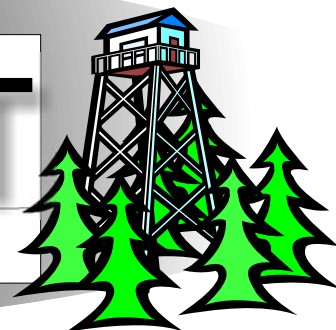


THE LOOKOUT



A publication of the Groom Creek Fire District



Proudly Serving Groom Creek Since 1970

'06 Fire Season Forecast

Bleak - to sum it up in one word. The lack of precipitation over the last few months is causing concern with fire management officials across the state. A sample of fuel moisture taken from live manzanita and oak brush in January 2006 showed lower fuel moisture contents than was present in **June** 2002 during the Rodeo-Chedeski Fire. At an average moisture content of 72%, this fuel type will be explosive. We are also seeing the return of the Bark Beetle to the pine type fuels. This will exacerbate the problem of the dead trees both standing and downed throughout the forest. We have both of the fuel types present in the Groom Creek area.

This fire season will be unique because in most years the fires in Arizona are either in the desert area or in the pines, but not both. This year we will see fires across the state in all fuel types simultaneously. The fine fuels that are present are fully cured and are already burning. We responded to a fire south of Groom Creek on Ash Creek Ridge on December 22. It was not only unusual to have a fire this time of year, but the fire behavior exhibited during this fire was concerning to all responders. If this is any indication of the expected fire behavior, there will be instances where we can not even engage a fire to take action.

This being said, here is what you can do to assist us in protecting your property:

- Relocate any piles of firewood at least 30 feet from your home after the winter months have passed
- Remove pine needles from roof and gutters
- Keep area within 30 feet of your home clear of pine needles and leaf litter
- Remove any ladder fuels that help a fire get into the crowns of trees
- Provide hoses at all hose bibs

These are only a few of the ways you can help us help you. If you would like more information about creating defensible space or would like to have the fire department assist you in the creation of defensible space and reduction of hazardous fuels, call Captain Ernesto Manzanedo at the fire station at 928.778.6519. He will schedule and assessment with you at your earliest convenience. Stop by the fire station for more information or see our website at www.groomcreek.org

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Groom Creek History

The Groom Creek Fire District Board meets in regular session on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at station 41 on Friendly Pines Rd and Spur Lane. Public attendance is encouraged and welcome.

Volunteers are always needed. See our website for more information.

FireWise Day 2006

This year's Groom Creek Fire District FireWise Day activities will take place Saturday, April 1 beginning at 10:00 am at the fire station. We will update the fire season forecast and explain all of the fuels management programs that are being offered.

We will be introducing the Community FireWise Board and display the recognition received from the Governor's office. This board will help the fire district make the decisions that affect the future fuels projects that we undertake.

Hot Dogs and hamburgers will be served. It is a great time to come out and meet your neighbors and see first hand how we can ensure the safety of our community by the continuing reduction of hazardous fuels.

Please mark your calendars and make every effort to attend. We are facing the most crucial fire season this year and we will give you the information to be armed and prepared.

Dumpster Program

Back by popular demand, the Dumpster Program will become available beginning April 17th until June 23rd. This program has been one of our most popular programs historically; however, we need your help to make it even better this year.

Anyone who spends time cleaning up their property and utilizing the dumpster is asked to complete a "sweat equity" form. This form allows the fire district to claim your time spent as matching funds towards our hazardous fuels reduction projects (a copy of the form is inserted in this newsletter and is available on our website at www.groomcreek.org) Your follow-through will help us continue to receive funding for these types of projects and assist us in keeping the cost to our residents down by generating the matching funds that are required on all of these grant programs.

Please remember - only unbagged pine needle and leaf litter debris are allowed in the dumpsters. Any branches and larger diameter materials that can be chipped are not to be put in the dumpsters.

2005 Accomplishments

Groom Creek became a recognized **Firewise USA Community**.

Off district response earned the district over \$52,000, which is a 78% increase over 2004 totals.

GCFD was awarded a grant to build a **Water Supply Trailer**, which will be an asset to our Department in providing a steady water supply for large fire emergencies.

The Spruce Mountain annexation was completed.

The Mt. Tritle annexation is 95% complete.

Training Improvements - The quality and quantity of personnel training has seen a huge improvement.

Purchased a new fire engine, **Engine 41**, which satisfies the requirements of NFPA 1901

The district was **funded for grant PL-106-393**, which is a public education grant for approx. \$25,000. This is a fully funded grant that we received from the County.

New Station Update

The committee that has been investigating the new station feasibility has just about completed their task. A report on their findings will be made at the March Fire District Board meeting.

