



Summer 2017

Blackhawk Ranch Newsletter

2017-2018

Blackhawk Ranch POA Officers

Ken Diehl

President, Emergency Management

Ray Butters

Vice President, Compliance

Lori Diehl

Treasurer

Frank Stump

Roads Committee

Cissy Severance

Secretary (non-board member)

Clay Pasternak

Weeds Committee (non-board member)

Art Jackson

Communications (non-board member)

2017 Annual Meeting Highlights

The Blackhawk Ranch Property Owners Annual Meeting was held at the Walsenburg Community Center on July 8th. There were 51 parcels represented by owner attendance and 35 parcels represented by proxy, with 69 owners present plus several guests. Tony Arnold was guest speaker. He works for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a branch of the USDA in Walsenburg, and spoke to owners about conservation plans that can be developed for private property including fire mitigation efforts through his office. To find out more go to: www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted

The Board recognized retiring board members: Rick Brandenburg two years as Road Chair, and Lee Kimball four years as Secretary and two years as Emergency Management Co-Chair. The Board welcomed 10 new parcel owners to the POA since our last meeting in July. Frank Stump Parcel 12 and Ray Butters Parcel 48 were elected to the Board of Directors. They join Lori and Ken Diehl, current Board members. Blackhawk Ranch currently has 32 full-time resident households and 18 part-time resident households. Robert and Tara Burke Parcel 99, and Cody and Ayla Julian Parcel 129 are presently having their homes built. The dues increase ballot issue was not passed because 50% plus one of the entire membership (93) is needed to increase the dues, as pursuant to our covenants. There were 39 votes for and 35 votes against the issue, with 12 abstentions. After the meeting was adjourned, the group enjoyed a potluck lunch. Nancy Pasternak, Past President

Broadband Service

The Huerfano County Commissioners are working with consultants to bring broadband service to underserved areas of the county. Specifically mentioned are Cuchara, La Veta, Majors Ranch, Silver Spurs Ranch, and Blackhawk Ranch. The commissioners are working on a survey, writing grant applications, and meeting with potential providers. Huerfano County Administrator, John Galusha, stated that they have contracted with a consultant to perform a needs assessment and begin preliminary engineering. They are exploring two options. One would be fiber optics via Secom and utilizing the existing San Isabel power poles. A second option would be to construct cell towers that providers would utilize. Cell towers are the most expensive option, however. The commissioners will be submitting a grant by December 1 that would fund 50% of the cost of the new service. Galusha also mentioned that USDA funds might also be available to offset the costs. They are hoping that the new service will be in place by August 2018.



(photo by Don Savage)

