

**DRAFT-FALLS CREEK RANCH ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
**2023 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**July 8, 2023**

Pursuant to Notice duly provided to the membership, Association President Paulette Church called the Annual Meeting of the Falls Creek Ranch Association (FCRA) to order at 9:07 a.m., July 8, 2023.

President Church announced a quorum was present with a total of 77 lot owners represented at the annual meeting: 53 in person and 24 by proxy. Board members present were President, Paulette Church; Vice President, Mark Smith; Treasurer, Robin Lucie; Secretary, Mary Ann Bryant and At Large, Terry Greiner.

**1. Introductions and Agenda Approval**

President Paulette Church welcomed the residents and thanked them for attending. President Church introduced all the Board Members and noted appreciation to the two Board Members who will be leaving the Board this year: Mary Ann Bryant and Terry Greiner.

The President recognized and welcomed our new Falls Creek residents which include 5 new families (Anderson, Fleming, Hennemann and Baxter, Silveira and Yates). Paulette asked for a moment of remembrance for those members lost during the last year and those struggling with health issues.

President Church summed up the “State of the Ranch” with the following accomplishments:

- A trails work group has been created to organize existing trail maintenance and create some new trails for recreation and safety from roads.
- Log removal to local entities for various local uses
- Beetle mitigation efforts led by member Chris Heine for ponderosa and fir trees. Forty-one lots have been sprayed this spring to help keep our trees healthy.
- Firewood is available to all members by personal gathering or can be delivered for a fee. Contact Paulette Church if you’d like wood delivered. Members are reminded that no firewood should be brought onto the Ranch to help prevent new beetle infestations.
- Two new tables have been added to the lake.
- This was an epic snow year; thanks to Ray Smith and our Road Committee for doing a great job keeping our roads clear and safe.
- The vegetable garden is doing well; the orchard has made irrigation improvements.
- The new dumpsters are helping to keep bears in the forest and away from homes.
- Several staff have received certifications in firewise and mitigation methods and safety.

- Our home values and homeowner insurance availability are excellent due in large part to our firewise mitigation success.
- Several governance policies have been updated for legal compliance.
- President Church thanked all the many volunteers and emphasized how volunteer hours help to get matching grants. Paper bags for pine needles are available from Paulette.
- President Church made a plea for more member volunteers for a variety of needs. Our fire mitigation hours reported are less than usual. We need more volunteers on common property workdays. Other areas in need include trails work, weed control, dam, lake, website, communications, recordkeeping, road and trail sign repair and replacement, and food coordinating committee for ranch events.

President Church asked if any changes needed to be made to the agenda and hearing none, the agenda was unanimously approved as written.

## **2. Approval of Minutes for the 2022 Annual Meeting**

By motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the July 9, 2022, FCRA Annual Meeting, sent with the Notice of this meeting, were unanimously approved.

## **3. Election of New Board Members**

President Church reported that two Board Members will be completing their terms on the Board: Mary Ann Bryant and Terry Greiner. President Church asked if there were any nominees in addition to the three who have been nominated to serve two open three-year terms. There were no additional nominees. The three nominees are Justin Poehnelt, Charlie Simons and James Trammell. Members were provided a written ballot on which they were instructed to vote for two of the nominees. Ballots were collected and tallied by volunteers. Members approved the two new Board members to be Charlie Simons and James Trammell. President Church thanked Justin Poehnelt for being willing to serve on the Board and for his volunteer contributions to our trails team and website support.

## **4. Committee Reports –**

The reports below were distributed to all members via email prior to the Annual Meeting. President Church asked for any questions, comments or suggestions related to any of our committees' work.

- Doug Parmentier noted that summertime is especially susceptible to trespassers, motorcycles, and speeders. He asked members to be especially aware of this concern.
- Tom Jones asked the status of planned improvements for the Ranch entrance to reduce the number of trespassers. Mark Smith provided an update regarding the construction plans for the log entrance, electricity and a median. We are waiting on drawings for foundation and electricity work to be completed. Tom asked that this discussion be moved forward regarding an electronic gate as an option. A future town hall and member vote will likely occur when more design and cost information is obtained.

