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**Bear Valley Community Council (BVCC)  
Meeting Notes  
BVCC Meeting – May 13, 2009  
Compiled by Angie Pinsonneault, Secretary**

The council meeting was held in the Arts & Crafts Room at the Bear Valley Elementary School, 15001 Mountain Air Drive. The meeting started at 7:00 pm, with approximately fifteen people, including five council board members. Thus, a quorum of members was present. BVCC Chair, Cheri Lipps started the meeting, introduced herself, and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Citizens Against Noxious Weeds Invading the North (CANWIN)**

Lori Zaumseil from CANWIN provided the attendees with information on noxious and invasive weeds in Alaska. She pointed out that noxious weeds are not synonymous with “annoying” weeds, such as dandelions and chickweed. Noxious weeds are those that completely take over an area, don’t allow other plants to grow, and change the ecosystem. Examples include:

- Orange Hawkweed
- Common Tansey
- Oxeye Daisy
- Purple Loosestrife
- Ornamental Jewelweed
- Bird Vetch
- Butter and Eggs
- White Sweet Clover

Lori explained that many invasive plants are sold as part of other plant arrangements at retail stores. Stopping the spread of noxious weeds in Alaska will require community involvement/action – prevention is key:

- Retail stores need to be held accountable for selling invasive plants (through legislation and enforcement)
- Home owners need to treat their yards – pull invasive weeds if you see them, treat with weed killers if necessary
- If you notice a potential invasion of noxious weeds, please notify CANWIN – they are trying to plot all infected areas

House Bill 330, which created a formal weed program for Alaska, has passed and will allow Alaska to get federal funding. More legislation is needed to further regulate and provide for enforcement.



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The purpose of CANWIN is to educate the public about how to be responsible gardeners and know what to look for. They also promote legislation to help control the spread of noxious weeds in Alaska and sponsor weed pulls. More information can be found on the CANWIN website ([www.weedwar.org](http://www.weedwar.org)) or by contacting the Anchorage Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) or the Committee for Noxious and Invasive Plants Management (CNIPM) ([www.cnipm.org](http://www.cnipm.org)). Those interested in participating can join the CWMA meetings at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Office at 3:30 on the second Thursday of the month.

### **Assembly Update**

Jennifer Johnston, Anchorage Assembly Section 6 representative, was available to answer questions. There were no questions, however, she informed the Council that due to budget and staffing cutbacks, the hillside may notice a slow down in the priority/knowledge for on-site septic systems.

### **AFD Wildfire Mitigation and Firewise**

Sue Rodman from the Anchorage Fire Department (AFD) provided an update on fire mitigation:

- Fire danger is currently high, and there is no burning allowed when the danger is rated as high. PLEASE be careful!
- Burn permits are available online at <http://www.muni.org/fire1/burnpermits.cfm> or at Station 10 on Rabbit Creek Road
  - ✓ Permits are good for 90 days
  - ✓ Be sure to check the website or call AFD to verify whether or not burning is allowed that day BEFORE you start burning
  - ✓ Burning is restricted to spruce/clean burning wood. This is to maintain Anchorage's strict air quality control standards. If too many people burn unclean wood, burn permits will need to be shut down
- The Anchorage wood lots are now open Thursday through Sunday, 9am to 7pm (for more information visit the website at <http://www.muni.org/fire1/Woodlots.cfm>)
  - ✓ Located at the corner of C Street and 100th Avenue and south of Dimond Blvd
  - ✓ \$10 per pickup load for brush
- The Firewise Assessment Program provides reimbursement to homeowners for up to 70 percent of the cost to remove trees. See the website at <http://www.muni.org/fire1/costsharetreeremoval.cfm> for specific program information and requirements
- It is illegal to remove downed or standing wood from Section 36



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- June 13 is Firewise Day for Bear Valley!
  - ✓ The wood chipper will make rounds starting June 13 and after
  - ✓ Please do not use this program as a removal service for trimming alders. Alders actually hold a lot of water and do not burn well – as such, they provide better fire protection than grass
  - ✓ Pile your brush at the end of the driveway where it is **easy to get to**
  - ✓ The piles should be neat, brush should be no more than 8 inches in diameter, and piles should be no longer than 6 feet

### **BVCC Updates**

**Hillside Area Land Owners Association (HALO) Update:** Rodney Powell gave a brief presentation on recent HALO activities:

- We need two more Bear Valley representatives at HALO. HALO meets the first Thursday of every month. Interested people should contact Rodney
- Dave D'Amato is pushing to delay discussions about drainage problems, presumably against the best interests of the hillside
- Nitrates are not a problem with sewers on the hillside – this is a scare tactic to attempt to sell other, more expensive septic alternatives
- There is a big push from Chris Birch to “remove” bears from the hillside. If you moved to Bear Valley with the understanding that there would be bears in your neighborhood, and feel that our bear population should be preserved, you should contact your Assembly representatives and let them know

Rodney invited Claire Steffens to offer her comments:

