

February 15, 2025



BLACKHAWK NEWSLETTER

Important Links

[Blackhawk Website](#)

[Blackhawk Facebook](#)

[Covenants](#)

[Driveway and
Building Compliance
Forms](#)

[Contact Information](#)

[BOD Meeting
Minutes and
Monthly Financials](#)

Editor: [Amber Laugesen](#)

Reporters: Anne Ebie,

Susanne Bloomfield,

Rayann Brunner

Letter from Blackhawk Ranch POA President

by JP Angellilo

Greetings everyone,

Looking back on this winter of heavy snow, I am continually amazed and humbled by our BHR community. Neighbors helping neighbors, pitching in to search and rescue and assist wherever possible. Although the gleaming snow and ice makes for a stunning photograph, venturing out in it has its risks. We all love hearing the soft crunch of the snow under our feet, but walking home in deep snow after sliding into a ditch loses its charm.

So be prepared for the cold and stay home when possible. We are still in snow season.

Something I am really excited about is our new member driven initiative, BHR Connect. The purpose is to connect with other property owners and listen to their innovative ideas and to express their concerns. It is a place where all voices are heard and valued.

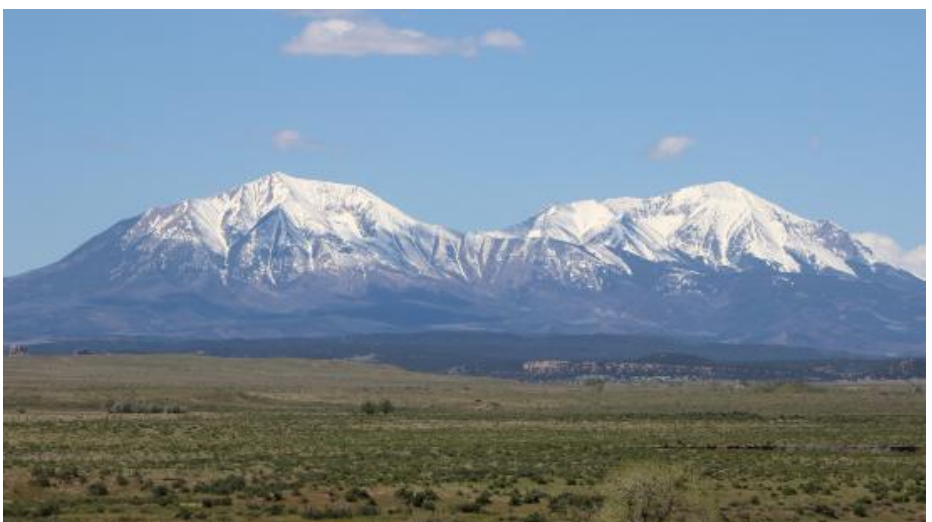
The meetings are initiated and overseen by property owners, will be offered quarterly and chaired by a different property owner each time. Whomever would like to oversee the next one, it's open. The first BHR Connect, hosted at the Walsenburg Mercantile on January 25, was facilitated by Frank Horwich, and meeting notes taken Margaret Horwich. It was resounding success. If you missed this kickoff meeting, I encourage you to check out the BHR connect section of the Ranch web site. The meeting notes are posted there.

The BHR is wild and beautiful, and most of us enjoy the quiet and solitude, but we need not feel alone. Connection is invaluable.

I invite all members to gather their big ideas and attend the next BHR Connect. (place and time TBA - keep an eye on the site for the next one).

All the best,

JP Angelillo, Blackhawk Ranch POA



The Vehicle with the Green Light

by Anne Ebie

In the coming months, you may be seeing a car or truck with a flashing green light on the roof driving on the ranch. The green light indicates that our Road Chair (Jim Nance) and/or the assistant Road Chair (Dan Ebie) are out and about on road business. In the next few months, they will be assessing the state of the roads to plan road work priorities that will fit the road budget in the coming summer. They will typically be out surveying the roads after big snow falls to see the roads at their worst.