- Mindy Ager suggested that clear signage be available for the lake when emergency vehicles and/or helicopters are using our lake and entrance area in fire emergencies. Some members have continued to use the lake when helicopters were trying to pull water for a lightning strike fire last year. Member email notices were not enough notice.
- Mary Ann Bryant recognized Eb Redford's two decades of service to the Ranch as our Utility Committee Chair. Eb's level of dedication and attention to managing our water system has been remarkable and is greatly appreciated.
- James Trammell inquired about possible road improvements for Falls Creek Main road. Mark Smith and Joe Scarpino, of our Road Committee, reported they are working on obtaining costs, chip seal paving options and permanent speed bumps. Funding options will also be explored as more information is obtained.
- Dwight Frankfather inquired as to the status of a carving on the juniper snag near the fire station. Paulette reported that quotes she received last year from carvers ranged from \$3,000-\$5,000. This would have to be funded by member donations. There was very little interest from members at that time, so the effort was abandoned. By a show of hands at this meeting, there appeared to be more interest from members now. Paulette will send another inquiry to all members to confirm the level of interest, financial support and design ideas to determine if this moves forward.
- James Grizzard reported that the Emergency Response Team needs more volunteers (8-10). FCR will pay for training. This volunteerism helps to bridge the gap of time until Durango Fire responders arrive on the Ranch (often a 30-45 minute time lag). Contact Jim if you can serve the Ranch in this area. Clyde Church added that a small fire in the Falls Creek canyon a couple of years was contained by member volunteers until the Durango Fire could get on site. We have responder equipment available for volunteers. Please volunteer!

### **Architectural Committee – Mary Ann Bryant, Nancy Peake, Co-Chairs**

The Architectural Committee (ACC) currently has six members: Mary Ann Bryant (Co-chair), Nancy Peake (Co-chair), Ginette Chapman, Erica Harrington, Linda Johnson, and Gale Marinelli.

The ACC reviews all exterior improvement projects of members' homes (renovations or new construction) as required by the FCR Covenants and ACC Rules/Regulations. ACC review and approval is required BEFORE any work may begin. If you're planning any kind of exterior project, please contact the ACC with any questions you may have. We respond quickly so we don't hold up your project.

If you have any contractors at your property for exterior OR interior work, please remind them to respect our speed limits, no smoking on the Ranch except in their vehicle and they are not to use our dumpsters for trash.

We reviewed and processed 11 projects during the last year. Currently, there are 14 open ACC projects on the Ranch. Let us know if we can answer any questions or assist you in any way.

## **Common Property Committee – Phil Boroff, Chair**

### **Forest Management**

In accordance with the FCR-published Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), the CPC teams with the Firewise Committee and others to contract additional forest restoration toward well-spaced trees with an eye on diversity in age and structure to ensure long-term healthy forests, while mitigating fire danger.

The CWPP is almost 12 years old and is in rewrite, but it reflects the founding principles incorporated to guide our efforts. Despite a bountiful winter, continued drought and infestation have been the impetus for greater resource requirements as many more of our trees succumb to the elements, are unhealthy, dying and/or dead. Last year, over 65 acres were treated, and forest density was reduced by almost 1,200 trees.

FCR Member Volunteers also continue to inspect for beetle infestation and fell trees as resources permit. We are careful to take advantage of available manpower and expertise to simultaneously address beetle issues and conduct restoration operations in the same areas whenever possible.

Creating these efficiencies often results in not fully treating a given area at one time; however, careful tracking and documentation keep our efforts in line with the CWPP.

While hiring a professional logging company is ideal, those resources have been difficult to attain. Combined with severe winter weather effects, and few resources to help move the logs off the Ranch in a straight no-cost arrangement we are behind schedule for restoration efforts this year. We continue to explore other means as we progress. With the influx of grant monies and increased value of lumber, we've been able to hire contractors and contribute to local businesses and will need to continue this practice.

To more effectively manage budget and coordination issues, as well as to prevent unnecessary duplication, Common Property and Firewise have merged planning, organization and equipping processes.

### **Weed Mitigation**

Significant moisture increases this winter have resulted in an equally significant weed infestation. The CPC requests all residents to be aware of weed growth on their properties, as well as common property, and mitigate as necessary. When mullein, hounds' tongue and thistle begin to flower, residents are highly encouraged to cut off the flowering parts and dispose of them to prevent weed proliferation. While La Plata County procedures allow for weeds to be placed in closed bags and put into our trash dumpsters, we strongly encourage residents to bag their weeds for air curtain burning.

We've expanded our approach to weed spraying using industrial strength vinegar and manual techniques in conjunction with commercial chemicals. Although this approach is considerably more costly, it adds to the volunteer pool willing to help. We've received additional help from the County Extension to help develop less chemically dependent methods.

### **Clean-up Day(s)**

We've accomplished one cleanup day to date this year and we're planning additional clean up days each third Saturday of the month. Volunteer cooperation fluctuates by up to 50% on any given scheduled workday. It's always impressive to witness the FCR machine in action and amazing to see what we accomplish together.

### Burn Yard

Air Curtain Burner (ACB) operations have transitioned to mainly pine needle bags. Slash is no longer routinely being accepted from residents in the burn yard. Slash will be chipped on common property and individual lots as residents move slash to the roadside. As a reminder, only the designated crew on duty is permitted to put anything into or operate the chipper and ACB. In response to the excessive water accumulations, the burn yard will be closed to work crew-unattended deposits until further notice.

