

Falls Creek Ranch Board Meeting

Status: Approved **Date:** Dec 18, 2025 5:30 PM MST **Location:** Online

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/yxh-huud-jmy>

Or dial: (US) +1 262-864-1592 PIN: 469 558 732#

More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/yxh-huud-jmy?pin=9208654690166>

Attendees

- **Board Members:** Pat Fettinger, James Trammell, Justin Poehnelt, Pamela Flowers
- **Guests:** Barry Bryant, Mary Ann Bryant, Mark Smith

Approval/Changes to the Agenda

- No changes

Conflicts of Interest

- None

Open Period Comments

- None

Approval of Previous Minutes

Justin Poehnelt motioned to approve, Pamela Flowers seconded. Motion has been approved.

Treasurer's Report

The bank balances as of December 16, 2025:

Capital	68,211	Bank of San Juans
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	198,765	Bank of San Juans - Water Reserve
Operating	91,760	Bank of San Juans
Grant	1,000	Bank of San Juans
Total Cash	359,736	

We received another \$16,821.40 Wildfire Adaptive grant payment in November, for work completed last fiscal year. A big thanks to Paulette for her continued work on applying for these funds to help offset our mitigation costs.

The Ranch House renovation is complete, with the total renovation cost of approximately \$28,000. The renovations were more extensive than originally thought, as issues arose that needed to be addressed. We received the final bill from the electrician for wiring from the firehouse to the front gate. The total came in at \$3970, which was well below the estimate. A big thank-you to Joe for all of his extensive work on this project and the Ranch House renovation. We also transferred the firehouse electric bill from the Fire Dept to our LPEA invoice. The first invoice was \$44.00. This was the most affordable way to get power to the entrance for lighting and the future electric gate.

The grader maintenance came in at \$17,500 (\$2,500 under original estimate) and will be charged to the capital expenditures account in December.

All of the monthly water base fees of \$10,100 per month have been transferred from the Operating Account into the Water Capital Account (through November).

Justin Poehnelt motioned to approve the Treasurer's report, James Trammell seconded. The motion was approved.

Committee Reports

Common Property

Mark Smith spent multiple days working with the Fire Department in regards to burning the piles on common property. We are coordinated with San Juan National Forest on the burning of the piles below Oakcrest. The plan is to burn our piles at the same time as the Forest Service burns the piles south of our entrance and north of our property east of High Meadows. The Forest Service plan is to do this during a heavy snow storm, whenever that comes. Heavy snow should help to clean the smoke out of the air as it falls and lessen the effects of the burn. We are following their lead on this process.

Community Garden

Dormant for winter. Accepting requests from new gardeners to reserve a plot!

Architecture

We have just three open projects at this time.

Bees and Chickens

Bees are quiet for the winter season. Chickens are adjusting to colder weather.

Dam

No report.

Entrance Gardens

Dormant for winter. If you would like to join this committee, please contact Teresa Rushton.

Emergency Response Team

No report.

FireWise

I submitted our Annual Report for the Southwest Colorado Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project and La Plata County so our work will be mapped and continue to lower our wildfire risk rating. Some of our lots are now rated Low Risk, which is wonderful!

Remember that extra large loads of split firewood (mostly pine) are available for just \$200, paid by check to Falls Creek Ranch, and \$100 paid in cash or Venmo to Kern for loading, delivering, and dumping it out the trailer on your lot. If you want it stacked, you pay \$35 per hour for each of the two staff members – still a great deal. Contact Paulette to schedule.

We were able to burn a few small piles of slash near the orchard and were careful to work when the wind blew the smoke away from the chickens and bees. Mark Smith is working with Durango Fire Protection District to update our burn permit while Scott Silveira works with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment on the air curtain burner permit. Many regulations changed last year and this year so procedures have changed and there are lag times as staff is trained.

We will know next month if we received the two grants we applied for, including a disc mower for along the roads and in meadows and for focused mitigation work along Falls Creek Main.

Please do not take any materials to the air curtain area, the slash yard. Also, we will let you know when we can burn again and when we can pick up bags and chip slash along the roads in the spring.

Christmas trees are still available at \$2 per foot and branches from Charlie Brown trees are free. Call Paulette to schedule.

Horses

No report.

Lake

No report.

Roads

No real activity on roads other than that Geary has been diligent repairing potholes as they have arisen. No real snow so far, but all equipment is ready when the time comes. The contractor will likely only be required to operate the grader during large storms.

Utilities

The Utilities Committee has offered to provide an orientation and tour of the FCR Water System to the Board. Timing and logistics are dependent on Board Member availability.

The Committee also welcomes new member Erik Enge to join our team.

The next utilities meeting is scheduled for Jan 6th 9-11AM at the Bryant home. Topics will include: utilities chair succession planning, new South Well status, Capital Planning, Water Tank repairs, Water Meter testing/replacement program, Water Line Leak Detection Plan, SCADA computer status, CDPHE Official Contacts, and 811 Program Official Contacts.

The Board and Utilities committee scheduled a tour for later this month.

Welcome

No Report.

Ranch Manager

The last couple of months have been a new and exciting time for me. From helping refurbish the Ranch House, learning how to operate heavy equipment, road repair, fire mitigation using the chipper, hauling a ton of leaf bags, and readying the ranch equipment for winter. Cleaning, organizing and documenting the maintenance shop and equipment including removal of 20 + old tires and general junk has given us the room to keep almost all of our ranch equipment under roof. After our first snowfall I was able to get out and practice plowing snow with the Ram truck. Not quite the same as a Zamboni. I did install Turf Defenders that will help save our dirt roads from the plow blade. Mark and I have been working on getting rid of all the slash and pine needle bags down at the burn area. My favorite task has been making the Ranch House into a Ranch Home. Thank you for this opportunity.

Old Business

- None

New Business

- Justin Poehnelt: Church Camp property and 2019 easement agreement. Discussion centered around the specific use allowed by the easement and limiting future litigation and costs. It was agreed that interpretation of the easement would not allow commercial or residential use by a new owner.
 - *Justin Poehnelt will reach out to residents involved in the 2019 agreement.*
 - *No decision made, the Board will consult with an attorney.*
- Justin Poehnelt: Unauthorized and unsustainable trail construction at multiple locations on common property.
 - A resident reported seeing a Facebook post from a resident discussing trail construction.
 - *No action taken. Justin will reach out to the individual.*

Executive Session

Announcements

- Email board@fallscreekranch.org if interested in serving on the Falls Creek Ranch Board.
- See <https://fallscreekranch.org/residents/calendar> for future Board Meetings
- Consider making a donation for harvested Christmas trees to support fire mitigation efforts. \$2/ft, checks to Falls Creek Ranch Association or contact treasurer@fallscreekranch.org.

Adjournment

Justin Poehnelt motioned to adjourn, Pat Fettinger seconded the motion.