



The Sunshine Fire Protection District Newsletter

Letter from the Chief By Michael Schmitt

Living in a rural area like Sunshine it can be upon any family member or neighbor to help a loved one or next-door friend in a time of need. As a fire district we really see the benefit of when a person has had medical training to help. We started providing CPR classes last year for our residents and some of you have taken this high-quality CPR class. In my ideal world every single resident would be CPR qualified (in some countries it is a requirement to obtain a driver's license) and refreshes at least every two years. That's a very small commitment to something that can help your friend or loved one. Much more so than in the city, being able to provide quality initial care is truly the best way you can enable their survival and improve outcome. Quality care is really important, and with critical patients every minute, not receiving the right care can exponentially

reduce their chances. SFPD Medical Officer David and Sherri Begleiter are medical professionals that we are fortunate enough to have in our ranks and are offering these classes through SFPD. Proceeds go to our medical program to afford some better tools and gear for our EMTs, but are the same costs as other available classes. Encourage your

friends and relatives who live elsewhere to take a local CPR class as well. To attend our classes please reply to the announcement emails that come through the different email groups. If you are not signed up for the department's urgent or general email list or the neighbor's list, let me know and I will get you signed up.

In 2024, SFPD Firefighters participated in 152 calls¹

Structural, car, & wildland
fire/smoke reports – 18
Vehicle & Bike Accident – 16
Medical/Medical Assist – 42
Hazardous Conditions - 3
Other/Auto. Alarm Activated -6
Dispatched & Canceled in
Route - 67

Mitigation: Spring is here with no meaningful amounts of moisture in the forecast. Nature is giving me a segway to ask you all to maintain the fire mitigation that has been done in the past or to mitigate your property well this spring. At the time of writing we are about to have some red flag weather, in the middle of March. A clean and mitigated property is one

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¹ The total call volume for 2018: 80 calls, 2019: 103 calls, 2021: 104 calls, 2022:130 calls, 2023: 134

Chief's Report

By Michael Schmitt - Continued from Page 1

that can be much easier worked on by firefighters during a wildfire and has a higher chance of survival, so anything you can do from cutting and limbing trees, cleaning gutters, removing firewood from structures, enclosing patio undersides, etc will be great. Another reason to be on our email lists is to receive the beneficial emails from the CWPP team specifically from Abby and Alan. Every year they announce CWPP mitigation or project updates and opportunities.

SFPD Fire Dispatch & Wildland Training: The year 2024 was a really good one for SFPD. As Chief this is perhaps the most important piece of 2024: We sent a number of Sunshine firefighters to fires outside of the State including to California and Oregon. Having fire experience elsewhere to take home is crucial to do a good job here at home. If your first fire is in your own district and community, it's hard and you get your posterior kicked. Enabling our firefighters to go out of district is a primary goal for us, and several firefighters have been working on attaining leadership qualifications since we have made a change in how we approach our wildland training a couple of years ago. This is why you may have seen a lot more hoselay practices and truck training in the last few years, and will be seeing more cooperation with other County agencies so that we can streamline response for the wildfire starts that affect all of us in the County. Another benefit of those engagements out of State is that the district has generated over \$84,000 in revenue last year, and that can help us take big steps as a district to prepare for the future. We are grateful for those funds and for the donations we have received. Thank you. With your help we are getting a few things done.

Why do we need a shower you may ask? Well, firefighters need to be able to get undressed and remove carcinogens from fires or other particulates even from medical calls before they go back into their personal car and their home, causing contamination of previously clean spaces if they don't clean up first. That is why we have clean spare clothes for firefighters to wear, and a commercial extractor at the station that is able to remove those carcinogens and particulates from our gear. The missing piece has been that we have not had a shower, and it is with great joy (I know, strange thing to be joyful about, but I am!) that we will now have a shower so that we can make sure that firefighters can reduce absorption of carcinogens and the exposure to themselves and their families. It's a big deal.