The following common property amenities are other examples of well-led volunteer efforts:

**Entrance Gardens, Community Orchard, Tennis/Pickleball Court and Vegetable Garden**

**Vegetable Garden Report** - Prepared by: Jenny Holmen, Teresa Rushton, Kate Reynolds, and Sara Carver

The FCR Garden is now in its fourth year! Some residents may have questions about what a “community garden” is. While the definition may vary from place to place, the FCR Garden is for the use of paying garden members only. Members pay fees that go toward shared materials (such as soil, water related expenses, etc.), upkeep, and improvements. We each put in a minimum of four hours per month during the season. We work hard, take pride in our accomplishments, share tips and ideas, and certainly learn from our gardening challenges.

Our annual fees also go toward our individual plots (each member gets one or chooses to share one with another member) and a few shared plots. The shared plots are tended and harvested cooperatively by all garden members and produce from these plots are intended for garden members only.

While we welcome residents who are not garden members to check out the garden, we kindly request that they view the area from outside the fence, and only enter the gate when a garden member is present. There are potential hazards, and we work hard to keep things safe and keep our garden healthy. Gates left open can encourage rabbits or deer to adversely affect our production. Water accidentally left on can be disastrous. And, as previously mentioned, garden produce is not for harvest by non-members.

The garden is considered “organic,” as we have chosen not to use agricultural chemicals and fertilizers. Because of this, we rely on wood chips (an abundant renewable resource in these parts!) to minimize weed growth in the least toxic manner. Thankfully, the Common Property Committee is planning on delivering us a plentiful supply this year when time and energy for our hard-working crews allows.

We welcome neighbors to join our garden in the future; however, we are currently at full capacity. If you would like more information or a tour, or if you are interested in joining the garden in the future, please contact the Garden Manager, Sara Carver. If/when plots become available, we contact residents on the waitlist first.

### **Trails Working Group**

The trails working group, led by Ginette Chapman, Mark Smith, Justin Poehnelt, and Clinton Keith, are excited to share some updates for 2023! Earlier in the year, the group presented a trails plan to the board for approval. The top priorities include work to allow residents to connect all of Falls Creek Ranch by trail, to provide routes that avoid roads, and make the trails accessible by all residents.

The snow and runoff this spring slowed some of the work that had been planned, but as of early June you can see some of the route marked for creating a new trail connecting the Garden and Lake trail to the Meadow between Snowshoe and Mason Cabin. This project aims to connect more residents and provide a central artery through Falls Creek Ranch.

For significant trail projects there is a two-step process to gather feedback from residents. First a document is written to detail the trail project and shared with an online feedback form to all residents. After a 30-day waiting period (if the project is proceeding), it will be marked on the ground and nearby lot owners will be given another opportunity to discuss the design. Finally, the trail work can start!

We are excited about the work that is planned and hope to see you at one of our future workdays! Feel free to reach out to the working group by sending an email to [trails-planning@fallscreekranch.org](mailto:trails-planning@fallscreekranch.org).

### **Dam Committee – Scott Southworth, James Glover, Co-Chairs**

It has been a great year for our lake and Dam. As of June 1<sup>st</sup>, the lake is full, Falls Creek is running, and a significant volume of water continues to flow around our spillway. A Great Year.

Our Dam is considered a Class 1/ High Hazard Dam & is regulated and subject to Inspection by the Colorado Department of Water Resources & the Colorado State Engineers office. As required by our 2022 Safety Inspection, this year we updated our Emergency Action Plan & have performed a video inspection of our main water discharge system. Our 2022 Dam Safety Inspection found all systems well maintained, in good operating order & our Dam is authorized to operate at full holding capacity.

When full, our lake covers 42 surface acres and holds about 153 million gallons of water. During the year, our Dam is maintained in good working condition with the help of Ranch Volunteers, Ranch Manager, Ray Smith & Kern Rucker's team. Throughout the summer, we will release water at a rate of .25 CFS or 1.1 million gallons a week as required by water rights/contractual agreements, & this summer we will be able to keep the lake mostly full.

We have a great Dam! Well designed, constructed & maintained. An incredible neighborhood resource.

### **Entrance Committee – Jessie Kileen, Chair**

The front entrance design and construction is moving along slowly. In fall we were able to identify and cut down trees that are designated for each side of the gate (based on last year's

approved design). They are currently being cured on the Ranch. The electrical plan and costs will be finalized this summer, which will green light final costs/construction. Mark Smith will be spearheading construction of the front entrance project.

### **Firewise Committee – Paulette Church, Chair**

This was a successful year for our fire mitigation work. Working with two matching grants, one state and one federal, we were able to continue our four-person summer work crew. We also hired professional sawyers to take down several loads of logs from more difficult terrain with our crew and volunteers pulling out the slash to be chipped. We treated approximately 60 acres of Common Property, and many residents did mitigation work on their own lots.

