



Working to Preserve a Reasonable Balance

Preserve Unique Magnolia

A S S O C I A T I O N

P. U. M. A. Newsletter • Box 536 • Nederland, Colorado 80466

Walker Ranch Fire Walk

By LYnda and Clark Chapman



The organizers of this October 28th walk through part of Walker Ranch Open Space, Cherie Long and Mike Figgs, hoped to inform residents of the Magnolia area about

the forestry complexities involved in the Walker Ranch (Eldorado) Fire. The wildfire burned 1100 acres a few miles to our east during three frightening days in September, at the expense of millions of dollars.

The fire blazed within yards of homes in the Meyers Gulch area just northeast of Gross Reservoir. They were saved through the efforts of two superheroes, who co-led the fire walk, and their teams: Chief Michael Tombolato (of the Cherryvale Fire District) and Randy Coombs (Forester and Fire Specialist for Boulder County Open Space). Chief Tombolato took a can-do stance, based on his bicoastal training in forest firefighting. When Federal firefighters arrived, he let it be known that a "let nature take its course from a distance" approach was not acceptable when the complete destruction of near-by homes was at stake, provided he deemed it safe for his firefighters. Chief Tombolato's team, familiar with the area and with recent thinning and prescribed burns, was able to judge the probable behavior of advancing flames due to such past "fire mitigation" that Randy Coombs had previously accomplished. We were shown the treated area. Indeed, when the fire got there, it laid down from the treetops to the ground, permitting firefighters to put it out.

We were shown the mild effects of the fire in the mitigation area, contrasting with the sterilized ground where the fire had burned hotly in the dense growth of untreated areas. Some of the burned slopes in the northwest part of the fire zone, including areas along Gross Dam Road visible from parts of our area, actually resulted from controlled, intentionally-set backfires, intended to confine the advance of the main fire.

Chief Tombolato pointed out, to our astonishment that the origin of forest fires is about a 50/50 ratio: man vs. nature. There is a message here -- fire bans are not sufficient in today's cultural climate, for some reason, without supplementary citizen participation, oversight, and enforcement. We must all band together to spread the word for additional fire safety measures. Chief Tombolato's "top mountain" professional demeanor, tactics, and adherence to established firefighting principles impressed participants in the fire walk. We all owe a great deal of gratitude to everyone on the "Tombolato Team" and to all the other firefighters involved in trying to put out the fire and save homes. (We are mystified, however, about why High Country Firefighters were not permitted to help.)

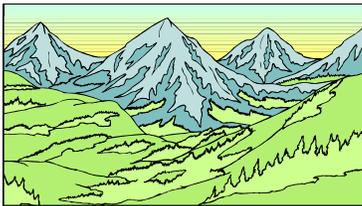
The three-hour expedition was attended by about 15 residents, and ended near one home that was saved, despite being entirely surrounded by the fire.

Restoration of the burned lands is already underway, with an enormous way to go. To control erosion, most of the standing burned trees will remain. Birds and animals will eventually use them, as the habitat is reborn. Gross Reservoir is undergoing water testing and treatments. Apparently one or a few careless individuals set the fire near the center of Walker Ranch, destroying the beauty, serenity, and recreation for thousands of people from around the planet. The resulting charcoal scars on our precious land will remind us for years to come of the need to protect our

environment from any more such dreadful carelessness. It is up to each and every one of us to do our best to remind others of what can be done by just one hot coal, one cigarette, or one piece of smoldering wood or ash.

We thank the County Commissioners for standing strong by maintaining the fire ban this autumn after premature efforts to rescind it. Chief Tombolato recommended that we all take advantage of home/landowner "fire mitigation" consultations provided by local volunteer fire departments that can educate individuals concerning fire protection options for their property. Chief Tombolato can be reached at cfpd@bcn.boulder.co.us - tel: (303) 494-3735.

MEPP Accepted into Boulder County Comprehensive Plan



A group of ordinary citizens took growth management and planning into their own hands. Four years and countless hours of research and writing

resulted in the Magnolia Environmental Preservation Plan (MEPP). The Plan details how residents and landowners would like to see the area managed in the future. In November, the MEPP was adopted by reference into the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan.

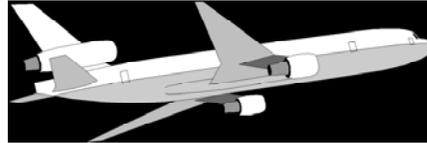
PUMA worked with the areas' 350 residents and landowners to write the MEPP and help guide their future. The plan is not law and adds no new restrictions, but suggests guidelines and recommendations for County planners. PUMA's past president, Bay Roberts, organized the members and divided the group to study and write on the cultural, vegetative, geological, hydrological and other aspects of the region. They raised nearly \$10,000 from residents and hired a consultant to help with the political and legal details of presenting such a plan. Finally, after nearly four years' preparation, the plan went through another year of exhaustive public review, including PUMA meetings, mailings, website display, and availability at local libraries.