- Hillside District Plan (HDP)
  - ✓ Claire would like to see a two-part comment period for the HDP – one in June, as is currently being planned by the MOA, and one in the fall, so that the public can see how the June comments were incorporated into the plan
  - ✓ The HDP currently calls for a 50 foot setback from any designated waterway. Additionally, several designated “streams” are simply drainage ditches. As many lots in Rabbit Creek View and Heights are smaller, this setback could significantly hinder building plans and/or current construction
  - ✓ There is a small overlap between the HDP and Section 36 that needs to be taken into account when commenting on either one
  - ✓ Claire strongly feels that the hillside community councils (there are 7 hillside community councils, representing 5 hillside districts) need to work together to support each other on a handful of key issues. This is where HALO can step in and do things the community council can not (such as lobbying)



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- Claire will work on drafting a resolution for the Council to review regarding not moving the Building Safety Service Area boundary line
- Neighborhood septic systems – currently the MOA is not supporting them but they foresee being able to in the future. This allow groups of homes to share a “community” septic system

Cheri pointed out that comments on the HDP are due June 15, but if they are in before June 4 they can be included in the staff packet that will be provided to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

She also mentioned that if the Council is interested in holding a separate meeting, or forming a committee to hold a separate meeting, Tyler Robinson from the Planning and Zoning Commission has offered to have himself or one of his staff available to answer questions.

Claire made a motion that **BVCC work with the other hillside community councils to develop a list of key recommendations for the HDP, to be submitted before June 4, 2009, to the extent that BVCC is able to support the recommendations, and without giving up our autonomy.**

Discussion was called for and Laurie Holland expressed concern about what BVCC might have to agree to in order to get a significant Bear Valley-specific concerns written into the comments. Cheri and Claire felt confident that differences in opinion could be documented in the submitted comments.

Rodney Powell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Claire agreed to chair a committee to come up with a list of Bear Valley priorities. The committee meeting will be held Monday, May 18 at 7:00pm at the Bear Valley Elementary School, 15001 Mountain Air Drive. All community members are welcome to attend.

**Federation of Community Councils (FCC) Update:** Laurie Holland said there is currently nothing to report.



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**BVCC Parks & Trails Committee (PTC) Update:** Laurie Holland gave a brief presentation on recent PTC activities and other items of interest:

- The Section 36 Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) finalized their Section 36 Master Plan vision statement recently, and they have drafted some goals. There are three basic concepts:
  - ✓ Minimal development in Section 36: basic concept includes a parking lot and outhouses, and plans to use existing trails
  - ✓ Moderate additional development in Section 36: in addition to the first bullet, plans would include a few warming huts and a few additional trails
  - ✓ Full-scale development of Section 36: basic concept includes educational facilities, warming huts, more trails, etc
- The CAC's consensus seems to be leaning towards a blend of the first and second bullets – minimal development with a few additional trails

**Treasurer's Report:** Jackie Morrissey gave the Treasurer's Report:

- BVCC took in \$10 at the April meeting
- The balance in the account is \$1,202.09

### Open Forum

Cheri gave a variety of other community updates:

- Corner of Clarks Road and Heights Hill: the east (uphill) side of this intersection is neither a road nor a parking area. Please do not drive on it.
  - ✓ No motorized vehicles or wood gathering signs are going to be posted
  - ✓ Topsoil is going to be brought in, and BVCC is working on a partnership to get flowers planted. If any one is interested in volunteering to help with gardening, please contact Cheri
- Rabbit Creek View and Heights road construction: General road maintenance and repairs are being planned for Nickleen and Carl Streets in June.
- Neighborhood Watch Program: If you are interested in participating in a Neighborhood Watch Program in your neighborhood, please contact Cheri.
  - ✓ A recent report stated that crime in Bear Valley is at about the same rate as in the Anchorage Bowl
  - ✓ Incidents in Bear Valley increased from 8 in 2007 to 43 in 2008
- The Bear Valley 5k Fun Run is on Saturday, May 16. Please be patient with traffic delays as Clarks Road will be one lane from Stork Park to Heights Hill for part of the day. Please also keep pets leashed while the run is going on
- The Anchorage Fire Department open house is on Saturday, May 16 at downtown Station 1



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- Saturday, June 13 is our Community Clean Up Day. Please join us in picking up trash around the community and then a potluck afterwards. The kickoff will be at 10:00am at our new Bear Tracks Park!

The meeting adjourned about 9:00 pm.

The next Bear Valley Community Council meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, June 13, 2009 at Bear Tracks Park after the community clean up activities. Please bring an item for the potluck, your appetite, and your excitement for community involvement!** Please forward any meeting topic ideas to Cheri.

Meeting minutes, notes, agendas and other BVCC topics of interest can be obtained by going to the BVCC web page at [www.communitycouncils.org](http://www.communitycouncils.org) and selecting Bear Valley. Thank you for your involvement – your community is only as strong as you choose to make it!