

Eagle Rock HOA: Notes re a Meeting with the Fire Marshall
September, 2013

In response to an enquiry from a Member of the HOA the Board appointed a two person Committee, Peter Flynn and John Cantello, to meet with the Sedona Fire Commissioner, Gary Johnson, to discuss fire hazard in Eagle Rock.

Gary did not voice any concerns as regards the overall subdivision, which is well served by road access and fire hydrants. He said that fire analysis is best done on a home by home basis and that he would be willing to meet with any homeowner to discuss site specific risks and measures. Gary prefers to be contacted by e mail, gjohnson@sedonafire.org . Note that any removal of existing vegetation in the Common Area would require pre-approval by the ARC.

Below are a number of points raised in Gary's discussion with us:

1. The primary wildfire season is May until the onset of monsoons. The predominant direction for fire spread is from the southwest. Winter wildfires are much rarer.
2. Fires spread by embers. Gary recommends that all external spigots have a hose attached so that a homeowner could douse a small fire created by an ember. Flat roofs should be checked periodically so that organic debris can be removed to eliminate that as a source of fire spread by ember. Gary thought that all roofs in a community as new as ours would be Class A fire resistant.
3. Gary strongly recommended that each house have a list of what occupants would take if they had a 10 minute notice to evacuate. He noted that in the absence of such a list people often have no organized approach to removing critical items from their home.
4. An ideal approach to reducing fire hazard is to have a defensible space, or a reduced risk space. Gary noted that this does not require the removal of trees near houses.
5. The risk from trees can be reduced by two methods. First, limit the organic mass under a tree (fallen litter) to one inch, which is adequate for moisture retention but low enough to create a low fire mass. Second, to reduce the potential for laddering (a fire moving from ground up a tree), hanging branches at the very bottom of a tree, such as those touching the ground, can be removed.
6. Succulents (cacti) are not a fire risk. Lean, clean and green is a general mantra: limited organic matter, removal of dead litter, and where practical fire resistant plants.

Again, any Member in Eagle Rock can feel free to make an appointment with Gary if they wish an individual assessment.

John Cantello and Peter Flynn