We supplied wood chips to the Community Orchards, FCR Gardens, and the horse corral area. Approximately 1,000 bags of pine needles were gathered or dropped off and burned in our air curtain burner.

We trimmed up trees and thinned the forest to create a healthier forest that is more resilient to beetles and wildfire. Our chipper and crew have continued to work on slash from Common Property and from individual lots, when it is stacked by the road with the cut end facing the road for easier loading. Small slash is hauled to the air curtain burner.

Phil Boroff began a new training program for our summer team, issuing certificates for each training session they completed. Videos were used for training with hands-on demonstration of skills mastered needed for the certificates. The focus was on safety in the use of equipment and in best practices during mitigation work. Equipment maintenance was included to increase its useful life. FCR also purchased more personal protective clothing and gear for the crew.

Chris Heine conducted a study of when the beetles fly that attack Ponderosas and Fir trees, so we are sure to remove infested trees and logs before they “fly” to protect nearby trees. We began using patches to reject beetles from fir trees, since so many have died this past year. Residents can purchase the patches for trees on their lots and the Ranch is putting them on trees in Common Property.

Kern is spraying Ponderosa trees on individual lots to protect them from the Mountain Pine Beetle. Residents can pay for a full tank (\$475) for 35 trees or a half-tank (\$250) for 17 trees. Contact Chris to sign up.

Volunteer hours increased this year to nearly 3,000, valued at \$31.51 per hour to match grants, so FCR used less cash to do so. Having workdays the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month helped with the increase. The value of the hours worked this year is approximately \$94,500. We also had a great turnout of 57 people at the annual Firewise Preparedness Day educational meeting with presentations from several partnering organizations. Falls Creek Ranch continues to be a model of successful fire mitigation leading to a healthier forest and we provided 4 tours and/or programs for area residents and other HOAs.

Clyde is leading the Rapid Response Fire Team that is geared up to contain and/or report fires in our area, such as those caused by lightning strikes. There are 2 openings on this team so contact him to sign up.

We are concluding one grant this summer but the larger grant of \$164,000 will carry us into next summer. A grant to pay for assistance writing an update to our Community Wildfire Protection Plan was not awarded to Wildfire Adapted Partnership, but they are pursuing other funds and we plan to complete our update this summer or early fall. We are also looking for new grants and funding sources.

Members include: Paulette Church, Phil Boroff, Clyde Church, Doug Parmentier, and Justin Poehnelt with support from many faithful volunteers including Geary Baxter, Sara Carver, Barry and Mary Ann Bryant, Stevo Allen, Mark Smith, Joe Scarpino, and Chris Heine, to name a few. Contact Paulette if you would like to join this crucial and fun committee.

### **Horse Committee – Alix Rowland, Jessie Kileen, Co-Chairs**

There is a lot of activity at the barn this year! We are full and everybody is riding. There are currently two families on the waiting list. Expect to see horses on the roads and trails around the Ranch and in the adjacent national forest. We divided the south pasture in the fall of 2022 and that has been great for rotational grazing. We have also beefed-up security around the barn.

This year we are going to investigate shoring up the hay barn's foundation and roof. We would like to do this as inexpensively as possible so if anyone has ideas, please let us know.

### **Lake Committee – Membership: Bonnie Trammell (summer co-chair), Jenny Holmen (summer co-chair), Mark Smith (winter co-chair), and Jenny Whedon**

#### **Updates/Accomplishments/Plans:**

- **Snowpack/Runoff:** As is obvious, we had a huge winter snowfall. The sediment-containing runoff has discolored the lake but is settling out now that the volume is slowing. Falls Creek is still flowing strongly as of the end of May. The runoff from Dyke Canyon stopped in mid-May. The lake is overfull and running over the spillway. This will continue for as long as Falls Creek continues to run with significant volume.
- **Aerators:** You may have noticed that the aerators have not been running much this spring. They were turned off and tested and found to be working well after being off all winter. However, with the huge snowmelt we are still experiencing, and the associated turbulence and discoloration of the water, we are waiting for the sediment to settle out before starting aeration. There is plenty of oxygen being introduced to the lake through the Falls Creek runoff.
- **Beach Furniture:** We continue to slowly replace the wooden and plastic beach furniture with long-lasting Polywood, which is weather-resistant and maintenance-free. This spring, we purchased two additional Polywood picnic tables for the Shady Beach.
- **Watercraft Storage:** Paddleboard (SUP) storage space has been in high demand the last few years. In summer 2022, we added a new SUP rack on the north side of the Shady Beach. There are now two SUP racks and one kayak rack. To the north of the Shady Beach,

logs are provided for elevated canoe storage. To the south of the Shady Beach, an area is provided for storing rowboats. Paddles can be stored horizontally on the side of the kayak rack.

