



July 2023

Summer in the High Country!



FROM YOUR PRESIDENT GLENN GROTHE.....

The Ranch is getting busier. Given that, we wanted to provide some reminders to be a good neighbor. Generators should be shut down as early as possible, but no later than 10:00 PM. If you have dogs that bark, please be considerate of those living around you and quiet them or bring them inside. Shooting weapons on the Ranch is not allowed. There are local gun ranges (a close one in Chaffee County and one off Elkhorn road south of Como). Unlicensed vehicles are not authorized on county roads. Licensed vehicles, please follow the posted speed limit signs and abide by rules of the road.

Great progress has been made this spring at the Reservoir. The staff gauge is finally installed and operational. We made our spring release in accordance with our water agreements. We also got the grate installed over the vault. Many thanks to our water committee for their outstanding work!

We are going to take a look at our infrastructure and make sure we have a long-term plan. The Ranch Manager will be providing a report in September and the board will formulate a plan. This might be another project we ask a committee to assist us with, so if you're interested, keep this in mind.

We look forward to seeing those that are able to make it to the Members Annual Picnic and August Board Meeting, scheduled for Aug 12, 2023 at the Pavilion.

ON BEHALF OF YOUR VICE PRESIDENT.....



Recently we had another board member resign. The stated reason was because of repeated vicious personal attacks. This is unnecessary and is having a negative impact on the Ranch and the board's ability to serve. The purpose of a board is to conduct business on behalf of the community and its members. Sometimes that involves making hard decisions with no easy solutions. Nothing that the board does is personal towards anyone in the Ranch. All actions are the responsibility of the board, not any one member. Personal attacks on board actions are inappropriate, take a negative toll on our volunteer board members, and are impacting our ability to conduct business with consistent and dedicated leadership. An inordinate amount of time has been spent on backfilling board positions (9 in the last 2 years), time that should have been spent conducting more constructive board business on behalf of the community.

If you have concerns or questions, bring them to the board, either at a board meeting (the best venue) or send an email to the Ranch account. I ask all of our members to elevate the discussion in a positive manner. Let's work together to create the kind of community that we all want. On behalf of Phil, he would like to thank everyone in the community. He still loves the Ranch of the Rockies, and will remain positive, focus on his health and finding ways to contribute. Godspeed Phil, and thanks for your service to this community.



The Manager's Corner

by Larry Hartley

Hello to all Ranch property owners. Just an update to make sure all members are able to enjoy the available amenities of the Ranch.

Reservoir: As promised in the April newsletter, the Reservoir has an approved staff gauge installed, the spring water release accomplished, and the reservoir stocked with 500 pounds of rainbow trout..

Documentation for property owners: I reviewed the first 750 property owners' files to ensure proper documentation. Most recently Doreen White and Linda Starr have assisted with the remaining 751 property owners' files. Many members do not have a deed or declaration in their files. As per the By-laws of the R.O.T.R. and specifically By-Law Seven, any member that has not signed a declaration and or is delinquent in any manner, that member is not entitled to any Ranch amenities. This includes voting rights. These declarations must be on file by the last day of the third month prior to the annual meeting (May).



RV Lot: I am still cleaning up and marking spots within the RV lot. We have approximately 20 items in the lot with unknown owners. Most of these items have been moved to the rear and will most likely be auctioned off in the fall. Colorado Self-Storage Facility Law gives the Ranch the right to lay claim to unpaid items in the storage lot. If you left something in the lot you want, come see me before we sell or scrap it. We currently have 150 spots accounted for; and I am creating more. There is a waiting list if you are interested in having a spot.

Trash Compactor: There have been issues with members attempting to drop their garbage at the trash compactor while Mountain View Waste is attempting to exchange the 40 yard container. As I can identify those members, I will be de-activating your trash card. This is very dangerous, not only for the member, but also for the driver who is attempting to do a job for us. This will not be tolerated. Every Tuesday morning, MVW sends us an empty container and swaps out the full container. The driver does not need our members interfering during this exchange! If it continues trash compactor will be shut down on Tuesdays for all!

The Burn Pit: The burn pit was opened in May. As was reported last year, the Ranch is assisting Hartsel Church Wood Chuck program by sending trailers full of wood to Hartsel. Last year we sent 33 trailers to the program. Over the winter we did not have enough snow at one time to allow the pit to be burned. It was approximately half full when we opened it this year. If we can continue to send wood to Hartsel we should be able to keep it open all summer.

In closing, we have not had many members volunteer for summer projects. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact me at the Office. If we do not have volunteers, some amenities may not continue to be available.



Please join the Friends of Trout Creek Pass in our monthly highway cleanups...We schedule clean-ups periodically and are in desperate need of volunteers. We meet at 8:00 at the Trout Creek bus parking lot. Please bring gloves and sturdy shoes/boots. To find out when the next clean-up is scheduled, call Terry Bahner at 719-836-7291

FROM YOUR MEMBER-AT-LARGE, GARY NESBITT....

