

## Incline Village residents turn out for Third Creek tours



- Bonanza Photo -Jen Schmidt

BY BY KYLE MAGIN  
BONANZA STAFF WRITER,

More than 60 area residents showed up Saturday to the Incline Village Recreation Center for a tour of the Third Creek Fuels Reduction area, which in June was treated by North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District personnel for defensible space.

District hand crews worked to clear the area, which had become overgrown with underbrush and was a serious fire risk, district officials said.

The tour was organized by the district to provide Incline Village/Crystal Bay residents with education on the project, including the staggering change in fire safety in the area.

Norb Szczurek, fuels division chief for the NLTFPD, said the reduction work dramatically decreased the chance a fire starting in the area would become an out-of-control blaze.

"I ran a computer model on the area from before we treated the area and if a fire would have started (without district response) it would have grown to 810 acres with only a 10 mph wind," Szczurek said. "After the treatment that same fire would only grow to 2.1 acres under similar wind conditions."

In short, Szczurek said, the district is very happy with the work for making the area much safer.

Residents were shown the model and met with experts in forest and stream health in addition to a number of other officials associated with the reduction treatment on their tours, which took place between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Saturday.

Among those present was Steven McQuinn, an Incline resident and docent at the Tahoe Environmental Research Center.

McQuinn said he came to learn more about the treatment zone so he could answer the questions people will inevitably ask him at the research center.

"I learned a lot today. What it all represents is a partnership between nature's ways and human needs. We're adapting nature and the way we go about things to form that partnership, and I see it working," McQuinn said. "I think the proudest thing that will come out of this for Incline Village is to be a case study for others to look at and see."

John Andrew, an official with the Nevada Fire Safe Council who was on-hand as a presenter for the tour addressed why area residents were so concerned about the stream zone at first. Some complained the work stripped the forest around Third Creek, leaving it bare.

"A lot of people go into their fear base, thinking 'Oh my God this is bad, this is awful,'" Andrew said. "It's a lack of understanding that drives it, I think."

Szczurek said overall the district was very pleased with turnout at the tours, which were followed by a barbecue on the back deck of the recreation center.

"I was pleased with the turnout, it was more than I expected for a Saturday and people came with a lot of interest and a lot of really good questions," Szczurek said.

<http://www.tahoebonanza.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080730/NEWS/144262245/-1/rss01&template=printart>

---

Copyright 2008 All Rights Reserved