

WHISPERING PINES NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION  
2587 N. Juniper Drive  
Payson, Arizona 85541  
website: wnapaysonaz.org

Angela Elam, District Ranger  
Payson Ranger District  
1009 E. HWY 260  
Payson, AZ 85541

September 9, 2013

We as a neighborhood association have organized and circulated a petition that addresses our concerns for the safety of our community and the surrounding forest. This petition puts forth our worry that delays in thinning the forest around settled communities greatly increases the danger of a catastrophic wildfire, with deadly risk to both homeowners and the firefighting personnel.

Every year we wait with bated breath for the fire season to end, and we are grateful and relieved when we escape yet again. But we have had experience with near disaster when the Waterwheel Fire of 2009 came within half a mile of Whispering Pines. We know it is only a matter of time before a fire reaches us. Our fire department is doing all it can to educate the campers in the forest surrounding us about fire safety, and has applied regularly but unsuccessfully for grant money to make us a Firewise community. We feel that we are doing almost everything we can to help ourselves.

We understand that there is a plan for fuel reduction in place in various areas throughout Arizona, and that the southern edge of our community of Whispering Pines is not on the immediate list. We also understand that lack of money and crews play major roles in implementing fuel reduction plans.

Because we place such a high level of importance on the well-being of our community and the surrounding forest, we have pledged to donate the majority of our funds from our dues account (up to \$9,000) and to volunteer with personnel and any available equipment to help the Tonto National Forest with fuel reduction on our southern border.

We urge you to reconsider your timeline, to accept our offer of financial and volunteer help, and consider implementing a fuel reduction plan during the fall of 2013 on our southern border.

Sincerely,

Lisa Tan Ehlers, President  
Whispering Pines Neighborhood Association

encl.

c.c.: Payson Roundup  
Superintendent Tommie Cline Martin  
Representative Paul Gosar  
Senators Jeff Flake, John McCain  
Governor Jan Brewer