

Rugby Rock Ranch Fire – After Action Report

Background: Rugby Rock Ranch, is located on the Eastern border of Blackhawk Ranch. It can be reached via CR 66.1. A significant proportion of this ranch are homeless encampments consisting of Tents, RVs and poorly constructed shacks/outbuildings. We have had numerous incursions from residents there, including drunk drivers, abandoned vehicles, reckless drivers and folks “looking around” on Blackhawk.

The Fire: On Saturday November 1st, at 10:03 and 10:04, two EMC members reported a smoke column on Blackhawk’s eastern border. It was not immediately apparent if it was on, or only near Blackhawk. What was apparent was that the smoke plume was from a fire.

Responding to this information, an EMC member sortied immediately to locate the fire. The fire was located quickly and a 911 call was initiated, including the location of the fire. Because the fire was located in Las Animas County, Huerfano dispatch transferred the call to Las Animas County’s Spanish Peaks Fire Department. Dispatch reported back that the fire had been reported and the SPFD just arrived on scene. The fire was located 1 ridge away from the border of Blackhawk. Because of its proximity to BHR, the BHR emergency communication protocol was initiated.

The EMC rep onsite engaged the SPFD Incident Command and the LACSO Deputies to offer Blackhawk help, if needed. Two SPFD brush trucks and two Las Animas Sheriff department vehicles were on scene. SPFD Incident Command asked that the BHR EMC rep remain on scene in case they needed additional help from BHR, given our proximity.

SPFD quickly ran two hose lines and attacked the fire. A makeshift living quarters was fully engulfed and looked to be less than 1000 sq feet. No power and no water services served this shack; it appeared to be entirely off grid. Several 20lb propane tanks had been thrown clear of the fire, as fire crew members continued their attack. Given that the shack was going to be a total loss, much attention was given to the surrounding tress adjacent to the fire. Within 45 minutes the fire was contained and the mop up operations initiated. With permission from Incident Command, the BHR EMC rep departed at approximately 11:25.

BHR EMC Involvement:

- EMC Fire Plume spotted
- EMC Rep locates the fire, Base Radio support calls 911 Dispatch, Dispatch Xfers to Spanish Peaks Fire Department and determines that two Brush Trucks already on Scene.
- BHR Emergency Communications Protocol initiated.
- Onsite BHR EMC rep remains on scene as requested by SPFD Incident command.
- SPFD Incident Command declares fire contained and initiates mop up operations. BHR EMC Rep cleared to leave the scene≥
- A total of six EMC members participated in the BHR response to this off-ranch fire during the spotting, locating, base and hand-held radio coms and relays and on scene reporting.

Tentative Cause:

- Wood stove over-stoked and overheated, burning small wooden building used as an off-grid living quarters.

Epilogue:

- Living quarters and contents were a complete loss. Two dogs may possibly have died. One dog and one human occupant were able to escape unharmed.
- Fast action by the SPFD and Las Animas Sheriff's Office prevented the fire from spreading more than 30 feet from its source. Some trees were singed, but fire did not spread from the burn area perimeter.

Respectfully submitted November 12, 2025

Brad

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