



BLACKHAWK NEWSLETTER

Important Links:

- [Blackhawk Website](#)
- [Blackhawk Facebook](#)
- [Covenants](#)
- [Driveway and Building Compliance Forms](#)
- [Contact Information](#)
- [January 18, 2020 Minutes/Financials](#)

Board of Directors Update

The Blackhawk Board of Directors held a meeting on January 18, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. at the Aguilar Community Center. The full Minutes of the January meeting and the Financials can be accessed on the BHR website through the link on the left.

Nicole Rinehardt, owner and president of Property Management, Inc. (PMI) attended the board meeting to discuss the various problems we have had since she took over the business. Vendors were not being paid in a timely manner, telephone calls and emails were not being answered, additions and revisions to the website were not being addressed, the monthly financials were not being forwarded to the treasurer, and the owner directory had not been updated nor realtors contacted. Nicole reassured the board that all of the problems would be addressed. The board has been researching and will follow up on other property management options in case the problems continue.

An ad hoc Gate Committee was formed. Jim Nance and Susanne Bloomfield will be co-chairs with John and Claire Baur, Roger Buttignol, Clay Pasternak, Mike Ferrero, Paul Kenney, and Brad Brooks as members. The group will come up with three different gate designs and the approximate cost of each. The proposals will be presented at the 2020 Annual Meeting where members will vote on their preferred front gate design.

A Note from the Treasurer

by Art Jackson

The BHR POA Board of Directors passed a balanced budget for 2020. In short, this means the board will only spend what is taken in from dues except for special circumstances, such as unforeseen emergencies or things like set asides for fire mitigation. As in previous years, the majority of the budget is allocated to road improvements, maintenance, and snow removal. But the budget also allows for critical needs, such as emergency preparedness.

The POA Board of Directors has made some improvements to the way we manage and track expenses monthly throughout the year. These changes will allow the board to better track how we are spending your dues against the plan during the year and ensure accountability to the approved budget. This will help the board prevent overspending as the year progresses.

The 2020 budget is posted on the website: <https://www.blackhawkkranch.org/new-minutes>

Things You Need To Know

The policy of the Roads Committee and the BHR Policies & Procedures concerning snow plowing is to remove snow when it reaches 4 inches across BHR.

If any owners have been plowing their own spurs in the past, especially when the snow is 4 inches or more, or if you only plow a portion of it, please contact the road chair if for some reason you don't intend to plow in a snow event so that your spur will not be overlooked.

(Text or call 308-991-8264 or email gtbloomfield@gmail.com)

Blackhawk Social Events

All residents of Blackhawk Ranch are cordially invited to meet and socialize at two regular community gatherings. Come once, twice, or often!

Blackhawk Book Club



Once a month, usually on a Friday, women of Blackhawk Ranch meet, enjoy refreshments, and discuss a book chosen the previous month. Some of the books we have read include *Have You Seen Luis Velez?*, *The Testaments*, *Where the Crawdads Sing*, *The Island of Sea Women*, and *Crazy Rich Asians*. Meanwhile,

the gentlemen socialize in an adjacent venue. Contact Gina Buttignol (inmang12@gmail.com) for information.

First Friday Friendship Circle

This gathering is for women to share news and laughs, inspire each other, and offer support when needed. Contact Judy Nance (JudyNance1@yahoo.com or call /text 559.917.3620).



BHR Receives Colorado Forest Service Grant

By Susanne Bloomfield

Brad Brooks, Emergency Management chair, announced that Blackhawk Ranch has received a Colorado State Forest Service matching funds grant of \$49,000 in the Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation Program for the treatment of 35 acres for a Shaded Fuel Break/Fuel Reduction plan. Much of the “matching funds” will come in volunteer hours from the national veterans group, Team Rubicon, and BHR owners on Community Mitigation Days. The project deadline is June 1, 2023.



The Wapiti Drive escape route and fuel break will include the cutting and removal of all dead trees, the thinning of predominate Ponderosa Pines to a 10 foot spacing to create an open canopy, the removal of Pinon and Juniper growing beneath the Ponderosa, and thinning to a 10-foot spacing between remaining Pinon and Juniper. Trees over 30' will be pruned up 8' off the ground, and trees under 30' will be pruned at least 3' above the ground to reduce ladder fuels. Fuel wood will be removed, slash chipped with the Blackhawk POA chipper by EMC volunteers, and the understory of Gambel Oak masticated. The mitigation area will extend 50' on either side of the road. (The photos above are before and after scenes of owner-completed mitigation on Wapiti. Some of the area is deeper than 50'.)

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Phase 1 will begin April–May 2020 with mechanical mastication of the proposed project area on grades that will allow the safe operation of masticating equipment. Phase 2 (June–September 2020) will include work by Team Rubicon, who will deploy up to 5 two-man sawyer teams and 5 additional workers to begin handwork on the steeper slopes of the project treatment area. BHR volunteers will operate the chipper to chip the slash generated by TR activity and cut/stack fuel wood generated to be donated to a local charity. During Phase 3 (September 2020 to September 2021), BHR volunteers will continue mitigation on Wapiti from Timber Drive to 4-Mile Canyon Road.

EMC members will soon begin contacting owners whose property aligns Wapiti Drive to explain the process, answer questions, and obtain permission to extend the mitigated area on their properties 50' from the road. Not only will decrease the fire danger for the individual properties and improve its forest health, but it will also serve as a crucial fire break for the entire community.

Wildland Fire

By Brad Brooks

In 2020, Blackhawk Ranch will be in a multi-year collaboration with both the Colorado State Forest Service and the Huerfano County Wildland Fire Liaison to take steps to reduce the potential for disastrous wildland fire.

