

Pine Brook Press

A quarterly journal for, about, and by Pine Brook Hills residents | Fall 2024

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Community Calendar

HOA MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Meetings are held quarterly at the Community Center/Fire Station (1905 Linden Drive) unless otherwise noted. All residents are welcome to attend.

See website: www.pinebrookhills.org

BOULDER MOUNTAIN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meets the second Monday of every month at 4:00 PM. Call 303-440-0235 for specifics.

BOULDER MOUNTAIN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT AUXILIARY

Meets quarterly on Sundays. Please check www.bouldermountainfireauxiliary.org/calendar-1 for the next meeting or contact aharsh@comcast.net.

PINE BROOK HILLS WATER BOARD

Meets the third Thursday of every month at 12:00 PM. Call the Water Office at 303-442-5394 for more information.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Meets the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 PM by Zoom. Contact arc@pinebrookhills.org for the link.



Bad Hair Day?
by Susan Schiff

ON THE COVER:
Northern Lights
from PBH by
Jennifer Nelson

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS!

Email your high resolution PBH images to press@pinebrookhills.org

A Word From the President

By Ethan Lake



Welcome finally to fall; the weather is starting to feel seasonal and the trees are turning. Before moving on, I just want to remind folks that fires now know no season. Be cautious and vigilant always (in the week that I penned this in October, we had at least one red flag warning day).

I'd like to dedicate this article to Peter King-Smith, the neighborhood's long-serving advocate for our road infrastructure. He has gone to bat for Pine Brook Hills for nearly two decades, securing us approximately \$1.5M for the rebuilding of Linden after the 2013 Flood and waging a long, seemingly hopeless war to force Boulder County to accept its responsibilities to county subdivisions and actually use our tax dollars to maintain our infrastructure. He is ending his long tenure as our advocate this winter and will be sorely missed. I am directly quoting his last report to the HOA below, because

this topic is something we will have to grapple with in light of the county's dereliction of duty.

For the last 15-20 years the County has committed to equitably resolve the issue of their secretly de-funding subdivision roads at a closed door meeting in 1995. BoCo took over subdivision roads from developers over the prior decades with formal agreements that stated that BoCo would maintain these roads in perpetuity. All understood this meant these roads would be fully maintained as any other county road. At the 1995 closed door meeting with no minutes, the then Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) redefined the word maintenance to exclude rehabilitation thus de-funding all capital improvement of our roads. The impacts of this change were not noticed by residents or even subsequent BOCC's until a decade or so later. If taxes had been established at the time of de-funding the cost would have been quite small. Now, 30 years later, the current estimate to rehab roads in all 100+ BoCo subdivisions over 15-20 years is \$150-\$200 million! PBH is the largest BoCo subdivision by road length. There are about 150 miles of road in BoCo subdivisions with PBH having around 12 miles or about 8% of the total. You can do the math!! There have been many unsuccessful attempts to establish county-wide funding to cover this de-funding resulting in law suits and failed ballot measures. Over the last few years the BOCC has continued to say they want to establish funding but have done less and less to make this happen. While our property taxes continue to escalate rapidly, the BOCC returns virtually none for our roads and allocates it all elsewhere. The most likely outcome seems to be that the BOCC will renege on all of their previous plans to raise necessary funding and leave it to individual subdivisions to tax themselves via a Public Improvement District (PID) that establishes a property tax on all residents of the subdivision to provide funds for rehabilitation of their specific subdivision roads. Out of frustration, a few subdivisions have already done so. The County will continue to provide maintenance services such as pothole repair, culvert repair and snow plowing. A PID must go on the BoCo ballot and be voted on by only the residents who are included in the PID, requiring a 50+% approval to be established. A fairly complicated, tedious, contentious and time consuming exercise. For PBH, a PID is likely to cost each residence anywhere from many hundreds of dollars up to thousands per year in additional property taxes depending on how PBH decides to develop and fund a rehabilitation PID for our roads and over what period of time.

As you all can see, this is a significant problem – at the low end of \$1M per mile of road rehab we would need to fund approximately \$12M and then set aside additional funding to maintain our work. While the best outcome would be to tax some of the 400,000 people living in the county and sharing the infrastructure, this does not seem likely. We collectively should start thinking now how to handle this challenge before it becomes worse and even more expensive to fix. We also desperately need a new advocate for Pine Brook Hills to fill Peter's shoes.

