

December 15, 2025



BLACKHAWK NEWSLETTER

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Editor: [Amber Laugesen](#)

Reporters: Frank Horwich, Val

Swinchoski, Nancy Pasternak

Letter from the President

Greetings at the end of 2025,

As I write this, we are receiving the first real snow of the season here at the Ranch. I have learned a few lessons this year, been enriched with friendships, and come to appreciate more the value and satisfaction of living here – and that is in gratitude to all of you.

I want to thank the **POA Board of Directors** for their service to our community, their enthusiasm as neighbors and friends, and their wisdom in dealing with the Ranch's business.

Jim Nance, as Road Chair and Board member at-large, has put in a lot of time and thoughtful preparation this past year to see to the road needs (BHR specific projects and projects partnered with County agencies), as well as good management of that part of the budget. Along with **Mike Ferrero**, grading and plowing extraordinaire, we have well maintained and safe roads.

Nancy Pasternak, as Secretary and Compliance Committee Chair, has seen to the Board's organization and the Ranch's permitting needs. She is a wonderful source of Ranch history, and we depend on her knowledge of process and procedure to keep us (the Board) on the straight and narrow.

Frank Horwich has taken on several rolls, including Vice President, assuming the chipper rental responsibilities, and contributing documents for communications and financial efforts benefitting Ranch operations. Frank's business expertise has been a great addition to the talents of the Board.

Carol Ryan maintains Ranch solvency and a thriving investment in our future. Together with bookkeeping by **Sid Gray-Kurtz**, and technical input from **Frank Horwich**, the Financial Committee provides outstanding accountability and transparent operation – a challenging task even in a small community.

This is a wonderful group of folks who care about us all and strive collectively to do their best for our community.

This newsletter has dealt a lot in the past with the importance of volunteerism, and a sure sign of this success story is the committees we have and the work they do.

Emergency Management – This is our largest committee (13 members), chaired by **Brad Brooks**. Be it strategic planning for Ranch safety, responding to emergencies and reporting back to the community, or equipment training for property owners, we are all much more able to fend for ourselves and each other because of the work this group does.

Kudos to **Frank Horwich** for continuing the planning and execution of fire mitigation efforts on the Ranch. This is a great volunteer activity which is being reorganized to responsively attend to roadways and properties.

Kudos also to **Wendy Jackson**, whose extra efforts realized the completion of the BHR Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and it's publication on the Colorado State Forest Service website. Not very many ranches in our region have reached this status, and it was a monumental achievement greatly benefiting our community.

Future action plan contains continuing and improving relationships with state and county fire protection agencies, outreach to Huerfano and Las Animas counties with our mapping documents,

improving emergency evacuation routes, adding another dedicated firefighting water tank, and owner training classes on safety and equipment topics.

All of these committee members deserve recognition for their community-centered time and energy – they truly have our personal safety in mind.

Communications – **Anne Ebie** chairs this committee, joined by **Art Jackson** and **Frank Horwich**. They have worked on community-wide communication programs, and kept us informed of emergencies, road closures, and other important news. Due to the email/phone call effort from **Nancy Pasternak**, the sign-up list for emergency texting, created by this committee, grew from 73 to 88 property owners.

Also, Anne authored the BHR Communications Plan, put together by a group including Brad Brooks, Kelly Alcorn, Art Jackson and JP Angelillo. This plan will be published on the BHR website upon final approval of the Board, possibly in January 2026.

Roads – **Jim Nance** (Chair), and **Dan Ebie** conducted surveys of road culverts and cul-de-sacs (spurs) of the entire Ranch. Nearly all the culverts were cleaned out (again, thanks to **Mike Ferrero**), and the spurs were surveyed in anticipation of future improvements for emergency access.

Noxious Weeds – A very important committee, chaired by **Susanne Bloomfield**. Quadrants of the Ranch are monitored and sprayed by **Susanne and Terry Bloomfield**, **Gail and Ron Lovely**, **Wendy and Art Jackson** and **Marian and Brad Brooks**, with special inspections and spraying by **Cricket Sutter**. These folks help protect our roadways, and they will let you know if you need some attention on your parcel, too.

IT – For years, **Art Jackson** has been the IT person for the Ranch. Art has provided priceless service to Owners and Board members alike in research, productivity, and connectivity, in addition to his expertise in CCIOA and other association regulations. Recently, he was joined by **Anne Ebie** and **Frank Horwich**, and as a team they have improved communication, IT functionality, and will continue to improve the internet presence of BHR.

A special thanks to **Amber Laugesen**, a committee of one, our newsletter editor/publisher. Every newsletter looks great when she is done with it.

There were some attendee-generated “future priorities” listed in the minutes from the last annual meeting...