- **Equipment Shed Bathroom:** Last year, we maintained (provided a bi-weekly cleaning service and kept stocked with supplies) the equipment shed bathroom through the summer season. We are doing the same this season. This bathroom is located across Falls Creek Main from the Shady Beach, on the exterior, northern side of the equipment shed. The bathroom is available to beachgoers.
- **Lake Clean-Up Day:** We've scheduled a Lake Clean-Up day on June 3 (postponed from a previous, rainy date) to tear down an old, wooden picnic table (wood to be used elsewhere on FCR), relocate another wooden picnic table, pull weeds, remove fallen branches and debris, maintain watercraft racks, clean out toy boxes, etc.
- **Sand:** We plan to spread a new load of sand at the beach(es) early this summer; to avoid waste, we are waiting for the lake level to lower a bit before doing so.
- **Muck:** Environmentally friendly, muck-eating microbes will be added to the heavily used water around the swimming areas near the South Raft and beaches. The aim here is to reduce the muck on the bottom (out of which weeds sprout) to limit weed growth. This is done each year and seems to be having a positive effect.
- **Fish:** We plan to release about 500 rainbow trout into the lake as soon as the water stops running over the spillway. Due to the extremely high runoff, the spillway pretty much became a stream- and trout love moving water. As a result, we lost a significant number of fish over the spillway this spring. But, as stated above, they will be replaced soon.
- **4<sup>th</sup> of July Party:** In 2022, the Lake Committee hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual FCR Independence Day party! Brats, hot dogs, and beverages were provided by the Lake Committee, with potluck items brought by attendees. The tug-of-war match was one for the record books! As of the writing of this update, this year's party is planned.

### **Notices/Ways You Can Help:**

- **Watercraft & Storage:**
  - All watercraft stored at the lake must have an FCR tag (sticker). Please contact Jenny Holmen (jennybell@hotmail.com) to get or replace a tag. Watercraft stored without tags could be removed or labeled as an "FCR Shared" watercraft. Last season, repeated attempts were made to identify the owner(s) of un-tagged watercrafts and notify residents of the need for tags to ensure non-residents are not storing watercraft at the lake, and to ensure that watercraft have not been abandoned at the lake by non-residents or previous residents. Despite this, we had several untagged watercraft stored at the lake, some of which were chained to the racks. With limited storage space at the beach, we plan to be more pro-active this season.
  - There are several watercraft marked with "FCR Sharing" stickers; these are for the use of FCR residents and their guests. Private watercraft are not to be used without permission of owners. Please notify your guests of this.
  - When storing/removing SUPs, please be careful; last year, several fins were broken.

- Watercraft storage is plentiful, but only if used wisely. Please consider your neighbors when choosing a storage location for your SUP and/or kayak: If you're tall and strong, or use your watercraft infrequently, please take the top slots! Reserve the low slots for those who could have physical difficulty accessing a watercraft stored high. If your family has multiple SUPs, please try to reduce the amount of storage space you use by storing your family's SUPs in one slot (if possible).
- Vehicles parked at the beach parking areas must have an FCR sticker or a guest tag. Lake users must be current FCR residents, accompanied by an FCR resident, or a houseguest of an FCR resident.
- Please show common courtesy to your neighbors while at the lake. Please share space (including rafts, picnic tables, chairs, etc.).
- If you are planning a large gathering at the lake, please contact the Lake Committee to avoid scheduling conflicts.
- Please note fishing guidelines (posted on the FCR website and on signs at the beach), including limits:
  - Trout: 1 per person per day; catch & release encouraged.
  - Bass: No limit.

### **Road Committee – Mark Smith, Chair**

#### Accomplishments:

- Road rebuild and Mag Chloride application in Spring of 2023: The roads team spread new road base on Main and portions of Oakcrest, Snowshoe, Aspen and Starwood which are the roads which receive the most traffic. These roads also received Mag Chloride. We also added road base to Dyke Canyon and Bear Scat to repair the damage done while installing electrical service for the Visionary project. After the road base was delivered the roads were constantly kept wet using a rented water truck until the scheduled Mag could be applied. A great deal of effort went into this and, anticipating the obvious question, the reason for the delay between road base and Mag was the difficulty, again, in scheduling trucks and materials. We have gotten a good deal of positive feedback regarding the upgrade and repair of the roads. Hopefully this work will last through most of the summer. Speed humps will be reinstalled in late June or early July and seemed to work quite well late year. Once again, the best way to preserve our roads is to keep our speed down to 25 mph on Main.
- Ray did a good job keeping the roads open and plowed through the Winter. The roads got pretty rough at the end of the extended winter season, which was a doozy. We understand there was frustration with the potholes and washboards in April. Thank you for your patience with this situation. Please keep in mind that during the transition from winter to spring, it is extremely difficult to smooth out gravel roads while the material just under the road surface is still frozen. Again, thank you all for your patience.
- The low water crossing north of Oakcrest on Main has been replaced with a concrete box culvert at no cost to the Ranch. This has resolved the drainage problem and reduced the hump in the road that has plagued homeowners at the North end of Main for years.

