

BLACKHAWK NEWSLETTER

June 2026

Summer Edition

Letter from the President

By Tim Kurtz

Greetings to everyone,

Thank you to all who performed their rain (snow) dances and crossed fingers for moisture. The recent rain/snow has begun to take the edge off the drought. It's getting better, keep up the good work.

This year's Annual POA gathering will include an after-meeting potluck at the La Veta Town park pavilion. The picnic tables are covered and there is electricity available for hot dishes and the like. We have reserved the pavilion from noon until 5:00 p.m. Our total cost for this reservation is \$15.00 for the electricity – what a deal! Please bring chairs, extension cords and power strips (if you need them). More details to come, stay tuned.

The POA Board of Directors has created an IT Committee and appointed Art Jackson as Chair, joined by committee members Anne Ebie and Frank Horwich. Each person brings their own expertise and skillset to the task of upgrading and maintaining the Ranch's website and other intellectual property. You will

hear more about the committee's goals at the Annual meeting; it will be great to see their ideas come alive for the betterment of the community. Many thanks to Art for his solo efforts in past years minding the website and other important POA support.

An update to the POA Policies and Procedures is in the Board review stage at this time. CCIOA regulations and revised State statutes made the update necessary to bring our documents in line. Some new policies were created to respond to recent occurrences on the Ranch. Notice will be given when this update is complete.

Wendy Jackson is the new Editor of this newsletter and we welcome her stepping into this role. If you have ideas for articles, questions, or concerns regarding this newsletter, please feel free to contact her or the Board directly.

Have a good Spring, stay safe out there.

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Wendy Jackson - Newsletter Editor

BHR BOARD MEMBERS

Tim Kurtz - President

Jim Nance - Vice President

Carol Ryan - Treasurer

Nancy Pasternak - Secretary, Compliance

Frank Horwich - Board Member, Roads

EMAIL

BHRPOABoard@blackhawkranch.org

WEBSITE

www.blackhawkranch.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE 2026

- 12 BHR Board of Directors Meeting
10 AM
- ~~12 EMC Mitigation
9 AM
CANCELLED~~
- 12 Book Club
4 PM
- 13 EMC Mitigation
9 AM

JULY 2026

- 04 Fourth of July Parade
12 PM
- 10 EMC Mitigation
9 AM
- 11 EMC Mitigation
9 AM
- 25 Annual BHR Meeting
10 AM

AUGUST 2026

- 14 EMC Mitigation
9 AM
- 15 EMC Mitigation
9 AM

BLACKHAWK ANNOUNCEMENTS

POA Board Minutes

[Latest minutes](#) have been posted to the BHR website

Road Work

All roads will be graded over the summer and road base added to Rugby Mines Road. Slow down and watch out for Mike!

Fire Restrictions

Due to county fire restrictions, all outdoor fires are banned on Blackhawk Ranch until further notice

Blackhawk Ranch Annual Meeting

La Veta Mercantile—300 S Main St, La Veta, CO. Sign-in begins at 9 AM, Meeting begins at 10 AM



The Blackhawk Brief

By Wendy Jackson

Welcome to the Summer Edition of the Blackhawk Newsletter! We've got lots of news, events and reminders to share with you. I will be taking over from Amber Laugesen as the newsletter editor.

Your newsletter has a new look with plenty of information sprinkled throughout. To give our writers a bit of a break and to collect more content between each edition, the newsletter will now be published quarterly.

I would love to hear your ideas on how to grow our newsletter. What would you like to read? If you like what you see, please let me know. Send your suggestions and comments to BHRnewsletter1@gmail.com. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Now, let's find out what's happening on Blackhawk!

Wendy ❤️

Fourth of July Parade

By Debby Kenney

As we are about to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of our Declaration of Independence, Paul and I are so happy to get to host the Hotdog and Hamburger phase of the annual Blackhawk Ranch July 4th event.

We really cannot begin without acknowledging the nexus of the big event on Blackhawk. When Dan and Anne Ebie first became property owners on Blackhawk, they began a salute to our country on their property. As the years went by they expanded the "parade", and now it includes everyone on the ranch who wishes to participate.