Fireside Chat

By John Benson



Greetings once again to the great neighbors of Pine Brook Hills. Welcome to the fall season. I hope this finds you all well and thinking about the upcoming holiday season.

Well, we had another successful summer season here at BMFPD. Luckily, we have not had any wildfires in the district. I am very thankful for that, considering how dry we are. But, with that being said, now is not the time to let our guard down. We still have a long way to go until we get sufficient moisture on the ground and the threat of wildfire can diminish. Our windy season is upon us. **STAY VIGILANT OUT THERE.**

Our 2024 mitigation season is winding down. Thanks to the efforts of Wildland Division Chief Mike Palamara we had another very successful mitigation season. Lots of trees have been removed and a lot of acres have been treated. We sincerely thank you for helping make our mountain community safer. We know we still have a lot more to do.

As we move into the colder portions of the year, everyone will be turning on their natural gas-powered heating devices to take the chill out of the air. Have you taken the time to check those appliances to make sure they are in good working condition? If not, now is the time.

DANGER, DANGER carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning can become a major issue for you, your family, and guests alike. This happens when your gas fired appliances have not been inspected or checked. I know in our house we had an older furnace and when it was replaced, we were on the verge of having an issue with carbon monoxide. Luckily the unit was inspected, and we were told to get a new one. My family means a lot to me, so the money spent was well worth it.



HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU ENSURE THAT YOU ARE PROVIDING THE BEST SAFETY FOR YOUR FAMILY.

- Have carbon monoxide detectors in place to help detect signs of CO. I have one on the bottom level where my water heater and furnace are located. I also have one on the middle floor and in the bedroom areas.
- Make sure your exhaust duct work is in proper working order and there are no leaks or gaps in the piping.
- Make sure your piping is free and clear of all obstructions.
- Make sure your appliances are well ventilated.
- Change your furnace filters. Dirty filters mean your furnace will work less efficiently during the cold months.
- If you are unable to check the above tips bring in an expert to check your appliances.
- If you are feeling sick, have headaches, lethargic or weak, dizzy, nauseated or vomiting, short of breath, confusion, blurred vision, have drowsiness, loss of muscle control or have a loss of consciousness, **DIAL 911 IMMEDIATELY, AND GET OUT OF THE HOUSE.** Crews from BMFPD will respond and check not only your home but also you using our multi gas detectors. Don't wait until it is too late.

Believe it or not BMFPD does run on our share of carbon monoxide calls. We don't like having to red tag appliances in the middle of the winter, but we have done it in conjunction with Excel Energy.



IF YOU ARE RUNNING WOOD BURNING STOVES, PLEASE CHECK THE FOLLOWING:

- Make sure your spark arrestors are still on top of the flue. We do not want to see a structure or wildland fire occur.
- Have your flues inspected and cleaned at least once a year. If you are burning lots of wood, have this done a couple times a year. If you get a build up of creosote, this can cause a fire in the flue, but also has a great potential to spread to the rest of the structure itself.
- Make sure you have proper screening on the front of the wood burning device to prevent embers popping out on the carpet and to protect children from getting burned.
- Check to make sure your dampers are working properly so that you do not end up with smoke backing up into the house.

Hopefully, we can prevent these types of incidents and you can have a great fall and winter season with family and friends.

Until next time be safe, and remember you can prevent these issues from happening if you just take a few minutes to check your equipment or call in the experts to help you.

Have a great holiday season.

Water Update

By Andrew Churnside

With winter weather (hopefully) finally here, Pine Brook Water would like to give some important updates from 2024 and helpful advice for the colder temperatures.

TANK PAINTING PROJECT: Here is the update on the tanks as of the end of the time of writing this article. The tank on Alpine is complete. Improvements include new paint inside and out, new roof supports, an upgraded hatch, and a safety railing. The tank on Bristlecone is fully painted inside and we are beginning to refill it now (end of October). Improvements include new paint inside and out, new ladder, new hatch, several new roof supports, an upgraded hatch, a safety railing and an interior mixer. The three tanks that were repainted previously (Meadowlook, Bow Mountain, and Wild Horse) will all receive new upgraded hatches before the end of the year.