- The water crossing at Dyke Canyon is being evaluated for the installation of either a culvert or a concrete water crossing this summer. The mesh crossing that was installed by SGM (the engineering company that also put in the box culvert at North Main) did not hold up well during the exceptional runoff this year. SGM is attempting to secure grant funds to fix the Dyke Canyon issue.
- The road committee came in under budget during this fiscal year.

Goals for this coming year:

- The road committee will be researching the cost of chip sealing and adding permanent speed humps to a portion of Main and offering the results of that research to the community for discussion. The annual cost of rebuilding Main and the amount of work necessary to do that is excessive. It is time to look at alternatives to our historic approach.
- Keep our roads open and easily passable during the winter season.

### **Utilities Committee – Eb Redford, Chair**

#### **Utility Team Overview**

- Eb Redford has served as Committee Chair for close to 20 years managing our water system operations, the SCADA system and is the Administrative Contact for the CO State Water Dept. Eb is stepping down as Chair; the Ranch thanks Eb for his many years of dedicated service and leadership for the Ranch.
- Shirley Jones, Jennifer Hardy & Nancy Peake collect monthly water meter readings although Jenny will be leaving us this summer. Thanks Jenny!
- Peter Sangas has joined the Utility team and now preps the meter reader, processes meter readings and billing database.
- Durango based FredrickZink & Associates CPA, processes customer payments.
- NM based CPAs generate and distribute monthly water bills via email.
- Mary Ann & Barry Bryant handle homeowner water usage discussions.
- Barry & Mary Ann Bryant, James Glover, Chris Heine, Hayes Lenhart, Melissa Smar & Karol Wolf have provided input and assistance during the past year.

**Thanks to all the Committee members; great work!**

#### **Ray Smith is the official CO State registered water system operator (ORC; Operator in Responsible Charge)**

- Takes monthly water samples for testing & reporting to the State Water Dept.
- Conducts annual testing for a range of chemicals as specified by the State.
- Is chief operator of the two Disinfectant Systems (Upper & Lower).
- Responsible for system repairs.
- Responsible for installation and repair of new meters at new homes.

#### **System Repairs**

- One Fire hydrant was replaced this fiscal year. We plan to replace one hydrant next fiscal year. This is an ongoing Capital based program to replace aging & problematic hydrants with new models.
- Ray Smith and Eb Redford last conducts flow testing for all 20 hydrants and Eb Redford submits related data to the Durango Fire Protection District at their request.

- Upper & Lower system household leaks. Faulty toilets & running hose bibbs are the main culprit. Call for help if you have high water usage and suspect a leak. We can narrow down the leak location as to whether it is in your house or the service supply line outside from the meter to your house. Falls Creek Ranch is responsible for leaks in the service line from the supply pipeline to the water meter. The homeowner is responsible for leaks between the water meter and the house.

### **Water Disinfectant System**

- There are two Disinfectant Systems on the Ranch. The Upper & Lower Treatment systems have continued operations without problems since the 1 June 2013 startup.
- Backup power generation systems were installed for the Upper & Lower treatment buildings in October 2015. They receive annual inspections and preventative maintenance.
- Each WTF (Water Treatment Facility) building has double check valves and back flow preventers that are checked annually by a contractor certified for that task. The contractor generates certification reports which Ray submits to the State Water Dept.
- CCR (Consumer Confidence Reports) reports detailing water quality are generated annually by Ray. They are distributed each spring to the membership by our billing company included as an attachment to a water bill sent to all lot owners.

### **SCADA (System Control & Data Acquisition) System**

- Water System operations are remotely monitored by Eb daily via the Internet.
- The System controls Well-1, Well-2 and Well 4R. Well-3 is manually operated but feeds the lower WTF (Water Treatment Facilities) System.
- Well-4 Replacement was placed into operation during the current fiscal year.

### **Budgeted Capital Projects 2023-2024 fiscal year (if budget is approved)**

- \$33K to repaint the outside of the Upper and Lower water tanks (deferred from the current fiscal year until tank repairs/maintenance is completed this spring 2023).
- \$6K to replace another aging fire hydrant.
- \$37K to add a mixer to each water tank to prevent winter freezing and tank damage.

### **Distribution System Issues**

#### **Upper & Lower Water Tanks**

- The tanks were installed 1994 (upper) and 1997 (lower) with a 60-year lifespan. They should be re-painted and re-coated every 20 years. Painting is planned for this year.
- Repairs and maintenance identified in 2021 inspection completed spring 2023.

