

The Carmel Pine Cone

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Soberanes Fire area will be closed for a year

■ No camping or hiking in vast area until the end of 2017

By MARY SCHLEY

THE U.S. Forest Service last week reduced the area that's off-limits as a result of the Soberanes Fire, which was started by an illegal campfire on July 22 and finally contained in October after burning more than 132,000 acres, destroying 57 homes, killing one firefighter and injuring several others. But the large chunk of land burned in the blaze will remain closed for another year, according to spokesman Andrew Madsen.

Much of Los Padres National Forest remains closed to the public, in order to protect hikers, campers and other visitors from dangerous conditions resulting from the blaze, and to allow the land to recover. But the boundaries have been

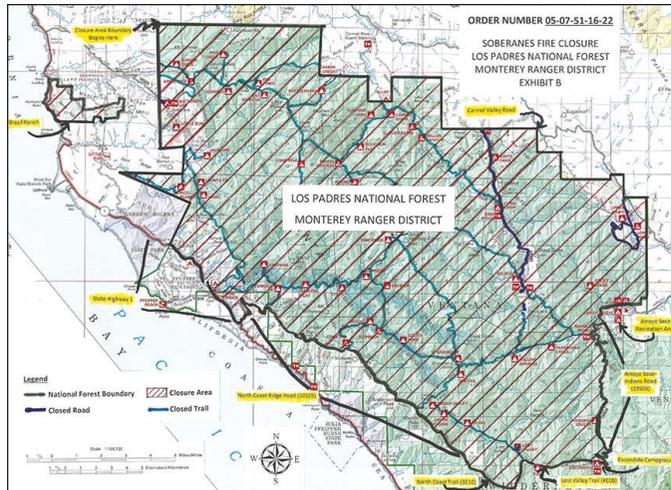
reduced to the area that burned in the fire, effectively reopening the southern portion of the Monterey Ranger District to the public, according to Madsen.

The new Soberanes Fire Closure Area stretches from the upper portion of Palo Colorado Road south along Highway 1 and North Coast Ridge Road, east along the North Coast and Lost Valley trails to the Escondido Campground, northeast along the Arroyo Seco-Indians Road to the Arroyo Seco recreation area, to Carmel Valley Road, and then northwest again not far from Carmel Valley Road, ending to the southwest of the Cachagua Grade, near Black Rock Ridge.

"Closure of the fire area aims to help ensure that members of the public are not injured within the fire perimeter, and allows for the scorched landscape to begin the rehabilitation process," Madsen said.

Law enforcement officers working for the forest service

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A map (left) shows the revised boundaries of public lands that are closed due to damage from the Soberanes Fire. A firefighter (above) douses a spot fire near a redwood.

Tomasi to become city's police chief

■ Replacing Calhoun at end of year

By MARY SCHLEY

"I OFFERED Cmdr. Tomasi the chief-of-police position this morning, and he accepted," city administrator Chip Rerig told The Pine Cone Tuesday. "He's very enthusiastic, and I'm very enthusiastic."

Tomasi, who came to work for Carmel as a sergeant in May 2008 and was promoted to the rank of commander in January 2013, was the heir apparent to the chief position in the wake of Mike Calhoun's retirement at the end of this year. Prior to coming to Carmel, Tomasi worked for police departments at Cal State University Monterey Bay and in Citrus Heights. He entered full-time police work "late," at the age of 28, having served in the infantry at Fort Ord from 1986 to 1989, and attended college at MPC, Sacramento State University and CSUMB. He later obtained his master's in public safety administration from Alliant University in 2014.

After Calhoun announced a few months ago that he would be leaving after 32 years on the force, Rerig said the city would conduct an internal recruitment, rather than hire a



Paul Tomasi

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POTTER SERVES FINAL WEEK AS MoCo SUPERVISOR

By KELLY NIX

BEFORE HANGING up his hat this week after serving an impressive five terms as Fifth District Monterey County Supervisor, Dave Potter reflected on what he'll miss, what he

won't and shared what he believes are among the challenges his successor will face.

First elected in 1996, Potter's last meeting as supervisor representing the Monterey Peninsula was Thursday. At an earlier meeting Tuesday, though, Potter, 67, was honored by his colleagues and the county with a resolution commending his work.

"Dave Potter gained a reputation as a consensus builder among boards and constituents, was an expert in the process and art of local governance, and built a district office team who shared his passion and dedication for public service — rolling up their sleeves to do the hard work necessary to serve the constituents of the Fifth District," according to a resolution honoring him.

"It's not my style to talk about myself, so it was very, very nice and I appreciate it," Potter told The Pine Cone of the accolades. "I'm kind of shy that way, about people being effusive about how good I am or about what a good job I've done."

In his bid for a sixth term, Potter was defeated Nov. 8 by former United Way CEO Mary Adams, who will take office in January.

Potter said he'll miss his small but effective staff, which he said "excelled in public service," a level of which he believed would be absent from the Fifth District "for quite awhile."

"I'll miss the team," he said. "I'll miss Kathleen, Bryan and Jane. We've had some emotional goings away. It's been tearful and a little sad."

Besides clearing out his Monterey office, his immediate post-supervisor plans include traveling to Boston to visit



Dave Potter

Plan to sell 130 lots at Rancho Cañada gets OK — but not without fight

By CHRIS COUNTS

AFTER A lively debate marked by accusations from both sides and the unexpected handing of the gavel to outgoing supervisor Dave Potter, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors this week unanimously approved a plan to sell 130 unbuilt lots — including 25 reserved for affordable housing — on land in Carmel Valley where Rancho Cañada's West Course was once located.

In his last act as a county supervisor before he is replaced by Mary Adams, Potter made the motion to approve the housing project, which passed by a 4 to 0 vote. Supervisor Jane Parker left the meeting before the vote.

Besides endorsing it, the supervisors agreed to reduce to 20 percent a requirement that 50 percent of the lots be affordable.

"I never thought we would see a project like this that uses less water, has compact development, has access to a park system and creates open space," Dave told his colleagues before the vote was taken. "I think we did a thorough examination on this one — it's been around for a long time."

A new project?

Precisely how long the plan has been around was one of the topics debated at the hearing. Builder Alan Williams has long considered it to be a scaled-back version of a subdivision proposed by the late Nick Lombardo in 2004 to build 280 homes. But his chief opponent, the Carmel Valley Association, contends it is an entirely different project — and as a result, Williams should be required to start the permit process from scratch.

"We at the CVA see a flawed process that has characterized this project from the get-go," said Pris Walton, the pres-

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Ely calls for help to honor his dad's 105th

By MARY SCHLEY

FORMER CITY councilman Dick Ely is taking a novel approach to celebrating his dad's birthday on Dec. 29.

"I don't know about you, but I have never known, met or even seen a 105-year-old person," Ely said in an email to friends asking them to send a card or call his father, who lives in Florida, to help celebrate his momentous birthday.

Most people have also probably never known a man who has shot a golf score under his age 2,005 times — including a tournament-winning 73 when he was 90 — who has nine holes-in-one, and who is the oldest living graduate of West Point. But William Ely, a retired highly decorated three-star lieutenant general in the Army, has, because he is that person.

"He's really an amazing guy," his son said, exhibiting the difficulty of finding the right words to describe someone who is, really, beyond amazing.

"He attributes his longevity to luck, as much as anything



William and Helen Ely in 2014

See **ELY** page 12A

See **POTTER** page 29A