



January 2024

Winter is upon us!



FROM YOUR PRESIDENT GLENN GROTHE.....

Wow, another year has gone by and it was a busy one for the Ranch! On behalf of the board, Happy New Year to all our members. We hope you all had a great 2023 and are looking forward to 2024.

We started off 2023 installing two new board members and passing the budget. The Ranch House Committee looked at the Ranch Manager's residence and provided us with recommendations for maintenance and long-term options. We had a Town Hall Meeting in March and appreciate those who attended. We installed a staff gauge at the Reservoir; a noteworthy accomplishment with kudos to the Water Committee; and conducted the spring release of water from our reservoir. During the summer we finalized the decision to transition to a commercial firm for our accounting and bookkeeping services. Our dues processing for 2024 will be the first real test of this, but it appears promising. Our annual meeting/picnic had some unseasonably cool and wet weather, but was a success with some interesting topics presented by Park County representatives. We also voted on and installed two more new board members. In the fall we passed the 2024 budget with no dues increase.

In 2024, we will finalize our transition to Hammersmith for bookkeeping and will be looking at our long-term infrastructure, both from a maintenance standpoint and for what we want moving forward. As said previously, the board has not made any decisions on new infrastructure projects. The online survey was just to help inform the board on membership thoughts concerning future options. Our intent is to have an ad hoc committee assist us in this process. If you would like to be part of this, please let us know. Any new projects will be discussed at our monthly board meetings prior to approval.



A key thing for us is the continued willingness of volunteers to assist the board in numerous ways. There is always a need for assistance, whether it is on a committee or assisting in the burn pit. If you haven't volunteered yet on the Ranch, we would ask that you consider this. Many hands make the work light! To all of our current volunteers, thanks for all you do on behalf of all of our members. And to our members, please treat our volunteers with dignity and respect as you interact with them.

In closing, I would ask all of our members to strive for encouraging and constructive dialogue as we enter the New Year, whether that's in person, at board meetings or on social media. All of us should have a voice and be able to air our opinions. The board is committed to resolve our differences in a respectful, constructive and positive manner. We would ask

for the members support and to approach issues similarly. I look forward to seeing you on the Ranch. Here's to a great 2024!

FROM YOUR VICE PRESIDENT GARY NESBITT.....

Now that winter is upon us, it's a good time to remind everyone to look out for your neighbors, especially the elderly or infirmed. Here are a few tips to help ensure all of our neighbors are safe and well taken care of:

- Offer to clear walkways or steps, as the snow can make those slippery. Check to see that neighbors have hired a professional to clear their driveways.
- Make a quick phone call or visit or take and share a meal with those who can't get out and who tend to feel alone and isolated during our long winter months.
- Make sure the elderly have road-ready vehicles by starting their cars periodically, checking tires for correct air pressure, etc. If you have time, offer to take them to appointments and relieve them of the stress of driving down the pass.
- Check for easy access to flashlights, extra blankets, and non-perishable foods in case of power outages. We sometimes have phone outages, too, so it might be necessary to make an in-person check to ensure your neighbors are okay until power and phones are restored.
- Replace batteries in your neighbors' carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors periodically.

The most important tip to keep in mind during the colder months and beyond is to encourage all of your neighbors to ask for help. Whether the need is to clear property of snow, stock up on nourishing groceries, or make a trip to town, we should all feel free to ask our neighbors for help, no matter the season. Living remotely offers many challenges, but we can all make the Ranch an even better community by watching out for each other.



FROM YOUR SECRETARY JEFF MORGAN.....

Happy winter greetings! Holly and I love being at the ranch in the winter - it's quiet and beautiful! Once we get the cabin warmed up with a roaring fire, it's a great place to be!

I contacted our Park County Commissioner, Mr. Dave Wissel, for an update on the RORA roads project. As you might remember from Dave and Mr. Mike Smith's remarks at our annual meeting, they are taking a more strategic approach to not only getting the roads in better shape, but in putting together a regular maintenance plan. They have also made some changes in leadership, which lead to their being able to re-recruit talent. They have also increased pay to be more competitive, also helping with recruiting.



The Public Works Department is in the process of acquiring all the materials to improve the roads so they can start when the weather cooperates. To this end, they have engaged long-haulers and engineers to get the materials to the sites; and have a solid plan for road improvement beyond just scraping it. They have ordered a supply of 300,000 yards of road base and mine tailings to complete the supplies needed to improve the roads. Dave also indicated that the county has money in the budget reserved for just this purpose! New to their plan is to stage materials near the road areas now, reducing the time to get materials in hand when construction is ready to begin. Of course, the proof is in the pudding; but this is good news that the wheels are turning. I'll keep you posted!



The Manager's Corner

by Larry Hartley

Ranch Manager's Annual Report 2023 Last year was busy....

