



North Tahoe and Meeks Bay Fire Protection Districts



Date: January 14, 2021
To: Meeks Bay Board of Directors
From: Steve Leighton, Fire Chief
Subject: Board Report January 2021

It is a pleasure and honor to serve as your Fire Chief for Meeks Bay Fire Protection District. I hope you all are doing well and had an enjoyable safe holiday season. I do miss seeing and meeting with you in person and hopefully in the near future we will be able to do that.

2020 was a year of success and challenge for the district. We kicked off 2020 celebrating the ten-year anniversary of the CERT team, followed by the annual SnowFest Pancake Breakfast. Eleven days later, a pandemic was declared followed by a mandatory stay-at-home order that basically turned all our interactions virtual. We have essentially become experts at conducting business remotely. Despite the shutdown, we pulled together to continue to provide excellent service to our customers.

When the pandemic hit, we were quick to modify our operations and developed two directives for our personnel to follow in order to safely support the community and protect our people.

The pandemic brought record visitation to our forests. This was our busiest summer and fall on record and our third busiest year overall; despite given our lackluster spring, and most of 2020 in some degree of lockdown. In 2020 our firefighters responded to 298 calls for service in Meek Bay Fire's jurisdiction.

2020 was also a record fire season, and fire agencies across the Tahoe Basin coordinated to increase fire restrictions, banning the burning of wood and charcoal, and any form of open flame during the record number of Red Flag days we experienced. The fire district participated in sending over 50 personnel on multiple fire assignments throughout California for a period of about five months. Climate change continues to have a significant impact on the California Fire Service. The months of August through October were the hottest on record in California. In 2020, catastrophic wildfires consumed over four million acres, far more than any previous year in the state's history. While we have received a boost of precipitation with weak-moderate systems since mid-December, odds still favor below average precipitation and above temperatures in 2021.

I do want to mention our efforts in creating defensible space on the West Shore. During the calendar 2020 year, we conducted 375 defensible space inspections in Meeks Bay Fire's jurisdiction with a goal that all homes within the El Dorado County portion of Tahoma receive a curbside, defensible space inspection by the end of 2021. We will be looking to recruit neighborhood leaders who are interested in working together through the Firewise USA recognition program in Tahoma and other neighborhoods in the Meeks Bay area.



North Tahoe and Meeks Bay Fire Protection Districts



The California Fire Service is being called upon to send Paramedics and EMTs to support hospitals and alternate care facilities. I'm proud to say that last week we sent one of our own to Loma Linda Medical Center in Murrieta to assist in this effort. We anticipate we will continue to be called upon to support medical systems throughout this new surge, and we are proud to answer that call.

Our organization is comprised of many hardworking and dedicated individuals. I'm very proud of each and every one of them and I'm honored that I can be a part of the team.

In closing, we will continue to be a good partner to our neighboring fire agencies and all Lake Tahoe Basin stakeholders, and will continue to provide excellent service to all we come in contact with while looking for new and innovative ways to keep our community safe.

Meetings and Assignments:

- North Tahoe, Meeks Bay, and Alpine Meadows Board Meetings
- Eastern JPA Chiefs Meeting
- Lake Tahoe Regional Fire Chiefs Association
- Sierra Front Wildfire Cooperators
- Executive and Command staff Meetings
- Fleet Services Update Meetings
- National Weather Service conference calls
- Meeks Bay Stakeholder Restoration Project Meeting
- XTB Operational Area Coordinator Meetings and Duty Chief
- Labor Management L3729 Meeting
- Bi-State Dispatch Meeting
- Grass Valley Emergency Communications Center Meetings
- Engineer Interviews
- El Dorado and Placer County Public Health and COVID Meeting
- Fire Adapted Communities Workshop
- Placer County Pre-Winter Meeting
- Fire District Association of California Meeting
- El Dorado LAFCO Meeting
- Placer County Breakfast Club Meeting
- California Fire Chiefs Association COVID Virtual Town Hall Meeting
- CAL OES COVID Vaccine Meeting
- El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Meeting