The document was reviewed by the Boulder County Planning Commission (a group of citizens and residents of Boulder County that makes many of the planning decisions that affect County growth) and passed unanimously. The County Commissioners later accepted their recommendation for adoption.

To purchase copies of MEPP in hard copy or CD format, contact **PUMA** at puma@indra.com

AVIATION NOISE POLLUTION UPDATE

By Paula Hendricks & Norman Lederman



Fines continue to mount against Denver and DIA due to violations of an

intergovernmental aviation noise mitigation contract with Adams County. These violations are resulting from the especially noisy westbound "hush-kitted" stage 2 jets. United and Frontier Airlines have agreed to a 90 day experiment in which these noisy jets will be redirected north and south, following an earlier noise mitigation route that sent the planes over more industrial and/or less populated/sensitive areas before heading west. As of this writing, a date to commence the experiment has not been established but all indications are that it will begin in early February.

The October "DIA Noise Complaints Drive" resulted in a substantial number of complaints from Nederland residents. As of 12/6/00, the DIA Noise Abatement Office was still tallying the figures, which significantly exceed last year's numbers. The final data should be ready by mid-December and will be forwarded to our elected representatives and the media. Kudos to those who let their feelings be known!

The Boulder County Commissioners' approval of the Magnolia Environmental Protection Plan marks the first time that an official Boulder County document acknowledges the deleterious effects of aviation pollution on its citizens and ecosystem. PUMA's position remains: the aviation industry must be held accountable for the pollution it creates and the resulting degradation of the quality of life.

Monthly Meetings



PUMA meetings are held on the first Thursday of every month. They are held in member's homes and begin at 7:00 PM.

The next three meetings will be held on the dates and places indicated below:

February 1, Terry Greenberg's house, 943 Pine Glade
303.443-1409

March 1, Jerry Griess/Rosalie Bargmann's house, 2440
Magnolia Drive 303.402.1194

April 5, Greg & Debbie Ching's house, 61 Meadowland
Court. 303.442.8855

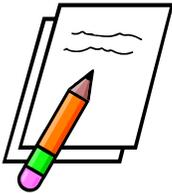
Getting Connected



To receive PUMA meeting announcements and regular email sent to the listserv. Send an email indicating a desire to have your email address added to the list to

puma@indra.com.

PUMA Survey Results



Two hundred sixty surveys were sent out and 78 or 30% were returned. There is not sufficient room in this newsletter for the complete results. We will make an attempt to place the results on the PUMA web page within 30 days

at www.peaknet.org/webpages/puma.

The following statements had at least 50 respondents (64%):

- There is a danger from motorists cutting blind corners.
- Runners do not pose a significant danger on Magnolia.
- Bicyclists do not pose a significant danger on Magnolia.
- There are not too many recreationalists using Magnolia.
- Mountain Pine Beetles are a problem on U.S. Forest Service lands.
- There should be protection for old growth trees.
- Watersheds should be protected from contamination.
- People can identify invasive/noxious weeds.
- People are aware of programs available to control noxious weeds.
- People favor seasonal closure of trails near sensitive habitats.
- The fire department provides adequate service.
- People favor preserving historical sites in the area.
- People favor maintaining a rural lifestyle on Magnolia.

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Your financial support of PUMA is *essential* in keeping our community informed, involved and connected. Here are some of the activities PUMA worked on in 2000:

- Completion of the MEPP and its incorporation into the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan
- Membership in Aviation Citizens Watch; involvement in Aviation Noise Forum
- Annual weed pulls; participation in noxious weed management town meetings
- Canadian thistle/toadflax weed program using county-supplied herbicides
- Extensive involvement in the USFS' Winiger Ridge Ecosystem Management Program
- Ongoing work regarding Gross Reservoir re-licensing
- Participation in Nederland Open Space and Trails committee
- Mountain pine beetle assistance and alerts
- Annual trash pick-up of Magnolia Road

- Monthly PUMA meetings with guest speakers
- Selection by US State Department as organization that exemplifies volunteerism; meeting taped by Russian journalists
- Work on community kiosk and 68J/359 stewardship program
- Quarterly newsletters, special mailings, PUMA listserv
- Annual summer and winter potlucks; summer DOW barbecue
- County Commissioner's meeting
- Walker Ranch post-fire field trip
- PUMA web site (www.peaknet.org/webpages/puma)

We couldn't have accomplished this without your support! While volunteers offer their time and services to PUMA, we still need funds to cover events, newsletter expenses and mailings to almost 400 residents.