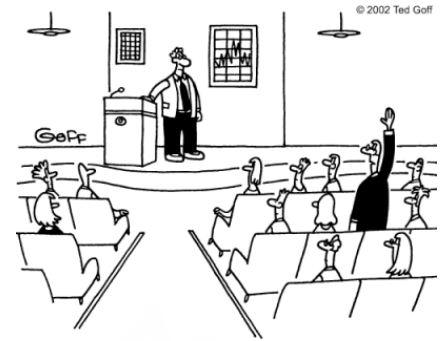
It is time for our annual membership meeting and picnic on August 12th! Please come to the meeting so you can meet your board members and hear their presentations and ranch updates. We are trying to secure interesting and informative guest speakers. **Please note new start time of 9:30 AM!** You will also have the opportunity to meet and hear from prospective board candidates. If you haven't voted prior to the meeting for a candidate who is running for an open position you may vote at the beginning of the meeting or you may enter a write in candidate for an open position if you desire.



The ranch will supply pulled pork and hot links, baked beans and coleslaw for the main course. Hot dogs will also be available for the kiddos. In addition, we will supply plates, plastic ware, napkins, and bottled water. If you want soda or another beverage please feel free to bring what you wish. We ask that everyone bring your favorite side dish to share: a dessert, vegetable, salad or fruit.

We will need a number of volunteers to help us with setting up the pavilion and cleaning up following the meeting, arranging and serving food, signing in membership, hat and map sales, and vote counting. Your assistance is greatly appreciated in helping to make the picnic a success. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Gary Nesbitt at garynesbitt@ymail.com or phone

817-691-9842 or contact the Ranch office.



"Could we extend the annual meeting? I still have a lot of complaining to do!"



FIREWISE USA™
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

With summer upon us and the threat of wildfires ever present, we must not forget to continue our fire mitigation efforts. Some of the parts of that process include:

- Raking and removing pine needles and dry leaves at least 3 to 5 feet away from a home's foundation. And if you have the time, even better is raking up to a 30-foot distance around the home. Dispose of collected debris in appropriate trash receptacles.
- Cleaning pine needles from your roof and gutters and paying attention to maintaining the home ignition zone.
- Getting out your measuring tape and seeing how close woodpiles are located to the home. Relocate them to at least 30 feet away from structures.
- Sweeping porches and decks, clearing them of leaves and pine needles. Raking under decks, porches, sheds, and play structures.
- Mowing grasses to a height of 4 inches or less.
- Removing items stored under decks and porches and relocating them to a storage shed, garage, or basement. Gasoline cans and portable propane tanks should never be stored indoors and should be located away from the home.
- Clearing dead trees and slash from your property and hauling them to the Burn Pit.

To keep our Firewise status, we have to document our fire mitigation efforts. To get a form to keep track of your efforts, contact the Ranch office at RORAHOA@ghvalley.net All the time we spend doing mitigation, the number of loads to the Burn Pit and other things all count. Help keep us Firewise!

FROM YOUR TREASURER, ROGER SIMPSON....

The Ranch's administrative and bookkeeping office has made substantial strides towards bringing the Ranch's financials to a healthier position, as a result of our current budget and improved collection of dues. During the collection process, friction has arisen from a small number of members, in some cases becoming rude and abusive. This is not acceptable behavior. We are following the law per Colorado legislature, House Bill 1137. If you, as a member with a lot, felt some inconvenience due to these new rules, it can't be helped. We all benefit from the Ranch's services and oversight and no one should expect the other members to absorb these costs. We each have to pay our share.

We have tried to reach out in a number of ways to make contact with each member and get owner information verified in our files. Both the HOA and the members benefit from having this corrected data on file. With correct information, we can get all of our members updated when we need to communicate from time to time. That means having a valid email address on file, so we can contact each of you quickly. Please contact the office by email with the subject line listing the change or by snail mail if you have any changes to your situation, so that we may include you in the further communications. Do not leave this information on a voicemail. It must be in writing with the subject line stating the change. That change should be the only information in the email to make sure it gets to the right place. Use a separate email for other business you wish to discuss.

The original invoices in January went out via US mail, as they have been all the previous years. Once it leaves here, we cannot control how delivery is handled. Let us know if you did not receive invoices. If you would like a copy of your latest statement, please email a request and we will email it to you, which is the fastest way. If you absolutely need a hard copy mailed, we can send you one as long as you send a self-addressed stamped envelope with a written request to do so. We do not send these out at the ranch's expense for these requests. There may be additional costs for this from the new management company for this request, so please refer to the package they send you.