UTV Garage: The other project we have is the garage next to station 2. Not only will it house our new UTV 4551, it will further include storage space that is much needed as the station is starting to run out of it. Items that we need for community meetings or only a couple of times per year can be safely stored there, and the UTV can receive its permanent home which will make its use and response much easier. Thank you to all who have donated to get the shed done, and special thanks go to our Treasurer Dan Fischer who agreed to be the project manager for both of these projects, and to firefighter Michael Greenberg who works tirelessly on making sure that our stations are in good shape while also playing a key role in the successful completion of these two projects. Thank you both!

Grants & Other funding: Anything left you may

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Chief's Report

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ask? Well, yes. We received \$104,000 from the Boulder County 1B tax that allowed us to purchase the command vehicle, the UTV, and an important brake upgrade for 4505. Most recently we received a grant award of \$5,200 for AED's and are able to get five units with that. We still don't have as many as we would prefer, but we are closer now.

Wildland Packs: Big thanks go to Ross Wehner who put us in touch with Mystery Ranch who was willing to donate 434 wildland packs (backpacks specific for wildland firefighters to carry their personal supplies, water, food, and of course fire shelter) with a value of approximately \$160,000. We were able to get rid of old packs that are uncomfortable and get a new pack for every Sunshine firefighter. Obviously, we did not need that many, so the rest went to just about every other agency in Boulder County (we made an Instagram post about it, too). Nothing like this has ever happened as far as we could track back, so having more Boulder County firefighters with more modern and comfortable packs was a welcome change.

CWPP: I could bring up some of the things the CWPP accomplished last year, however, I do not want to steal Alan and Abby's thunder as they will bring this up in their newsletter contributions, but would like to

express our gratitude for their hard work. Thank you both! The district is in a better and safer situation now because of the hard work you put in.

SFPD Board: Two board members are leaving the board this spring. I would like to thank John Bauer and Jean Gatza for their contributions to the district throughout their tenure. It's not always easy but I think both can move on to bigger things knowing the positive impact they both have had on the district. Thank you both!

Incoming are Jennifer Newton and long-time SFPD firefighter Bill Stahl. We look forward to working with you, and thank you for joining the board!

Can You Help Volunteer?: If you are interested in helping the department in different ways that meet your skills and needs, get in touch. In a pretty brief conversation we can determine what an involvement would look like. We do need more help in a variety of positions so if you are interested in leaving an impact on your community and directly or indirectly helping others, let me know. Thank you.

Regards,

Chief Michael Schmitt



Mystery Ranch Donation

CWPP Committee Update - By Abby Silver

CWPP Planning Meeting:

This year's meeting was held on March 18 with 19 community members attending. Thanks to all who attended! We came up with some exciting new ideas that attendees are looking into. Please keep an eye on your SFPD announcement emails for more information on a possible Community Cleanup Day, Neighborhood Outreach on wildfire situational awareness at Bald Mtn, and more!

We will also continue with projects that were begun or envisioned in prior years, and to offer popular community services that we've been providing. This includes:

- Community Chipping
- Continuing to maintain our egress routes and remove hazard trees from along all district roads.
- Doing a robust round of maintenance on our community number signs this summer. (We have some volunteers but could always use more. Please reach out to Abby if you weren't at the meeting and are interested in helping.)
- Continued partnership with Wildfire Partners (Boulder County's wildfire mitigation program) and funding for our SFPD Wildfire Mitigation Rebates.
- Fuels treatment projects: implementing the Dry Gulch South project and planning/implementing the Dry Gulch North project.
- Full details and minutes from the meeting are posted on the SFPD website. More details follow.

Spring chipping is coming soon:

SFPD is taking advantage of Wildfire Partners' free community chipping again this year. We will be offering spring and fall events. The program, which is funded by the Wildfire Mitigation Sales Tax, saves

the district tens of thousands of dollars each year.

Spring chipping will take place the week of June 9th (weather dependent as usual). Please keep your eyes peeled for emails from our Sunshine Fire communications starting in mid April with details on staging piles and how to sign up. If you plan to start working on this sooner and have any questions about specifics on how or where to stage your slash, please reach out to Abby (abberoo@msn.com) for more information.

Please note that each participant will need to self-register. Please read the sign-up email carefully when it lands in your inbox. 😊

Financial Incentives for Mitigation:

There are a number of financial incentives available to SFPD residents to help offset the costs of wildfire mitigation projects.