This year the kickoff will be at about 12 noon on Saturday, July 4 at the Ebie's Lot #163. We will sing America the Beautiful, God Bless America and of course our National Anthem while enjoying mimosas and bourbon, whichever you wish. We will then parade to the parcel of Ron and Kelly Alcorn, Lot #124 and enjoy some snacks.

Around 3:30 the parade will terminate at Lot #9 and the cooking will begin. Ray Butters, our very own Uncle Sam, will review the parade en-

trants at the entrance of Lot #9. Awards will be given for best patriotic dress, best decorated ATV/UTV and



*Master of Ceremonies
(2025): Ray Butters*

best dressed dog. Then everyone is invited to join us for an old fashioned 4th of July cookout. Paul and I will furnish the hotdogs, hamburgers and the "fixins", along

with bourbon, margaritas and sangria.

We ask that you bring a side such as potato salad, baked beans, chips and dips, a dessert, and beer of your choice. If you would like to bring your side dish early, we will be able to keep potato salad cool and baked beans warm. Also, please bring folding chairs if possible.

Please remember everyone is welcome even if you do not wish to be part of the parade, just come to Lot #9 about 3:30.

We so look forward to seeing everybody for this wonderful celebration!

Fire Season County Fire Restrictions

Fire season is upon us here in southern Colorado. Two recent fires have occurred in Las Animas County. The Schwachheim Fire, located near Lake Dorothea State Wildlife Area, burned 1,582 acres and the Poitrey Canyon Fire near Kim, Colorado consumed 2,113 acres.

Las Animas and Huerfano counties have both imposed fire restrictions. Currently, Las Animas County is in Stage 2 Fire Restrictions and Huerfano County has declared Stage 1 Fire Restrictions. Because Blackhawk Ranch is located in both counties, the BHR POA will follow Stage 2 restrictions for outdoor burning. No campfires, charcoal grills, or outdoor smoking are permitted on Blackhawk Ranch. Propane stoves may be used outdoors if equipped with an on/off switch. For current information, you can view [fire restrictions](#) on the Blackhawk Ranch website.

Blackhawk Ranch Book Club

Looking for a good book and great conversation? The Blackhawk Ranch Book Club might interest you. Come join us for book discussions, fun, and refreshments. Meetings are held throughout the year at rotating host homes, usually monthly when schedules allow.

Book selections vary throughout the year and include a wide range of genres and authors. It's a great way to connect with neighbors and new members are always welcome! If you are interested in joining, please send an email to BHRnewsletter1@gmail.com and we will get you added to the invite list!

WILL YOUR HOME SURVIVE A WILDFIRE?

Contact

COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE

to schedule your

Home Ignition Zone Assessment

(719) 742-3588



Neighborhood Security Tips

By Art Jackson



Thefts on Blackhawk Ranch are very rare. I can only recall two incidents in the past 22 years. Our community faces unique challenges because of our remote environment, but there are things we can do to

help deter intruders and react in the event of a burglary.

- Lock doors and windows on your home, shed or garage. Many burglars gain entry through an unlocked door or window.
- Do not hide spare keys. Burglars know all the hiding places. The first place they will look for a spare key is under doormats, flower pots or commercial hide-a-key devices. Instead give a key to a trusted neighbor.
- Install motion lighting. This may alert a neighbor or a passer-by of an intruder. Please consider dark sky principles.
- Keep landscaping trimmed around your home to avoid dark hiding spots.
- Consider using security or game cameras. This may not stop an intruder, but may provide an image or video of an intruder you can provide to the police.
- Install a home security system.
- Be a good neighbor. If you see someone suspicious, report it. If you see an unfamiliar vehicle, tell someone. Use a Blackhawk Ranch window sticker or hanger so people know you are part of our community.
- Home Inventory. Keep a record of your valuables to include serial numbers. This may help the police recover anything stolen and will help with an insurance claim.

Tips When Traveling

- Use light timers to provide the illusion someone is home.
- Avoid ordering packages that may sit on your porch while you are away. This is an indicator to a burglar you are not home. If you are expecting a package, ask a neighbor to pick it up for you.
- Watch your social media posts. Posting your travel plans will let people know you are not home and may make you a target. Instead post your pictures when you return.

If you do experience a theft, contact the local Sheriff immediately. Also notify the BHR Board of Directors.

