

# Wildflowers!



July 2021

## From your President Dennis Ann Strong.....

Greetings, Ranch of the Rockies HOA members! "It's a beautiful day in the neighborhood." Don't forget our **2021 Annual Meeting, Saturday, August 14, 9:00 a.m. at the Pavilion**. At this meeting, the Board of Directors and Committees will give annual reports, and you'll hear from our local county leaders and invited guests. There are two open positions for your Board with four candidates.

- See the agenda at <https://www.rotr.org/>
- See the printable ballot at <https://www.rotr.org/quarterly-newsletters/>

Most importantly, this is a great time to see old friends and meet new neighbors.

**A serious note about wildfires and the aftermath:** As we get heavily into fire season, I'd like to recall the summer of 2018 and the Weston Pass fire. It was very frightening and took a huge amount of resources to contain. In less than a week, the fire spread from a few hundred acres of mountain timberland just above the CORA campground to several thousand acres that extended into the Buffalo Peaks wilderness area. Containment efforts included extensive ground work over several miles, as well as numerous water drops by helicopters.

But the heavy rains that contained the fire also caused significant runoff flooding, bringing down ash and slash into our Buffalo Creek Reservoir. We were immediately in contact with the Forest Service Restoration and FEMA folks to see if they could help out with debris removal. Even though the erosion damage and debris field continued to grow, we did not qualify for aid. That debris buildup led in 2019 to having to restore the outflow banks of the dam at our cost of about \$12,000. At that time, the Water Committee and Board noticed that water from the spring runoff had begun to seep under the liner and threatened the integrity of the dam if not repaired. David Loring consulted with an engineering firm from the Front Range, and Denver Water regarding help with repairs.

In 2020, ice dams formed along the Buffalo Creek reservoir intake and created major breaching of the creek banks and runoff, again endangering the liner and dam. This time, the Water Committee and Board notified Denver Water that we needed to take emergency measures to plug the breaches, and return the flow of water to the reservoir. They agreed, but again offered no financial assistance. In May, the Board contracted with Maverick Excavation for \$15,000 for creek bank work that we all believed would be sufficient.

However, in 2021, we learned from the very rapid spring runoff and further formation of ice dams that the dirt work in 2020 would need to be augmented with multiple truckloads of heavy rock to shore up the creek banks. Maverick Excavation agreed to do the work, crediting us the \$15,000 spent the prior year. Even then, we had to dip into our reservoir reserve funds to cover the \$84,000 cost. The work has been completed; the rocks are in place, and grass has started to anchor the banks for better holding. Most importantly, the work has brought the creek back to its original natural flow, increased the water inflow, and should prevent further ice dams.

**So why is this important to you?** Without the restoration of the inflow to the reservoir and without the continued maintenance of the creek, reservoir, and dam, we would lose the benefit of being able to drill water wells on our property. As we have seen in other Park County subdivisions, without water rights, properties are less valuable. Additionally, the State Water District can require meters on all existing wells, severely limiting water usage. So when you hear someone complain about spending \$100,000 over three years to maintain the reservoir and our water augmentation plan, just know that this expense enhances the value of your property and the quality of life we enjoy.

## FROM YOUR TREASURER, GARY D. WOIRHAYE....

Sincere thanks for jobs well done to Niki Griffin and Mark Wefler, who are going off the board, after having served for three years.

**Niki** has put on some great meals, helped with different organization for fund-raising, and worked with the forest service and fire department to help make the Ranch a safer place.

**Mark** came up with the drawings for the new metering box and the grate for the water outlet at the dam, saving the ranch thousands of dollars from engineering firms. Also, as the secretary for the board, he takes great notes. I have had to go back many times to reference them.

**About the Budget:** There is a lot of work that goes into having a balanced budget; and many issues have to be considered. At the Ranch, we deal with the same pressures you do, balancing rising prices and prioritizing repair needs. When I worked for the school district and had to prepare for a new budget, we would use the same approach we do at the Ranch: gathering input from all the affected parties and trying to balance their wants with how much money we had been allocated.

One of the possibilities for balancing our budget is to raise yearly dues. The questions we need to consider in doing that include:

- How much should they be raised to meet expected expenses?
- Should we raise them all at once or incrementally over several years?
- What about people that have multiple lots?
- Does being retired enter into the equation? Should people on a fixed income get a break?
- Could some of the services now covered be converted to pay-as-you-go, like the use of trash compactor, the burn pit, RV dump station?

