

April 15, 2025



BLACKHAWK NEWSLETTER

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Finding Yourself on Blackhawk Ranch

By Brad Brooks

Did you buy property on Blackhawk Ranch to come here and “find yourself”?! Well, most of you are likely too young to get the pun here, but it made me chuckle. More seriously, the ability to find your way on Blackhawk Ranch roads and identify where you are, whether on the roads, on your own property, or possibly deep in the forest somewhere on the ranch, turns out to be an essential skill. Importantly, for a host of reasons your normal route of ranch ingress and egress can suddenly, without warning, become unavailable for periods of time. You

should learn at least two routes to get on and off the ranch from your respective properties. You should learn how to establish the longitude and latitude of your property (at your driveway, if you have one), AND you should invest in the technology that would allow you to determine and communicate your latitude and longitude regardless of where on the ranch you might be.

Why is this so important? Accidents, fires, dangerous weather and even missing persons searches can occur on the ranch without any warning. If you are involved in such an incident or injured in them, it is critical for you to be able to clearly identify your current latitude and longitude so that others can locate you and guide first responders to your location. IF YOU DO NOT KNOW WHERE YOU ARE, HOW CAN YOU TELL OTHERS WHERE TO FIND YOU?! More than one accident has occurred on the ranch in which significant injuries have occurred well off of marked roads and spurs. Being able to quickly determine your present latitude and longitude is really a SURVIVAL skill. At least one Fire Protection District in Huerfano County will ask for the latitude and longitude of the fire they are responding to as they travel to Blackhawk. Most cellphones can utilize third party apps that will allow you to quickly establish your current latitude and longitude. Many compass apps also identify current latitude and longitude (see Apple iPhone Compass App Photo). As an aside, the current generation of Apple iPhones also include an emergency satellite phone application that allows you to call out, even if there is zero cell phone coverage.

In addition, most Blackhawk Emergency Management Committee members carry radios, some of which can establish latitude and longitude using radio frequencies, negating the need for any cell service at all. We are working to grow the number of licensed HAM radio operators on the EMC. Even if you are not an EMC member, but want additional information on radio usage on



the ranch and what it would take to become a licensed HAM radio operator, simply inquire at the EMC.

Finally, did you know if you own property on Blackhawk Ranch, it will be located within 1 of 4 Quadrants on the ranch. Knowing which BHR Quadrant your property is located in can also be very useful. You can quickly determine which Quadrant your property is located in by downloading a BHR Quadrant Map from the Committees Page (see EMC Page) of the BHR Website. The Quadrant system created by the EMC has been used to good effect to perform fire column searches, lightning strike searches, vehicle recoveries and even a missing person’s search. Knowing your ranch Quadrant coupled with your latitude and longitude helps others quickly pinpoint your current location.

“Finding yourself on Blackhawk Ranch” might be construed by some to be a new-age self-discovery quest, but it is actually an essential survival skill builder to create a more resilient and self-reliant existence for yourself here on the ranch.

BHR Communications Initiative

by Anne Ebie

You may have noticed an increasing number of informational emails from the BHR board which link back to blog posts on the blackhawkranch.org website. This is one outcome of the working group created after the big November snowstorm of last year and referenced in the December newsletter posted [here](#) . As a side note, if you cannot reach these links please read on.

The communications working group has introduced several new processes and protocols to make sure that:

- 1. All members of the BHR community are kept informed of pertinent information involving the ranch.
- 2. All members of the BHR community are able to easily and consistently reach members of the EMC, BHR POA Board or the Snow Captain, both through email or text.

To accomplish these goals, we have introduced two new communications channels.

Incident and Announcements Blogs

In the past, information from the BHR board or committees was generally shared via the BHR Facebook group or from emails sent out by Shoebox. Shoebox has gone out of business, and it became readily apparent that Facebook was not sufficient for several reasons, especially because many of the BHR Community choose not to be part of social media. As a result, we have developed communications channels based on the most accessible protocols, email, text and internet.

We have introduced two new sections on the blackhawkranch.org website, Announcements and Incidents, under the Owner Resources tab.



These tabs contain posts which are the new “system of record” for communications from the BHR POA Board, EMC,

Snow Captain or Road Committee. The contents of both tabs are blog posts that allow for comments from BHR community members.

The Announcements tab will contain general information about ranch doings, such as times and dates of annual or BHR connect meetings, notices of offerings and such. Email notifications will be sent to all members of the POA Community when a new blog is posted.

The incidents tab will contain ongoing information about incidents like fires, snow plowing, and other safety concerns. Either email or text notifications will be sent to all member of the BHR Community when a new blog is posted, depending of the criticality of the incident. Additional information will be added to the post until the incident is closed. Any questions may be directed to sender of the email or text, which will typically be someone kept in the loop but not directly involved in responding to the incident. Non-critical questions may also be added to the comments section, which will be monitored.

Please note that anything that is critical enough to justify a text alert, such as a fire on the ranch that may warrant a pre-evacuation notice, will likely be sent in conjunction with a Code Red or Rave Alert. In this case, the information on the blog is the secondary information source and will just provide additional BHR specific information, such as evacuation routes. It is not intended as a replacement for the existing county emergency systems.

Contacting BHR Board and Committee Members

In the past, we relied on people who may need help or have questions to know who to call for help. This may have worked well enough when the community was small, but has proven insufficient as the community has grown.

