

February 15, 2026



BLACKHAWK NEWSLETTER

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Letter from the President

Greetings at the beginning of 2026,

I hope that everyone is well. A couple of my friends always say, when asked how they are doing..." Better than I deserve." May we deserve the best, and get what is even better this year.

I'd like to share a few thoughts for the new year:

Editor: [Amber Laugesen](#)

Reporters: Anne Ebie,

Susanne Bloomfield

The Board went through a change in organizational structure. Jim Nance resigned as Road Chair after several years, though he will remain on the Road

Committee, and will assume the Vice President role to finish out his Board term. Frank Horwich resigned as Vice President, and has assumed the Road Chair duties, remaining a Board member. These changes were made voluntarily, with Board blessings. If there are any questions or comments about the reorganization, please respond directly to the Board.

We have reserved the La Veta Mercantile for the annual meeting this summer, July 25th. If there are ideas for guest speakers, specific topics to cover, or specific agenda items, please notify the Board. Thanks to Nancy Pasternak for making this reservation happen.

"See something, say something" is a long-used phrase on the Ranch; not an "official" edict, but an idea taken seriously, nonetheless. It is used primarily for emergencies, or at least semi-emergency situations. Depending on what is seen, and what kind of response is deemed necessary, please get in touch with the Board, the Road chair, or the EMC Chair directly. Prompt attention will be given to events reported in a direct manner.

The newly published BHR POA Communications Plan is located on the Website, Committees tab, Communication, dated Jan 26, 2026. This is a working document primarily for residents of the Ranch, with communication and alert information. Many hours were put into this document by, and much thanks goes to, Anne Ebie, Art Jackson, Brad Brooks, Kelly Alcorn, and JP Angelillo.

Speaking of committees, if you have a yen to join the volunteers that make the Ranch run, you can get in touch with any of the committee Chairpersons. As always, the website has a lot of information about who, what, and where the Ranch is. Contact info is there for the Board, as well as the latest budget and emergency contacts.

All the best to everyone,

Tim Kurtz

President, Blackhawk Ranch POA



Safely Navigating BHR Roads

by Anne Ebie

I am sure most have noticed the 20 mile speed limit signs coming onto the ranch. Many may not be aware that these signs were not arbitrarily set by the covenants or the POA board. Colorado State Laws set the speed limits (20 mph) for mountain roads and blind intersections. A blind intersection is defined as any intersection where you cannot see 100 feet in all directions, and a mountain road is one with many blind curves due to switchbacks or trees. Our covenants just mimic the existing law and the speed limit signs coming onto the ranch are official state speed limit signs.

We have had a lot of communications and presentations about why sticking to the 20 mile speed limit will help limit damage such as washboarding, but the Colorado Speed Limit Law, along with some additional driving tips, are more concerned with safety.

Stay safe out there with these tips:

- Keep your speed down and proceed with caution around blind curves. You never know what's there, a delivery truck driving on your side of the road, a cow, or even one of your neighbors walking. Colorado State Troopers even suggest that you use your horn when traveling around blind corners and/or through blind intersections.
- Keep your speed down on straight sections too. We live in an environment teeming with wildlife, and you never know when a deer or something else may pop out of the woods on the road. There is a big difference between hitting (or being able to avoid) a deer at 20 miles than at 40. A visiting friend of ours found this out the hard way when he caused massive damage to his truck.
- It's very easy to find yourself driving in the middle of the road. There is no center line on our dirt roads and the crown is steeper than paved roads, making it feel safer to drive down the middle especially when it's wet. But, if you encounter another vehicle on a blind curve, being on your side will not only help you avoid it, but will tend to make the other driver flinch in the right direction (his side) even if he is not currently on his side.
- We have no right of way signs at intersections and often the right of way is not obvious. Also, since the traffic on the ranch is light, many of us (myself included) routinely drive through intersections without really looking because we never encounter another car there. Until we do. This happened to me when turning onto Rugby Mines from Howards draw. Only good peripheral vision and fast reflexes (both of which are declining as I age) prevented me from being t-boned.

So in conclusion, please slow down, enjoy the ranch and watch out for your neighbors. Human and otherwise.



UTE PRAYER TREES

by Susanne Bloomfield

The Ute tribes, who once inhabited this region of Colorado, often culturally modified trees as a part of their ceremonies. The people would stop and pray four times on the way to their sacred mountain, Pikes Peak. The Ute called the mountain Tava, meaning Sun, and they were the Tabeguache, or People of the Sun, the largest of the ten bands of Utes.

On each prayer stop on their journey to Tava, they would choose a pliable sapling, bend it parallel to the ground, and secure it with a yucca rope. "Then everyone circled the tree and prayed, for they knew it would hold their prayers for 800 years, and each breeze would give their prayers new breath."

