

Red Creek Ranch-Newton News

☺ What's New in Our Neck of the Woods for Summer 2007 ☺

*** NOTICE ***

2007 Annual Meeting, Saturday Aug. 18th, 10am
Join us at John & Barbara Peters' Barn, 7571 Vanessa Dr.
Elections for a New Board will be held. VOLUNTEERS & NOMINEES Needed!

Newest News

This newsletter has a new editor! I'm Soraya Bourassa and I've been wondering why we've only had a few newsletters over the past couple of years. Well, I found out it's because there hasn't been an official newsletter editor for some time now. In the meantime it's been the President of the Association that's put a few newsletters out, which amazed me. Like he isn't busy enough already!

So, I figured that since I'd like to know what's going on in our community and that there ought to be a newsletter, and no one seems to be willing to produce one... Well, then, I'll volunteer to do it. I've been involved in a variety of volunteer clubs and have always found it to be fun and rewarding. Of course, like most of you, I have a pretty crazy-busy life but I believe it's important for there to be good communication in our community. Since I feel this is important, I'll make the time for it ☺

My main goal will be to try to keep as positive a note as possible to all the information, I believe that even complaints and criticisms can be presented in some kind of positive manner with suggestions for a good resolution.

I would also like to try to preserve as much of our Association dues for use on road improvements. One way to do this is for us to send this newsletter out via email to as many residents as possible. So if you have an email address and would like to help save on copy and mailing costs of this newsletter, please email me your email address. Your email will *not* be shared and all newsletters will be sent out "blind copy" so no one else will see the whole newsletter email group list. Thanks for helping to save your Association funds!

Anyone have ideas for a better newsletter name? I'd love to hear some suggestions, send them on! Or have any ideas for an interesting "department" to ad, let me know!

Please contact me if you have name/address corrections and with any suggestions or comments for better information sharing! This newsletter will grow into what you help it become ☺

Happy Trails, Soraya Bourassa

Email: RanchNews@gmail.com or Ph: 485-7665

PS - Our website will be updated soon, check it out! www.RedCreekNewton.com

President's Ponderings

By Calvin Smith

JUST MUSIN'

I have acquired some "truisms" during the past 18 months serving as the President of the Red Creek Ranch - Newton Property Owners Association. Most are just personal observations but some are from challenging, experience related contacts and encounters, while a few were just passed on.

First let me say that I'm a "waver" -- not "wishy-washy", mind you, but a real hand waver. I wave at everyone who passes "Smith's Hollow" unless I've got a hold of something I can't let go of, but I've found not everyone is or does. That's OK, but just know I'm trying to be friendly and a good neighbor. In that regard we ended up with a lot of starter wood for fireplaces. Since we didn't get to build our Kiva fireplace anyone who wants some nail-free, paint-free untreated wood can stop by and pick up what they need. We also have several pieces of equipment, like a small generator, that we bought to build the house that I would be more than willing to loan out whenever and where ever there is a need.

NOTE: All of the following observations are mine and do not necessarily reflect the views and/or opinions of the Board:

1) You cannot make everyone happy. What we do for one/some may be considered an infringement or even a transgression by others. Of course that is human nature and to be expected in a free society.

2) What you do to one stretch of the roadways may not work on another section. When you try to correct major problems, for example, Peck Creek crossing, your efforts may not work even with all the input and advice from as many experienced people as you can find. Problem is, few people have actually witnessed the creek flooding. Have a look at the pictures and article in this newsletter.

We continue to look for answers, so, if you have any expertise or ideas, please let me know. We're somewhere between status quo to letting the culverts wash out to trying to put in some type of bridge, maybe like Gabe and Piera Trapani's down-creek. As usual, fiscal restraints are a consideration, but we also have to consider access by the fire department in emergencies.

