

NSSHA ANNUAL MEETING
CAMP SACRAMENTO
JUNE 28, 2025
www.nssha.org

The NSSHA annual meeting began at 10:33 with the Cody Lake Boy Scout Troop 1 Color Guard. They presented the Colors, led us in the Pledge of Allegiance, and recited the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Welcome: Tony Franks, President of NSSHA thanked the boy scouts and welcomed the membership to Camp Sacramento. He thanked us for adjusting to the delay in the newsletter and change of venue from Sciots to Camp Sacramento. He thanked Camp Sacramento and the director Chad Richardson for being so accommodating.

Updates: Tony continued: We have a new logo for NSSHA. We have plans that we want to do for the NSSHA. At the end of our meeting, we will have “office hours” with the FS. Please ask your questions then. There are *Ask Your Questions* forms on the back table so that all questions get answered. Finally, we ask you to “rate the agenda” by rating each topic on the agenda.

Introduction of Officers: Tony Franks, President of NSSHA, and a burned cabin owner (who intends to rebuild); Paul Hugo, Vice President; Mike Blote, Treasurer; and Nancy Allen, Secretary. We have an open position for Editor to help with the newsletter. If you are interested, see Paul Hugo.

Introduction of Area Reps: Tony asked that members stand up if they are in a Representative’s area as they were introduced. Meredith Randall - Area 1; Linden Beck - Area 2; Open - Area 3; Lisa Long - Area 4; Dawn Johnson - Area 5; Mary Clarke Ver Hoef - Area 6; Jim Botsford - Area 7, celebrating 40 years with NSSHA and a former two-time president and vice president of NSSHA; Nancy Allen - Area 8; Julie Newlin - Area 9. (please see the roster for the full rep tract list)

Business Meeting: Paul Hugo presiding:

Minutes: the minutes from the past year are on the back table. They have been approved by the board.

Treasurer’s Report: Paul introduced our treasurer, Mike Blote. Mike reported that the numbers on his report are from June 22nd. However, the fiscal year does not end until June 30. Our beginning bank balance as of July 1, 2024 was \$42,762.12. We added \$2958.84 from dues. We had a miscellaneous entry of plus \$4047.67 which is a return of an unused legal retainer from 2023. That added to our expenses, gives us a positive amount of \$573.03. Our ending bank balance as of June 22, 2025 is \$46,293.99. We now can pay our dues online. Dues are still \$20.00 unless you pay as a tract. Tracts that pay as one, pay less.

Tony asked for a motion to approve the treasurer’s report as read. A member made the motion to approve. Another member seconded it. The motion passed.

Election of Treasurer: Because Tony Planchon retired midterm, according to our bylaws, the board was able to appoint an interim treasure. The term is up now, so we need to officially elect Mike as treasurer. Nominations are open. Paul asked if there were any nominations for the office of treasurer. Someone made a motion to nominate Mike Blote as treasurer. There was a second from the membership. Paul asked if there were any other nominations. There were none. Paul moved that we close nominations. He had a second from a member. Mike Blote was duly elected as treasurer per the bylaws.

The Website: Paul Hugo: Mike Bratland of Gerle Creek converted the old website to our new website. There are resources available on the website - a tree page, cabin repair, contractors, bear sightings. If you have a bear

sighting, there is a place on the bear page to report that. There is other information too: histories, cabins for sale, cabin associations and more. You can access it by typing www.nssha.org or by using the QR code in the newsletter. Information about insurance is coming soon. Linda Babcock asked if we would add a link on the site to CA Game and Fish, because they would be interested in our bear sightings. Paul replied yes, great idea.

Hazard Trees: Paul Hugo continued with a hazard tree update. He discussed last year's project to have RCD cut hazard trees in the tracts, the scope of it, how trees were marked – orange and blue (for water) rings around the trees - why it was not completed and how far it got before it ran out of funding. Paul showed maps (see slide deck) from RCD, showing the areas that they have completed and the areas still to go. They are also on the FS website.