- I continued to improve RV Lot Assignments, maintenance and monitoring.
- The Dump Station pumping schedule was prepared for the 2023 season for Antero Septic.
- Because we were unable to burn the Burn Pit (lack of snow), it was closed and the final push happened in late 2023.
- I took care of the Ranch truck necessary repairs, including a new windshield.
- We opened the Burn Pit April to October, and donated 55 loads wood to Wood Chuck Program Hartsel Church (Big thank you to Susie Jones!). Taking wood out for a good cause also helps keep our Burn Pit open to Members.
- The Staff Gauge was installed at the Reservoir as approved by Garber Brown, our water consultant; and the spring release was completed.
- Damaged fencing was repaired as needed in six areas.
- I assisted horses being moved to the summer pasture by owners.
- The pavilion was power-washed twice and the canvas ropes repaired as needed.
- The pavilion utility room and restroom maintenance was completed, including replacing all water lines, pressure tank, and two toilets; and painting floors.
- In preparation for the Annual Meeting, the area was mowed, weeded, and power washed. Set up and tear down was done with assistance from volunteers.
- Winter and Summer pastures' fencing was checked and repaired, and debris removed. The gate was replaced on the summer pasture, and two new 300-gallon water tanks were added.
- The reservoir willows (3/4) were removed and hauled to the Burn Pit with assistance from volunteers.
- The reservoir winter release was completed; and the annual Water Report filed with Garver Brown and the State Water Engineer.
- I monitored reservoir spillway flow and inlet flow throughout the summer.
- I maintained the Ranch Office, Ranch truck, and Ranch garage.
- I assisted horses moved to Winter pasture by owners.
- The Ranch house repairs were accomplished, including a new heat/boiler system; and the electrical panel was relocated from outside to the basement.
- Two USPS mailboxes were removed and replaced with new ones. The two removed will be repaired and reused.
- A camper violations survey was completed with Rules Enforcement Committee.
- Weekly surveys of Ranch property were conducted, noting sections for trash, debris, repairs, and violations.
- The trash compactor was repaired by Roger Simpson in July 2022, allowing smooth operations throughout 2023. Mountain View Waste replaced the motor and serviced the hydraulic fluid in summer 2023.
- I filed 12 monthly reports to the Board, attended 11 Board meetings, prepared 4 newsletter reports to Members.
- I prepared required Literature Book for Ranch Office, covering literature available to new and current members.
- I reviewed all Member files (1501) for accuracy, with assist from Linda Starr and Doreen White; and overseen by Suzen Rodgers.
- Currently being prepared are the volunteer list for 2024 and the 2024 Project list.



Hope everyone enjoyed a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Spring is just around the corner! Stay warm! Stay Safe! Larry

FROM YOUR MEMBER-AT-LARGE, LINDA STARR....

Happy Winter fellow Ranch members! Hope you are staying healthy and warm! Our Ranch community depends on all of us contributing our talents to maintain a wonderful place to live. As we begin the new year, consider some volunteer opportunities with RORA. Our Burn Pit is open May through November (closed if it's full) on Wednesday and Saturday mornings from 9am to 1pm. We look for 2 people each day to record member information and direct where to dump the wood. Let us know what day or days you'd like to take on the burn pit. We'll start putting together the calendar for 2024 Burn Pit soon.

Want to spend a day at the reservoir? We have a number of projects: completing the removal of willows, picking up fire debris and general clean up. We're also renumbering the RV lot with pavers. (The stakes have been driven over, so that's not a good option.) If you'd like to help number the pavers, let us know. We'll pick some nice days this spring to paint pavers and complete the project.

If you're interested in any of these activities, call the Ranch Office! If your interest is the reservoir or RV project, we'll put you on the list and let you know when we're scheduled to start.

Some additional notes:

- Colorado is a fence-out state, meaning we have to fence out what we don't want on Ranch property. RORA maintains all the fencing on RORA property. If you notice fencing that needs repair, please call the Ranch Manager.
- As you know, 2024 dues of \$233 are due by January 31, 2024. We are experiencing some transition issues with Hammersmith, so if you need assistance getting your dues paid, please contact me at 720-635-1617.

My best wishes to you for a great new year!

FROM YOUR TREASURER, TODD ERIKSON....

Update on Hammersmith

We engaged Hammersmith back in September to provide the Ranch's accounting services, and we now have four months' experience under our belt with them. We have all experienced a few transition challenges, but for the most part, I'm pleased with how they have performed.



We made the transition to help us control our accounting costs and to provide more stability in our processes. The new Colorado State bill regulating HOA's, HB1137, has greatly increased the complexity around HOA administration. Historical systems just weren't up to the task. Rather than invest in costly software and higher labor hours to maintain compliance, we turned to a professional - Hammersmith. So far, it has worked pretty well. Hammersmith has saved us money and also provides their online portal, which has easier payment options and account information for members.

The biggest challenge for us and Hammersmith was setting up the member database in Hammersmith's accounting system. The Ranch has 1,500 lots, which means 1,500 files and a lot of data to transition. We had a few errors, some on our side, some on theirs. But we continue to work through those. Our first annual dues statements went out later than what we expected, but part of the delay was the Board. We wanted to add in RV dues to the annual statements to make payment more convenient for members. This resulted in delays we hadn't anticipated. The billing data is also not presented as clearly as we would like, but we are working with Hammersmith to remedy all this for next year's billing cycle. I urge everyone to logon to your member portal and check all your personal information to make sure it is accurate, including your mailing address and email.

Change is always challenging. I think this is a good change for members, but we'll need to keep improving the quality of our records. For help or questions, please call me or Hammersmith at (303) 980-7431.





RANCH OF THE ROCKIES ASSOC.

492 Ranch Road
Hartsel, CO 80449-8502
USA

Address Service Requested

STANDARD A
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MAILED FROM ZIP CODE 80449
PERMIT NO 004