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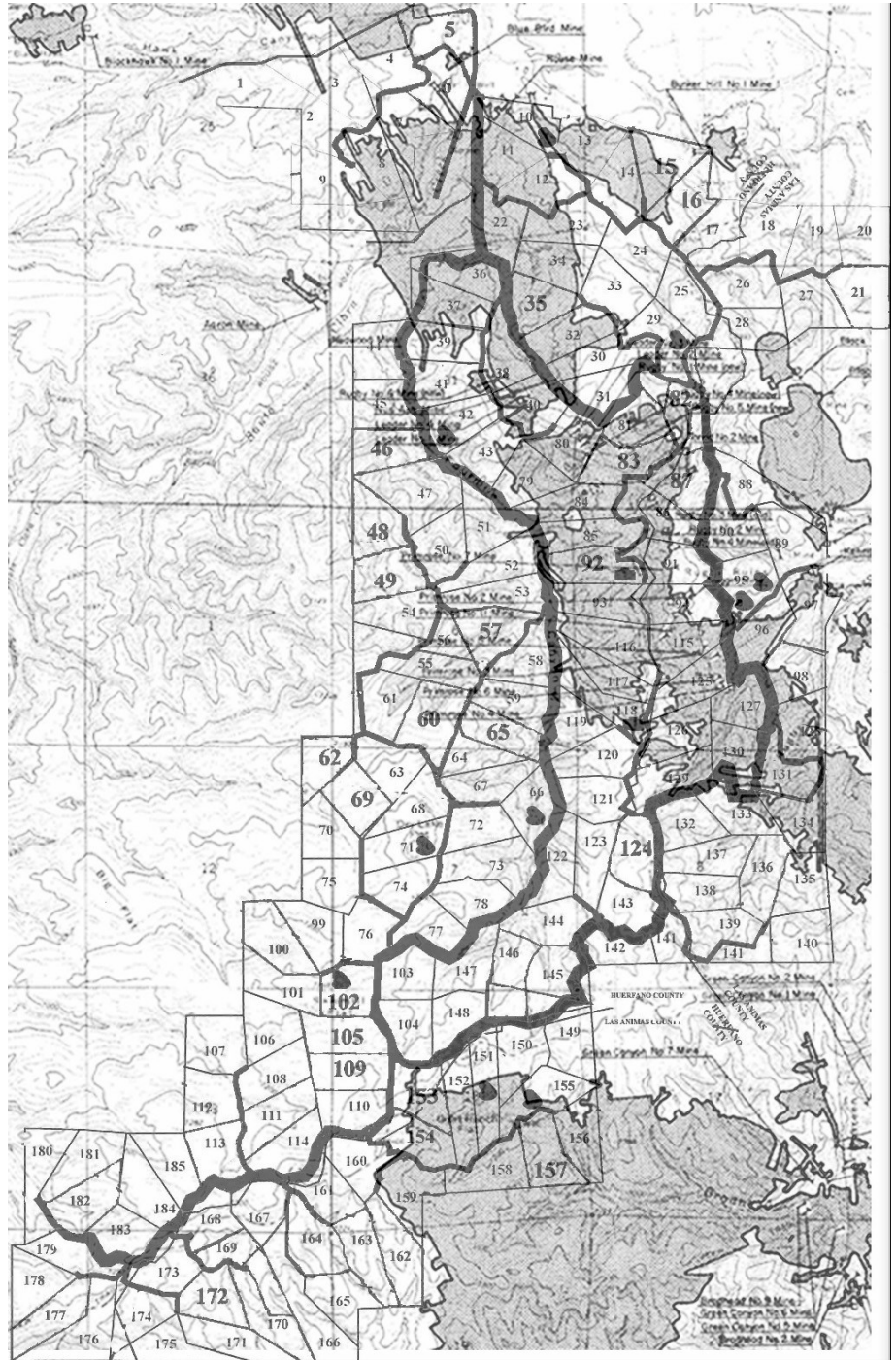
Mining History on Blackhawk Ranch

Although the Utes were the original inhabitants of Blackhawk Ranch, more recent residents were associated with the mining industry, whose impact can be seen throughout the ranch, either in abandoned structures, mine tailings, or occasional sealed or imploded mine entrances. Throughout the ranch, deteriorating tree stumps attest to the amount of lumber necessary to fortify the many mine tunnels.

