

Big Sur Volunteer Fire Brigade

Fire Brigade News – August 2015

We were paged for a veg fire in the area of Dairy canyon on the El Sur last month. The Brigade responded with two engines, a patrol, two water tenders and my command vehicle. Fortunately the weather was foggy with not a lot of wind, as we all know, unusual for that area. The fire grew to about two acres by the time it was under control. It was also sometime last month we were paged in the middle of the night for an unknown veg/bonfire in that area. We found a pick up backed up to the gate at the Navy base with a pretty good bonfire going, again, no wind. With the USFS gone the Brigade has been holding down the fort as I'm fond of saying.

Our First Responder class is halfway over as I write, our last two dates have been changed so it won't end until September. Everyone is doing a great job, for some it is like learning a whole new language with the medical terms they are being taught.

The Fire Brigade hosted an interagency ops meeting at the firehouse in July. This was more of what I call a "boots on the ground" type meeting, for those of us who work together and respond to calls on a regular basis. It is always great to meet face to face and throw out concerns with all agencies able to weigh in. Jesse our resident Deputy is keeping busy moving campers along down the road. At the same time he is keeping an eye out for campfires.

I have been having an ongoing conversation with Andrew at the Post Office about the traffic and parking issues there. He has ordered some signs that will say Post Office parking only and have the Monterey County code listed for Officers to use to cite people. We are also trying to have the berm in front painted red for a fire lane parking only. Perhaps someday we will be able to find a place to park at our Post Office, I always feel like I have just won the lottery when I get one.

And speaking of too many people...we had a medical down at Pfeiffer beach last month, (last month was busy with 36 calls) and it was all we could do to get there. That was a topic of our interagency meeting as well. We appreciate all the help from St. Parks who either respond and stop traffic or drive down ahead of us and pull people over. It was gridlock at the bottom, no one was moving. We landed H70 the CHP helo on the beach and flew the patient out to Natividad. I looked at some of my figures and since the new trauma center started in January we have used a helicopter twelve times.

Unless you live under a rock everyone has to be aware of the out of control and dangerous fire situations in the western states. It is at a level 5, the highest level there is and to say it is dire is an understatement. The one fire in Washington I was seeing on the news recently expected 45 mile an hour winds. This is like a massive gargantuan blow torch coming at the FF. There have already been 5 lives lost so far on these fires, all USFS FF, very, very sad.

We responded to yet another fire reported to be in our area but it turned out to be on the East side of Nacimiento so we cancelled enroute. USFS was able to get on it quickly and get most of it out in a few hours. And yet another fire..... While many of you were sleeping the Fire Brigade, USFS and some of your neighbors were hard at work putting out a fire at Pfeiffer Beach. Thanks to Jules, Jason, Clayton and Scott for reporting and then going back to help contain the fire. Yet again we were lucky; a foggy morning with no wind and a quick initial attack prevented this fire from sweeping up into Clear ridge. The comment was made that the gate to the beach was left open after hours, which would allow campers to come in, it is my understanding that the locals did not want it locked preventing them from going to the beach. What is more important, a little inconvenience for locals to walk around a gate or having it closed to make it more difficult for campers to have access?

On another note, Treebones is now selling some of our Fire Brigade merchandise online! You can visit Treebonesresort.com to shop!

Our 35th River Run will be here before we know it in October. And we have such exciting news!! Nepenthe has offered a \$25,000 matching grant!! Our goal will be to reach \$1,000,000.00 after all these years. There will be more details elsewhere in the Round Up. We really, really need volunteers to make our race a success, so mark your calendars now!! October 24th!

Martha Karstens
Chief