### **Water Supply Task Force – Mary Ann Bryant, Chair**

The Water Supply Task Force (WSTF) began as a subset of the Utility Committee in 2019. Our charge was to investigate additional potential sources of potable water. During the last year, our Well 4 Replacement was put into production and all water quality tests are done and approved by the State. We planned to do some additional rehab work on Well 2 this year to better maintain pump life and minimize down-time for that well; timing depends on our contractor's availability. We are moving forward with a new well to be drilled this Fall (depending on contractor schedule)

as a possible additional domestic water source for the future. That cost is included in the FY 2023-24 budget.

Overall, our water source continues to serve us well as long as the snow falls during the winter, and we manage our usage and infrastructure. As our Ranch gets closer to full build-out, conservation of our water resources remains critical for the future. Our team thanks our residents for their full cooperation.

### **5. Treasurer's Report – Robin Lucie**

As of June 30, the Association's Cash balances were as shown here. We could end the fiscal year fairly close to this as some grant funds are expected this month that will offset some July expense.

Operating Account \$113,368

Capital Reserve \$204,786

Grant Account \$ 30,002

Total \$348,156

Of note during the fiscal year ending 7/31/2023, most Committees ran under budget, with thanks to the Committee Chairs and volunteers. Expenses that ran over budget were Equipment, due to the heavy toll the winter took on road equipment; and the Ranch House, which needed repair work to the attic insulation and roof, for which the cost was split between operating expense and capital. The neighborhood did an incredible job of managing the massive spring runoff without incurring significant expense while minimizing damage to roads, driveways and common property. Huge thanks to all the volunteers.

Capital expenditures during the year are listed in the budget report. Most project costs were within budget. Capital projects must have an expected useful life in excess of 1 year into the future, and generally cost \$5,000 or more. Capital reserves are only used to fund repairs and replacement of existing capital assets. Purchases of new capital items are initially paid for out of operating cash and then added to the list of assets.

Dumpster fees are an expense that seems to continue to grow each year. Several times a year we incur penalties due to contaminated recycling. It's super important to read the recycling rules and be sure you are 100% confident that the materials you are putting in the recycling bins meet the recycling requirements. If you are not sure, please use the trash bins. We also offered the use of a large haul-off dumpster to the neighborhood this year to reduce the large items that sometimes get left outside of the dumpsters. It seemed to be a popular program that we have budgeted again for next year.

For FY 2024, the proposed budget shows no change in HOA dues, with a fee of \$3,300 for improved lots and \$3,200 for unimproved lots. HOA invoices will be issued in early August with a 30-day grace period. Dues paid after that period will be charged late fees. The annual assessments can be paid in 2 installments, with half due in August and the other half due in February. We have forms available to sign up for ACH payment. You can also use your bank's BillPay service and have your bank send a check payment by the due date. For check remittances, please use the address of: Falls Creek Ranch Assn, PO Box 577, Durango CO 81302.

The FY 2024 Budget includes a transfer to Capital Reserves of \$40,000 in Dues, \$60,000 from the water base fees, and \$1,500 for the tennis court. Capital projects include water system repairs and improvements, and a possible secure storage shed for equipment and supplies. As part of the storage shed purchase, the Board is considering removing the small log structure at the picnic grounds. While not an original structure from the area's working ranch days, it has been on the Ranch for several decades. It is also mostly un-useable because it is such a rodent habitat, which carries the risk of hantavirus exposure. The Board is interested in resident comments on its removal.

Call for Budget Vote: As per Colorado's Common Interest Ownership Act, we need to call for a vote to VETO the proposed budget, ie, NOT to approve it. If it is vetoed, we default to the prior year approved budget. If it is vetoed, we adopt the proposed budget. There were no votes to veto the proposed FY 2024 budget and it is therefore adopted.

## **6. Old Business**

Ranch video recordings – President Church summarized current concerns with mail package theft at our mailbox area and trespassers onto the Ranch. The La Plata County Sheriff has recommended we install a video surveillance system that would allow a photo of a vehicle and the license plate. That information would be provided to the Sheriff only if and when there was an incident of criminal activity such as home burglary or mail theft. Paulette noted that proper notification signage and location would be required. Member input was requested.

- Tom Jones fully supports such a system right away to help defray such activity.
- Charlie Simons noted that many vehicles are lacking resident stickers or visitor hang-tags on their vehicles. More member enforcement is needed.
- Karen Yates asked how and by whom the system would be monitored. It would only be looked at if an incident occurred. Only the Sheriff would look at it. The video could be stored in the Cloud up to the time the camera was ever damaged or removed. This process is common for law enforcement.
- Dwight Frankfather and Pat Fettinger asked for clarification of the process and proposed locations. Paulette explained that the camera could take a photo of license plates as vehicles come and go. (Cameras we are considering are accurate up to 45 mph.) If an incident is reported, the Sheriff could investigate timing and the relevant vehicles in question. Mark Smith added that a combination of some kind of electric gate at the entrance to keep out unauthorized vehicles (with date/time stamp) plus a camera at the mailboxes could also be considered. A vehicle would be stopped at the mailboxes and an individual would likely be out of the vehicle so a photo of both could be helpful to identify a trespasser or unauthorized person.
- Tom Jones supported accepting the advice of the Sheriff to help us.
- Jen Salstrom suggested that we can be proactive or reactive. She inquired as to the cost of a camera system compared to gate options. A camera system could be approximately \$600, or we could purchase a monthly service with Cloud support; that cost would vary depending on what we decided to purchase.