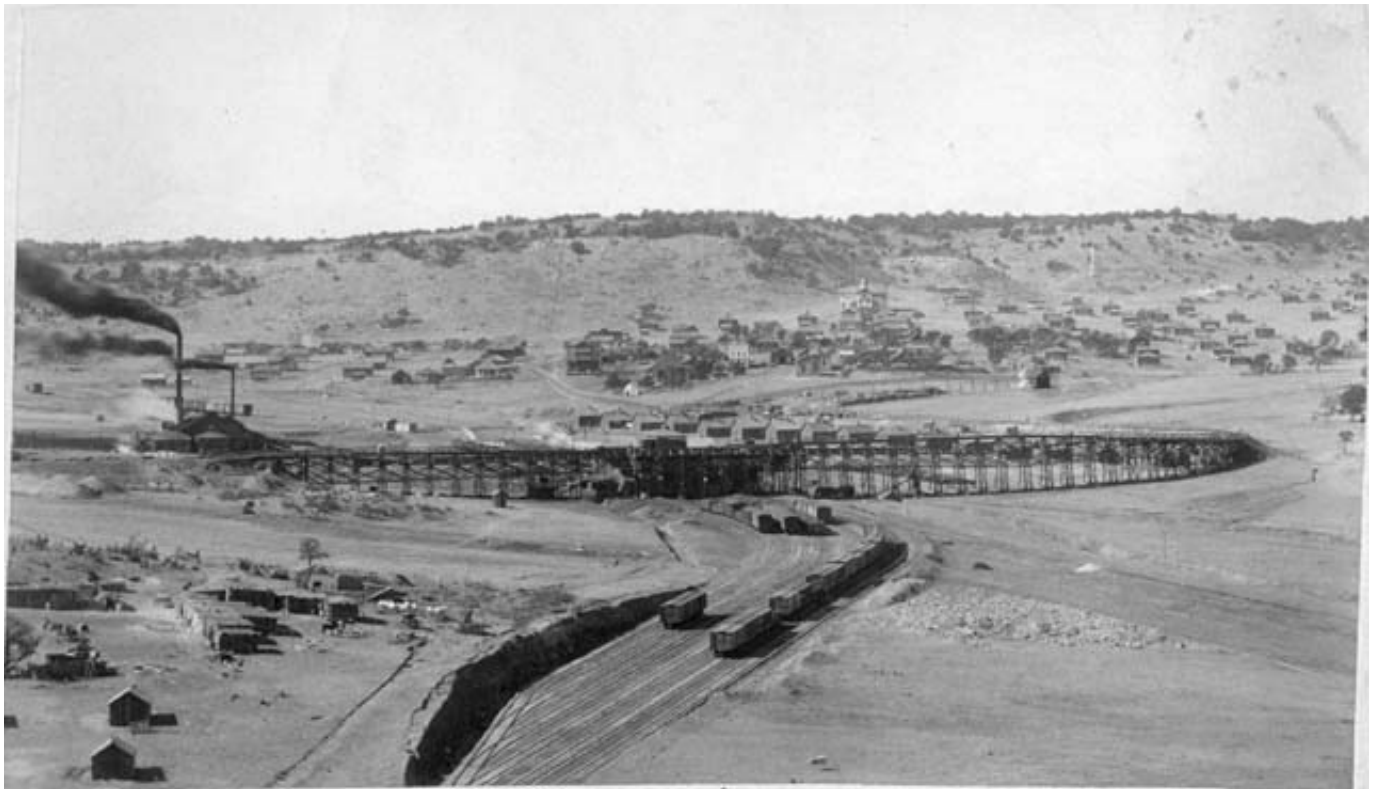
The first and most obvious remnants of this once vibrant culture are the remaining foundations of the buildings near the entrance to the ranch that was once the town of Rouse, actually New Rouse, controlled by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company owned by J.D. Rockefeller and Jay Gould. It began operations in 1899 and closed in 1920 after producing 2,095,239 tons of coal. Nearby settlements to the east included Pryor and Lester, as well as Rugby, located to the south in Las Animas county.

This map of the various mines located on Blackhawk Ranch is overlaid with the lot numbers as well as the routes of Four-Line Canyon and Lower Mine/ Rugby Mines roads. Unfortunately, the names of the individual mines are illegible on this map, but the areas that they cover are shaded in grey. In *When Coal was King: Huerfano County's Mining History*, Nancy Christofferson has a general map of the mines operating in Huerfano County near the ranch: Pryor, Midway, Lester, Blue Blaze, Blackhawk, Spring Canyon, Bluebird, Rouse, Aaron, Redwood, Romera, Nun Ash, Leader, Rugby, Primrose, and Bunker Hill.

When Land Properties Inc. developers originally subdivided Filing #3 of the 10 filings on Blackhawk Ranch, Pioneer Engineering evaluated the residual effects of the underground coal mining using historic maps and mine data to compile the "Report Concerning the Affects of Abandoned Underground Coal Mining in the Blackhawk Ranch Filing #3" in November 1996.