Trusted Contractors

Are you looking for a dependable company for construction or repair work? You can find a list of Trusted Contractors, recommended by your neighbors, on the BHR website! This list is composed of contractors who have been found to be timely, fair, and trustworthy.

- **Have a recommendation?** Feel free to **refer a trusted contractor** you have used so we can add them to the list.
- **Have feedback?** You can request to have a business removed if their service was lacking.

To view the current list or submit your feedback, visit the [Trusted Contractors](#) section on the BHR website.

Blackhawk Ranch Baseball Caps

Embroidered Blackhawk Ranch logo baseball caps are available to order from Tees In Time, a local Colorado Springs company. The hats are made of cotton twill and are available in a variety of colors. Logo embroidery can be any color. Mix & Match! The company will also embroider the logo on other clothing items. Be sure to reference Blackhawk Ranch Item #6440 when ordering.



TEES IN TIME
(719) 553-5725

Thank you Val and Rick Swinchoski for arranging this!

Community Mitigation Day

By Wendy Jackson

Blackhawk Ranch Community Mitigation Day is in full swing! The 2026 season kicked off on May 15 with volunteers meeting at Darby Spur and Rugby Mines Road. Community Mitigation days are coordinated by the Blackhawk Ranch Emergency Management Committee (EMC) and are typically scheduled from May through October each year. Volunteers rally over a weekend, two days per month, to donate their time for a cause that benefits the entire community.

Blackhawk Ranch is located in a high-risk wildfire area. The EMC's goal is to reduce the risk of wildfire intensity and restore our forest to healthy conditions. Mitigation efforts along evacuation routes ensure property owners and emergency responders have safe passage in and out of the ranch. Mitigation includes thinning and limbing trees, removing ladder fuels, cutting firewood, and chipping slash. Not only does this promote wildfire safety, but it also has the added benefit of allowing

sunlight to penetrate the tree canopy and melt winter snow along the roads.

Safety is always at the forefront of EMC sponsored events. Training is required for wood chipper operators, a safety officer is assigned, a traffic monitor is present, and a compact water tank with pump is kept onsite in case of fire. Due to severe drought conditions, wood chippings are doused with water from the Fire Scat as a safety precaution. The Fire Scat is a portable firefighting device engineered by Brad Brooks. The mobile water tank with pump and hose may be used to suppress low-level fires until local firefighters arrive on scene.



Fire Scat: 60-gallon mobile water tank and 5-gallon backpack pumper for spot fires



Community Mitigation Day volunteers

During the 2025 season, 27 community members put in over 300 collective hours of wildfire mitigation labor! Ross Hallihan from Huerfano County Department of Emergency Management has become a "regular" at our mitigation events. He has a soft spot for the Blackhawk Ranch community and is a willing participant to support us in every way.

The EMC is always looking for additional volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact [Frank Horwich](#) for meeting locations. Check out the posted [2026 mitigation dates](#). We hope to see you at the next Community Mitigation Day!

Understanding Bears

By Anne Ebie

A few years back, the (now retired) Trinidad Wildlife manager gave a talk on BHR about living with bears. He started with saying that it always upset him when people called to report a problem bear. According to Bob, bears are not the problem. Bears are just doing what they have been doing for thousands of years to survive. It's people who are the problem. The solution to minimizing the risk to our property, livestock,

pets and ourselves rests in understanding the bears and working with their instincts. Here are some tips from Bob's presentation. As an aside, these tips will also protect the bears, as repeated bear encounters with humans always end in the bear being euthanized.

Bears are incredibly powerful and formidable animals with massive claws and canine teeth, substantially

(Continued on [page 7](#))

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Join us for BHR
Community Mitigation
Days!

[Sign up here!](#)



2026 Wildfire Mitigation Efforts

By Frank Horwich

The 2026 Community Wildfire Mitigation season will focus on improving emergency evacuation routes through the Howard's Draw eastern exit by removing hazardous roadside vegetation along Rugby Mines Road and increasing visibility at blind curves.

With continued drought conditions and increasing wildfire risk across southern Colorado, improving evacuation access and reducing roadside fuel hazards remain critical priorities for the ranch. Reducing dense roadside vegetation improves driver visibility, increases emergency vehicle access, and helps create safer evacuation corridors during a wildfire evacuation.

What are the Goals?