1. Comprehensive communications plan – the plan has been completed and will be posted to the BHR website after final Board approval. We’ll send out a notice at that time.
2. CWPP – completed, addressed above.
3. Grazing lease renewal/renegotiation – done and signed on the day of the last annual meeting.
4. Expanded fire mitigation tools – added to the EMC committee statements above.
5. Weed prevention – this may have been ideas for preventative measures, or the desire for same. No precise notes were taken on this topic.

If you noticed that a few of the names highlighted in this newsletter were repeated, some of them several times, perhaps you’d like to join them. If you are interested in being part of a committee (especially if you live on or near the Ranch), feel free to contact a committee chair and ask about joining.

I hope that we all have a safe, friendly, and peaceful holiday time.

Cheers,

Tim Kurtz
President, Blackhawk Ranch POA

Reminder About Upcoming Dues

by Frank Horwich

This is a reminder that as a Blackhawk Ranch property owner, your annual dues of \$450.00 (for each parcel that you own) must be paid by January 31st 2026. An email from the POA board about annual dues has been sent to each property owner, with an invoice attached. If you would like a copy of your invoice mailed via USPS, please send an email with your request to bookkeeper@blackhawk ranch.org.

The Blackhawk Ranch Property Owners Association uses the dues it collects to maintain and improve the shared infrastructure that benefits all property owners.

- The largest portion of the budget typically goes toward road maintenance - grading, repairing, and improving the 35 miles of dirt roads that provide access throughout the ranch.
- Dues also fund snow removal to keep all routes used by property owners open and support emergency response.
- These funds help cover the cost of managing drainage (the ditches and culverts that keep the roads from washing out) and address weather-related damage so that roads remain safe and passable year-round.
- A portion of the budget is also used for wildfire mitigation efforts, such as maintaining defensible space along roadways, managing vegetation in high-risk areas, and coordinating community preparedness.
- In addition to road work, the dues support essential administrative and operational needs of the association. This includes insurance, legal and accounting services, compliance with state HOA requirements, and long-term planning for capital improvements.

By pooling resources through annual dues, the association is able to protect property values, ensure safe access, and manage the ranch in a responsible and organized way for the benefit of all owners.

The email that you will receive from the POA will contain the following information.

- You can pay your dues at any time before January 31st, 2026.
- There are 4 ways to pay your dues:
 - 1) [Click Here](#) to pay your balance due by Credit Card or Online Check (ACH).
 - 2) Click "Make a Payment" on the BlackhawkRanch.org website Home Page, located on the lower right.
 - 3) Copy & paste the following link in your browser
https://www.convergepay.com/hosted-payments?ssl_txn_auth_token=73bop7IjTQy5Um9LjmHOjAAAAZThij8U

There are NO FEES for ACH payments. If you pay by credit card, you must also pay the 2.4% processing fee incurred by the POA. \$460.80 is due if paying by credit card.

Alternatively,

- 4) Make a check payable to _____ and mail to:

Blackhawk Ranch POA
PO Box 1245
Walsenburg, CO 81089

If you would like a copy of your invoice mailed via USPS, please send an email with your request to bookkeeper@blackhawk ranch.org.

Blackhawk Ranch Baseball Caps

By Val Swinchoski

Since there was interest in having ball caps made with the Ranch logo, we went ahead and found a local company (Colorado Springs) to do the embroidery. Currently the price is \$22.00 (subject to change on availability) a hat. If you let us know you are ordering, we will pick up and bring PAID hats back to the Ranch at N/C. If you want hats mailed, there will be an additional charge.



Hat country of origin is Bangladesh. Made of cotton twill. Velcro back. Hat colors: white, black, charcoal, forest, khaki, navy, orange, pink, red, royal blue, yellow. Embroidery can be any color. When ordering, say for Blackhawk Ranch, item 6440.

Order by calling Tees in Time at:

719-573-5725

Or online at:

Sales@teesintime.com

For a pickup, call or text Val at 802-760-7930

Christmas Theatre

by Nancy Pasternak

Trinidad's Main Street Live Theatre is presenting 'Miracle on 34th Street' adapted from the novel and the 1947 movie, on two consecutive weekends in December: Friday the 12th and Saturday the 13th at 7pm, and on Sunday the 14th at 2pm; and on Friday the 19th and Saturday the 20th at 7pm, and on Sunday the 21st at 2pm. "Kris Kringle, an old man in a retirement home, gets a job working as Santa for Macy's Department store. Kris unleashes waves of good will with Macy's customers by referring parents to other stores to find exactly the toy their child has asked for. Seen as deluded by Macy's vocational counselor, who plots to have Kris shanghaied to Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital, Kris ends up in a court competency hearing. Especially at stake is one little girl's belief in Santa." Tickets for seniors are \$21.00, \$23.00 for the general public, and \$18.00 for students/youth. For more information contact info.mainstreetlive@gmail.com, 719-846-4765. The theatre is located at 131 West Main Street.