- Start with a free Wildfire Partners individual home assessment.
- Anyone who is enrolled in that program is eligible for up to a \$2000 matching award from Wildfire Partners for forestry work if you hire a contractor from their approved list.
- SFPD is also offering up to an additional \$1000 match for completing any action item/s called out in the Wildfire Partners assessment report. Receipts and before and after photos will be required. Reach out to Abby abberoo@msn.com with any questions. A WP assessment is a requirement for SFPD residents to qualify.
- Wildfire Partner is also planning to offer rebates of up to \$500 for specific mitigation actions. Watch for a postcard in the mail in mid-late May or check their website.

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CWPP Committee Update - Continued from Page 4

By Abby Silver

Remember, the mitigation work you do on your property also helps protect your neighbors!

Individual mitigation efforts are important, but when they are aggregated across the community, that’s where true resiliency exists. Creating defensible space around your home not only reduces the likelihood of flames spreading from the forest to your house, it also prevents the opposite from occurring. If your house was to ignite first (think electrical fire etc.), your defensible space helps to protect the forest (and your neighbors’ homes) from igniting.

Dry Gulch South Strategic Fuels Reduction Project– 60% complete!

The Dry Gulch South fuels treatment project involves thinning vegetation on 70 acres across 14 properties in the lower part of our fire district between 3100 and 3600 Sunshine Canyon Drive. The project is over half-way done and we hope to have it completed by the end of 2025. Sunshine Canyon Drive may occasionally

be reduced to one lane while wood is being loaded for transport. Please keep an eye on your SFPD communications emails for details as the project is underway.

Dry Gulch North Strategic Fuels Reduction Project– funding is coming together!

The Dry Gulch North fuels treatment project will involve thinning vegetation on 57 acres across 11 properties in the central part of our district between 3700 and 4200 Sunshine Canyon Drive.

Thanks once again to Alan’s incredible grant-writing skills, we have been awarded a Federal SFA-WUI grant for \$136K (not fully counting on that at this point!); a Colorado State FRWRM grant for \$189K and are optimistic that we will get a grant from Boulder County’s SFMG program (application will be submitted for this round of awards decided in June).

Next steps will involve working with the State Forest Service to refine and mark the project, put together a bid package, and interview then choose the contractor/s. We hope to begin the implementation phase (cutting trees) in late 2025 or early 2026.

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Sunshine has partnered with our neighboring fire protection districts of Four Mile, Sugarloaf and Gold Hill to create a joint Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The four districts make up the Boulder West Wildfire Authority (BWWA). The BWWA CWPP, which was completed in 2023, is posted to the SFPD website.



Thanks!!! Abby Silver

CWPP Committee Chair: abberoo@msn.com

Burn Permits for Bonfires & Fire Pits:

Remember that **every year** in the Sunshine Fire Protection District you need a new burn permit for **fire pits** and **bonfires**. If you have a question or need a burn permit, please contact our Fire Marshal Michael Johnson (775) 790-2662 marshal@sunshine-fpd.org, or Chief Schmitt.

Sunshine Website and Community Directory**SFPD Communications:**

To receive SFPD email communications or to update your email address for both urgent and non-urgent SFPD business please contact chief@sunshine-fpd.org. SFPD communications may include announcements, evacuation information, safety concerns/issues, CWPP, and fire department information. The SFPD announcement emails will not be used for conversations/discussions.

Directory:

The Community Directory is available on our Sunshine website. To make changes or for instructions and password please email directoryupdates@sunshine-fpd.org. It is password-protected for security. This directory is for just our community, please do not share it outside of our community and protect our secure access.

Sunshine Community Forum:

As a way to keep our Sunshine community connected, we created a special Google Group called the Sunshine Community Forum. It's a private group that allows all our neighbors to post non-commercial topics and respond to others, (lost dog, bear sighting, help finding a contractor, questions about our community, etc.) If you would like to join this group or more instructions on how to post to this group, please contact John Bauer at JRBauer01@gmail.com.



