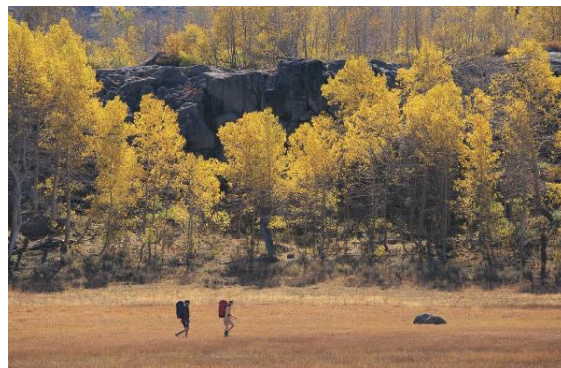




October 2023

Fall Turns into Winter!



FROM YOUR PRESIDENT GLENN GROTHE.....

Wow, the colors have been beautiful this fall! It is always great to get out and enjoy fall in Colorado. Fall also brings with it the responsibility for members to remove campers from their respective properties and to store them properly till the next season. As has been mentioned in the Board Meetings, we will be fining members who leave their campers on their lots after 31 Oct. The process of cataloguing campers left on lots and then sending out the notices is time-consuming and expensive work. Please make sure to remove your campers as per our regulations.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, the board asked the Ranch Manager for an assessment of our permanent infrastructure here on the Ranch. Our intent is to review this and come up with a long-term strategy for maintenance and refurbishment. The board not only has a responsibility to maintain the infrastructure we already have but also to consider long-term new infrastructure projects. In line with this, we are also looking at what other infrastructure projects we might want to consider and invest in as a community. One step of this process will be a survey for the community to consider a variety of projects and to assist the board in prioritizing them. We want to assure the community that our intention is not to rack-and-stack these projects and then to start funding them, but to just look at community interest as we look to the future. While our existing infrastructure has met the initial needs of the community since it was formed, there are other options that all residents might not want or use, but will overall improve and enhance the community for all members. We encourage your participation in this process.

With the recent transition to a bookkeeping service, there have been some questions as to whether members can still drop off cash or checks at the Ranch Office for dues. We will not be accepting cash or checks at the Ranch Office. This adds another layer in the process and we no longer have a bookkeeper at the office. Members will need to send in a check or chose one of the other options that are available for paying their dues.



Thanks again to all of our volunteers that help make things work around the Ranch. We couldn't do it without you! Those that serve on committees, help at the burn pit, helped with the Annual Meeting/ Picnic, thanks to all of you! On behalf of the board, we hope you all have a great fall.

ON BEHALF OF YOUR VICE PRESIDENT GARY NESBITT.....

On August 12th we had our annual Ranch Picnic and even though Mother Nature didn't cooperate with a warm and sunny day, it seems most attendees had a good time. I would like to thank the many volunteers who helped set up the pavilion on Friday, those who helped complete the set up on Saturday morning and those who cleaned up afterwards. The picnic would never have happened without you! A big shout out to Skip Penhall for cooking the brats, and to him and Daryl Atherton for cooking the pulled pork! A delicious meal was enjoyed by all!



We had the opportunity to hear from our county commissioner, Dave Wissel, from Sheriff Tom McGraw, Hartsel Fire Chief, Brian Cook, and from Director of Road and Bridge, Mike Smith. Each speaker provided us with interesting information relating to Park County and specifically to our Ranch community. For those who are interested, Mike Smith will be holding Town Hall meetings periodically to provide updates on road conditions and maintenance. The dates and times of those should be posted on www.parkco.us.

Thanks to those who worked diligently this summer clearing debris and wood from your properties and for those who volunteered to man the burn pit. Start doing your snow dance so we can burn the burn pit this winter! With cold weather coming upon us please make sure your wood burning stoves and fireplaces have been cleaned and are in good working order. Also check your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. Keep warm and stay safe!

Phone Directory project update: With the change to Hammersmith for accounting, all property owners can decide what information they would like to be available in a Ranch of the Rockies contact directory. This may keep us from having to reinvent the wheel and you can update your own information as needed. It's a starting point and we can re-evaluate as needed.

Per Colorado State Law, homeowner contact information such as email addresses and phone numbers may not be published unless the homeowner has opted-in to publish this information. As a homeowner within the Association, you will be able to see all owner names and their property addresses within the Association, but their contact information will not be displayed if they have not opted-in. If you would like to opt-in to publish your contact information in the Directory, just click on 'My Contact Info' on the left-hand side of the screen and select your Directory Preferences.

ON BEHALF OF YOUR SECRETARY JEFF MORGAN.....

