

# SUN PEAK FIRE NEWS

November 4, 2022

## Sun Peak Fire Safety Open House

**Saturday, November 19 from 10:00 to 12:00**

**Sun Peak Clubhouse, 1950 Bear Hollow Drive, Park City, UT 84098**

Please join the Sun Peak Fire Safety Committee, Pinebrook HOA Fire Safety Committee, Summit County Land Manager and other forestry and fire mitigation experts for a review of work completed in 2022, and planning for 2023. This is an Open House informational meeting not a Board meeting.

## Sun Peak Fire Mitigation Project Update

by the Sun Peak “Fire Safety Committee” 11/2/2022

The HOA Board held their October meeting on Thursday, October 26. A few homeowners attended to ask questions about the fire mitigation work that was done this last summer. In addition, the Fire Safety Committee and Brad Washa, guest consultant (forestry and fire mitigation expert), attended.

We wanted to give homeowners an opportunity to voice any concerns they have as well as ask questions related to the project. The main topics discussed were as follows:

There was a question regarding how the 2022 Open Space and Trail Maintenance \$70k budget was used. To date Sun Peak has spent \$63,636 of the Open Space and Trail Maintenance budget in fire mitigation work, community clean up, and consulting services for Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan (CWPP) and Firewise Certificate. Also, Dubois trail was trimmed, weed treatment was applied to open space and winter lighting has been installed at the Sun Peak entry.

Some homeowners questioned why 20 acres were treated versus the 6-12 acres that was initially expected to be treated. It was explained that we were able to treat more acreage as Sun Peak was able to apply for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant providing additional funding for the overall project.

A request was made for the studies the HOA used to select the fire mitigation treatments that are being implemented. It was clarified that the Board has worked with and relied on the opinion and recommendations of the best forestry and fire mitigation experts available including but not limited to people from the Federal (FEMA), State, and County levels as well as private consultants. Alpine Forestry has been employed by most communities that are engaged in wildfire mitigation work in the Park City area such as six projects in Park City proper, the Enclave and Pinebrook. Furthermore, our project was reviewed and approved by Summit County.

Some homeowners questioned the need to create defensible space that was so deep into the forest. It was explained that the depth is determined by the slope of the terrain. Furthermore, Mr. Washa explained the reasons behind the work that was done, mostly the removal of dead material and of

ladder fuels (low vegetation that could ignite the canopy of bigger trees), and the removal of branches up to 6-8' high on the conifers (this is much of what is seen as "live" material in the leftover piles), Since both the Colins and DuBois Trails go through Sun Peak as well through the Enclave, at the time of the meeting, it was not clear which part of the fire break is on Sun Peak property versus Enclave property. Therefore, to better understand homeowners' concerns, the Fire Safety Committee walked the two trails and confirm the following:

- The Colins Trail starts on Sun Peak property and there is very little fire mitigation work done adjacent to the trail on Sun Peak property. However, once the trail crosses into the Enclave property there is evidence of mitigation work.
- The DuBois trail traverses both Sun Peak property and Enclave property. Of the treated area, about .3 miles is on Sun Peak property and about .5 miles is on Enclave property. The committee did not see any evidence of large trees cut down on the Sun Peak section and most of the piles were composed of smaller branches, brush, and green branches from cutting the lower branches off the conifers.
- It was clarified that the plan for defensible space reflected on the Alpine Forestry assessment has been slightly modified so that all the work done by Alpine Forestry is on the Open Space and none inside homeowners' property lines. Therefore, the committee asked Alpine Forestry to provide an updated map showing the actual areas treated. As can be vividly seen on the attached map, much of the work done by the Enclave this summer is what is high up the mountain.
- The Enclave decided to treat higher up the mountain and tie into the work they had performed in 2021 on the lower section. Whereas our treatment was fairly narrow except for the area where it needed to be expanded to tie into the Enclave's work.

Most of those present at the meeting felt that the most consequential issue going forward was the extent of the mitigation work to be performed next year and what is planned for the forest adjacent to Rob's trail.

It was advised that, other than the burning of the existing piles, no further work will be done until the following spring/summer. Prior to work starting in 2023, we will host a meeting with experts to whom homeowners can ask questions and give feedback about the planned work to be done.

The need to dispose of the current wood piles was discussed. It was explained that piles need to be disposed of during the next snowy months before they start decomposing and they no longer burn. Burning is the preferred and least costly method of disposal and the one recommended by the experts. Chipping is substantially more costly and access is obviously a challenge. Park City proper and the communities around Sun Peak are burning their piles.

The timing of the burning must be approved by the Utah Department of Air Quality, to be done when the ideal climatic conditions are present. Homeowners will be kept informed on the time and place for any pile burning.

A question was raised about the potential conflict with our CCRs prohibiting fires in the open space. It was explained that the intent of that particular CCR provision is to prohibit people from building campfires in the open space to avoid the risk of a wildfire. Furthermore, the HOA General Counsel has advised that burning of wood piles resulting from us cleaning up and thinning some of the open space

to reduce the risk does not run contrary to our CCRs so no immediate update to that document is required.

Nevertheless, a follow up email question on the CCRs was raised by a homeowner regarding a reference in the Sun Peak Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan (CWPP) posted on our website citing a potential need to “review and update the CCRs to clearly allow for pile burning...” It is important to clarify that the CWPP is a template from the State of Utah for communities to voluntarily complete at their discretion to motivate and empower local government, communities, and property owners to organize, plan and take action on fire safety issues. Contrary to the assertion from the homeowner, there is nothing compulsory in the document, but rather it represents a collaborative effort with local and state Fire Safety officials, and the activities suggested in this template, including potential updates to our CCRs, are made in good faith and on a voluntary basis. In other words, the State of Utah isn’t telling Sun Peak to do anything, but rather we are offering to participate as a community in the overall fire safety planning for Summit County.

As stated at the October 26 meeting, The Fire Safety Committee will hold further homeowner meetings to review the fire mitigation work and host a Spring “walk in the forest” to not only review what has been done, but also to have a view of the plan for the next steps.

We can assure you that the HOA Board and the Fire Safety Committee are working hard to make sure what is done is the best for our community. The Park City Fire District recommends a two-prong effort: For homeowners to reduce the amount of fuel on their properties, and for community associations to reduce the wildfire fuel that has accumulated in the common areas of their community. As this is an ongoing and collective effort, all homeowners will be invited to future fire mitigation meetings so that everyone has an opportunity to ask questions to the experts who are advising us on this important project.

## Sun Peak Fire Mitigation Treatments Map