Sunshine, Fourmile, and Gold Hill annual helicopter training

SFPD Mitigation Funds Are Available for Home Hardening

Multiple scientific post-wildfire disaster studies have shown that embers and surface fire are responsible for the majority of home loss during all western wildfires. There are many simple steps that each of us can take to make our homes more resilient, and SFPD wants to help!

The CWPP Committee, with board approval, has allocated funding to support improvements to the wildfire resiliency of homes in our district. This is designed as a partnership with Boulder County’s Wildfire Partners program. Homeowners who join Wildfire Partners will receive a report detailing the vulnerabilities of their structure(s) and the defensible space around them, as well as a list of mitigation measures. Any SFPD taxpayer who joins the Wildfire Partners program for the first time will be eligible for up to a \$1000 match from SFPD toward either forestry work or home retrofits that are required or recommended on their Wildfire Partners report.

Examples: If home retrofit work (like creating a gravel border around the home or patching holes in siding) costs \$1000, you could receive \$500 from this fund; if it costs \$2200 the homeowner could receive \$1000. If forestry work costs \$4500 and Wildfire Partners provides their maximum of \$2000 toward this work, homeowners could receive an additional \$1000 from SFPD.

Please visit www.wildfirepartners.org for more info on the Wildfire Partners program. Please contact Abby Silver (abberoo@msn.com) with any questions or to apply for SFPD reimbursement. Receipts will be required, and homeowners’ time does not count.

Save the date for FUN 2025 Sunshine Events:

Family Bingo Night at Station 1

Wednesday, April 16th

Sunshine Community Fall Festival

Sunday, September 7th

SFPD Wine-Tasting Fundraiser

Friday, November 7th

Wildfire Readiness Tips

- * Create a 3-5 ft. non-combustible “vegetation free” perimeter around all structures and always keep wildland grass cut to a max height of 4 in. within 30 ft. of all structures.
- * Ensure your roof has a Class A fire rating
- * Remove branches that hang over the roof
- * Keep wood piles at least 30 ft away from your house and uphill from any structures
- * Make sure gutters and the top and underside of decks are always clear of flammable debris.
- * Screen all attic, roof, soffit, and foundation vents with 1/8 in. metal screening.

Sunshine Fire Protection District Board News
Jean Gatzka, Dan Fischer, John Bauer, Pat Noyes, Dick Smith

Hello Neighbors and Happy Spring!

There is so much happening with the district this spring! We encourage everyone to participate in upcoming meetings and events.

- Sign up for the May 17, 2025 **Certified American Red Cross First Aid & CPR** Course in Sunshine. This course is so informative and will help you know what to do quickly should someone need medical help quickly. To register go to <https://www.sunshinefpd.org/event-list>
- Cistern and Water Supply Planning meetings are coming up! These are critical for thinking about longer term district needs and we need your participation.
- Our events team is planning more fun and informative events! Watch your emails for news of these.

May 2025 will mark the end of Board of Directors terms for John Bauer and Jean Gatzka. We had two awesome community members step up to volunteer. The SFPD will welcome **Jennifer Newton** and **Bill Stahl** to the Board of Directors.

Jennifer moved to Sunshine Canyon July 2015 and has loved being a part of this special community ever since.

She is a mom, wife (of firefighter), jewelry designer and is excited to add Board Member to this list.

Bill grew up in Sunshine Canyon and lives in his childhood home with his wife and daughter. His oldest is off to college. Bill is also a former SFPD firefighter.

As always, many thanks to all the people who volunteer their time to the district: Chief Schmitt and the Officers, Firefighters and EMTs; CWPP coordinators Alan Kirton and Abby Silver; Emily Gebhardt and all the community members who coordinate events, and many others who help keep our community safe and connected.

JOIN US any 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. for monthly **Board Meetings**. We meet in-person at Station One. The Sunshine web site provides access to the agenda and board meeting minutes and Treasurer’s reports. Feel free to contact board members if you have any questions or concerns about what’s happening in the district.