In their report, Pioneer Engineering explained that “The mining method used at the mines was designed to maximize the amount of extraction and to deliberately induce caving or subsidence” shortly after the coal was mined. “The resulting subsidence is marked by a gentle rolling of the land surface. The thinner the coal seam, the less effect it would have on the surface.” They concluded that “Mine subsidence probably occurred under the subdivision, even though there is very little visual evidence that it has taken place. The time of the maximum influence or significant disturbance was probably from 48-98 years ago based on the recorded dates of operation of the mines. There may be some small residual effects present in the area, and these can be compensated by a low-cost design of strengthened foundations, non-rigid home construction, and orientation of construction along the directions of the potential minor stresses, or avoiding the undermined regions altogether. The area of most concern would be around the fringes of the historic mining.”



Three major mines operated in this one particular section of Blackhawk Ranch. Black Diamond Mines, below parcels 26 and 27, operated from 1901-1922 and produced 438,700 tons of coal in seams 3' thick. The deepest shafts were 200'. The New Rouse mine (pictured above) beneath parcels 23 and 29-41 had 4'7" seams and was 2,000 feet at the deepest part. It produced more than 3,400,000 tons of coal between 1905-1920 and 1936-1948. The Rugby mines produced over 1,275,000 tons of coal with seams of 3'- 4' at a depth of about 250' during the years of 1898-1924, 1935-1936, and 1945-1954. Although Parcel 34 is the only lot included in this report for Filing #3, nearby lots in Las Animas county would also have seen mining activity from the Rugby mine.

This article is the first of a series that will focus on various aspects of the mining history of our area. In addition, many resources are available for residents if they wish to learn more about the mining activity on Blackhawk Ranch. Two historical references specific to coal mining here are *Coal Was King: Huerfano County's Mining History* by Nancy Christofferson and *Coal People: Life in Southern Colorado's Company Towns, 1890-1930* by Rick J. Clyne. In addition several historical centers have a wealth of information as well as archives available to the public: [Huerfano Heritage Center](#) and the [Walsenburg Mining Museum](#) in Walsenburg; the [Steelworks Center of the West](#) in Pueblo; and the [Apishapa Valley Heritage Center](#) in Aguilar. Other sources of information can be obtained from the [Huerfano County Clerk](#) and the [Land Use Office](#) in Walsenburg and the [Las Animas County Clerk](#) in Trinidad. (Ed. Note: I am still researching the locations for mine shaft maps of the various mines on Blackhawk as well as other subdivision filing reports concerning abandoned coal mines. The Steelworks Museum only has the map for the Rouse mine.)

Wildfires and Roof Vulnerability

One of the advantages of Blackhawk Ranch belonging to the Firewise USA community is the access to materials for homeowners on fire protection. [Firebreak](#) is the association's monthly newsletter. (Click on the above link to subscribe.)

The July 2017 edition offers a fact sheet containing the steps homeowners can take to reduce their roof's vulnerability to a wildfire's damaging heat, embers, and flames.

Class A roof coverings are preferable and include asphalt fiberglass compositions, concrete, and flat/barrel shaped tiles. Some materials, such as aluminum, recycled plastic, rubber, and fire-retardant shake shingles must have additional sheathing to obtain an A rating. Check out the article for more details.



Six steps can be taken to reduce vulnerability to wildfire.

1. Choose Class A fire rated roofing materials.
2. Remove debris from roof and gutters at least twice a year.
3. Remove overhanging tree branches.
4. Periodically inspect exposed areas under eaves and soffits.
5. Cover vents with 1/8" noncombustible, metal mesh screens.
6. Inspect your roof regularly and replace when necessary.

Change of Address

Whether you have recently moved or have gotten one of the new mailboxes on County Road 312, don't forget to notify the Board of your address change. You can email Cissy at cissy@scw-inc.net or fill out a form on

<http://bhrpoa.com/information.php> — scroll down to find the form (user name = bhr password = bearhaven),

And don't forget to notify the County Assessor of your new address

http://www.huerfano.us/Assessor_s_Office.html

Huerfano County Assessor
401 Main Street # 205
Walsenburg CO 81089
Phone: (719) 738-1191
Fax: (719) 738-1191 (Call First)
assessor@huerfano.us

<http://qpublic.net/co/lasanimas/>

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200 E First Street # 203
Trinidad CO 81082-3003
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