

NFLA Newsletter

Spring 2007

Groups on both sides of border seek to bury open-pit coal mine

Efforts continue to stop development of the Cline Mine in southern British Columbia—a proposed large-scale open-pit coal operation just north of the Canadian border on the Flathead River (as it's called in Canada). The mine would adversely affect water quality on the North Fork of the Flathead River in Montana, disrupt wildlife habitat, feeding and migration patterns, and infringe on the quality of life of humans both north and south of the border.

Dozens of North Forkers have become personally involved in the effort to stop the mine—by attending meetings locally and in Canada, and writing letters to the people who can make a difference. The mine is also being fought by Elk Valley communities in Canada, whose lifestyle would be disrupted by large-scale day-and-night trucking operations, an influx of workers, and the mine's obtrusive infrastructure.

According to the **Flathead Basin Commission**, on April 20 the Montana Legislature passed a bill that will provide \$300,000 for water-quality monitoring on the North Fork of the Flathead River, and to hire a full-time transboundary specialist to work on issues related to proposed coal mine applications in the Canadian Flathead. The bill was awaiting the signature of Gov. Brian Schweitzer.

Also, reports the commission, on March 16 Schweitzer petitioned the Canadian government to invoke the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act to ensure that the EA process includes three to five years of baseline data, and a transboundary environmental assessment. Sens. Max Baucus and Jon Tester, Rep. Denny Rehberg and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice also officially oppose the mine.

We have additional coverage of this issue, as well as links to relevant Web sites, at www.NFLandowners.org. Also check the Hungry Horse News and the Daily Inter Lake.

Road-paving survey results

More than 61 percent of landowners responded to the North Fork Landowners' Association's North Fork Road survey that was mailed last fall. The results:

- 55.6 percent favor paving the road to Camas
- 42.1 percent favor paving other sections
- 76.2 percent favor dust abatement
- 41.0 percent are satisfied with winter maintenance
- 23.4 percent are satisfied with spring/summer/fall maintenance.

Fire-safe efforts garner award

As a result of the conscientious efforts of the North Fork Landowners' Association's Fire Mitigation Committee, Firewise Communities/USA has designated the North Fork as a Firewise Community. The award, which is given for taking action to protect lives and property from the risk of wildfire, was conferred in Helena on May 18.

Among other benefits, the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) recently announced that a Firewise Community has priority in consideration for pre-disaster mitigation planning and project grants.

The committee reminds landowners that grant money is still available for fuels reduction around homes. This summer, Resource Conservation and Development foresters will visit with interested North Fork landowners about the cost-share assistance program.

To determine whether your property qualifies, and to get started, contact Bill Swope, RC&D program coordinator, at (406) 892-3866 or via his e-mail: [**bhswope@centurytel.net**](mailto:bhswope@centurytel.net).

Weed, fire workshops set for June 2

The Fire Mitigation Committee will sponsor a workshop on controlling weeds on June 2 at Sondreson Hall. The schedule for the day will comprise North Fork Fire Chief Lynn Ogle's Standards for Survival/Fire Preparedness course from 1 to 5 p.m.; a community potluck from 5:30 p.m.; the weed-control workshop from 6:30 to 8 p.m. The NFLA's regular monthly business meeting will follow.

The weed workshop will be presented by Tom Barbouletos, a weed-management specialist with the U.S. Forest Service. He will address identification and treatment options for current North Fork weed threats; U.S. Forest Service current and future plans for the North Fork; how to develop a community weed-management plan.

NFLA to honor Hubbles' service

Longtime North Forkers John and Nancy Hubble are leaving Montana and moving to Arkansas.

In recognition of all the contributions the Hubbles have made to the North Fork Landowners' Association and the community over the years, they will be presented a plaque acknowledging their service at the June 2 NFLA business meeting.

Thanks again, John and Nancy.

Wildfire escape route to be repaired

Repairs on Grave Creek Road in the Kootenai National Forest, which connects to Trail Creek Road on the North Fork, will begin with a survey of the site in May, reports Betty Holder, district ranger for the Fortine Ranger District of the Kootenai National Forest. The roads provide an escape route from wildfires for the northern portion of the North Fork.

“The road was damaged in late November of last year by the same storm that created all the damage in Glacier National Park,” says Holder. Grave Creek Road was even washed out down to bedrock in places, she says. A heavy snow followed the November rain storms, preventing surveys and repair designs from being done last year.

“We know that getting the road open to landowners in the North Fork is a priority,” says Holder, but “there is a potential the road will not be completely repaired and opened this year. If it is it will be late in the year.”

Moderate damage to Trail Creek Road in the Flathead National Forest is expected to be repaired this summer.

Zoning plan awaits county action

After working more than two years on revising the 1992 North Fork Neighborhood Plan, the North Fork Land Use Advisory Committee is awaiting review of the plan by the Flathead County Planning and Zoning Office to determine whether it requires updating.

The county’s new growth policy was adopted March 17. Until the committee is informed by the county that the existing North Fork Neighborhood Plan requires updating, the plan has been incorporated into the new county growth policy as an addendum, and has been deemed to be consistent with the growth policy. For further details, go to www.nflandowners.org

You may use the hall, but ...

All North Forkers, regardless of whether they are members of the North Fork Landowners’ Association, are welcome to use Sondreson hall for meetings or private events. Permission to do so, however, is required.

Rental fee for members is \$50, with a \$50 damage deposit. Fee for non-members is \$100, with a \$50 damage deposit. Renters are required to leave the hall in the state of repair and cleanliness in which they found it.

To rent the hall, contact Secretary-Treasurer Pat Cole, 14405 North Fork Road, Polebridge, MT 59928; e-mail Secretary-Treasurer Pat Cole; pabdc@starband.net.

Board takes care of business

At its annual off-season meeting May 6, the North Fork Landowners’ Association board of directors:

- Approved the annual budget for the association, as submitted by Secretary-Treasurer Pat Cole
- Confirmed that fire-safety workshop and weed-control workshops will precede the June 2 business meeting
- Agreed unanimously to honor John and Nancy Hubble’s invaluable service to the North Fork with a plaque

- Heard a report from Larry Wilson regarding repair of the Trail Creek-Grave Creek road washout.

The first NFLA business meeting of the year will follow fire-safety and weed-control workshops June 2. Additional business meetings will be held the first Saturday of the month, July-October. For the full updated schedule, go to **www.NFLandowners.org**.

Are you a mover?

In an effort to keep the North Fork Landowners' Association's records up to date and to reduce mailing expenses, if you are receiving this newsletter and you are no longer a landowner, the secretary-treasurer would appreciate receiving a note to this effect at the address listed on the sign-up form; or an e-mail to **pabdc@starband.net**.

North Fork Landowners' Association

Polebridge, Montana

President Ed Heger
Vice President Molly Shepherd
Immediate Past President Lynn Ogle
Secretary-Treasurer Pat Cole
North Directors Jon Cole & Oliver Meister
South Directors Gerry Stearns & Frank Vitale

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