



**Blackhawk Ranch
Property Owners Association
Communications Plan**

BHR POA Communications Plan

1. Purpose/Overview.

The BHR POA has several teams and committees comprised of volunteers dedicated to the well-being of the ranch and POA membership. These teams perform tasks including, but not limited to:

- Working with vendors to maintain and plow the roads
- Facilitating the response of emergency personnel, such as fire fighters and ambulances
- Coordinating ranch wide projects, such as fire mitigation and grants
- Maintaining communication tools, such as the blackhawkranch.org website and Facebook

In years past, communications between the various volunteer teams and the wider BHR community have been relatively informal. As the ranch population of full time and part time residents, renters and seasonal visitors has increased, it has become apparent that there are some gaps. The POA can no longer assume that people simply know who to call when they need help or information. The processes and tools outlined in this document attempts to rectify this.

2. Roles and Responsibilities.

There are several roles necessary in the BHR communications plan. Some individuals may fill more than one role at a time.

2.1. Emergency Management Committee

The EMC is the team responsible for facilitating the response of emergency personnel, such as fire fighters or ambulances. While not being emergency responders, they may provide gate guides for responders, assist property owners to coordinate with fire department, etc.

2.2. Snow Committee

The Snow Captain determines when to call in the vendor to plow snow, and coordinates with the vendor on progress and priorities.

2.3. Incident Commander

An Incident Commander is a member of the EMC committee who coordinates communications with fire fighters, the sheriff or other emergency responders and other EMC members, typically with a radio on scene. The Incident Commander may also request a Code Red Alert if conditions warrant it.

2.4. Communications Coordinator

A Communications coordinators are similar to an Emergency dispatcher. The Communications Coordinator will monitor the EMC radio channels, passing relevant information from the Incident Commander to the POA membership through the Blog Editor, texting capability and from the POA membership to the Incident Commander.

2.5. Blog Editor

The Blog Editor adds both general announcement and incident related information to blackhawkranch.org, and works with the Communication Coordinator or the POA Board of directors to notify the POA membership of new posts.

2.6. BHR POA Board of Directors

The BHR POA board generally handles non-incident questions and content.

2.7. BHR Community

The BHR community as a whole has several roles involving communications.

- Incident Reporting - Since BHR is very large and not patrolled by any police force, the POA relies on all members to report any incidents that may be happening on the ranch, including but not limited to fires. It is critical the BHR community calls 911 if the situation warrants it and also notifies the appropriate committee members of any issues.
- Questions or Concerns - The BHR community must be able to easily contact the board or other committees.
- Information Consumers - The BHR community must be kept up to date as to what is happening on the ranch.

3. Communication Modes/Methods.

The mode of communications best suited to a particular need varies. Listed below are the communication methods available.

3.1. Reverse 911

Though not an official BHR communication tool, the POA encourages all residents and visitors to sign up for Reverse 911 (CodeRED for Huerfano and RAVE Alerts for Las Animas) from both Las Animas and Huerfano counties. Links for sign up may be found at <https://www.blackhawkranch.org/emergency-contacts>.

Reverse 911 alerts will be augmented by additional communication modes described below.



Emergency Contacts

EMERGENCY

911

(For all major emergencies)

3.2. Texting

When a member of the BHR community needs immediate help, texting a message to help@blackhawk ranch.org will send the message to the POA board of directors, the EMC, the snow captain and all communications coordinators. An appropriate team member will provide a response. For instance, in the case of a fire or other emergency a member on the EMC will respond with a phone call, or if bandwidth is an issue, a text.

As a rule, texting help@blackhawk ranch.org should be limited to critical issues, so will generally be responded to by the EMC.

When the POA board of directors or one of the BHR committees needs to send an urgent communication to all Blackhawk ranch members, such as reporting a fire, they will send a group text to POA members that have opted in to the texting capability. This text will coincide with a critical new post on the incident blog.

3.3. BHR Texting Capability

Ranch wide texts will be limited to life threatening emergencies, or major time sensitive disruptions. Life threatening emergencies would be incidents such as fires on the ranch potentially requiring evacuation, tornado watches etc. Major disruptions would be incidents such as washed out roads. See the BHR texting process for more information. To sign up for texting, visit <https://www.blackhawk ranch.org/texting-opt-in>

3.4. Email

For non-critical issues members of the POA community may email help@blackhawk ranch.org. This email group includes the POA board of directors, the EMC, the snow captain and all communications coordinators. This address is the best one to use for things like asking about snow plowing schedules, questions on dues, etc.

For purely business concerns, emails may be sent to the POA Board only at BHRPOABoard@blackhawk ranch.org.

When the POA board of directors or BHR committee needs to send a routine message to the POA membership they will send a group email to bhrall@blackhawkranch.org. This email group will contain all email addresses currently on file. This email will usually coincide with a new post on the Announcements blog, or with another post on the <https://blackhawkranch.org> website, such as a newsletter or fire mitigation schedule. The use of this email group is restricted to board members and key committee personnel.

3.5. BHR Web Site

The website at <https://blackhawkranch.org> is the primary repository for persistent information from the various BHR teams and committees. Two Blogs may be found under the Owner Resources tab, the Announcements blog and the Incidents blog. To the greatest extent possible, the Board of Directors will use the Blogs to communicate with the POA membership. POA members will be notified of new Blog entries either by single text or email depending on the severity of the incident. Additional information may be added to a Blog without additional notification.