During the last board meeting held in June, the board voted to move forward with the final steps for the first set of delinquent accounts to be handed over to the company attorney for the collection of back dues, as set in the House Bill 1137. This means that by law, no one in the Ranch office can talk to you about your account in any form; you now must go through the attorney for this information and to square your account. The costs for the attorney's rates will be added to the already delinquent amount until it is resolved, so as not to burden other members with these collection costs.

The Board will vote on the next batch of delinquent accounts if they remain unpaid in the next meeting, then these will be turned over to the attorney, as well, to proceed forward. If you decided to do a partial payment on your invoice as some sort of protest and not pay the balance shown along with any finance charges or late fees as set in the statute, you are in these batches going to the attorney. We must apply the law equally to all delinquent accounts, no matter how you feel about the fairness of the government-mandated process. If the ranch can ever get past this by not having to do collections, it will be a much happier place for everyone.



Last year the budget did not pass at the first attempt, and as the governing documents of this process spell out, we were then required to use last year's dues amount for billing until a new budget was passed. The process is still the same each time. So in consideration of this, we will present the budget earlier than last year's, in the same calendar year to prevent having this process carry over into the next fiscal year which was a timely and costly process. The process involves a discussion earlier than normal so the board can get input and have the appropriate time it needs.

I do want to extend a special thanks to all of you that have paid the annual dues on time and have kept the ranch moving forward, so thank you for this! Finally, I want to say thank you to my fellow board members, the Ranch Manager, our bookkeeper and all the committee members, web administrators and all volunteers past and present, it has

been a pleasure getting to know you and working with you.



FROM YOUR SECRETARY TODD ERIKSON....

The Ranch has hired and managed its own bookkeepers and administrative help over its history. Due to the growth in membership, along with the continue tightening of the local labor market for skilled bookkeepers, the Board has decided to move to a professional HOA bookkeeping and administration firm to take over these duties. In-house performance for these duties was becoming increasingly unsustainable. The requirements that go with bookkeeping and administration in an HOA have become much more complicated with the passing of Colorado's new comprehensive HOA law, HB1137. We needed to investigate alternatives to assure that we can follow all the regulations of the new law and apply them in a consistent manner to all the Ranch's members. Hiring a professional firm becomes the obvious choice.

The other concern that the Board had was the increasing workload for volunteers and some board members. Our treasurer probably spent more than 20 hours every week over the last couple months to assure that everything went smoothly with our dues invoicing and collection, especially with the added requirements under the new regulations. Our bookkeeper Suzen Rodgers also spent numerous weekends and evenings at the office to get this all correct. We can't continue to demand this from our people going forward.

The Board looked at all its options, including investing into accounting and administrative packages and hiring full time personnel to meet the requirements. We also conducted an in-depth analysis comparing the costs and services of the leading professional services in the state, eventually selecting Hammersmith as the best option. Hammersmith services over 100 HOAs across the state and has the systems and personnel to efficiently and effectively provide these services, while meeting the new requirements. And they have robust online resources for members we couldn't provide as a stand-alone HOA. The best part is that because of these efficiencies, it won't cost us any more than what we are paying now for these activities. The Board is going to try to make the transition as soon as possible. In the near future, members should expect a welcome package from Hammersmith which will provide details about the new services.



FROM YOUR OUTGOING BOOKKEEPER, SUZEN RODGERS.....



An incredible number of changes have taken place in this office over the past four months; and it has been very busy. We have seen the outstanding dues balances at their lowest for the past six years, thanks to the efforts of the Board and the Ranch Manager. Yes, I said Ranch Manager. Larry and two volunteers have been an integral part in keeping the office organized and completing some projects that were vital to the process. THANK YOU!!! Also, the success of this office with the new laws and procedures, and many, many changes would not have been possible, if not for the countless hours and dedication by Treasurer Roger Simpson. I cannot tell you the many times daily he worked with me as we

navigated the past four months. The entire community owes a great debt of gratitude to him for his thoughtful efforts and dedication to this community. We have been able to assist some members with payment plans and connect with other members who weren't aware of the process and how to stay current with their dues. Overall, it has been successful. As we move closer to a property management company for the betterment of the entire community, it will be important for every member to supply the office with an email address and any changes to your phone number or address. If changes occur, please contact the office immediately. News and notifications will soon be coming your way; and staying in touch with you will be very important.

I hope to stay on in the office to facilitate the smoothest transition possible for the Ranch of the Rockies. I have truly enjoyed and appreciated my time speaking to and serving members of this incredible community. Thank you for the opportunity.

August 12, 2023 Annual Meeting Agenda

- 9:30 AM Registration
- 9:45 AM Officers' Reports
- Introduction of Board candidates
- Closing of ballots
- 10:30 AM Guest Speakers
- 11:50 AM Election Results
- 12:00 PM Lunch!



RANCH OF THE ROCKIES ASSOC.

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