- Diane Brady commented that someone could still walk around an entrance gate, but we could still get a photo at the mailboxes if a camera was at that location. If we were to chip seal our roads, that could encourage more trespassers. More security would be reasonable. These issues should be considered together. Di also noted the need for emergency ingress and egress. Paulette stated any system would have an override capability to allow for emergency vehicles.
- Nancy Henry suggested we look at a variety of gate options and cost.
- Barry Bryant suggested a simpler swing-arm style of gate (like at the airport parking lot) without a median. Both would be lower in cost and would be easier for road plowing and maintenance.
- Doug Parmentier shared his experience from several years ago of someone at his house during the night. He was able to confront them and contact the Sheriff. His home camera proved beneficial to obtain the vehicle description and the license plate for the Sheriff.
- Mark Bloom seconded Barry’s idea to keep any gate simple for residents, minimize maintenance and repairs, and control costs.
- Joe Scarpino noted that this year we had no volunteers or hired help at the entrance.

Paulette asked for a straw poll (show of hands) regarding a camera system: all but one member present supported a camera system. Paulette then asked for a straw poll (show of hands) regarding installation of a gate option: approximately 85% of those present supported a gate option; the remaining 15% didn’t care or did not support a gate option.

## **7. New Business**

Short term rentals – President Church introduced La Plata County Commissioner Clyde Church who informed the members that the State of Colorado recently signed into law legislation that allows County Boards of Commissioners to require registration of, and a fee for licensing, short-term rentals. The State now defines a short-term rental as “less than thirty days”. The FCR Board recently distributed to all members draft language to update our current property rental policy to add rental time restrictions to no rentals less than thirty days. This was to address concerns regarding rentals that could negative impact our private residential community and character of FCR. President Church asked for member input and comments on this topic. While some supported at least a 30-day minimum rental, several members commented that a 30-day minimum is too short. Many prefer at least 60 or 90 days minimum allowed for rentals. Others suggested six months to a full year minimum rental. One member asked if we could limit the number of homes that could rent at one time. One member suggested some research be done to determine the positive or negative impact on property values. Prior feedback from a member suggested our wording include “consecutive” 30-days period for a rental. Paulette asked for a straw poll (by show of hands) for those who support some type of time restriction on rentals. Of those members present, all but two supported time restrictions. The two responded “don’t care”. None objected. The majority supported a timeframe of between 90 days to six months minimum. Mary Ann Bryant confirmed that a new policy could be drafted by the Board, with 30 days for member input, then the Board could approve. A new covenant or change of existing covenant would

require legal review, two-thirds approval votes of the membership and recording with the County. One member suggested we make a policy change first, review with membership input and plan a more permanent covenant change at a later date. President Church stated the Board will address this in the coming months with further member input before any decision is made.

## **8. Announcements**

- Paulette thanked Mary Ann Bryant and Terry Greiner for their service on the Board of Directors.
- Paulette also thanked Ray Smith for his service to the Ranch especially for all the extra road work required during the past winter.
- Paulette encouraged all members to be kind. Kindness makes Falls Creek Ranch the wonderful community that it is. Since 1894, FCR has been a “working Ranch”. This is still true today since it takes all of us working together to manage our property while being respectful and kind to each other. She reminded members that instead of beeping at horse riders on the roads to say hello (this spooks the horses), just give a smiling wave.
- Paulette announced that as of Monday, July 10, the County will be in Stage 1 fire restrictions. No smoking outside a building or vehicle. Be careful and watchful for lightning strikes. Report any smoke you see.
- Paulette also reminded members of our process for changing a policy or creating a new policy. Send your written ideas or suggestions to the responsible committee, who will then review your proposal. The committee may then forward that information with their input and recommendation to the Board. The Board will then review, discuss, suggest appropriate changes, and share with members for a 30-day review period. Then it will go back to the Board for a final decision. Any covenant change would be the above process, with often an added town hall for member discussion, legal review and then a member vote.
- Paulette thanked all those who attended today’s meeting and asked again for everyone to volunteer in some way.

## **9. Next Annual Meeting**

The next Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, July 13, 2024, at the Falls Creek Picnic Grounds.

## **10. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:04AM after a duly made motion, a second, and all approving.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Mary Ann Bryant  
FCR Board Secretary