



Blackhawk Ranch Newsletter

FIRE MITIGATION NEWS

The dates have been set for the 2016 Community Fire Mitigations. They will be held on the first Saturday of every month beginning at 8:30 from May through October. An Appreciation Supper will be held the evening of October 1 for all of those who have participated.

Not only will property owners be helping make Blackhawk a safer place, but each hour a volunteer works counts as \$23 toward our matching funds for the grants we have received.



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SEASONS GREETINGS!

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Feedback as well as suggestions
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Ranch Road Report

Those who have visited the Ranch lately will have noticed that a lot of road work has been done. Most obvious is the 1.3 miles of "Rotomill" road base that was applied from the beginning of Lower Mines Road to Spanish Peaks Drive. According to Rick Brandenburg, Blackhawk Ranch board member and chair of the Road Committee, the cost of that section was \$24,800.

A road base called "3/4 Minus" was applied for .8 miles, including .5 miles on North Mountain Drive from Rugby Mines Road to the driveway of lot #83. Another .3 miles of the road base was applied to Bear Paw Trail,

beginning at Four Mile Canyon Road up to the driveway of lot #108. These two portions cost \$19,455.72.

In addition, Brandenburg reported that most of the roads were graded with emphasis on cleaning, improving, or adding bar ditches to facilitate better drainage. He stated that he instructed the road grader operator to NOT grade roads which appeared to not need any work or roads where there was no road base. "These latter instances would have done more damage than good." The cost of grading totaled \$6,710.

The total for all of the road improvements this summer came to \$50,965.72.

Gold in the Rocky Mountains

Stories of gold in the mountains near Blackhawk Ranch abound, and one group, [Gold Prospectors of Colorado](#), has collected many of these legends. One tale describes Spaniards transporting 12 chests of gold coins from Santa Fe in the 1700s who were either lost in winter or attacked by Indians near the Purgatory River. A skeleton, a suit of armor, and an old gun were found in a cave near Trinidad—but no gold has yet been found. Another story tells about two barrels of coins lost on the Gomez Ranch in the Sangre de Cristo mountains that have never been recovered.

The most intriguing story is the *Caverna del Oro*, or the Cave of Gold, located on Marble Mountain near Music Pass a few miles from Westcliff. Supposedly, three Spanish monks from the Coronado expedition forced local Native Americans to mine gold from the cave. The Natives rebelled, killing two of the monks, but the third monk was able to persuade them to extract "vast" amounts of gold. After killing the Natives, he and his followers fled to Mexico. One hundred years ago, Elisha Horn found a skeleton in armor with an arrow in his back near the entrance to the cave where a faded red cross can still be seen today. Many people have since explored the cave where several artifacts have been found, but still no gold.

However, real gold does exist in our area, according to the Colorado Geological Survey, a part of the Colorado School of Mines. A 1947 report states that there was "a small amount of placer gold production from Wahatoya Creek and small tributaries to the Apishapa River. The source of the gold has not been identified." In a 1986 survey for the [U.S. Bureau of Mines](#), Donald Scott explored the area near Blanca Peak and reported that "the area contains a system of several large veins called the Courthouse Vein System" where 40 ounces of gold was said to have been removed from the system, supposedly only a fraction of the actual amount.

Is there gold on Blackhawk Ranch? Although there are many coal mines, we do have our own golden treasures. The most abundant are those from the aster family, the Common Sunflower, the Maximilian Sunflower, and the Rubber Rabbitbrush. That is treasure enough for most of us!

"The earth laughs in flowers." Ralph Waldo Emerson



POULTRY RAISING ON BLACKHAWK RANCH

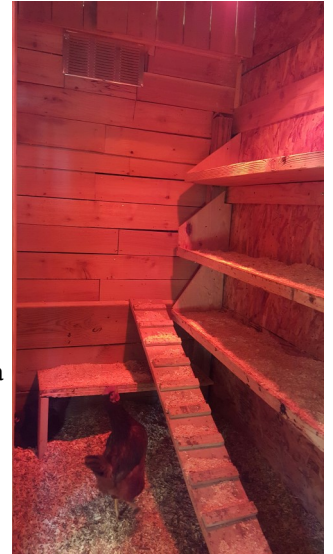
The MCPHEARSONS (Lots # 171 & 172)



When Rebecca and Jim McPhearson decided to begin a flock here, they started out with some Buff Orphingtons and some Rhode Island Reds, very productive and docile hens. They constructed an 8X12 chain-link dog kennel with coop and roof. Unfortunately, it wasn't strong enough to handle a bear and her two cubs that fell in and destroyed the hens. When finally over that trauma, Jim built a really strong, double roof with lumber and opaque poly panels, and a triple fence system including the original kennel. He enlarged the entire coop into a fenced and roofed yard, and they purchased 3 Mottled Cochins Bantams, hatching 4 more hens. Soon, they added 2 extremely hardy Wyandottes. When the Bantams started getting older, they bought 7 more hens (3 Wehlsummers, 2 Aracaunas, and 2 New Hampshire Reds) and put them in another fenced and roofed yard with coop. The next spring, they purchased 6 Red chicks, adding another coop and yard. "However," explained

Rebecca, "one of the chicks, supposed to be all hens, went from Caitlyn to Bruce. Now we have a chorus of 4 roosters crowing every morning."

The coops and waterers are heated, and in summer, all yards have fans and sometimes misters to keep the chickens cool. The chickens can roam around their yards, without worry about snow or rain or too much sun. All get fresh spinach, fruits, and veggies, mostly home grown. The McPhearsons have eggs all year around. The entire system is surrounded by a dog yard for protection. "No more bears!" hopes Rebecca.



The HINZMANS (Lots # 66 & 72)



After carefully researching the art of raising chickens, Mike and Heide Hinzman opted to select rare breed heritage chickens with many listed as endangered in an attempt to "help our planet maintain biodiversity among our farm animals." They stated that commercial breeders only raise a few select breeds for profitability reasons. However, the breeds that the Hinzmans have chosen have been around, in some cases, for hundreds of years. They selected cold hardy breeds that are dual purpose, large enough to use for meat, but their original use was for egg laying. "Our Silver Spangled Hamburgs were known in 19th century England as the 'egg-a-day

chicken," stated Heide. "We've had a lot of fun, and some heartache with our chickens, and it has truly been a learning experience. All of a sudden, all those old adages such as 'pecking order,' 'coming home to roost,' and 'hen pecked' take on a whole new meaning. The joy of raising chickens comes listening to the contented cooing of our chickens as they enjoy the sunshine and catch bugs, and we would now be lost without the wonderful crowing of our rooster, Black Jack."