The Road Chair evaluates the work priority based the criteria listed in the box below. Top priority is given to emergency

Safety issues: blind turns, super (which way the road slants), plants/trees that physically impact the roads and visibility.
Road crown (4%): lower or no crown will allow water to run down the roads, creating ruts.
Incidents (accidents and slides) at any particular location: I usually check with the EMC Chair
Amount of road base on the side of the road: road base on the side of the road can give you an indication of the amount of road base used on the road in past and how effective it has been and/or if it requires additional road base.
Color of road base on side of road: pink road base is the road base that was applied when the road was built.
Ruts in the road: usually only non-road base roads have ruts and they are usually very slippery and have deep mud when wet.
Wash board: can occur on both non-road base roads and road base roads, but most commonly (and worse) on non-road base roads.
Traffic volume and type of traffic: heavier traffic and higher traffic loads have a more damaging effect.
Width of road: minimum road width on the ranch is 20 feet.
Water patterns across/down the road: water on roads is always bad.
Ditching/culvert issues: drivers have a tendency to drive in the middle of the roads if the sides of the roads appear dangerous.
Steepness (grade) of slopes: Steeper slopes present a greater danger in winter (and summer), people tend to drive faster up steep slopes. Whenever we cut down a slope, we attempt to get it well below 15%. FYI, Freeways 6-7%, Trains 1-2%.
Direction of slope: north facing slopes tend to retain snow longer than south facing slopes due to a greater amount of sunshine.
Tree and mountain shade: snowy and wet areas remain a problem longer and worsen over time.
Emergency evacuation routes: We attempt to keep evacuations routes in good order.
Emergency vehicle accessibility: We attempt to make it easier for emergency vehicles to travel on the ranch.
Location of roads: ridges/east side, roads on the ridge tops and east side of the ranch tend to hold up better even without road base, due to the greater amount of sunshine, fewer tall trees, less traffic, and better drainage.

repairs, such as washed out roads preventing access to properties. Blocked culverts also get high priority because they tend to result in emergency repairs.

Safety is also very high priority. Areas that invite accidents or other mishaps such as people routinely sliding off the road also get special attention.

Main arteries, longer spurs, and spurs going to properties most frequently visited generally get higher priority than spurs with little traffic because these roads get more wear and tear. Also, most occasional visitors need to use main arteries to access their properties.

The location of the road and type of terrain also play a role in priority. For instance, if there are two roads with

equal amounts of traffic and no road base, the Road Chair will look at the type of terrain to determine the priority. If one is a south or west facing road that is very rocky and another is a north facing road in a forest and all dirt, the north facing forest road will get higher priority simply because the rocky road will dry out faster and will be more passible in inclement weather.

While necessary because of the limited road budget, this prioritization is a source of frustration to many of us in the POA community. There are a couple of actions property owners whose roads do not tend to make the top of the priority list may take.

First, if your property runs along a road and the trees on your property have not been thinned as part of the fire mitigation effort, please consider doing so. Not only will this help contain a potential fire, it will also allow your road to dry faster after heavy rain or snow storms, minimizing road damage. Attached are two photos taken about a week after an 8 inch snow storm. These photos were taken at the same spot from opposite directions along a property line. The only difference was that the property in

the top photo has had the trees thinned and the road is dry. The other has had no mitigation and the road is still an ice sheet. The ice is not only extremely hazardous but also melts every day resulting in ruts and road damage. The Blackhawk EMC is a helpful resource if you are looking to begin fire mitigation near your roadways.



A second option is a cost sharing program. This option will allow property owners in good standing with the POA who would like to accelerate the priority of a particular section of road to split the labor and materials cost of the road work



with the POA. Examples of this programs past usage were projects on Meadow Spur and Bear Paw Trail, both of which were particularly muddy but not highly used enough to get to the top of the priority list. When used, this program has resulted in a win/win situation because it stretches the very limited POA budget, and allows problem areas important to individual owners to get higher priority. Please contact Jim Nance (roads@blackhawkkranch.org) if you are interested in this program.

Trees on Blackhawk Ranch: Ponderosa Pine

By Susanne Bloomfield

My husband and I lived most of our lives on the plains of Nebraska, so we are fascinated by trees, a rarity where we grew up. When a forester assisted us in planning our mitigation strategy, he explained a lot about our beautiful trees, and since then we have learned much more.

Although everyone on Blackhawk can recognize a Ponderosa,

not all may realize that the bark of the tree, not the size, reveals its age. The Ponderosa is fast-growing, often more than 12 inches per year, and it can reach a height of 125 feet when fully mature. The older the tree, the smoother the bark:



yellow to orange-red in very broad plates with black crevices in older trees; coarser, blackish-brown bark in younger ones. Early loggers referred to youngsters as "blackjacks." The oldest Ponderosas can be more than 700 years old; the oldest tree known in Colorado is on Mt. Rosa west of Colorado Springs that is 780 years old. Trees of that age are rare on the Front Range of Colorado due to their use in

construction during the settlement period, for logging during the mining era, especially on Blackhawk, and from human-caused wildfires. Trees between 300 and 500 years old are frequent, and those older than 200 are not uncommon. If you wander through your property and see century-old stumps of trees that would have logged for the mines, many could have been 400 to 500 years old when cut. Many Ponderosas that surround these relics have established themselves during the last 100 years.

