decided it would be best to abandon the rusted HVAC ducting encased in the concrete floor slab and replace it with new ducting in the walls and ceilings in order to provide clean air to the building. The existing electrical service required extensive investigation by the electrician in order to properly integrate the new and older electrical infrastructure. The new electrical system for the building is capable of integrating a modern fire station alerting and low voltage

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lighting system, a zoned HVAC system, and apparatus diesel exhaust system, as well as providing for the comforts of a modern fire station. All new domestic water and sewer service lines are installed and inspections are complete. The new HVAC system is almost complete minus finish items to be completed after the drywall is installed. We are optimistic that we will be ready to staff the fire station in late August or early September. I would once again like to thank our Facilities Coordinator Tim Schrader for his efforts to make this project as seamless as possible while keeping tight control of the expenses. In addition to this very large project, Tim has managed to address the on-going maintenance needs of the other seven District facilities.

The Facilities Division has several capital improvement/maintenance projects pending approval in the final 2019/20 district budget. Hopefully, by October we will have a better idea which of these programs will be funded and carry us into next year as they get underway and are completed.

Annual District-wide hose testing was completed in late June. I would like to thank Engineer Jerry Sheehan for coordinating this intense, two days of apparatus movement and testing. A small amount of hose failed this year's testing process, and we are working to replace that inventory out of the current suppression equipment budget.

The months of June and July have been busy for the Air Operations Division. We have used our aircraft recently on water rescue and back-country rescue incidents. I attended several regional UAS Operator Group meetings. In June, the District hosted a first ever UAS pilot skills camp in conjunction with Truckee Fire. We had over 20 attendees and had two days of educational presentations and hands-on flying. We had attendees from all across northern California and Nevada. In July, I made a presentation to the CalFire Fire Traffic Area Annual Briefing at the Grass Valley Air Attack Base regarding our District UAS program and the Sierra Nevada UAS Operator Group. We also did a live flight demonstration using both NTF and Truckee Fire UAVs. Also in July, I made a similar presentation to the Lake Tahoe Regional Fire Chiefs annual barbeque at Lake Valley Station #7 in Meyers. This also included a live flight demonstration of NTF and Truckee Fire UAVs. The Air Operations Division continues to seek out and apply for grant funding. We are anticipating receiving our \$20,000 Homeland Security Grant in December of this year. These monies are targeted for the purchase of a DJI Matrice 210. This is a very robust all-weather aircraft with enhanced visual and thermal imaging capabilities.

Forest Fuels Coordinator: (Coordinator Horntvedt)

SNPLMA 16 - TNFAC

We are excited to have Talina Sky and Chris McMaster out in the neighborhoods performing Defensible Space Inspections and giving our community members education on how to make their property ready for fire and hone-in on their emergency preparedness.

- 1200+ Defensible Space Inspections completed this Season
- 400 Requests for Free Curbside Chipping

SNPLMA 16 - PTEIR

Ascent Environmental, Inc. (Ascent) was selected as the Phase II contractor for the Lake Tahoe PTEIR. We are excited to continue the momentum from Phase I, which generated the PTEIR Strategy Report, into Phase II with Ascent as they develop a draft and final PTEIR. The NOP for public scoping period closed, and we



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are now consolidating and addressing the scoping comments, as well as moving forward with reviewing the draft project description.

- All agencies that conduct vegetation management on the California side of Lake Tahoe will benefit from this programmatic report as it will streamline environmental planning/permitting on commercial and noncommercial timber harvesting/fuels reduction projects. The project-by-project review process that has been used to comply with NEPA, CEQA, FPA, TRPA, LRWQCB, and other regulatory requirements has led to inefficiencies, delays, excess costs, and inconsistencies in project planning. We are excited to keep our momentum moving forward with this project, as completion will allow accelerated implementation of fuels reduction projects by resource managers in the Defense zone of the WUI on the California side of the basin.

SNPLMA 15 - CWPP Implementation

NLTFPD's Rifle Peak Handcrew began performing hand-thin-and-pile-style treatment in mid-June and has completed 30 acres of initial entry hand-thin work on NTPUD's Gentry property that is north of Hwy. 267 in Tahoe Vista. I have completed boundary marking and project layout on 170 acres of NTPUD lands in preparation for Rifle Peak to continue their hand-thin work through the remainder of this season.



FEMA - HFR on CTC lots

Contractor completed Phase I which treated 154 parcels for a total of 26.67 acres in Kings Beach. We flew the Phase II IFB and will be awarding the contract once all required documentation is submitted. Phase II will treat 281 parcels for a total of 51.82 acres from Hwy. 267 to Tahoe City.

SNPLMA 16 - HFR & Wildfire Prevention

I have been using available geo-database sets to identify landowners that are at high risk for catastrophic wildfire and will be looking to engage these landowners for implementation of fuel reduction treatments.

I will be meeting with Tamarack Mutual Water Co, Carnelian Woods, and CTC this month to discuss further.