

Welcome to our neighborhood newsletter - a place to catch up on news and updates from your Lion Mountain Owners Association (LMOA). If you have information you'd like included in our next issue, please contact Kim Solem at kim_solem@msn.com.

Lion Mountain

OWNERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER | Spring 2025

YOUR LMOA BOARD

- Mitch Robinson, President
- Ragnar Stoelzle, Vice President
- John Novak, Treasurer
- Kristin Ramsey, Secretary
- Keith Quisberg
- Lauren King
- Jon Solem

WORKING COMMITTEES

The LMOA Board oversees several working committees that address specific neighborhood issues by gathering information, assessing problems and recommending solutions to the Board. Committees and Chairs include:

- Finance: John Novak
- Roads: Ragnar Stoelzle
- Communications: Lauren King
- Security: Ragnar Stoelzle
- Architectural: Keith Quisberg
- Water: Lauren King
- Beach: Ragnar Stoelzle
- Septic: Keith Quisberg
- 2050 Planning: Jon Solem
- Social: Lauren King
- Welcome: Jennifer Robinson
- Weeds: Jane Decker & Dugan Reber
- Firewise: Ed Lieser

Interested in getting involved? We'd love your help. Please contact the chairperson for each committee. You'll find more information about the Board including contact details, committee reports and meeting minutes on the LMOA website.



Summer Water Conservation

Water conservation will be a top priority for Lion Mountain again this summer. We anticipate the downward trend we've seen in our water reserve over the last three years to continue. Lion Mountain's average water use numbers per household are quite high: our residents use an average of 800 gallons per day in the summer, 150-200 gallons per day in the winter, and 250 gallons per day for non-irrigating months in the spring and fall.

Last summer, we asked neighbors to limit both indoor and outdoor water usage, and these conservation efforts made a big difference in the water levels of our holding tanks. This year, we ask you to do even more: please consider letting your lawn go dormant over the summer and/or turning off water features in your yard.

Fixing leaks in toilets, faucets or lawn irrigation systems and/or installing water saving shower heads will substantially reduce water waste. Here are a few additional tips from the experts on minimizing water consumption.

- **Water your lawn less frequently**, but more deeply – or don't water at all. Your lawn will gradually turn yellow and go dormant. Going dormant under intense heat is natural for lawns; they will turn green again in the fall when temperatures cool.

- **Water vegetable gardens or flowers in the morning** to prevent evaporation and fungal disease.
- **Aerate grass**; this helps your lawn retain moisture.
- **Landscape with native plants** that can survive our warm, dry summer weather. Use mulch around plants to minimize evaporation.
- **Use rain barrels** to collect rainwater from your gutters to use when watering your plants or lawn.
- **Mow tall and let clippings fall.** Tall turf naturally develops a deeper root system. The tall grass blades and the grass clippings will shade the soil, keeping it cooler and conserving moisture.
- **Wash your car at the car wash**, not at home. According to the EPA, commercial car washes use 60% less water to clean your entire car compared to just rinsing your car at home. Additionally, it's best to keep soap out of our soil.

Let's work together to see if we can bring down our collective water consumption. The alternative is digging a new and deeper well, and that is a costly endeavor we'd like to postpone as long as possible. If you have any questions about water conservation or your water usage, please contact Water Committee Chair Lauren King at mrs.mtn.king@gmail.com.

Save the Date: LMOA Annual Meeting Aug. 2, 10am @ Grouse Mountain Lodge

COUNTY BURNING REGULATIONS

In accordance with Flathead County Air Pollution Control and the State Air and Waste Management Bureau, *burn permits are required from May 1 through June 30*. The ventilation forecast is updated each evening for the following day. No burning is allowed during Montana's fire season in July, August, and September. The Bureau asks that you call the air quality hotline before burning at (406) 751-8144.

In addition, please keep in mind the following wildfire prevention tips:

Never park your vehicle in tall, dry grass. The heat from your undercarriage and exhaust pipe can cause accidental ignition.

Dragging chains can easily spark a wildfire. When traveling with any type of trailer, ensure your chains are properly connected..

The mtfireinfo.org website contains important information to help you prepare for an evacuation. It also has recommendations for managing vegetation to improve your home's chances of surviving a wildfire.