In 2009, Congress passed the Federal Land Assistance, Management, and Enhancement Act, which directs the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior to develop a national cohesive wildland fire management strategy to comprehensively address wildland fires across all lands in the United States. This plan was necessary because in reality, **wildland fires are a natural disturbance**.

1. **Wildland Fire occurrence is inevitable**. Human activities and lightning have been the principal ignition sources of wildfires for millennia.

2. **There is ecologically appropriate fire occurrence**. During the changing climate since the end of the Ice Age, fires were a principal factor in the development of most North American ecosystems. Fire occurrence changed with European discovery and settlement.

3. Since that time, **wildland fires have been greatly reduced and have changed** in their nature and extent:

Estimated US historical range (last 200+ years) of annual wildland fires was 44 to 106 million acres burned per year.

Total US average annual area burned during wildland fires and prescribed burns (2005-2015) 9.6 million acres / year.

4. Consequences of **reduced fire has caused significant changes** in fuel continuity (increased), fuel density (increased), and composition (significant changes in species hierarchy) of most forest, shrub, and grassland ecosystems.

5. Ecologically significant **wildland fires now largely occur during extreme conditions**. Historically, wildland fires freely burned during ALL CONDITIONS that supported fire spread. Because most conditions were (and are) not extreme, historical fires mostly spread during less than extreme conditions. In fire disturbed ecosystems, landscape patterns were more varied (patchy), and vegetation was FIRE ADAPTED.

Today, reduced fire occurrence and decades of fire suppression have largely eliminated wildland fires during all but extreme conditions (2% of wildfires). This has led to the WILDLAND FIRE PARADOX – our wildland fire exclusion policy has increased the potential for EXTENSIVE WILDFIRES during extreme conditions – these are the wildland fires when Wildland Urban Interface disasters occur.

Blackhawk Ranch community is committed to the safety of our community and to the restoration of healthy forests.

A Moment in Time

By Nancy Pasternak

Huerfano and Las Animas counties are commonly known as “Spanish Peaks Country,” and the history of this area dates back for centuries. Taos Pueblo in New Mexico was a major trading center for over 1,000 years, and the native people headed north, crossing into Colorado’s San Luis Valley and over the San de Cristos into what we now call Spanish Peaks Country. Back then it was the Utes, Navajos, Apaches, and Comanches who travelled through our area. They believed the Spanish Peaks were sacred and was where mankind first emerged from the womb of the earth into their vision of the Garden of Eden. They named the peaks “Wahatoya,” meaning “Breasts of the Earth.”

Spanish and French trappers from Santa Fe were the first recorded Europeans to explore Spanish Peaks country in July of 1706, and they founded a settlement along the Huerfano River called Badito. Badito was the main center of business and commerce as well as the county seat for many years before Walsenburg became the new county seat.



Zebulon Pike led an expedition in 1806 to 1807 to map the lower half of the Louisiana Purchase. By that time, more than 1,400 Europeans had already passed through Spanish Peaks country. At the beginning of the Colorado Territory days, the area was much larger, stretching from the Arkansas River south to New Mexico and from the Kansas border west to the mountains. The Santa Fe Trail was established in 1821 from Missouri to New Mexico, and the Spanish Peaks have been among the most important landmarks and guideposts to travelers of the southwestern United States. Explorers, lawmen, gunslingers, and mountain men with the names of Kit Carson, Black Jack Ketchum, Wild Bill Hickock, John C. Fremont, Zane Gray, William Bent, Zebulon Pike, John Gunnison, and Bat Masterson frequently traveled the area. Around 1876, a gold boom occurred in these mountains with as many as 60 new shafts. Another burst of activity happened around 1900, and these mines were worked sporadically until the 1940s. La Veta was founded in 1876 and Walsenburg in 1873.

Today people hike to the summit of both peaks for panoramic views, picnic in the surrounding San Isabel Forest, hunt for wildflowers in spring time, and photograph flowers, wildlife and bursts of gold in Autumn as aspen turn colorful in October. These old landmarks are practically in our backyard, so get out there and enjoy the great outdoors!

Day Tripping

By Judy Nance

During our house-hunting expedition in January of 2018, we stayed in Cañon City to see the area and the housing options. While there, we fell in love with this little town, its people, and its entertainment. From Blackhawk Ranch, Cañon City is approximately a two-hour drive north to Pueblo and then west on Hwy 50.



The first stop on our agenda was the Royal Gorge Train trip through the Gorge and a lovely lunch on board that we shared with a couple from Denver. The trip lasts about two hours, and prices for adults range from \$45, including an entree, to \$179 if you want to ride with the engineer. They even have special events such as a Valentine Train, a Murder Mystery Train, and an Oktoberfest Train.

After we disembarked, we headed over to the Helicopter that was down the road from the train station. These tours begin at \$54 a person and go to \$399 each for a flight over Pikes Peak. The pilot was very experienced, friendly, and informative. It was a smooth take off, flight, and landing. Our pilot also worked as an excellent tour guide for the area while in the air. The views of the Gorge and surrounding areas were impressive.



That evening, we dined at Bunkhouse Burgers located on the frontage road off the main highway through Cañon City. They are setting a new standard for unbelievably delicious burgers in the area. The restaurant uses all-natural, grass-fed beef sourced from their very own family-owned ranch that’s been thriving for four generations. The result is a burger that’s juicy, tender, and unforgettable, and you can choose from three different buns, unique and classic sauces, and sides like their made-to-order potato chips, plank fries, or onion strings.

Should you wish to spend the night or recommend it to friends, we stayed at Andrew & Christina’s Air Bnb right off the main road into Cañon City. It was a lovely apartment above a young couple’s garage. The owner built it himself, and it was meticulous and sparkling clean.

Enjoy Southern Colorado during winter, there is so much to see and do so close to home. All of these entertainment options have special websites that explain in more detail all that they offer.