The primary goals for the 2026 season:

- Improve emergency evacuation access to the east through Howard's Draw
- Increase visibility around blind curves and limited-sight areas
- Reduce hazardous vegetation along this important travel corridor
- Improve access for emergency responders during wildfire events

In addition to the planned work along Rugby Mines Road this season, we have also identified remaining mitigation needs along Four Mile Canyon to continue and expand upon last year's efforts. Completing these corridors remains an important long-term objective for improving emergency egress from the ranch.

[Click here](#) to review a map that illustrates the mitigation plan and identifies:

- Planned mitigation areas along Rugby Mines Road, the primary focus for the 2026 season
- Remaining target areas along Four Mile Canyon and the broader Rugby Mines Road corridor
- Specific work areas planned for each

scheduled mitigation weekend. As work progresses, priorities and coverage areas may change based on weather conditions, fuel conditions, crew availability, and overall progress.

Wildfire preparedness is a shared

responsibility. Mitigation efforts are intended to improve the safety of residents, visitors, and emergency personnel by helping ensure evacuation routes remain accessible if a wildfire threatens the community.

Roadwork on the Ranch

Progress, Challenges, and What's Ahead

By Frank Horwich

The Road Committee's primary goal this year is to grade every road on the ranch and apply new road base to as much of Rugby Mines Road as the budget allows. In addition, we are prioritizing regular maintenance of the main entrance—Four Mile Canyon Road from the north gate to the first low water crossing—on a 6–8 week schedule to keep this high-traffic area in good condition.

This season has presented some unexpected challenges. Prolonged dry conditions have made it difficult to carry out grading work effectively. When roads are too dry, grading does not produce lasting results, and the increased fire risk limits operations due to the potential for sparks during the process. As a result, some planned work has been delayed while we wait for safer and more suitable conditions.

To manage the workload efficiently, projects have been divided into five separate work orders

that are being completed as weather permits. Following recent precipitation, we were able to successfully complete the first two work orders. The remaining three, along with planned improvements to Rugby Mines Road, will move forward as conditions allow.

Our goal is to ensure that all ranch roads receive proper attention and maintenance throughout the season. We recognize that road conditions can vary, and input from residents is an important part of this

process. If your road is not included in the [current plan](#), or if you have concerns or suggestions, we encourage you to reach out.

Please [contact us](#) with any feedback or questions. Your input helps us prioritize efforts and maintain safe, accessible roads for everyone in the community.



Understanding Bears

(Continued from page 5)

bigger than even the largest dog breeds. Fortunately, they are not naturally aggressive. They would prefer to have nothing to do with us.

Food and Trash Storage

What regularly brings them to the vicinity of our houses and camps is a single-minded pursuit of sustenance (food and water). Depending on the season and size, bears need to eat up



Secure trash in bear-proof containers

to 20,000 calories a day and can smell food a mile away. We tend to have plenty of high calorie food around in the form of

trash, bird seed, drippings from barbecue grills, vegetable gardens, small livestock, and so on, so they are naturally attracted to our houses and camps. A bear that finds a food source will be back for more. As such, it is imperative to secure any food source, especially between dusk and dawn when the bears are most active.

In addition to being large and pow-

erful, bears are also very intelligent. As a rule, if you can open a door without using a key or your thumbs, a bear can too. Their claws, designed to tear apart logs to get at grubs, can also rip through flimsy doors, fences, chicken coops, etc. If you cannot store a food source in a secure location, then protect it with electrified livestock fencing.

In spite of all precautions, a bear may still occasionally visit your house or camp. You may be able to temporarily startle it with a loud noise, but bears quickly acclimate to that. Bob suggested using rubber shotgun slugs to convince it to leave. As long as you don't hit the bear in the face, the rubber slugs will not injure it, but like the electric fencing, will make an impression and will definitely make it less likely to come back.

Bear Safety Tips

Bears are not by nature confrontational and can run 30 miles an hour (much faster than any human and most dogs). By far the most common result of a bear encounter is the bear running away. There are exceptions to this rule; a female bear will defend its cub, any bear will defend a food source and any bear will defend itself if it feels unable to escape.