Pueblo's Steel City Theatre Company is presenting 'A Nice Family Christmas' from December 12th through the 21st, at 7:30pm on the 12th, 13th, 19th and 20th; and 2:30pm on the 14th and 21st. "It's Christmas Eve, and a young newspaper reporter on the brink of being fired has been assigned a last chance story about a typical family Christmas – HIS family's Christmas. He goes home to his recently widowed mother, his crazy uncle, his eccentric grandmother, and his battling siblings and their neurotic spouses, who provide no shortage of material. One by one, we learn each family member's secrets, problems, and dysfunctions, and when they learn that he's writing an article with some very personal family information, the fruitcake hits the fan!" Tickets are \$15.00 for adults, and \$12.00 for seniors and students. The theater is located at: 611 North Main Street. For more information contact www.steelcitytheatre.org, 719-994-8298.



So, why not enjoy an evening or afternoon of live entertainment and support our local arts communities?

How do you spell Wahatoya?

by Frank Horwich

Rising dramatically above the plains of southern Colorado, the Spanish Peaks—known to the Indigenous peoples as Wahatoya (wah-hah-TOY-yah), or “Breasts of the Earth”—stand as timeless sentinels over our region. Visible for over 100 miles in every direction, these twin mountains are not only icons of the landscape but also witnesses to eons of geologic, cultural, and human history.

A Geologic Marvel

Formed more than 25 million years ago, the Spanish



Peaks are the roots of ancient volcanoes that never erupted at the surface. Instead, molten magma pushed upward and cooled underground, creating the towering granite domes we see

today. Over millions of years, erosion wore away the softer outer layers, leaving the hard volcanic cores exposed. The most striking features—called radial dikes—spread outward from the peaks like the spokes of a wheel, forming dramatic stone walls that slice through forests and meadows. These dikes are among the best examples of their kind in the world and have earned the Spanish Peaks a National Natural Landmark designation.



Homelands of Indigenous Peoples

Long before Spanish explorers or American settlers arrived, the region around the Peaks was sacred to several Indigenous tribes including the Ute, Apache, Arapaho, and the Comanche (who named them Wahatoya). These peaks were a guiding landmark, a spiritual place, and a source of myth and meaning. The twin peaks often appear in oral histories and creation stories, symbolizing protection and abundance. The Comanche, who were part of the larger Numic-speaking Uto-Aztecan language family, were highly mobile across the Southern Plains and had deep connections to the region that now includes southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. The term was adopted into early Spanish maps and writings as Huajatolla - a transliteration of the Comanche pronunciation. Many Indigenous peoples, including the Ute, Apache, and Pueblo tribes, also held the Peaks as sacred, but the name itself - Wahatoya - specifically traces back to Comanche origins. Even today, many residents and visitors approach the area with respect and reverence, aware that they tread upon ancient cultural ground. There are many artifacts of the native inhabitants on the ranch including culturally modified trees that were bent to mark trails and places of worship and mortar stones, or matata.

Coal, Courage, and Community

In the late 1800s, the valleys below the Spanish Peaks became the heart of Colorado’s coal-mining boom. Towns like

Walsenburg, La Veta, and Trinidad sprang to life as railroads connected the region to Denver and beyond. Immigrant miners - Italians, Slavs, Greeks, Mexicans, and others - brought their traditions and built vibrant, if hardscrabble, communities. The area's history also includes the struggles of organized labor, most famously remembered in the Ludlow Massacre of 1914, when striking miners and their families clashed with company forces in one of the most significant labor events in U.S. history. Though the coal mines have long since closed, their legacy remains in the old stone coke ovens, ghost towns, and the resilient spirit of southern Colorado's people.

Modern-Day Adventures

Today, the Spanish Peaks region is a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts.

- Hiking: The West Spanish Peak Trail (13,626 ft) and East Spanish Peak Trail (12,683 ft) challenge climbers with steep but rewarding ascents and panoramic views from the San Luis Valley to the Great Plains.
- Biking: The Highway of Legends Scenic Byway (CO-12) offers some of the most breathtaking cycling in the state, winding through forests, rock formations, and historic mining towns.
- Skiing: In winter, Cuchara Mountain Park—reborn through community effort—welcomes skiers, snowboarders, and snowshoers to its family-friendly slopes.
- Fishing & Camping: The Cucharas River, Blue Lake, and Bear Lake provide year-round opportunities for anglers and campers seeking tranquility beneath the shadow of the Peaks.



Whether you're here to live, climb, ski, photograph, or simply breathe the mountain air, the Spanish Peaks region offers a deep connection between earth, history, and the human spirit.

A Place Beyond Time

From their fiery volcanic origins to their role as beacons for travelers and residents alike, the Spanish Peaks remind us of the powerful forces—both natural and human—that shape the land we call home. Whether viewed from your front porch or summited on a summer morning, the Wahatoya continue to inspire awe and gratitude for all who live in their shadow.