Another type of ceremonial tree is the Medicine Tree. The National Park Service explains that Utes would insert a sharp stick into a tree and peel the bark away to the inner layer, which would be used in a healing ceremony. Since a tree cannot add growth rings to such scars, historians are able to date the ceremony by comparing the rings in the scarred and unscarred areas.

Historian Celinda Kaelin of the Pikes Peak Historical Society has identified over 500 ceremonial trees in the region so far, and more are being discovered near Black Forest, Fox Run, Cuchara, and La Veta. John Wesley Anderson, who gives presentations on this subject, has also written a book titled *Ute Indian Prayer Trees of the Pikes Peak Region* that describes in more detail the history of the Ute practices.



The following photos are some of the trees discovered on Blackhawk Ranch that appear to be culturally modified by the Utes. The



bottom two trees can be viewed on the east side of the road on Wapiti Drive between Mule Deer and just north of Canyon View. If you see similar trees on your property, please do not destroy such historically and culturally significant artifacts!

Check out this website:

www.pikespeakmuseum.org/indians



More Ute Artifacts Found on Ranch

by Susanne Bloomfield

The area that is now Blackhawk Ranch was once the winter homelands for the Capote/ Kapota band as well as other Ute bands and neighboring Native American tribes. While all of Colorado and Utah as well as southern Wyoming and northern New Mexico comprised the Ute hunting grounds, late in the fall, small bands of extended families would descend from the high altitudes to escape the winter cold, living close together for defense and to gather supplies. Since the Utes were one of the first Native American tribes to acquire horses, the lower altitudes also afforded better forage for their herds.

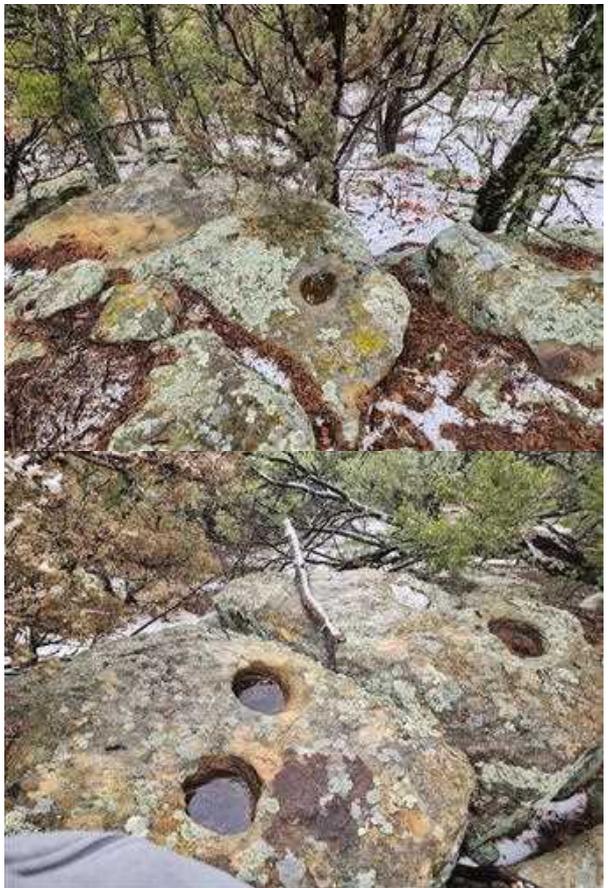


In summer of 2016, Dr. James Jefferson, Ute Tribal Elder, and John Anderson, author of "Ute Indian Prayer Trees of the Pikes Peak Region", visited Blackhawk Ranch to view our many culturally modified trees. During their visits, they pointed out the many bedrock mortars visible in the

rock outcroppings, circular holes that Native tribes used for grinding food. The holes served as bowls, and foods, including grains, animal flesh and fat, fruits, and the pinon nuts and acorns found so plentifully on the ranch, were ground with a smooth stone or blunt stick, known as a pestle, into pemmican, a concentrated, long-lasting high energy food.

The mortar holes observed around Blackhawk Ranch are usually from 6-10

inches in diameter and 4-7 inches deep and often appear in clusters of from two to six on large stone outcroppings. Some sources speculate the grinding was also a social activity for the women, so that is why there are often multiple holes. Occasionally, more shallow, trough-like depressions can be found in nearby rocks. These are more like the typical metate. In fact, one Blackhawk couple also found a small, moveable metate and mano on their property.



Sources: [Southern Ute Indian Tribe](#), [Caprock Canyoneer](#), Utes: The Mountain People by Jan Pettit, and John Anderson.