- The Announcements blog contains general, non-emergency messages from the board or other committees. The Announcement blog requires a login to the website, which can be requested by clicking the Log In link in the top right corner of the website.
- The Incidents blog contains information related to ongoing and historical incidents on the ranch, such as fires or snow events. As it may contain critical safety information, the Incidents blog does not require a login id to the website.



3.5. Social Media

The Blackhawk Ranch private Facebook group is typically used socially but has been used on occasion to report an issue or ask for help. In this case, the request will be forwarded to the help@blackhawkranch.org channel once it is seen. A link will be added to the top of the BHR Facebook page to remind POA members of the new process and Blogs.

3.6. Radio

Because there is no cell phone service across much of BHR, the EMC, Snow Captain and Communication Coordinators use short wave radios for internal communication for the duration of incidents. Communications Coordinators will also monitor radios to receive up to date information to share with the wider BHR community when practical. Other POA members may also use radios to listen to these communications, although they will require a Ham Radio license to talk.

3.7. Phone/Email

The traditional method of calling or texting the EMC members based on the refrigerator magnets, or the BHR board of directors directly for help, will still be a viable option. The recipient of the call will ensure the information is forwarded to help@blackhawkranch.org if needed.

4. Communication Types

Several distinct types of necessary ranch communication have been identified, and the processes involved in each type defined.

4.1. Reporting

Reporting is the means by which members of the BHR community notify the committees, POA board of directors or first responders of issues needing attention on the ranch. This could be something as critical as a fire or mundane like seeing a car parked on the side of the road.

The text or help@blackhawkranch.org email groups is the desired channel for reporting, where email is used for non-critical issues and text for critical ones. As a general rule of thumb, if you call 911 you should text or call an EMC member directly.

In order to let the sender know that the text has been received, and to get all the necessary information to respond, an appropriate member of this group will immediately try to call back the sender. If the call does not go through, the responder will attempt to text back. The response team as a whole will also immediately start to take appropriate action based on the text.

4.2. Questions or Concerns

Emailing help@blackhawkranch.org is one way to communicate questions or concerns. An appropriate member of the group will email back a response.

Another tool is the BHR Connect page at <https://www.blackhawkranch.org/bhr-connect>. Adding a comment here will allow an open discussion of ideas and concerns and will be added as a topic to the next BHR Connect meeting.

4.3. Routine

Occasionally the POA Board or other committees will post announcements on the Announcement blog. When a new announcement is made, an email notification will be sent to all POA members who have provided a valid email address.

POA members with questions or comments may communicate back by adding a comment to the blog.

4.4. Incident

The Incident blog, accompanied by either text or email notifications, is used to report current information on an ongoing incident. When an incident starts, notification to the entire POA membership will be sent either through the bhrall@blackhawkranch.org email or a text, depending on the severity of the incident. The Incident blog will be updated with reliable information as it becomes available.

Once the incident is over, POA members will be notified, and the incident information will be rolled up and archived on the incident blog.

4.4.1. Emergency Communications

4.4.1.1. Fire

Usually the spotter(s) and first responder(s) of a fire on the ranch is a property owner and/or neighbor(s) near the location. As soon as a fire is reasonably suspected, the POA member(s) involved are asked to:

1. Call 911
2. Text help@blackhawkranch.org (or call or text any EMC member directly) with the location of the fire. The location may be approximate, no delay should be made in the first two steps in trying to exactly locate the fire.

Once the BHR EMC and Communications receives a notification of a fire, the EMC will kick off their existing process. Additional Communications tasks are:

1. Assign a Communications Coordinator and Blog Editor as needed.
2. The Blog Editor will open an Incident about the fire.
3. If the Incident Commander feels conditions are warranted, the Communications Coordinator will send a text to the Blog Editor who will communicate with the POA membership reporting the fire. The text will contain a link back to the incident blog and the Communications Coordinator's contact information for questions

As the incident progresses, the Communications Coordinator will monitor the radio reports from the Incident Command and blog entries and communications will be sent out as additional information becomes available. **If the fire gets out of control** the fire department will issue a reverse 911 evacuation or pre-evacuation alert and the Communications Coordinator will notify the Blog Editor who will issue another text and email notice with additional information, such as which emergency evacuation routes to use or avoid.

4.4.1.2. Other Emergency

Other types of emergencies will not bring the full-blown response described for fires, but POA members calling 911 for other reasons, such as vehicular accidents and medical emergencies may still consider texting help@blackhawkranch.org. If no other actions are warranted, a gate guide may be helpful to ensure that an ambulance does not get lost.

4.4.2. Snow Storm

When there is a snowstorm on BHR, the Snow Captain determines whether to call the snow plow contractor based on measurements of snow depth on various locations on the ranch. If plowing is warranted, the Snow Captain will contact vendor and notify the Blog Editor.

The Blog Editor will create an Incident Blog Entry indicating plowing is starting and indicate the planned route and will send an email notification that plowing is starting.

If the Snow Captain determines that plowing is not warranted, a Blog entry will be created indicating the roads will not be plowed.

As the plowing progresses, the Snow Captain will keep in contact with plowing vendor via radio and will occasionally work with the Blog Editor to report progress. Once the roads are plowed, a blog entry will indicate plowing has been completed and the incident will be closed.

5. References

- EMC Handbook
- BHR Texting Capability Process
- BHR Policies and Procedures