Your Sunshine Fire Protection District
Board of Directors

****** Boulder County’s Emergency Alert Notification System ******

This system allows residents of Boulder County to be notified of emergency situations including mandatory evacuations notices in a variety of ways including on their **cell phone**, home, and work phones. This can be sent to you by text messaging and e-mail. You will receive time-sensitive messages for your chosen locations such as home, work, school, and family. YOU pick where you pick how.

To register for these alerts or to validate your existing account please go to: <https://boulderodm.gov/>

Four-district Tool Library

Residents of SFPD (along with our neighbors in Fourmile, Gold Hill, and Sugarloaf) can borrow tools to help with fire mitigation from our new four-district Tool Library.

Where: Poorman Station 1740 Fourmile Canyon

How: contact Ellie Prain
districtadmin@fourmilefire.org

What:

- Electric Weed Wacker
- Pole Saw Attachment
- Hand Saw
- Rake
- Looper



Malachi Brooks' Fire Academy Graduation with Deputy Marshal Hourihan and Chief Schmitt

Fire-Wise Landscape

from Harlequin's Gardens in Boulder Website

Fire-wise landscaping should focus on creating a 'defensible space' around your home. In "Firewise Plant Materials," a fact-sheet for the CO Cooperative Extension, F. C. Dennis defines this: "Defensible space is the area between a structure and an oncoming wildfire where nearby vegetation has been modified to reduce a wildfire's intensity," and therefore, reduces risk to property.

These modifications could be accomplished by: increasing moisture content, choosing the most fire-resistant plants, spacing plants in smaller, disconnected groups, and proper maintenance and clean-up.

Harlequin's Gardens staff has, from many sources, compiled and edited a very extensive list of plants with their fire-resistant ratings. See the current list at the link on the bottom of this web page <https://harlequinsgardens.com/fire-wise-landscaping/>

Also, remember landscaping with plant material should not occur within 5 feet of your home.

SFPD OFFICERS

Chief - Michael Schmitt
(303) 246-4519
chief@sunshine-fpd.org

Deputy Chief - Henry Ballard
(303) 449-8619
deputy-chief@sunshine-fpd.org

Fire Marshal -
Michael Johnson - (775) 790-2662
marshal@sunshine-fpd.org

Deputy Fire Marshal -
Paul Hourihan - (303) 551-3443
pthourihan@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jennifer Newton (May 2025) (310)
704-7706
livjoyously@yahoo.com

Treasure - Dan Fischer
fischer_dp@outlook.com

Pat Noyes pat@patnoyes.com

Dick Smith regjsmith@gmail.com

Bill Stahl (May 2025) (720) 775-2057

**COMMUNITY WILDFIRE
PROTECTION PLAN (CWPP)**

Co-Chairs

Abby Silver - abberoo@msn.com
Alan Kirton - alanj.kirton@gmail.com

Other Volunteer Positions

Deputy Treasurer -
Stephanie O’Hearn
stephanie@drnuzzi.com

Events Coordinator -
Emily Gebhardt
emilydreyer@hotmail.com

SFPD’s Website:
www.sunshinefpd.org

SFPD Phone #
303.786.7731

Instagram -
@sunshinefire.boulder.
colorado

Are you ready to Volunteer for SFPD?
We are always looking for dedicated individuals to become auxiliary department members as Quartermaster, grant writers, station cleaners and organizers, event managers/support and equipment managers. Please contact **Michael Schmitt** at chief@sunshine-fpd.org if interested.

Calendar

April:
2 Medical Training - 7-9 PM
8 SFPD Board Meeting 7:30 PM @ station #1
12 Practical Training - 8AM -5 PM (Wildland Refresher)
24 Classroom Training - 7 to 10 PM

May:
6 SFPD Board Meeting 7:30 PM @ Station 1
7 Medical Training 7-9 PM
10 Practical Training 8:30 AM - 12 PM
27 Classroom Training -Fire Attack 7 to 10 PM

June:
4 Medical Training 7 -9 PM
10 SFPD Board Meeting 7:30 PM. @ Station 1
14 Practical Training 8:30 - 12 PM
26 Classroom Training 7 -10 PM

Comments or suggestions for next newsletter contact:
Jennifer Lansky at 303.442.2709 or jen@lansky.cc