These have all been talked about, keeping in mind that the main use for the dues that we all pay now is for water augmentation and the upkeep at the reservoir, so we can keep our wells. Have a Save Summer and hope to see you in August meeting.

## FROM YOUR SECRETARY, MARK WEFLER.....



One requirement of the Ranch Board is to hold an annual documents review meeting. This meeting is to be called by the Secretary for the purpose of reviewing our legal documents to determine if any changes should be considered or made. The meeting this year was held immediately after the March regular board meeting.

Then, at the May board meeting, all of the proposed changes were further reviewed and several were eliminated. The two that remained include:

- A change to the fine structure in the Policy, Procedures and Rules (PPR) document which would increase fines to \$100 per violation of Ranch rules after an initial notice of a violation. The increase in the fine amount is to encourage compliance with Ranch rules.
- An addition in the By-Laws regarding Board member qualification that stipulates that no more than one board member per lot can serve on the board at any one time. This change was recommended by Altitude Law, a prominent HOA law firm.

## FROM YOUR VICE-PRESIDENT, NIKI GRIFFIN....

The Hartsel Fire Protection District has a brand new administration and training building. Started in the fall of 2020, most of the building was completed by Chief Chris Tingle and Firefighter Brian Cook. The new 60 x 78-ft building includes a beautiful training and meeting room with a kitchenette, a huge relax and rehab area on the second floor with a full kitchen, lounging area, and 4 bathrooms total. The Chief and the Admin have new energy efficient offices to better serve the public. Fire station offices and volunteer training will be moved from the existing location to the new building by mid July 2021. . The new station and our team will serve our people for years to come.





# The Manager's Corner

by Josh Ezell

With the influx of our summer residents and to address concerns of year-rounders, I want to talk about a topic on everyone's mind:



**Recycling**, or the lack of it: Not having recycling at the Ranch and in Buena Vista has put a strain on our trash compactor, so I wanted to give you the information I have come up with for those of you who want to recycle. While we are still working to try to find a reasonable solution, in this part of the world it is never easy. In the meantime, I wanted to share with you a couple options. We do have two locations within a short drive that will take all your recycling and a lot more.

1. The closest one to us is on Highway 9 just outside of Hartsel. Go into Hartsel, take highway 9 south toward Cannon City, and it's less than half a mile on the right. There is no sign, just a couple of big roll-off boxes to mark the place. Their hours are Sunday only, 2-4 p.m.

2. Fairplay: Their recycling is marked and is right next to the fire station. Look for a pair of green gates on the left as you come into Fairplay and pass the station. Their hours are Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Both charge \$3 per bag at both locations, but you can take mixed bags of recycling. You don't have to sort it. We will continue to try and source other solutions to this problem, but for now we all must do what we can to help the whole community out. It is a little more work, but totally worth it! As always best wishes

On another note: keep an eye on the Ranch social media for opportunities to volunteer. Volunteering is a good way to make new friends, and catch up with old ones. If you are interested in volunteering around the ranch, just call the office (719) 836-2079 and let me know. - Josh

## FROM YOUR MEMBER-AT-LARGE, CLAY BANDY....



### Annual Meeting and Community Picnic August 14, 2021: 9 AM to 3 PM

The annual meeting is a gathering required by law to maintain our status as an HOA. Please don't come just for lunch. Vote on the new board members and take part in the meeting. Help us be the best HOA in the Rockies! The meeting agenda will be posted on the Ranch of the Rockies website ([rotr.org](http://rotr.org))

**Great news!** We will have the member and guest picnic following the annual board

meeting. The Ranch will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, buns, prepackaged condiments, bottled water and soft drinks, napkins, plates, and plastic ware. Side dishes can be brought by members and shared with their close friends and family. All County requirements for Covid will be observed. If you are interested in volunteering for any of the tasks, like setting up, serving or clean-up, please contact us through the ROTR email or website.



**August 7, 2021: Open House for the new Hartsel Fire Protection District Administration and Training Station**

Watch our website for times and the many activities planned. Come and see the spacious new quarters for fire station offices and volunteer training. The new building is behind the old Station #1 on Valley Street in Hartsel. The Masonic Lodge will be present, setting the new cornerstone in the new brick wall that frames several picnic tables, updated landscaping, and lighting.



**Ranch of the Rockies Assoc.**

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