RESERVOIR: After a long, dry summer, we were finally able to begin pumping water from our source in Fourmile Canyon again in late October. Filling the reservoir is not a quick process, but you should start to see the level slowly rise throughout the winter. This was the kind of year that makes us all grateful for the foresight of Bob de Haas and all of those who were instrumental

in building the reservoir back in 2006. No watering restrictions were necessary at all!

PREPARING FOR WINTER: Cooler temperatures and snow are on the way. Please take steps to prepare your plumbing and irrigation systems to prevent freeze damage. Winterize and blow out irrigation systems, disconnect garden hoses and any splitters from outdoor spigots, and winterize swamp coolers and drain lines. When extreme cold temperatures are expected, leave cupboard doors open at night and run a drip of water from faucets to prevent frozen pipes.

WATER EMERGENCIES: If you suspect a water emergency please call us immediately at 303-443-5394. This could be frozen pipes in your house, water bubbling out of the road, low pressure, or anything else out of the ordinary. The sooner you contact us, the quicker we can identify the problem and get it resolved. We would much rather respond and find nothing wrong than be delayed for a major issue.

Auxiliary's "Wildlife, Wildfires, and Well-Being" offered three education opportunities in one spot

By Sue Brundege, Auxiliary Outreach, and Education Team Lead

Photos by James P. Adams



Auxiliary member Susan Schiff represented Greenwood Wildlife Rescue



A discussion of bear behavior

On October 5, residents from across the Boulder Mountain Fire Protection District (BMFPD) met at Station 2 in Boulder Heights to learn about local wildlife, safe mountain living, and fire mitigation strategies.

Kicking off the day of education, seven volunteers from Boulder County Parks and Open Space and Greenwood Wildlife Rescue shared their knowledge about foxes, deer, bears, and the wild cats that live among us. Each station included taxidermy models, pelts, paw prints and scat, as well as written materials describing these animals' habitat and behavior, and how to enjoy their presence safely.

On the topic of safe mountain living, Chief John Benson shared his wisdom and advice to 20 participants, including three new families and six long-time residents. Topics included facts about BMFPD, evacuation protocols, safe winter driving, and wildlife behavior, to name a few. It was a particularly robust discussion with many longtime residents in attendance who shared why they love living in the mountains and advice for newcomers.

Finally, Patrick Maynard and Terry Donovan, members of BMFPD's own wildfire crew, presented to residents from eight homes about fire behavior, what the wildfire crew does for the community, and how to go about property fire mitigation. They played a video showing the difference between what happens to a mitigated and non-mitigated house during an ember storm, which was particularly impactful for the audience.



Chief advocates for reflective address signs on every home

Rounding out this education event was a community safety gear sale where residents purchased fire extinguishers, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, reflective address signs, and - new this year - fire blankets that could be used to smother small kitchen fires, for example. Chief Benson tested two brands of fire blankets under two sets of conditions before selecting the brand offered online at Auxiliary's Community Safety Store: <https://www.bouldermountainfireauxiliary.org/community-safety-store-1>



Residents picked up new fire safety gear

What would you like to learn?

What would you like to teach?

The Outreach and Education Team of BMFPD Auxiliary is starting to plan the 2025 schedule of education sessions for the community. Please email your ideas to president@bouldermountainfireauxiliary.org.

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Boulder Mountain Fire Protection District (BMFPD) Auxiliary Contributes to Safety Equipment Used by First Responders

By Pat Deutschman

This past spring the Auxiliary donated \$10,000 to the fire department that went toward the purchase of new communication radios to replace the 15-20 year old ones that were in use.

Chief Benson reported that the BMFPD received grant funds from Boulder County and was able to purchase 65 new radios at a cost of \$4,300 each. The new dual band radios, with over 5,000 channels, greatly increase interagency interoperability so that the BMFPD first responders can easily talk to all agencies that are responding. This interoperability was an important lesson learned from the Marshall Fire as is improving the communication in our mountainous area where there are many “blank” spots with no reception. Fourteen of our first responders worked the Dinosaur Fire at NCAR as well as other fires in the area. Fire departments

throughout Boulder County and beyond also respond to incidents in our district, so it is essential that communication between responding agencies be significantly improved. The Chief’s goal is to replace all the old radios by the end of the year and have a total of 85 new radios.