***Note:** Linda Babcock asked the members to email her if they find problems with the website. The FS is required to change their website and are finding many broken links.*

Paul continued. On July 16th RCD planted 16,000 trees at Sierra at Tahoe. He described how to find out what to do with a hazard tree, where to go for answers. He referred members to the NSSHA website, to the tree page, what information to email to our permit administrator. The cabin owner is responsible for removing hazard trees that might damage their cabin with one exception. If that tree is going to fall on a main power line, you want PGE to cut it down. Use the PGE Report It app. There is a link on the NSSHA website, in the "tree" section. The Report It app goes directly to PGE's construction department. If a line comes from a pole and it splits, PGE is responsible for the line before the split. Paul discussed markings on the trees, what they mean.

Forest Service Report: Linda Babcock, ENF Placerville Recreation Staff Officer

Linda said that she was happy to be with us and was there to serve. She could not answer questions from the other districts but was happy to pass on questions to the other districts.

This is a summary of Linda Babcock's report along with questions from the membership.

Hazard Trees: Linda discussed last year's hazard trees project with RCD. Hazard trees were removed in 13 tracts. There will be more tract work this year. Five more tracts will receive hazard tree treatment: Aspen, all or part of Bryant, 46MS, 47MS and part of Sayles tract. The FS does not have enough funding to do all of the tracts. She stated that it's cheaper for a cabin owner to remove a hazard tree than to have it fall on your cabin.

FS fire crews are not allowed to fell trees within the cabin tracts because if they were to hit a cabin, it would be a liability to the FS. A water association felled hazard trees and piled them in one area. Then the FS fire crew staff burned the piles. Perhaps together we can come up with creative ideas to deal with the hazard trees.

For a hazard tree request, use the shared email address for your district. If you send in a hazard tree request and you don't get a timely response, you may also cc Linda Babcock. For a hazard tree request, they need the tree height, the species, the diameter at breast height, and photos.

PGE: This year a pilot agreement was signed with PGE and the FS. Most of the work will be done in the Placerville and Amador Ranger districts. PGE has one team that fells the trees and another team that removes the trees. The trees should be removed within 45 days per the contract. If not let Linda know. TSU is their contractor. She can contact the head of TSU directly, and the head of PGE's wood management directly.

If a tree is felled beyond a bridge, PGE will not remove the tree due to safety issues. Tree removal does not include the slash. PGE does not have to remove any of the trees. The new PGE pilot agreement starts this year. Last year they started to remove some trees, but the agreement was not in place. If trees were felled last year, PGE is not obligated to take the trees, but the FS is trying to get them to come back and take some of them. Linda asked for information: pictures, the cabin tract, the cabin number, when it was taken down and she will try to work with PGE. PGE does not sell the logs. Most of the trees are not merchandisable. The markets are overflooded with trees.

Carson City is trying to get rid of trees that they accepted at their mill because they don't have a way to mill them all.

The five additional tracts that RCD will be working in are Aspen, part or all of Bryant, 46MS, 47MS and part of Sayles tract. Tracts will be notified as soon as possible. The final contract has not been signed. It should be signed by July 14th. Then RCD will come up with a schedule along with its contractor SVE, and the FS will notify the cabin tracts. Those tracts need to mark their water lines with flagging. One water line was broken last year. SVE notified Linda and had it fixed within four hours. Mark your septic area and propane lines as well.

If a tree is a certain distance off the road and they cannot get it without doing more resource damage then they will not take the trees. A cabin owner was at his property, an in lieu lot, and found his septic uncovered. He covered it back up and marked it. When he went back the next weekend, the tree crew had driven over it and destroyed it. He believes it was TSU; he could see the tractor marks. Linda asked to have the details mailed to her. TSU damaged septic systems last year and they did fix them. He should be able to get TSU to fix the septic, but it is a process. Tracts further east, Echo Summit, Atwood, will not get treatment at this time. There is not enough funding. Sayles canyon is only going to get partial treatment, because the timber department is working on another contract to get additional timber removed from Sayles Canyon. However, it may not get done this year.