EMERGENCY & FIRE EGRESS

As we enter fire season, remember that we have three routes to safely exit our neighborhood in the event of an emergency. In addition to the main Lion Mountain entrance/exit at State Park Road, you can exit via Wolf Tail Pines access gate at the top of Good Medicine Drive, or via the Goguen/Two Bear Ranch property access road in Lion Mountain Ranches.

You can find maps, gate codes and other details on the LMOA website. Please become familiar with these options and print out egress information and store a copy in each of your vehicles.



We Want YOU to be on the LMOA Board!

In August, we will have two openings on the LMOA Board of Directors. The three-year terms will run from August 2025 – August 2028. We are seeking candidates with a broad range of life experiences and business skills. You might be an engineer, an accountant, a tech wizard, or a boardroom executive. Maybe you're a social butterfly, a stay-at-home parent, a community volunteer, or an organizer. We need all types of people with all types of skills and perspectives. Please consider how you can help Lion Mountain remain a vibrant, safe and solvent community.

If you are interested in serving on the Board, please send an email to info@lionmountain.com with the following:

- Name and Lion Mountain address
- Length of time you've owned property in Lion Mountain
- Occupation, current or prior

- Areas of expertise or interest
- Full time or seasonal resident (if seasonal, time period of residence)
- Short statement about why you would be a valuable Board member
- What is your superpower and how would you use it to benefit the Board?
- If you have one, feel free to include your resume

If you have any questions about serving on the Board, please contact Lauren King (406-909-0302, mrs.mtn.king@gmail.com).

Please submit your information by July 1, 2025, so that the Nominating Committee can review and prepare candidate bios for the LMOA community's review prior to the Annual Meeting.

Elections will be held at the Annual Meeting on Saturday, August 2, 2025 at 10 a.m. at the Grouse Mountain Lodge.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION & WOOD CHIPPING

Our LMOA road paving project in Lion Mountain Ranches is scheduled to begin in late June, taking approximately three weeks. The overlay project will start at the Lion Mountain Ranches gate and extend into the Ranches about ¼ mile. We will have one lane of traffic with flaggers, so please drive carefully. Chip sealing and minor road repairs will be happening at various other locations on Lion Mountain in early to mid-June, so please keep an eye out for workers.

Thanks to all homeowners who have been thinning their properties and creating brush piles to minimize wildfire fuel. Wood chippers will be coming through in mid-June

to chip the piles. An exact date will be sent out via email the week prior to chipping.

As a homeowner, you can help protect our roads and make them safer by ensuring that any contractors or other providers you are working with who drive heavy vehicles are not using Four Wheel Drive. All truck and tractor trailer drivers should only use Lion Mountain Drive to travel to job sites. The purpose of this restriction is to limit heavy traffic on the steep hill which can be very hazardous at any time of year, but especially in winter.

Potential Changes to our Fire Service Funding

An important change is underway to increase funding for fire service to Lion Mountain and the surrounding communities. The LMOA Board and 2050 Committee are researching this issue and a summary and recommended actions for neighbors will be forthcoming.

Our Whitefish Fire Service Area (WFSA), a Flathead County Board, is petitioning to transition from a fire *service area* to a fire *district* — a move that will give local residents more direct control over fire protection services. Currently, everyone in our *service area* pays the same flat rate fee of \$180 per year. With a *district*, fire services would be based on a rate determined by the taxable value of each property, and residents would each pay for the service their property would require in a fire-related emergency.

The WFSA encompasses approximately 75 square miles of unincorporated land surrounding the City of Whitefish, including Lion Mountain. It is one of the last remaining FSAs in the state, as most have transitioned

to district status. Fire infrastructure in this area is underfunded, understaffed, and poorly equipped to meet the demands of our growing population base. This situation affects homeowner insurance rates, response times, and firefighter safety.

Currently, the rates within the fire service area are determined by the Flathead County Commissioners. If approved, the switch to a fire district would transfer funding authority directly to voters within the service area. The current flat-rate system would be replaced by a mill levy, which ensures all property owners contribute equitably based on property value.