Your HOA Dues at Work

Did you know that the vast majority of your HOA dues are “invested” in wildfire mitigation projects to protect our homes and property? This summer alone, BMFPD leveraged \$20,000 of HOA funds with over \$173,000 in matching grants, to provide over 2,000 hours of mitigation efforts throughout our neighborhoods. That’s nearly a 10x boost to what we are able to do on our own!

Your HOA dues also cover the cost of publishing the Pine Brook Press and PBH phone directory, plus some wonderful community social events, neighborhood enhancements, and much, much more.

However, with only a 70% participation rate in paying our voluntary dues (come on ... it’s only a \$75 minimum!), this covers only about 70% of these costs. The shortfall cuts into our dwindling cash reserves. Remember, although it isn’t mandatory, we can’t continue to fully support this important work without everyone’s participation.

If you have already paid your 2024 dues, the HOA Board and your neighbors thank you. If not, won’t you consider joining us in keeping Pine Brook Hills the safe and supportive community that we all love?



Please support your HOA by either mailing us a check (1907 Linden Dr.) or visit our website (<https://pinebrookhills.org/hoa-dues/>) to pay via PayPal or credit card.

Thanks, Your HOA Board.

Ethan, Brandon, Art, Andy & Kevin

Architectural Review Committee

By Natasha Bodorff and Rob Mohr

We thought you would be interested in some of the new, innovative trends that many of our Pine Brook Hills neighbors have been incorporating into their homes recently.

- **Unified Steel stone coated steel roofing.** Highly rated for fire, hail, and wind resistance. The manufacturer says “All Unified Steel™ panels provide Class 4 Hail Impact Resistant rated performance, the best rating available for roofing products. Our material is warranted for hail up to 2-1/2” inches in diameter and winds up to 120 mph.” When installed with a specific underlay, they carry a Class A fire rating. A 50-year limited warranty includes 120 mph Wind and Class 4 Hail protection. Contact a roofing contractor.
- **Tesla Solar Roof.** This roof has an appearance similar to a metal roof, except that portions of it are actually solar panels. It is combined with a Tesla Powerwall to store the energy the solar roof produces so it can power your home during outages.
- **TheColorConcierge.com** If you would like some help choosing colors to paint the exterior of your home, this website provides that service. You upload a photo of your house and they respond with options suited to your taste, house design, and neighborhood. They also do interior rooms.
- **James Hardie fiber cement siding.** While this is not a new product, many of our neighbors are replacing their old wood siding with Hardie Siding which has a Class A fire rating.
- **Deck material.** Ipe (pronounced EE-pay) is a natural wood imported from Brazil which is extremely dense. Its fire rating meets Boulder County’s strict standard for decks. Some of our Pine Brook Hills neighbors have used Ipe when replacing their old wood decks instead of the more popular composite materials. The composites such as TimberTech AZEK look great, have an A fire rating and are zero maintenance.



A Tesla Solar roof (Source: Tesla)



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Ride-Along with Tyler Asnicar, District Wildlife Manager

By Carron Meaney

I requested a ride-along with our local District Wildlife Manager Tyler Asnicar. He is in charge of wildlife for northern Boulder County and beyond, generally from Arapahoe Road to Lefthand Canyon.

I had some paperwork to fill out, and approval was granted. Tyler picked me up the morning of September 13, 2024. I jokingly said that I hoped we would encounter an animal with a bucket on its head and we could remove it! We both chuckled at the likelihood, though he told me about a bear up Four Mile Canyon that had a bell-shaped chicken feeder stuck on its head two years ago. It took a couple of weeks, but he and his colleague were able to get it off.

Around midday he received a call from his colleague Sam Peterson who covers Boulder County south of Arapahoe Road. A mule deer buck they had been keeping an eye on, with the help of neighbors, had netting wrapped around his antlers. The netting had started to unravel and hang down, creating a hazard for the buck. We headed over to the location in South Boulder.



▲ Tyler Asnicar, District Wildlife Manager for Colorado Parks and Wildlife



▲ The netting was wrapped around the buck's antlers and hanging down



▲ Tyler drawing up the tranquilizer



▲ The large piece of sport netting

In all, there were 5 professionals, and it took about 3 hours to get the netting off. First, we had to find the animal in an area with a lot of brush and get a good approach. Tyler then darted him with tranquilizer, which took a while to take effect. Once down, Tyler and Sam rushed in to cut the netting off. Then the reversal was injected and we stood back and waited. We stayed until the buck was clearly up and moving.