3) The better the roads the faster they will drive. (An old wife's saying, oops, I don't think that came out the way I intended.) Unfortunately, there seems to be a LOT of truth to that statement. While we have been able to reconstruct the "crown" and create some better drainages, there were still some bad spots especially when these areas are really wet. So the Board approved limited "spot" placement of gravel (the best and most inexpensive we can retrieve) where the road needs some additional base to prevent mudding and/or wash-out. Some of our attempts have resulted in exposed sharp rock and we appreciate those who helped us throw some of the larger pieces off the thoroughfare and those areas will be addressed during the next grading, graveling and smoothing.

4) The Board, at this point, has decided not to build a new gate at the South entry (Bronquist and Red Creek Springs Road). After much discussion and reviewing the agreement when RCR-Newton was established that states we will allow the residents of Roper to utilize the ingress/egress via Bronquist and Newton it did not seem advisable for the continuation of a controlled entry. We pursued different vehicles of limited access but considering all the potential ramifications including a possible glitch in case of an emergency, it was deemed inadvisable. Also, for those who do observe

the traffic it appears it is not the routine traffic (unless they are speeding and thus having to slow down on the curves) that cause the damage to the roads but the heavy/overweight trucks (that are also speeding) that are creating the greatest damage. I personally went out and stopped a cement truck and called the manager of the company who said he would have his drivers slow down. (???)

5) For the first time in ranch history, we have an agreement between one of our property owners, Mr. Todd Hughes, and the Association to allow him to graze his cattle on the ranch. This is a major asset because the Association will finally be deriving the economic benefit from the cows eating your grass. Everyone has a part to play in this endeavor by assigning your grazing rights to the association so the association can enter the grazing lease with Mr. Hughes. A lease for each of you and an explanation of how this works is in this mailing and I urge you to consider it and call me if you have any questions.

The contract between the association and Mr. Hughes is being finalized, AND as it stands Mr. Hughes will continue to grade as necessary and clear the roads during heavy snowfall in exchange for a fair market value for the grazing rights. Naturally, this would give the Association a major benefit in that the Assessment dues will be stretched much further.

6) We find ourselves fighting for the rights of all the POA members in attempting to uphold the Declaration statement that "No property may be split more than one time into no more than two lots." The Board has unanimously voted to go to the courts if necessary to protect this section of the covenants.

In addressing that situation, it was discussed that it's possible not everybody reads the declaration given to them when they buy their property because it is such an unfriendly and unreadable document and that if we had a summary of the covenants posted, nobody could claim they didn't know about them because they would become "public knowledge." You still need to read the declaration, but we will be installing a permanent "Bulletin Board" at the front Hwy 96 post office boxes that would not only have the appropriate Board notices but would be a better place for announcements, lost animals, etc.

7) All my goals for the Association could have never been met in a two year period but we have made some progress. I think one of the most significant accomplishments is, with major help from a former Board member and current Helper Bee, the standardization of "Policies and Procedures" that future Boards can follow bringing more responsibility and consistency to the operations and "business" being conducted.

While it has been an honor to serve it has been MOST challenging. I found it to be a job with much satisfaction when things did work and/or fall into place. It has been very difficult to find willing participants to volunteer their time and expertise to further the Associations mission and purpose. Therefore, I encourage all our fellow residents to become involved and become an integral and vital part in making our community a better place to live and enjoy.

Calvin Smith, President, 2006 & 2007
Email: smith9858@fone.net

Grazing Lease Information

By Soraya Bourassa

When you opened this newsletter you found the Property Owner's Grazing Lease which needs to be signed so that the RCR-Newton Property Owners Association can have proper documentation for leasing our grass land and collecting the grazing fees for the Association. Calvin's letter talks about the needed agreements and there is a cover letter on the other side of the Lease Agreement.

Many of you know that the cows grazing our lands and the funds collected from it have been a big issue over the past number of years. For those of us who are not familiar with this kind of thing, it can all be pretty confusing, it was for me. So I asked if there was a simple explanation of how this grazing thing will work now. Many thanks to Onica Gilmore who helped me understand this process!

There need to be two leases. The Association does not have any grazing rights to lease to someone interested in our grass land; the grazing rights are owned by the property owners. It works this way: we own the grazing rights to our own properties (except Vanessa); we the property owners (lessor) lease those rights to the Association (lessee). The Assn then has grazing rights on a bunch of properties. This is the first of the two leases needed and is the one included with this newsletter.