Q: Could cabin owners help by taking the hazard trees off their lot, and putting them in a common area and then the FS could remove the trees? A: The contract (with RCD) was for a lump sum bid, which means when they go into a tract, whatever they take, that is a lump sum bid. They would not have gotten as much work done if they had done it on per tree basis. Linda asked that we keep the ideas coming. Send her an email.

COMMENT: When burned cabin owners start rebuilding, they will need the powers lines put back in. To do that PGE must first remove the hazard trees. That will also help.

Q: Please define a hazard tree? Are they trees with markings on them? Are they trees within 200' of the center of the road? A: All marked trees are a hazard for one reason or another. They may be dead or dying. A hazard tree is a hazard if it is going to hit your cabin or it's going to hit a power line or any infrastructure. Q: What about the project to remove hazard trees 200' from the center of the road? A: That related to the RCD contract that did tree removal in the cabin tracts last year. By policy the FS is not allowed to remove trees for cabin permit holders. It was Scot Rogers' idea (former ENF district ranger). He said that those trees were hazardous because they may hit a roadway and that roadway does not belong to the cabin owner. That is how the FS was able to get the contract through. Those trees are marked by orange and blue rings. Q: Where are the trees going? A: PGE has their own facilities. Linda believes that they have a biomass facility. SVE (RCD contractor) also has a choice of where to take the trees. The FS is not involved in that. [End of the tree section...]

Burn Permits: Cal Fire stopped issuing burn permits on federal land so the FS came up with this plan: burn permits will be an addendum to our O&M plans. In the Placerville district, burn permits will be good for two years. Other districts (Pacific and Amador) may be different. The reason for the two-year timeframe, is that the Placerville district is still very busy with permits and burned cabins. They want to get on a two-year inspection schedule, with new O&M plans every two years. *Note: Because Placerville just went through permit reissuance (20-year term permit), Linda and her group have learned that cabin owners are confused about the 20-year term permit and the O&M plan. They are two different things.*

Question on burn permits: Is the FS still following the Air Quality District burn day policy of calling the burn phone every day? A: Yes. Q: El Dorado County has already cut off burning. Does that apply to us? A: Yes. Q: what is the difference between a campfire permit and a burn permit? A: A burn fire permit is for a 4' x 4' area. A campfire permit is for a bar b que and allows no more than a 2' x 2' warming fire. To get a campfire permit, you need to

watch a 3-minute Cal Fire video and then you can legally use a bar b que. Burn restrictions go into effect on June 30th. The burn permits will be at the Placerville Ranger Station Monday through Friday.

Forest Service Construction and Maintenance approval: When the FS does inspections, they frequently find unauthorized work. Before you do work on the outside of your cabin, the FS must give you a construction or maintenance approval depending on what the work is. Linda cited someone who painted their cabin a color that is not acceptable and they are going to have to re-paint their cabin. The permit administrators know when you need to go to the county for a county permit. El Dorado County will not give you a construction permit if you do not have permission from the FS first. If you submit a construction or maintenance request and you don't get a response, cc Linda on it.

20-year term permit reissuance: Linda cannot speak for the other districts, but she believes that Amador and Pacific are in really good shape. For the El Dorado Placerville Ranger district, 88% of cabin owners are completely through the permit process. Six people have not turned in their O&M plans. If they have not turned in their O&M plan, then they do not have a new permit. Someone asked about an email that they got, they signed it and returned it. Does that mean that they are done? Yes, that was the signature page. It must have District Ranger Andrew Mishler's name on it. That needed to be returned. The FS has 25 signature pages missing. Linda has been trying to contact those people. The FS needs a "wet signature". Permits were sent out last fall, for everyone who had turned in an O&M plan via the mail. On the last page there is a signature page, and you must sign it. You must either bring it into the FS or mail it to the FS. It cannot be done by email. Andrew will sign it and Keri, one of Linda's staff, will send the signed page back to you. The FS still has 30 permits in transfer status, usually due to Trust issues.