It was a great day for me!!



▲ Sam watches as the buck recuperates



▲ Sam Peterson cutting off the netting



▲ Finally, head up, the buck is getting ready to go

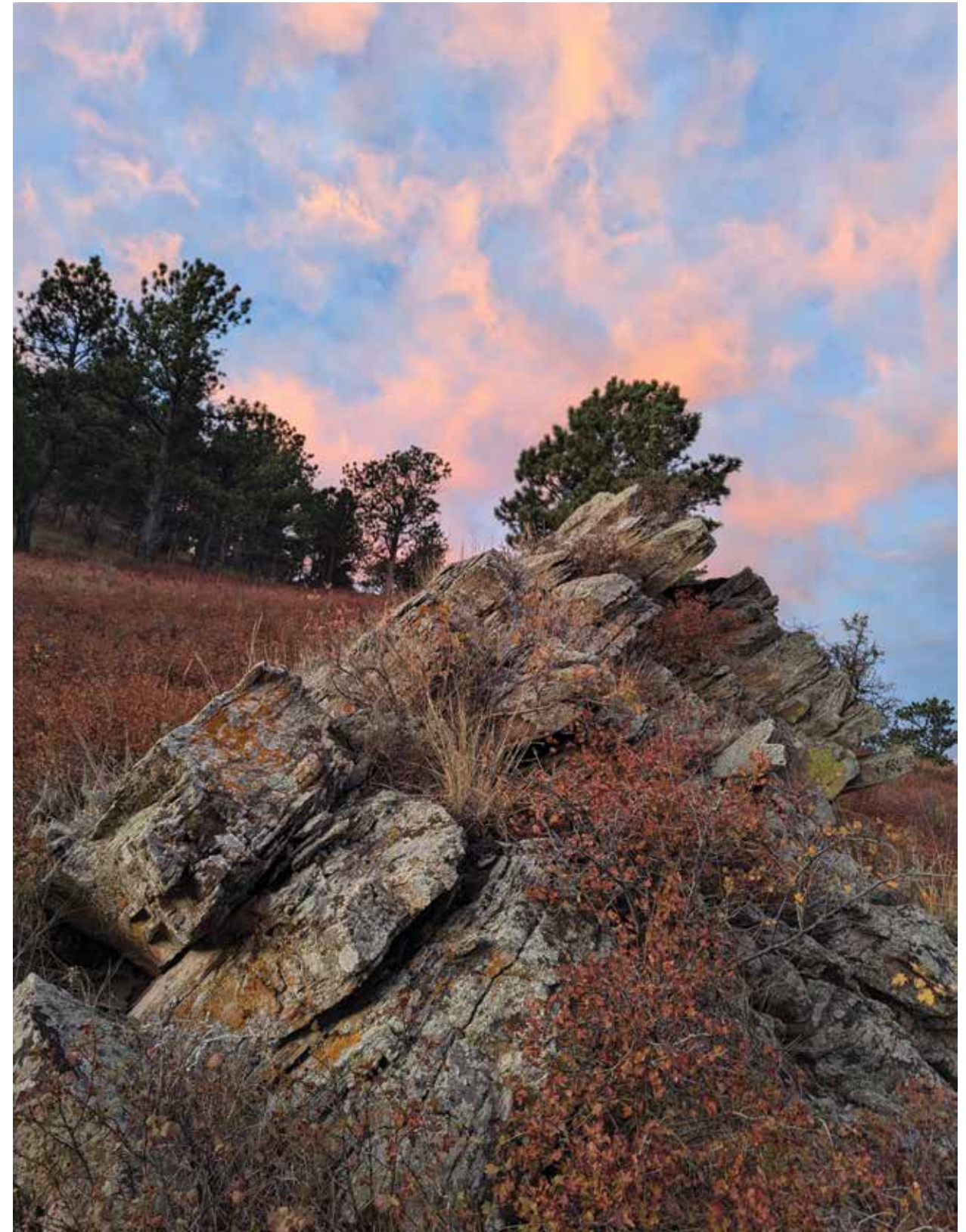
Easy Quiz: Which are from Pine Brook and which from Canada/Greenland and in between?



By Gail Loveman



By Gail Loveman



By Katie Odom

Nature, continued...



By Gabrielle Naglieri



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Black Fox by Gabrielle Naglieri