SWEETWATER SPRINGS WATER DISTRICT

TO: Board of Directors **AGENDA NO. V-F**

FROM: Steve Mack, General Manager

Meeting Date: October 1, 2009

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION/ACTION RE WILDFIRES AND DISTRICT COMMUNICATIONS

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Receive a report on the potential of wildfires disrupting District radio communications.

FISCAL IMPACT: No direct impacts.

DISCUSSION:

Board members have asked about the vulnerability of District communications to wildfire, with particular interest in the Mount Jackson radio antennas from which District radio service is based. Staff have inquired as to the vulnerability of the Mount Jackson site and have found that it is in an area which has the vegetation managed to reduce fire danger and is also in a high protection area – there are other antennas near the District radio antenna and those antennas are also important for disaster response, as well as normal communications. The Mount Jackson antenna area would be well protected in any wildfire situation.

The District also has cell phone coverage in most of the District, but cell phone systems are notoriously unreliable during emergencies – the system can be overloaded by too much phone traffic and cell phone towers are also suspect to wildfire damage.

In a wildfire anything can happen, of course, but the District's radio system appears to be reasonably protected.