Burned cabins: The FS needs to get your concept plan all the way through the process. They are past the deadline for getting concepts turned in. The FS is going to get stricter about it. The form must be completely filled out. When it goes through the FS process, they will need to know who your engineer is going to be. The forest engineer must approve it, and she will not approve it without a licensed engineer. If you have questions, call. If you don't get an answer, email. After your concept is approved you will get a permit. The first permit went out yesterday (June 27). You will be issued a 2-year temporary permit while you are building and when the building is complete, you will be issued the balance of your cabin permit to bring it to a 20-year term. Things may not move along as fast as you want but show the FS progress. The FS will work with you. Communication is the biggest thing. She said that they have done round one and round two of in lieu lots. There are still people in round one who have not answered if they were going to accept their in-lieu lot. They will start sending letters about this. They need the process to move forward. There will be a third round for those who decided late to accept an in-lieu lot. The answer won't be due until November. [End of the FS Report....]

NFH Presentation, Meredith Randall, NFH President:

Cabin Program Restoration Act – CPRA: CPRA is legislation NFH is trying to get passed. "Once cabins are lost in events like the Caldor Fire, the number of cabins being rebuilt is insufficient to keep the cabin numbers up. For those of us who have our new 20-year permits, if you read them clause by clause, you will see that the language generally takes away some of our rights as permit holders, increases some of our liabilities and removes some of the responsibilities that the FS has, so it's getting a little out of balance."

Meredith introduced herself as the current elected volunteer president of National Forest Homeowners. NFH looks out for all and advocates for the cabins, 13000+ nationwide. NFH concluded that the FS was caught between a rock and a hard place because their hands are tied by current policy. So NFH went to Congress with a bill. Rep Doug LaMalfa from NE CA, who met with Meredith in his office in Washington D.C. for 45 minutes, will introduce the bill (hopefully) in this Congress. The draft language that NFH wrote has been given to the House Legislative Counsel who will turn the bill into legislative language. One draft has been done. The second one is due possibly

in the summertime. The bill is also supported by a democrat rep in Oregon, Rep Hoyle, and two senators, Senator Risch from Idaho and Senator Wyden from Oregon. As soon as it's introduced, there will be virtual town halls multiple nights. There will be a Call to Action sent out with a template letter which Meredith encouraged us to personalize. Q: What is the purpose of the CPRA? Is it just to protect our cabins? A: It restores permit holder rights and enables more pathways to get cabins rebuilt when they have been destroyed. It includes the possibility of 30-year permits and other details. It segways into the use of retained fees. When the Cabin Fee Act passed 10 years ago, that put us into the current tier structure. In the new permit that most of us have received, the tier structure is on one of the pages in the permit. Prior to that we were in an appraisal system which caused some very high fees. In the CFA, there was language that said that after 10 years our fees would go to the FS rather than to the US Treasury. This year 35 million dollars went to the FS. Next year it will be that plus the inflation factor that we all pay. NFH started sending letters to the Washington office of the FS in 2020 about how those fees should be spent, and the discussion continued. In November the Washington office produced a letter from the Deputy Chief announcing how the fees would be spent. NFH has summarized the letter on their website. It guarantees that 85% of the money collected would return to the forest. ENF has the largest number of cabins in the country, so ENF should get around 8 million dollars. The number one priority is that there is staffing to be able to administer the program. The second priority is to remediate wildfire hazard. The third priority is post emergency cleanup, mapping, roads and bridges, multiple rec uses (trails), and infrastructure. There is more information on the NFH website. Meredith continued: as cabin associations, we can send in our suggestions on how the funds should be spent to the Forest Supervisor, David Fournier. It would be best to speak with a common voice. Meredith met with the Chief of the Forest Service in Washington at the end of May regarding the reduction in staff and asked as cabin associations how can we help? He asked for some proposals from NFH that would streamline the administrative process and still stay within regulations. He said that NFH could work with his staff to hit that target. Doug Kniveton from Wright's Lake has been involved with the stewardship group that has put together a framework for emergency planning.

