

Carnelian Woods Townhouse Association

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Forestry Overview...

Carnelian Woods Townhouses (CWTA) were built in the 1970's with underground utilities. Numerous trees were removed at that time. In 1992, plans were begun for logging the land, which was accomplished in the winter of 1994-95. Since that time, occasional trees were removed as they died or were a problem.

2005: Larry Lee, CWTA Manager, and Ruth Dworsky, Forestry chair of CWTA Board of Directors, sought the advice of Jeff Dowling, of the US Forestry Service in Truckee. They walked the property with one question in mind: how can we make our forest more fire safe? That year, about 50 dead and dying trees were removed from around the buildings, and inquiries were started with Fire Protection agencies in the area.

2006: A tally of dead and dying trees indicated that we had a minimum of 222 trees in need of removal in our defensible space areas and dangerous growth of brush under the units and decks existed. Ruth began the removal of brush around 20 units of the upper area.

2007: The Carnelian Woods Board of Directors voted to begin the process of providing defensible space. Permits were obtained from the Fire Department for 3 areas: The clubhouse, pool and sheriff's station, units 1-76, and units 108-155. All trees to be removed were marked by Stewart McMorrow, head of defensible space for North Lake Tahoe. A contract was signed with Quality Enterprises to do the clearance of the critical area of 30 foot around the clubhouse, pool and sheriff's station. This work was completed in July, 2007 at a cost of \$1575.00.

Trees were also marked by Stew in the other 2 permit areas. Bids were sought from 3 contractors for each of the 2 remaining permit areas. A contract was given to Aaron, the Tree Man to remove 91 trees around units 108-155, which was completed at a cost of \$3,500.00. Brush clearance in this area was by Carl and Ruth at a cost of \$2,180.00 for Carl's salary. Fifteen five-ton dumpsters were provided free of charge by Placer county and the slash was used in a bio-mass plant for production of clean electricity.

Bids were also requested for brush and logging of units 1-76. Brush clearance was done by Stephen Minard with help from Ruth. Cost: \$3,125.00. Logging bids for this area ranged from \$23,500.00 to \$28,000.00. The contract was given to Stephen Minard and that work was completed in April of 2008. Total cost for 2007= \$34,155.00. All contractors provided proof of insurance and a valid contractors' license.

Several contacts were made in an effort to sell the cut logs for fire wood or chip it. . No bids were received for the wood, in fact, it was written into the contract with Minard that he would have the wood removed or chip it. As requested, he chipped and scattered on the fire road to prevent erosion into Carnelian Creek.

2008: In February Ruth received information from Stewart McMorrow of the Fire Department, that there was an application available to apply for a grant to help Carnelian Woods Townhouse Association pay for the clearance work of the 100 foot defensible space areas and the open forest. Estimates of the cost of clearing 60 acres were obtained and determined to be approximately \$2500/acre for a total of \$150,000.00. This would be a matching grant, with the US Forestry Service paying \$75,000.00 and the homeowners paying the other \$75,000.00. With help from Stewart McMorrow , Ruth wrote and submitted the grant application on 3/29/08. In April, Ruth was informed that the CW application had been selected for funding. Tour “start date” was set for July 1, 2008. Thus began our planning.

Bruce Seybold, the Registered Forester who has previously surveyed our land was contacted and asked to begin plans for the Carnelian Woods Fuel Reduction Project. To do this type of work in the Tahoe Basin it is necessary to have 4 permits: An Archeology report, a survey by the Lahontan Water Control District, a CALFire permit, and a permit from The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). In fact, we had to have a second TRPA survey to search for nests of the endangered goshawk species. Bruce obtained all permits, flagged boundaries and hazards, and supervised the project. Final cost for permits, reports, flagging, marking and supervision of the project: \$1,328.60 for the archeology report and \$ 4,144.00 for the Forester.