As we say good bye to summer and hello to sweater weather, we're finishing up the to-do list around our cabin: paint touch ups, raking pine needles, storing away the summer yard art and thinking about snow tires.... The shorter days have moved our evening walk up a few hours to avoid being out there with our four-legged neighbors! One of my important duties as the RORA Board Secretary is to take the minutes of the Board Meetings. We post the draft minutes about 2 weeks after the Board Meeting, and repost the approved minutes shortly after the following month's Board Meeting. Please sign into the RORA website and review the minutes on a regular basis so you'll keep informed about the association's business.

A couple of important items were discussed at the September Board Meeting. Speeding on the RORA roads continues to further deteriorate the road conditions, not to mention the safety issues. There have been two roll-over accidents on ranch roads due to excessive speed. A fawn was also hit and killed and left on the road. Members are often out walking on the roads enjoying our blue sky and mountain air. PLEASE SLOW DOWN!

We are moving forward with the much needed Ranch House repairs. The boiler has been repaired and the updated electrical work is in the planning stages. Smoke detectors and CO detectors have also been installed. Thank you to Larry for his patience and cooperation during this time.

A question came up at the Board Meeting regarding "hipcamping". Hipcamping is where property owners rent out a portion of their land to non-members for a fee. The fee covers overnight camping in a tent or RV, sometimes just in a vehicle. In researching the question, we found that Park County prohibits hipcamping; and since RORA is subject to Park County regulations, hipcamping is therefore prohibited on Ranch of the Rockies land too. The rationale behind the Park County regulations stems from concerns about safety on land that is not specifically prepared and county permitted to manage restroom facilities, trash and non-member behavior. Members operating hipcamping on their lot are asked to discontinue to offer these services to non-members.



The Manager's Corner

by Larry Hartley

- Ranch truck has been returned and is up and running with a new windshield
- Ranch house heat and hot water system has been replaced by Antero Plumbing and Heating
- Ranch house septic froze last winter. Deteriorated risers have been replaced.
- Prior to Picnic / Annual meeting the Pavilion was power-washed, the utility room pressure tank had to be replaced so I replaced all water lines and two restroom toilets
- The trailer lot has been cleaned up and more organized allowing for approximately 25 new spots. / I have placed orange stakes at each spot in the East and West rows / tenants should pull forward and drop their item right over the stake / it is placed center of each spot / 3" / by organizing this it may cause a number or letter to be off / please check with me if you are in these two rows so we may continue to identify our tenants
- Summer Pasture: I cleaned all debris last year while checking and repairing fencing. This year I replaced the metal water trough with two - 300 gallon Rubbermaid troughs. Mary and Joe Gifford rode the fence line this August and checked all fencing with minimal repairs
- Winter Pasture: I mowed and weeded in front of the approach area and it is all set for horses to move in for winter. I will recheck all fencing when owners are ready to move horses
- Reservoir: Staff Gauge is installed, Vault grate is installed, Spillway has been cleaned, spring release was accomplished and we are set for winter release in October. I will be working at the Reservoir starting September 20th, 21st, 22nd 0800-1600, in an attempt to remove willows. Water Committee is working on theory of re-using the Weir box part of the year to assist us in maintaining the silt traps.
- A big thank you to John Adams, Ric Jefferies, Steve Horn and Don Kidd for their efforts and results!
- The burn pit has been open since May. Aaron Hanke pushed it in back in July; and we are continuing to trailer wood to Hartsel Wood Chuck Program. Over 600 loads have been dropped at the pit by our property owners. 37 trailers have been taken to Hartsel. Hope to keep it open until weather changes maybe mid to late October. A big thank you to Suzie Jones and the Wood Chuck personnel!

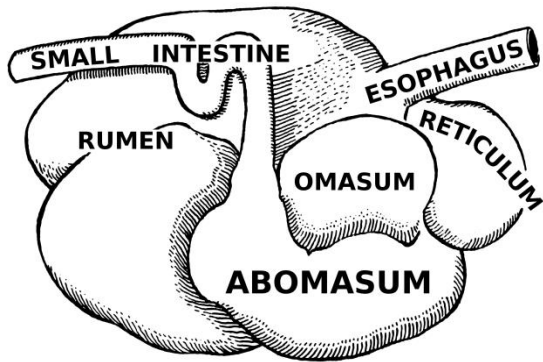


FROM YOUR MEMBER-AT-LARGE, LINDA STARR....