To try to streamline the process and keep it simple even as members of the BHR Board and Committees change, and to ensure that messages will always be received by someone who is available, we have implemented a communications group called help@blackhawkranch.org. This group may be used either in email or text and will send a message to all the board members, EMC, Snow Captain, Communications Chair and Webmaster. On receiving a message the best available person will respond.

If the message is sent through text, the sender will receive an immediate call back. If email, a response will be made within 24 hours. We would ask that email be used instead of text unless immediate assistance is required. Examples would be a fire, accident or some other emergency.

Actions to Take by the BHR Community

We have tried to make our communications channels as accessible as possible, but there are a couple of things we ask of the community to make communications effective.

- If you have not already, please provide a working email address and phone number to Art Jackson <tech@blackhawkranch.org>
- The Announcement and Incidents blog posts require a login for access. If you have not already, please sign up to the blackhawkranch.org site by clicking the “Log In” link at the top right corner of the home page and then the “Sign Up” link.
- If you have not already, please sign up for both the Huerfano County Code Red and Las Animas County Rave/Smart 911 alert systems.

[Sign-Up for Huerfano County Code Red](#)

[Sign-Up for Las Animas County Rave Alert/Smart 911](#)

Summer Fun in the Sun in our own Backyard!

by Nancy Pasternak

Just 3 miles west of Walsenburg on Highway 160 you'll find Lathrop State Park, Colorado's first state park that opened in 1962. The park encompasses over 1,400 acres, has 2 lakes for water recreation and fishing, with 40 picnic sites and 103 camp sites, and 8 miles of trails. Reservations are required to camp at Lathrop. You can book one of the campsites 6 months in advance at cpwshop.com. Water hydrants, shower and laundry facilities, fire rings and picnic tables, dump station and flush toilets are available.

Martin Lake has a sandy beach and is good for swimming and speed boats. Horseshoe Lake doesn't allow speed boats, and is open to canoes, kayaks, paddleboards and floating devices. The park maintains group campsites (30 to 50 persons), single tent sites and RV sites with electricity. The Hogback Nature Trail offers fantastic views of the park at the top of the trail. The Cuerno Verde Trail encircles Martin Lake and is wheelchair accessible, with a paved 3-mile loop for walkers and cyclists. North Side Trail allows mountain biking and hiking. All trails are dog friendly. The park also has an archery range.



The park is a pinyon-juniper woodland, diverse wetland, and home to migratory birds including several species of raptors, pinon and scrub jays.

Lathrop is the only state park with a golf course. It is open to the public and no state park pass is required to eat or play the golf course. There is a 9-hole course, mini golf, and golf cart rentals. One of the best views of the East and West Spanish Peaks can be found in the golf club bar and grill! The bar and grill are open Thursday



through Saturday from 11am to 7pm, and on Sunday 11am to 3pm. The menu features burgers, salads, sandwiches, fish & chips, appetizers, country fried steak, and many sides. Prices range from \$10.99 to \$15.99.

Clear skies facilitate some of the best dark skies and stargazing in the area! So pack up the family, pets and swimsuits for a fun filled adventure at Lathrop State Park this summer, without "breaking the bank"!!

For more information call: 719-738-2376, or contact lathrop.park@state.co.us The office/visitor center is open daily from 8am to 4pm.



A Spring Reminder about Noxious Weeds

by Susanne Bloomfield, Weeds Chair

Just a reminder to BHR property owners that the Common Mullein and Musk Thistle, the most prevalent noxious weeds on Blackhawk, are beginning to awaken. Pictured are the early stages



of these two outlaw weeds. More photos and information on common noxious weeds can be found in the [April 14, 2024 newsletter](#). They are most easily eradicated in their early stages, usually beginning in May.

Although all property owners are responsible for the inspection and control of noxious weeds on their own properties, several Blackhawk volunteers on the Weeds Committee have assumed the responsibility of spraying noxious weeds along both sides of about 34 miles of BHR roads (30 feet from the center of the road on each side) twice a year. Current volunteers who have agreed to help my husband and me include Art and Wendy Jackson, Brad and Marian Brooks, Nancy Pasternak, Ron Lovely, and Cricket Sutter. More volunteers are always welcome on the committee to help keep BHR roadways beautiful.

Individual property owners may rent a POA sprayer filled with Milestone herbicide to help control weeds on their own properties. Please email me if you wish to rent one or volunteer to help the committee: stbloomfield@hotmail.com.

Alys' Restaurant

by Rayann Brunner

Alys' Restaurant in La Veta is well known to many ranch residents, but if you have not been, it is definitely time to consider a visit. For our family, a visit to Alys' is perfect for any special occasion or when we are looking for a great meal. In fact, Alys catered our wedding, bringing her staff and amazing food to Blackhawk Ranch!



Alys' is located near downtown La Veta in a converted home. With only nine tables, it feels exclusive, and the experience of dining there is always special. You will not know the menu before you arrive, which to us, is part of the fun. Instead, you will be told the evening's menu once you are settled. The menu varies every night but generally includes five to seven different entrees, all accompanied by soup or salad. On a recent visit, we enjoyed both steak and chicken accompanied by Alys' famous mashed potatoes and the vegetable of the day, and a vegetarian entrée is always available. Dessert is not to be missed, and it often includes Alys' cookies or brownies, with homemade toppings such as her bourbon caramel sauce.



Alys' has a full bar as well as an excellent, well priced, wine list. Despite being an exclusive feeling restaurant, the dress code is casual, and you will find many patrons in jeans – although feel free to dress up for a nice night out! Alys' Restaurant is open Thursday - Saturday 5pm - 7pm, by reservation only. Call 719-742-3742 for reservations.