In the meantime, Stew McMorrow brought Dave Mercer, a logging contractor doing clearance on several properties on the North Shore, to Carnelian Woods. Stew recommended that Dave Mercer be hired to do the Carnelian Woods Fuel Reduction Project since Dave had the equipment and an early August opening in his schedule for this year. Dave, Bruce, and Ruth walked the property to determine what and how much could be and should be done. Ruth contacted John Pickett to get his input on hiring Dave Mercer’s crew to do the work. John is a member of the Tahoe Bi-State Fire Commission appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger. Formerly, he was the head of the California Division of the Nevada Fire Safe Council. Carnelian Woods is a member of that organization, but our grant is being handled by the Southern California branch of the California Fire Safe Council. (To be even more confusing, the California Fire Safe Council has now hired Dan Lang to head up the Sierra Region of the California Fire Safe Council.) John Pickett is now the Fuels Program Manager for the Tahoe basin, responsible to the 7 Fire Chiefs in the Tahoe basin. His duty is to utilize the manpower and machinery efficiently to accomplish fuel reduction in the Tahoe basin. He approved our hiring of Dave Mercer and e-mailed a copy of a Fire Safe Council contract for Ruth to edit to be appropriate for the Carnelian Woods Townhouse Association.

We had been informed that our “start” date for the grant application was July 1, 2008, but Ruth had been informed by Cathy Browne, Grant Manager of the Southern California Fire Safe Council (which manages the grants submitted to the Forest Service) that we could not start until we had all of the environmental permits. Since we had all five of the required permits, logging was started on August 5th

in the undeveloped lots area, one of the highest priority fire areas. Other areas of Carnelian Woods were logged after the Wooden Boat Show, as the people attending would impede the logging and possibly endanger them. Three weeks later the logging was complete and measured by GPS as 68.5 acres. The grant budget was for 60 acres and Dave agreed to bill us for 60 acres at a cost of \$1,350 per acre, for a total of \$81,000.00.

Mastication of the logged areas began on the upper area as soon as the logging was complete. A contract was given to Jeff Holland of CTL Forest Management for this work at a budgeted cost of \$60,000.00. We were fortunate to have Terry Johnson in charge of our mastication process. Problems did occur due to the many rocks and boulders on our property which break the teeth on the masticator. Mastication was completed on Friday, September 12, 2008. Cost for mastication with two machines was tabulated by hours that each machine worked for total cost of \$68,890.00, but was discounted by \$1,000.00 for a final cost of \$67,890.00.

Total cost for the Carnelian Woods Fuel Reduction Project: \$155,669.60

Additionally, Carnelian Woods residents have raked, bagged, and cut brush around all of the 118 townhouses, the pool area, and the Sheriff's station. Help has been provided by Susan Terry, Daphne Smith, Val Hubachek, Lee and Shirley Shuff, Roy Rasmussen, Tom and MaryJo McCallister. Judy Antone has worked more than 150 hours since May; Ruth has worked 116 hours, and Chris has helped by picking up the bags and dispensing them in the dumpsters. Equipment purchased for this endeavor: 3 leaf funnels, 1 rake and hundreds of large black plastic bags for the slash.

Three hundred free CD's, entitled, "Controlling Nature's Wrath" were distributed by Ruth for the California Fire Safe Council. Carnelian Woods home owners, libraries, the Tahoe City Rotary Club, our local Seven-Eleven, the Laundromat, and North Shore Post Offices all participated in the distribution.

Questions asked by homeowners: Why are there still some dead and dying trees? A forester is required to leave 2 dead trees per acre as a habitat trees and the machinery utilized for this project is not allowed to work on hill of 30 degrees or more of steepness. Large logs are left in scattered places on the ground to impede fast run-off of rain or snowmelt.

2009: The number one priority for 2009 will be to again rake and bag all pine needles and re-cut brush that has re-grown within 5 feet of the structures. Second priority will be to "limb-up" trees in the defensible space area of 100 feet from all structures. Thirdly, we should hire the fire crew of 10 men at a cost of approximately \$3,000 per day to clean out the riparian area around Carnelian Creek. Recent conversation with Stew McMorrow indicates that his crew may be available as early as May and he may have some grant money to assist us. Fourthly, there will be additional trees that die and pose a threat to property. They will need to be removed. Cost estimates are being sought from local contractors

The future: In 5 to 7 years Carnelian Woods may need to eliminate overgrowth again. At that time, we might consider hiring a company to do a mastication project, but logging should not be needed for 10-12 years.