An action plan was developed to assist the committee in determining:

- the effect on operations
- the financing options
- special use permit requirements
- layout and design
- partnership opportunities
- existing station remodeling option

If approved, there is a strong possibility that a US Forest Service engine crew would be stationed here - which will add to the wildland fire first response capabilities of our fire district. This will be one more way we can continue our fiscal responsibility and provide a greater level of service to the community. If you have any questions, please call us at 928.778.6519

24-hour Staffing

Beginning July 1, 2006, the Groom Creek Fire District will have 24-hour coverage at our fire station on Friendly Pines Rd. This is being staffed initially with one Captain on shift at all times and the overnight hours and weekends being staffed by additional qualified volunteers. Our normal daytime shift staffing will be augmented by the fuels personnel who will be working Monday - Friday.

This increased level of service is the first step towards providing our residents with lower homeowner's insurance premiums by way of improving our ISO rating. Many of the changes to our operations in recent years have been with the goal of obtaining a better rating which translates to a lower insurance premium for most of our residents.

The salaries being paid to these personnel are being generated from the increased valuation of the fire district via annexations and increased County assessments. We will strive to keep our levy rate one of the lowest in the County; however, it is time that we provide an appropriate service to keep up with the demands of providing effective and efficient EMS and fire service. We will need to remodel Station 41 to provide sleeping quarters for these firefighters - Let us know if you can help in any way.

Community Park

The planning for the community park has gone forward and a master plan is almost completed. This possible redesign and upgrade of the park that is located at Friendly Pines Road and Spur Lane is proposed to include a ramada, picnic tables, swings and playground equipment.

We will be needing to raise money for this project through donations and with proceeds from events like our 10k run and a new safe Halloween event scheduled for this year. These events are being sponsored by the Groom Creek Firefighter's Association (a 501(c)3 organization).

Any assistance from local merchants and contractors who could help with this project are urged to call Chief Bentley at the fire station.

Anyone interested in participating on the steering committee or who like to provide input can do so at any Board meeting or by emailing those comments to gcfid@cablene.net. We want this park to be used by the community and your input is needed.

Groom Creek History

Excerpts paraphrased from "*Echoes of the Past - Tales of Old Yavapai Vol. 2*" by Evelyn Mackin Zuchero - published 1964 by The Yavapai Cowbells, Inc.

"The next and third stop on the long road was Buck Horn Station, a saloon where teamsters and miners could again wash the dust from their throats and proceed on to the fourth and final night stop, a place called Maxton, at the head of the Hassayampa River, where the famous Senator Mine was located...

... My father, Peter Mackin, continued through the years in his several ways of providing for his large family, until in 1917 he was critically injured at the Storm Cloud Mine...There was no industrial insurance in those days and, while my mother got a judgement against the mine, the owner skipped out and no financial help was available to our family.

The City of Prescott owns a peice of property on lower Groom Creek which once belonged to the Ben E Major family and was cultivated by them for years.. The Otto Langes ownwed and operated the P cattle ranch on the Hassayampa river and ran the largest herd of cattle in the area for many years.

Another Groom Creek pioneer was John C. McNelty who served for years as assistant supervisor for the Prescott National Forest. An early day postmaster was John Shaffer, who conducted the business in a room adjoining his living quarters. His home was located just across the bridge on the present Senator Highway. When Rural Free Delivery service was provided, the post office was discontinued.

(This book is available at the Sharlot Hall museum Bookstore).



Groom Creek Fire District

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CPR Classes

Thanks to all members of the community who have attended one of our CPR and First Aid classes. We will continue to offer these classes to all residents of the fire district and their families at no cost. The curriculum includes CPR for adults, children and infants, environmental emergencies, basic first aid skills and use of an automated external defibrillator (AED).

Our next class is scheduled for Saturday March 11th from 8:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. and will include lunch. If you are interested, please call the fire station at 928.778.6519 and speak with Todd Bentley. Leave a message and we'll get back with you to confirm your attendance.

Class space is limited to 8 people so reserve your place as soon as possible.



Groom Creek Timber Sale

Beginning later this year, there will be a lot of activity on the Prescott National Forest land to the south and west of the private land within Groom Creek. The Groom Creek Timber sale has been marked and the contract is in the process of being awarded. This sale will have the same prescription as the Loba timber sale and will provide for safety from wildland fires approaching from the south and west.

This project begins at Senator Highway and ties into the thinning done at the Groom Creek Schoolhouse as well as the other recreation sites. More information on this timber sale and the other planned projects will be made available on our website and at the annual FireWise Day to be held at the fire station on Sat. April 1 at 10:00.

These projects on forest land are being targeted to our area due to the work that we are doing on the private land within the district. Let's keep up the great work being done and maintain the support necessary for our grant projects to be successful.