The Property Owner's Grazing Lease Agreement asks for names of property owners and lot numbers. The \$1.00 per lot is a nominal fee the Assn "pays" the lot owner for the grazing rights. However, that fee remains with the Assn because the property owner "assigns" it to the Assn's general fund in the agreement.

The Assn (lessor) can then lease those rights to someone wanting to graze their cows on the ranch, in this case it's Todd & Co. (lessee). This is the second lease and is the one that is still being finalized. The second lease, the Association Grazing Lease, is where the fee for each cow/calf unit is agreed upon, etc.

As long as the Assn has some of the property owners return the lease agreement it has the rights to lease for grazing. The cows can graze anywhere they are not fenced out. The Assn already has some of these lease agreements from a past request for them, this current request is to have a more complete and current representation from the property owners.

I, for one, am very happy for the grazing fees go to our own association for much needed ongoing road improvements! Here's a *Great Big Thank You* to those who have worked on this issue to help resolve it in such a win-win way ☺ SB

Details, Details...

This newsletter is planned to be a quarterly publication, unless our information flow needs to increase. Here is the basic schedule with deadlines for getting info to me:

- Summer (July-Aug-Sept)..Deadline = Variable due to Annual Meeting date, call/email for date.
- Fall (Oct-Nov-Dec)..... Deadline = Sept 10th (mail out last week of Sept)
- Winter (Jan-Feb-Mar).....Deadline = Jan 5th (mail out middle of Jan)
- Spring (Apr-May-June).... Deadline = Mar 10th (mail out last week of Mar)

These deadlines are basic guidelines, if you have a last minute item, call/email and it might get in ☺

Positive-Twist Feedback

Resident articles of comments/complaints that are presented w/ positive suggestions ☺

PECK'S CREEK vs. BRONQUIST ROAD

By Onica Gilmore & Steve St. Clair, Residents on Bronquist Road

THE STRUGGLE

During the drought, Peck's Creek was dry, lulling us into a false sense of security. Usually, there is barely a trickle of water flowing in the creek, and the two culverts under the road are more than adequate to handle it. However, the creek drains a very large area, and a heavy rain can quickly cause flash flooding. Bronquist Road becomes a dam across the flood plain, and the culverts are completely overwhelmed. The crossing is very dangerous and impassable until the water subsides, and the road is usually damaged - sometimes a little, sometimes a lot.

The picture of the water cresting this past April may look serious, but it was actually a minor flood. Unfortunately, there were three minor floods that week, so the damage was cumulative.

We've owned the property upstream of Bronquist Road since 1994, and we have witnessed many floods. The granddaddy was in 2001 when Peck's Creek rivaled the Arkansas River at over 100 feet wide where it could spread out and 12 feet deep when channeled by high banks. Our property was inundated and permanently scared. The 4-foot wide creek bed which we could previously stroll across is now impassible with 8-foot vertical sides and a 20-foot wide channel carved out. The term "gullywasher" takes on new meaning.

The 2001 flood also closed Red Creek Springs Road until the County could cement in some huge replacement culverts a mile or so west of the Roper entrance. They remain in place but are regularly topped by flood waters that continue to damage the back side of the road. Last summer, Red Creek Springs Road was closed again for over a month when a portion to the east of us was undercut by Soda Creek and had to be completely rebuilt.

We have heard too many times that clogged culverts cause the road damage. Not so. Look at the picture of the April flood. What culverts? The volume, speed and force of the water, including the gravel and rocks it can carry, cause the damage. Our break-away fence across the creek stops branches and the like until the force of the water is great enough to break it. We have watched branches pile up against the culverts, and the water continues to flow through. The water drops its burden of silt and debris as it slows, and the caked branches *can* block the culverts--but only *after* the water has receded and the damage has been done.

THE FIX = ?