The Utes, the earliest residents of Blackhawk, used the inner bark and seeds of the Ponderosa as a food source and as firewood for heating and cooking. In addition, its boughs, pitch, and needles produced medicine, its roots made a blue dye, the needles served as insulation, and the trunks and branches served in the construction of tipis and lodges. Abert squirrels, the ones with the tufted ears, are current Blackhawk residents who also obtain most of their food from Ponderosas. During the winter, they eat the inner bark of the newer, terminal twigs, and in the summer, they prefer the seeds inside the mature pinecones that they scavenge from the ground. Since these squirrels only range over about eighteen acres in the summer and five acres in the winter and can live for seven to eight years, the same squirrels may be your neighbors for many years. They build their nests of pine twigs in the branches of the Ponderosas, and each squirrel may



have more than one nest.

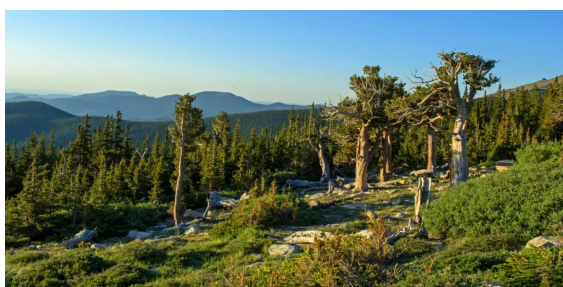


Historically, fire was the primary regulator of forests in the Front Range, and Ponderosas grew in open stands with grasses flourishing beneath them that supported a variety of wildlife; these open stands were kept cleared by

frequent small fires on the average of every 10 to 20 years, larger fires only every 30-60 years. Beginning with the influx of miners and settlers in 1859 during the Gold Rush, fire frequency dropped dramatically, and other tree species that thrived in shade or grew faster began to fill in between the Ponderosas, depriving them of water and nutrients and stunting their growth. That is why some of the smoother-barked Ponderosas may be small but still many years old.

Foresters recommend clearing small trees and brush between the Ponderosas, like Blackhawk is doing in community mitigations and residents are doing individually, to keep the trees healthy, favor the growth of grass and wildflowers, and feed the wildlife. If a blaze does occur, even a natural one caused by lightning, firefighters can attack it more easily and more trees and homes are likely to survive.

For more information, check out these websites: [US Fish and Wildlife Service](#) and [Field Guide to Old Ponderosa Pines in the Colorado Front Range](#).



Meet Your Neighbors

By Rayann Brunner

Ten years ago, Frank and Margaret sold their cabin in Westcliffe, and since then have been looking for a new place



out in a rural area to call their own. With Frank from Chicago and Margaret spending many years in Denver, they have plenty of experience with city living, but they also enjoy living in the country, and that eventually resulted in them becoming part of our Blackhawk Ranch community.

Margaret and Frank met at a brokerage firm where Margaret was working as an Executive Administrative Assistant, and Frank was handling software implementation for the firm. Before retirement, Frank's career was in the software industry, and he has developed multiple

businesses and a non-profit organization using his skills. The two have been married for 33 years, and they have two sons living in Denver. Prior to moving to BHR, Frank and Margaret were living in Castle Rock. Over the years, they watched Castle Rock grow and change, and after retirement they wanted a different lifestyle.

They knew from their time living in Westcliffe that they liked Spanish Peaks Country, and when the opportunity presented itself to purchase the home on Lot #62 of BHR, they jumped on it (with some hesitations). Their home was in a bit of a distressed state, and they were aware there were many unknowns that they would be facing as they undertook a significant renovation project. However, they loved the area, so they decided to take a chance. Now, looking back over the 8 months they have been on the Ranch, they are so glad they took the risk, and they are loving their home, property, and the BHR Community.

When they are not tackling home renovation projects through YouTube tutorials, they enjoy hiking and have done many 14ers together. Now they enjoy walking and hiking on their property and the roads around the Ranch. They also enjoy skiing, and Margaret enjoys making greeting cards. Margaret and Frank are truly delighted to be part of our community, which they have shown through their willingness to open their home for a fantastic Yule Party (Frank makes a mean green chili!), and on February 21, Margaret will be hosting the BHR Book Club with Frank hosting Beer Club. They appreciate how everyone at the ranch looks out for each other and people do not hesitate to jump in and help out their neighbors whenever necessary.

Welcome to BHR, Margaret and Frank!