To make the transition, the WFSA must gather in-person petition signatures from residents of the WFSA that represent at least 40% of the population and 40% of the property value.

For more information, including details on how this change would impact your property taxes, please visit www.whitefishfireservicearea.org.



NEW 2050 LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The LMOA board is establishing a new committee called the 2050 Committee to address long-range neighborhood planning issues. The committee will help guide the LMOA through long-term, complex issues that will best position our neighborhood for the future through investments and mitigation strategies. This committee will not be a decision making group, but will work in partnership with the LMOA board to provide information, recommendations, and guidance. Initial projects for this committee include:

- Fire/Insurance: Encourage a fire-wise community, acknowledging threats facing our neighborhood and creating our best defense
- Water Supply: Identify and mitigate challenges to our current and future water supply
- Waste Water Management: Review issues regarding Lion Mountain septic leakage into Whitefish Lake and propose potential solutions

This new committee will be spearheaded by LMOA board member Jon Solem. Other committee members include Kim Solem, Ed Lieser, Todd Votteler, Keith Quisberg, Emily Rindal, Lauren King, John Costa, and Mitch Robinson.

NEWS & NOTES

Two **boat slips in the LMOA marina** are available for weekly rentals this summer at \$200/week. Contact Ragnar Stoelzle at rsresourcesmt@gmail.com if you would like to make a reservation.

Thanks to neighbors who are getting a jump start on **clearing brush** off their properties. When possible, please combine your pile with your neighbors to streamline the woodchipper process. You can get free mulch after the neighborhood chipping is completed; call JD Thinning at (406) 212-1312.

Recycling is available in our neighborhood; you can

curbside recycle cardboard, plastic #1 and #2 with Republic Services. For more information, visit <https://www.republicservices.com>.

Thanks to board member Lauren King, we have a new **neighborhood Facebook page**. The purpose of this page is to share information, ask questions, and get to know your neighbors. This page will be private and only visible to Lion Mountain neighbors. It will not be our primary source of communication, and will not be monitored by LMOA, but will be used as a community information sharing portal by and for neighbors. Feel free to invite other neighbors to join.



Wildfire Updates

If you'd like updates on fire activity in our area, Watch Duty is an excellent resource. This free app and web-based notification system alerts you of nearby wildfires and firefighting efforts in real-time. You can access it via the website, watchduty.org, or download it to your phone from Google Play or the App Store.

Noxious Weeds

The term “noxious” weed is used to describe any plant that is non-native, unwanted and grows or spreads aggressively. This is the time of year we start seeing the rosettes of many noxious weeds, so now is a good time to hone your weed identification skills. Familiarize yourself with the many stages and phases of noxious weeds and learn best management practices for each species before they start to flower; timing is everything!

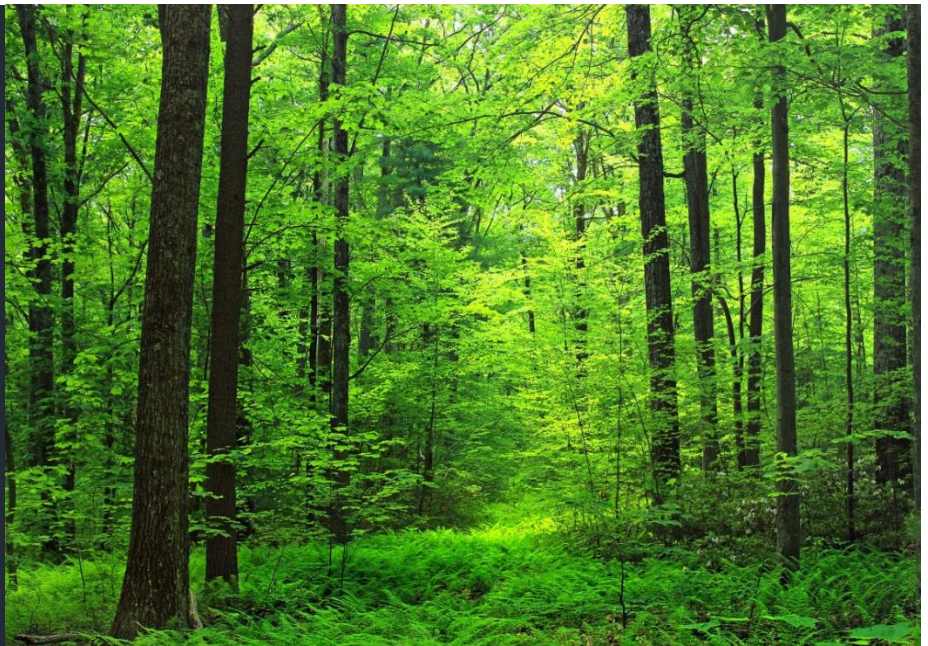
Noxious weeds are harmful because they may render the land unfit for agriculture, forestry, livestock, wildlife, or other beneficial uses. They also harm native plant communities. Noxious weed seeds often lie dormant in soil for many years until soil is disturbed and they erupt into healthy plants. Two noxious weeds that love our conditions here in Lion Mountain are Orange Hawkweed and Oxeye Daisy. The rosettes of these weeds are prominent this time of year and the window for management is now. It is best to manage these noxious weed populations before they flower and set seeds in early June.