From Colorado Parks and Wildlife:

Feeding hurts, not helps, big game. Feeding big game is bad for animals and dangerous of people, for many reasons:

1. Big game wildlife can die if fed the wrong food. Corn, alfalfa, pet food and human food are all harmful.
2. Big game animals that are fed can become demanding and dangerous.
3. Feeding deer, elk and bighorn sheep attracts mountain lions to your property.
4. Feeding big game can concentrate them in an area and lead to the spread of disease like CWD.
5. Feeding big game is illegal.



Deer, elk bighorn sheep and other ungulates are all ruminants: they have complex digestive systems composed of a four-chamber stomach. These animals digest plant-based foods through fermentation in their specialized stomachs. Wildlife is well-adapted to feed on natural food sources, but food provided by people, like corn, alfalfa or hay can kill big game animals.

Every winter, wildlife officers around the state pick up many deer, elk and sheep that have died from artificial food sources. Ruminants that ingest grain, corn, and other high carbohydrate foods can develop lactic acidosis or enterotoxaemia. These two conditions are common in ruminants in areas being fed by humans. Those two conditions are also fatal, usually within 24-72 hours from

the time the animal ingests the grain.

Ruminants can develop some tolerance to grain and corn over time, but feeding them has other biological consequences. Salt and mineral blocks, corn and grain causes animals to gather in close proximity, which facilitates disease transmission. Chronic wasting disease in deer, elk and moose, as well as pneumonia in sheep can result. These diseases are usually fatal, but take time to develop. Consequently, the people feeding the wildlife may not see the results of their actions. The best things people can do for wildlife is to provide access to habitat where they can find their natural diet.

For more information on living with wildlife responsibly, visit:

<http://cpw.state.colorado.us/learn/Pages/LivingwithWildlifeJunkFood.aspx>. To report incidents of feeding or other illegal wildlife activity, contact a local Colorado Parks and Wildlife office. If you wish to remain anonymous, contact Operation Game Thief at 977-265-6648. Rewards may be offered if tips lead to a citation.



FROM YOUR TREASURER, TODD ERIKSON....

Update on transition of the Ranch's bookkeeping to Hammersmith

September was the first month that Hammersmith took over bookkeeping duties from the Ranch, and it has been a busy month for myself and Roger Simpson, our former treasurer. I have to give Roger a ton of credit. He has spent upwards of 50 hours over the last 6 weeks transitioning the Ranch's books, completely on a volunteer basis. If you see Roger, give him a big thank you.



Our first financial reporting period with Hammersmith will be September's month-end financial report. They typically get these published mid-month, at which time we'll get them posted to the website. The format will likely change, but the sample we've seen looks straightforward.

A few members have asked about any new fees associated with Hammersmith. Most all the fees for bookkeeping services are billed to the HOA directly, and have been budgeted for. Members will see a few that are charged directly to members for services, but only for either (i) late payment of dues, (ii) insufficient funds checks, or (iii) conveyance of member's property in a real estate transaction.

In the event a member fails to pay dues, late fees, or in extreme cases, legal fees for collection actions in a timely manner, those fees will be charged back to the member to cover our legal and accounting costs. These fees all meet the standards dictated by the State in HB1137. If a member's check is returned for insufficient funds, that member will be charged \$45.00 to cover our bank and accounting charges.

Hammersmith's member portal provides all your relevant account data in real time, so you can access your status at any time. Additionally, they offer a variety of ways to pay dues or fees that the Ranch was unable to provide, including e-check and credit card, in addition to mailing a check.

When a member sells property, the buyer typically requires a Status of Dues statement. This is a representation from the Ranch that states the selling member's status to the HOA in regard to dues, assessments, or any other possible obligations. This document is typically requested by the title company or closing agent, and becomes part of the closing package. Hammersmith charges \$350 for this document. Before our transition to Hammersmith, the Ranch charged \$250 for this service. Additionally, Hammersmith utilizes a third-party on-line service, HomeWise, to manage the document request. HomeWise charges \$22. Hammersmith utilizes HomeWise since Hammersmith receives hundreds of these requests monthly across its customer base, and HomeWise enables them to better manage the work flow.

All these situations involve special circumstances that don't apply to the majority of members in the Ranch, but they incur real expenses in our budget we have to account for. It is the Board's belief that rather than include these as budgeted expenses borne by all members of the Ranch, it would be more equitable for our members if we instead charge these fees directly to the member incurring the expense.

Anytime there is a major change, people will have questions. The Board is confident Hammersmith has the ability to provide competent and economical services for our members. As we work through this change, I'm sure people will continue to have questions. I'm happy to answer any questions that any member might have in regard to these issues.



RANCH OF THE ROCKIES ASSOC.

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