[End of NFH presentation...]

Tony congratulated Meredith. He said "Our Meredith met personally with the Chief of the Forest Service in Washington D.C. to advocate for cabins. I think that is an incredible accomplishment."

Tony elaborated, NFH is a national organization that represents 14,000 cabins across the country; they have a lobbyist. The regional association is NSSHA and many also have tract associations. We all support each other. NSSHA is a registered nonprofit.

Wright's Lake Fire Safe Council: Next Tony introduced Doug Kniveton from Wright's Lake to talk about fire safety and how to mitigate wildfire in our cabin tracts. Doug said that they were motivated by the Caldor fire. Wright's Lake and Dark Lake got some cabin owners together and they came up with two objectives. One was to motivate cabin owners to clean up their lots and the other was to get a fuel reduction project done around our lakes. They got two recommendations, to talk to Mark Egbert from RCD and to form our own Fire Safe Council. They formed their Fire Safe Council three years ago. No one had formed a FSC on FS land before. They wrote a specification for fuel reduction, which included limbing your trees 8 to 10 feet up, remove ladder trees 6 inches in diameter, prune trees 10 feet away from buildings, remove surface fuels. They got their rec officer to approve those specifications. As a Fire Safe Council they are entitled to a free chipping program from the county if each lot has an APN (assessor parcel number). They had about 60% participation. Since then, they have been doing chipping every year. There are 6 hours twice a year available to every APN in the county within a Fire Council. Since Strawberry and Wright's Lake are so far away, they combine and do one chipping day a year. The main focus of the fire council has been on

education and training for the members on defensible space, cabin hardening and emergency preparedness including evacuation and communication. They have had people come and speak - Alice Cantelow, Director of Education for El Dorado FSC, the FS, and County Fire. They used their caretaker cabin as a demonstration on how to create defensible space. They also applied for a \$4000.00 grant to fire harden the caretaker cabin with volunteer labor. If you want to form your own Fire Safe Council, it's pretty easy. You just need to fill out some paperwork. The Fire Council wants someone to coordinate events. Since there are already 32 fire safe councils, if one forms on FS land, they want it to combine with Wright's Lake and if on private land to combine with Strawberry. Wright's Lake is happy to share what they have learned with anyone who wants to form a council. They have a webpage on the county FSC website. Before they approached the FS about a fuel reduction project, they made sure that the members had cleaned up their lots. They went to Mark Egbert who designed a fuel reduction project around Wright's Lake. He applied for a grant that they did not get, but the FS took the project in house, tripled the size and did all the Nepa environmental work. The Nepa work would have cost \$100,000 and they have no money. There is a video put out by the FS on the benefit of fuel reduction projects, how it saved homes in So. Lk Tahoe in the Caldor fire. If you do decide to move ahead with forming a council, you will be asked to do a CWPP – Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Wright's Lake put one together so they can apply for grants. There is a new one coming soon from the county that will cover the entire county. Wright's Lake now has a fully approved shovel ready project and all they need is five million dollars. There is a page on the NSSHA website on the Fire Safe Council with links. There is also a way to become a Firewise Community which provides your community with fire insurance discounts. They go to the monthly County FSC meetings and last month they had a presentation on the county fire fighting capabilities and how everyone teams up to fight a wildfire - the Fire Chief of the ENF, the Cal Fire Chief for El Dorado/Amador County, and the Placerville Fire Chief - how they coordinate together. El Dorado County is one of the counties at highest risk in CA for property loss. A sheriff who comes out can immediately declare an evacuation. The first person who arrives at a fire becomes the incident commander. There is good cooperation between agencies. There is a handbook in the back to find out how to sign up for emergency alerts and communications and a website that you have to log onto for a resource for an emergency.