How to 'fix' the crossing has been a recurring topic of discussion over the years. The Board's current operational plan is to keep the road as low as possible with a ponding area on the upstream side that slows the water, allowing the culverts extra time to handle their load. This works fine as long as it doesn't rain too much. "Too much" means a gullywasher is going over the road.

Why not just add more culverts, or use bigger ones? Not only is this very expensive, but the Trapanis just downstream from the crossing tried 5 culverts stacked in 2 rows and they washed out twice. They recently hauled in a railroad flat car for a bridge. That's an idea, but they have a narrow, deep channel to work with. Our crossing is much wider and sloping.

If you drive down Red Creek Springs Road to Highway 96 toward Pueblo, there's a piece of a concrete bridge that used to span Soda Creek. The creek runs all the time through there, but the County has elected to keep it a low water crossing, or "ford" as we used to say. This has also been discussed as an option for Peck's Creek. Arguments against a low water crossing: (1) the approach to the creek will be too steep and narrow for longer vehicles, (2) it may be icy in the winter or (3) full of water when it rains. A possibility that may address these concerns is a carefully planned and constructed reinforced concrete pan with a small culvert to handle the normal creek flow.

Remember, even if you never drive over the creek, the Fire Department is located on the other side. Should we build a garage for a fire truck on this side instead of a bridge? In the old days, there were a couple of steel poles and a cable with a basket that apparently got people over the creek. Their horses had to swim.

Of course, anything can be engineered if you have enough money. Estimates run as high as \$100,000.00 for a bridge. That's a big gamble. And what about the old cost-benefit analysis? Do we really need a crossing that is passable 100% of the time? What is a realistic goal? What do you think?

Editors Note: OK, so now we need your input! Send your ideas to the ranch email address: RanchNews@gmail.com Thanks! SB



There were three back-to-back fairly large floods in July of 2006. This is what happened to the road. About half of it is gone. Note the large rocks in the foreground. They used to be part of the road. If you look carefully at the background right, you can see how far up the road the water rose.



This is the third of back-to-back flood this April, 2007. Note that these floods were much smaller than the ones in July of last year.

Note:
These photos, and two more, are in color on the website and show better detail.

Here are some ideas for more “Regular Departments”:

Here’s the part where you get to send in stuff to put in these sections! Send pictures if you have them, they’ll look especially great on the website.

“Blast From The Past”

Reprints from old newsletters, some neat stuff there! Starts next issue.

Camp Fire Tales

Good ol’ local ranch stories from the past & present. Maybe with photos?

Firehouse Friends

Any news about the fire station is welcome here.

Hip Happenings

Firehouse BBQ or Community Garage Sale, RCR Clean Up Days, Resident Events like Street/Neighborhood BBQs or Potlucks, Horse Playdays or Clinics, Dance Parties, Card Parties, etc.

- Is anyone interested in having a *Ranch Garage Sale*? Some interest has been expressed in this. If you are interested, let me know! We could maybe donate part of our proceeds to the Dress Up The Front Gate Fund ☺
- We also need to schedule our *Annual Clean Up Day*, if you think this is important to do this year please contact me to help arrange this!

Ranch Hands

Services offered by residents like backhoe, plumbing, dirt hauling, riding lessons, car or tractor repair, satellite tv installation, animal sitting, whatever!

- *Simple Text Ads*: Limited time pricing; Max. 3 lines, 1st text line Free, each additional line \$2.50. A line is approx. 95 characters & spaces.
- *Business Card Ads*:
Resident rates \$5/quarterly issue or \$15/yr (4 issues).
Non Resident rates \$10/issue or \$35/yr.

These funds will go directly towards producing this newsletter and help stretch our Assn funds ☺

Barn Yard Sales & New Arrivals

Are you selling a goat, horse, cow, car/truck, trailer, too-much-stuff, etc ? List it here for Free!
New Arrivals of anything: baby humans, horses, goats, donkeys, dogs, cats, whatever.
Send pictures!!!

Lost & Found

Lost/Found stray cats, dogs, goats, donkeys, horses, etc. This can be updated on the ranch website anytime so it’ll be current, email me anytime with details/photo.