It's best to avoid these situations by some common-sense rules:

- If you see a bear, talk soothingly and back away slowly. Don't run and don't act aggressively.
- Stay away from cubs.
- If you are out with your dog, keep in mind that more than half of bear on human attacks involve a dog acting aggressively. Keep your dog under control.



Mama bear will defend her cubs. Steer clear!

If all else fails, Bob recommended using high powered bear spray that will spray up to 30 feet to dissuade a bear. He did allow that if there's any wind, you are likely to catch the bear spray too, but it's much better than getting mauled by a bear. Bear spray is generally more effective than firearms because most calibers and loads will not stop a bear before it reaches to you.

So please respect the bears and other wildlife and enjoy them from a distance. More information may be found on the [BearWise](#) website.

Did You Know?

Blackhawk Ranch is 6,706 acres within two counties

**4,488 acres in Huerfano
2,218 acres in Las Animas**

Source: Blackhawk Ranch Filings 1 - 10 (1996-1998)

Noxious Weeds

It's time to spray those **noxious weeds** on your property!

Contact Susanne Bloomfield
for sprayer rental & herbicide
stbloomfield@hotmail.com



Crows or Ravens?

What are Those Birds on the Ranch?

By Wendy Jackson

Have you ever been outside at the ranch and suddenly find yourself standing beneath a looming shadow of birds circling overhead? Dozens of crows! Or are they ravens? How can you tell the difference? Let’s dive into this and see what we can discover!

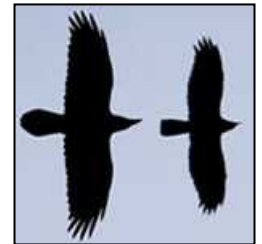
The Common Raven and American Crow are members of the Corvidae family and both are common throughout Colorado. It is easy to confuse these birds as they are similar in appearance - both are entirely black, including their feet and beak, but the similarities end there. Look at the pictures below. You may notice the beak on a raven is thick and curved, while the crow displays a slender and



The beak on a raven (left) is thick and curved. The crow (right) has a slender beak.

sleeker beak. Ravens have shaggy throat feathers and are considerably larger than crows, about the size of a hawk.

Watching birds in flight offers even more distinguishing features. Ravens typically fly in pairs, whereas crows are very social and often travel in flocks known as “murders”. Ravens soar and glide gracefully in flight, while crows tend to flap their wings continuously. Distinct wing shapes are a dead giveaway as to whether you are observing ravens or crows. Long wedge-shaped tail feathers are indicative of a raven versus the shorter, square tail of the American Crow.



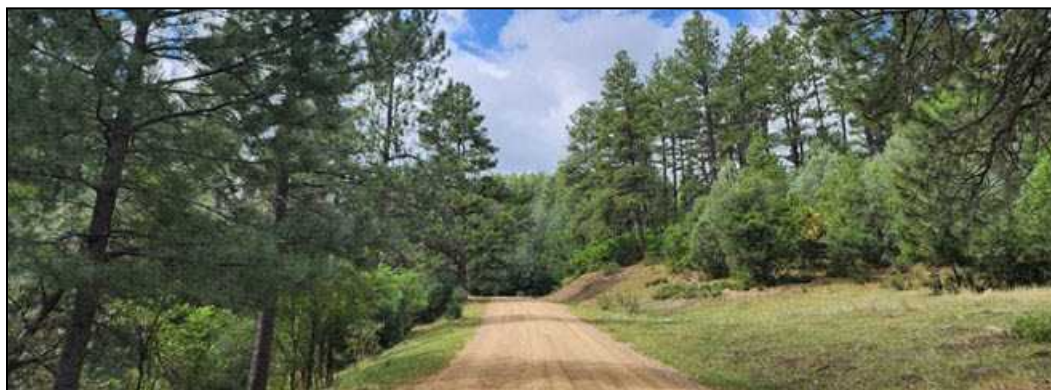
Wing patterns - raven (left), crow (right)

If you are still having difficulty spotting their differences, perhaps the sound of their call will help. Crows have a distinctive “caw caw” call. Ravens produce a deep croaking sound. Click to listen to [raven calls](#) and [crow calls](#).

Well, there you have it! You’re an expert now. So, the next time you are outside, be on the lookout... you may just find yourself in the midst of a murder – of crows!



SLOW DOWN **ENJOY** THE SCENERY!



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