Our local conservation district has great information on control methods on their website: [Noxious weed control blogs by: Flathead Conservation District](#). One strategy is to fight bad plants with good plants. Planting native plants that have rhizomatous root systems and prolific seeds that will grow aggressively and compete with noxious weeds is a great option after preliminary weed management.

ROADSIDE TREE REMOVAL

If you see trees along Lion Mountain roads with tape markings, that's neighbor Ed Lieser identifying dead and dying trees as well as areas of dead brush for removal. The LMOA Board has asked Ed to flag these trees because they are a safety risk and could potentially fall into the road during a storm, and are also fuel in the event of a fire. All of the flagged trees are in the road right of way, which is 60 feet wide (including the asphalt road).

There are several dead and dying trees outside the right of way on private property, but removal of those trees is the responsibility of the landowner. If you have any questions about this tree removal project, please contact the LMOA Board (Mitch Robinson at mrobinson@glaciersir.com).



STAYING FIREWISE

Fire prevention is a high priority throughout our region with the increasingly hot, dry summers. Our best chance of avoiding extensive burning and loss of homes is to clear dense trees and dead shrubs throughout our entire community. This will not stop lightning or a careless cigarette butt from igniting a fire, but it can prevent an uncontrollable wildfire from consuming vast areas. These prevention efforts also keep our fire insurance rates down.

Ed Lieser, our local forester and wildfire management expert, shares a few valuable property management recommendations. “Not only is Lion Mountain heavily forested, but we also have steep slopes that can easily and quickly spread a wildland fire,” says Ed. “So, in addition to clearing dead and downed vegetation, we all need to make thinning live trees a part of our annual property management plan.”

Effective thinning involves removing smaller trees that can become hazardous fuels in late summer. Thinning also enables the residual trees to flourish. When trees are dense, they compete for soil nutrients, water, and light. “Take out the smaller, understory trees,” advises Ed, “much as you would weed a garden to protect your crop. Thinning will improve your forest’s health by allowing diverse species to grow stronger. It also improves wildlife habitat.”

Ed recommends thinning when the trees are small and can be clipped with pruning shears rather than a chainsaw. Select the healthiest seedling or sapling in a 10-foot square area and remove the rest. Repeating every few years minimizes the harder and more expensive work of cutting down larger trees with a chainsaw and dragging them out.

In addition, pruning live and dead branches on larger, older trees as high as a person can reach is a critical part of fire prevention. Pruning reduces the possibility of a fire jumping into the crowns of a tree and starting a crown fire. “Crown fires are our greatest threat, particularly in August and September,” says Ed. “Because we live on steep slopes with an essentially closed forest canopy, a fire at this height will spread quickly.”

A great resource for developing a property management plan can be found at the [mtfireinfo.org website](http://mtfireinfo.org). The website contains detailed advice on preparing your property for a wildfire. By performing simple maintenance tasks and removing fuels within the home ignition zone, you can greatly improve the chance of your home surviving a wildfire.

We are grateful to Ed Lieser for all his leadership and guidance to keep us all fire-wise. For advice on managing the forest on your property, please contact Ed at liesered@yahoo.com.