Tony thanked Doug for his presentation. He suggested that you, yourself, or someone in your tract, need to form a Fire Safe Council and align with Doug's group at Wright's Lake and that qualifies you for a free chipper program. It just takes a little bit of paperwork.

Signage: Tony showed off a new sign for 33MS tract. NSSHA pays for the signs. If your tract needs a sign, see Linden Beck after the meeting.

CCORP Update: Paul Hugo: CCORP represents burned cabin owners. He asked for a show of hands of those present who were burned cabin owners. More than he expected. Briefly he showed two slides of where they are in the process of rebuilding. One cabin has applied for building permit with the county. They hope to do groundbreaking next week in Fir tract and have a shell by the end of the year. Any questions, see Paul after the meeting.

Questions: Paul Hugo moderator: Question on sales on Federal Lands. Meredith replied. Yes, they are still trying. From an NFH perspective, NFH responded when there was the possibility of a sale of millions of acres of national forest system land in the senate reconciliation budget bill. That part was removed by the senate parliamentarian. Senator Mike Lee introduced an amendment to sell some BLM land. NFH will push back on the sale of any FS land by Congress through legislation because it is a slippery slope. Initially there may be carveouts for places with

special use permits, like Camp Sacramento or our tracts, but once you start selling off that land, then there is going to be more grabs at it. For those that are in places on lakes, e.g. Wright's Lake or the lakes along Hiway 88, those are prime places. NFH is pushing back on all of that. NFH sent out a Call to Action email to their members. A little over 700 people responded but NFH could connect over 1700 people to the 700 that responded. Meredith suggested that we join other organizations, like the Outdoor Alliance, who will do their own calls to action. If you are a cabin tract who wants to pursue a land exchange with the FS where you purchase some land and try to exchange it with the FS, talk to Meredith after the meeting. Question: if we become a member of NFH, we would be notified about sales of FS land? Answer from Meredith: Oh Yes!

Question: Funds for road repair following the Caldor fire and for debris clean up? Linda replied that the FS does not have funds to repair the roads post Caldor fire. Every time there is a severe storm (2023), we apply for funds, storm damage money. We may get some, it's too early to say. If we have a severe storm, let the FS know if there was damage to the cabin tract road. Presently Sayles and Twin Bridges have the worst roads. Sayles Canyon post fire had a lot of damage to the road. Linda worked with PGE and got a little bit of work done but not much. The storm in 2023 added to the damage. After a storm to try to get funding, she could say that a tract road (Sayles Canyon for example) had damage. She could go out with the road engineer, ask him to add it to the list and see where it ranks. If your road has storm damage, let Linda know.

Question: Very disturbed about the discrepancies between the harshness of permit language and words of staff, which is a real situation. The two are not at all the same. Answer: from Meredith: The harshness of the permit language, and the lack of being able to rebuild after fires, is the reason NFH initiated their legislative effort. As for the response from the FS, the FS is being much more active pushing out education and providing a lot more resources on their share point site in the Washington office so the people who are making decisions are more informed about what this Recreation Residence program is and what are Special Uses, what they can do, what can't they do and what are some best practices. I believe that Linda is taking advantage of that. Linda added that language can be harsh, but when you put a human face to it, we know how to stay within the policy boundaries. Linda told her staff to create a friendly environment moving forward. If you are not experiencing that, let Linda know, because everyone has a bad day. Policies, while they seem black and white they always have a little wiggle room, and we will work with you.

Tony: after adjournment, we will have office hours with the FS. If you have a specific question, Linda will stay around and talk with you.

He asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made with a second close behind. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:27.

Nancy Allen, Secretary

July 3, 2025 Transcription

July 6, 2025 Rev 1

July 7, 2025 Rev 2 Meeting Notes