

## **Fire Clearance of Lots More Important Than Ever**

Forestry experts are already seeing early signs of what they're calling a "bark beetle explosion" in the forest, due mostly to the drought. So it's more important than ever that property owners comply with the 30/100 foot clearance requirements around homes and on vacant lots. The fire danger is high, and last year's Ganns Meadow fire was a close call for Bear Valley. Tree mortality may be especially severe this summer. We are not immune to forest fires here. Firefighters with limited resources will give priority to houses with good clearance when deciding which structures to protect in a fire.

Local dump sites are reportedly no longer accepting pine needles, meaning that burning will be your best option. But the burn season may be over by mid-June.

The following people can help you with yard clearing:

Erich Haas, 209-639-1169

Joe Zibley, 209-795-2492

Mike Ratkowski, 209-795-4366

Chris Hager, 209-329-0595

Scott Thompson, 209-753-6243

If you need licensed, bonded tree fallers for non-routine chainsaw work, call:

Sean's Tree Service, 209-588-9350

Dave Finn, 209-795-7649

Mike Ratkowski, 209-795-4366

If you'd like to do tree thinning on your lot, you're allowed to cut trees up to 12 inches in diameter at breast height without special permission. For larger live trees, you need permission from the Architectural Resource Committee, whose contact information can be found on the [www.bvri.org](http://www.bvri.org) website. If you want to get serious about thinning and forestry management on your property, you can hire Forester Ross Richards (209-736-4988) to do a professional assessment of the trees and fuel loading on your lot, with recommendations for thinning. Healthy forest at our elevation should average 90 trees per acre, so the normal one-third acre Bear Valley lot should have about 30 well spaced trees.

BVRI will be inspecting the lots earlier this year due to the fire danger so please clean up your lot as soon as possible. Also just because it was a light snow year doesn't mean that there is not burnable material on the ground. Please remove all burnable material. The duff and pine needles can stay except within 5 feet of your home, unless they get deeper than 4 inches.

There will be a chipper program this year. For information, call Supervisor Terry Woodrow, 209-753-2551.