

Cedar Mesa Ranches - HOA Newsletter

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CEDAR MESA RANCHES

Winter at Cedar Mesa Ranches is a beautiful sight. Hopefully will accumulate enough snow this season to help with the drought and fire issues we fearfully anticipate during summer months. The snow packed roads have been a perfect venue to experiment with cross-country skiing before you hit the backcountry. Also, literally across the road, is Mesa Verde, which offers a number of winter options for skiing and snowshoeing.

I remember my grandmother talking about how quickly seasons come and go. It seems like

yesterday we were putting together the summer newsletter, which included news of fire strikes and water restrictions. In the blink of an eye we are surrounded by snow covered hills and sliding our vehicles around on snow packed roads.

We have our challenges at CMR living in a remote area, and interacting copasetically in a planned development

Regardless of the challenges, be they icy roads or legal disputes, we need keep in mind that working together to preserve and enjoy our community will ultimately serve us all.

Reports and Updates

The Annual Meeting

The Cedar Mesa Ranches Homeowners Association met for their annual meeting on January 13, 2007 at the San Juan Basin Technical College. There were 22 HOA members present despite a snowstorm. The minutes of that meeting have been sent to you and we encourage you to read the monthly reports just to keep you updated on what is going on in the community.

Following is a summary of the reports given at the meeting

(Much of the Cedar Mesa Ranches Updates are taken from the monthly HOA minutes. The minutes are distributed monthly via email. If you do not receive the minutes please let Ruth Bignell know so she can put you on the email list.)

◆ Fire

Jim reported that a Fire Strike Task Force was organized in the spring. Its mission is to spot and be first responders to a fire before it gets out of hand. Three areas were set up: (1) Spotters – those members that live on the ridges, (2) Coordinators – those members that relay the information to the local fire department and firefighters (3) Firefighters- two groups are in this area: (a) those with ATVs that can go into the BLM area if necessary and (b) those that can respond where needed. This project has been very

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successful. 8 fires were responded to this past summer.

We unfortunately anticipate the continued need for this effort and encourage anyone living in the area to lend both your help and support.

Living with fire is a concept and reality we all need to understand as we choose to move into this area. The more we understand, prepare and mitigate - the safer we can be.

Anyone interested in staying abreast of the news Concerning fire in our area may go to www.southwestcoloragofires.org

◆ Weeds and Trees

During the past year, we have changed how we deal with noxious weeds along the road right-of-way. We purchased 5-25gal tanks to mount on the back of ATV's. Five members volunteered to mount them on their personal ATV's and to spray the weeds instead of hiring it done. By doing this, we have saved at least \$1200 and can do it better. We also use these tanks to respond to fires in the area. The tanks have proved their worth in the case of small fires and in dealing with hot spots on larger fires.

◆ Building Advisory Committee

This year there were a few covenant violations, which were brought to the attention of the Board by some lot owners. It is the responsibility of the Board to review all complaints and discuss them with the lot owner in question. So far most complaints have been addressed and remedied to everyone's satisfaction.

The covenants and how they are to be enforced are covered in the By-Laws and the Board is the agent designated to deal with these issues. With this in mind, the Board encourages individuals getting ready to build on their lot to contact the HOA with any questions or concerns about existing covenants. It is much easier to fix a problem before it even begins.

Do you have a number ID on your property? It is important that all lots have the appropriate ID in

order for the fire department to be able to locate you property if need be.

◆ Roads

Gary Brodhagen announced at the meeting that he was responsible for spending all of our money – and actually he was right. Gary and the Road Committee have worked very hard this year to fix what needed fixing and keep the roads in good condition.

- Following is a summary of the work that was done on the roads this year:
 - a. January – blade, water and compact Road 35. 4 loads of gravel were put on the hill.
 - b. February – Road 36.7 cleared ditches, new culverts and holding ponds installed. Repaired ditch at Mud Creek
 - c. March – Blade Road 35 and K.3.
 - d. June – Blade, water and compact Road 35.
 - e. July – Blade Road 35
 - f. August – Clean culverts, one on Rd. 35 and two on J.7
 - g. September – Asphalt front entrance. Blade, water, compact roads 35, J.8, K.1, K.3, J.9 & J.6
 - h. November – Blade, water and compact Road 35. 4 loads of gravel put on Road 35.
 - i. December - Roads plowed 3 times.
 - j. 48 reflectors were placed on various hills and turns throughout the subdivision. Greg Kemp donated the stakes and Jim Bignell and Gary Brodhagen put up the reflectors.
- There have been a few issues concerning snow plowing. Some things to remember:
 - (1) only the board can call to have the roads bladed or plowed. If you want you private driveway plowed, you are responsible for the payment to that person.
 - (2) The general rule is that the roads are plowed when accumulation reaches 5". Gary drives the roads to determine if plowing is necessary if it is less than 5". The cost for each snow removal is \$650-\$700. It is also important for everyone to be extremely careful when driving these roads

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in the snow especially on the hills and sharp turns.

◆ Activity and Grounds

Ruth provided the following report for the Activity and Grounds Committee:

- 27 members attended cleanup day in May.
- Dumpster was provided for 3 weeks in May; over 6 ton of trash was collected.
- Summer Newsletter went out in July
- 36 members attended the July HOA BBQ.
- 3 members helped mow the front entrance in August.
- 38 attended the HOA Christmas Party in December

At the moment, we have no activities scheduled. We will schedule a cleanup day in May at a later time. I want to thank the other 2 members of the committee, Cheryl Brodhagen and Nancy Schaufele for all their help. Earlier this year, this committee received criticism for spending HOA funds for some of our activities. Our budget gave us \$200 for the year. As of June, we had spent \$14. Since then, this committee has personally provided their own money to fund the BBQ and Christmas party. I cannot thank them enough for stepping forward so we could all get together, get to know each other better and have a good time doing it. I want to stress that all members were invited and I hope that all who came enjoyed it.

(As a note, Ruth has done a phenomenal job of keeping the community connected. With Cheryl's help they have put together a number of fun socials that pull together neighbors who rarely see each. It's been a way to share in the ups and downs of living in a rural community. Thanks Ruth!)

◆ Web Site

Please remember our web site. The address is www.cedarmesarancheshoa.org

◆ Problems and Issues

Please read your minutes to update you on current litigation issues. We sincerely hope all current

problems will be addressed and resolved so we can get back to everyday living in our beautiful community.

◆ Dogs

We have had a number of complaints about dogs roaming the neighborhood chasing cars, wildlife and people. You may think that you have the most wonderful dog in the world but if he or she is becoming a neighborhood nuisance, then it is your responsibility to keep them in your yard. Please remember that the county has a leash law and our own community has covenants which state that your dog must be kept within your own property boundaries. Unfortunately, the HOA will be forced to contact animal control, which will cost the owner a hefty fine.

Community Interest

Living with Wildlife

Part of living in a rural area surrounded by public lands is the opportunity to share our lives with the many wild animals that call Cedar Mesa Ranches home. This includes deer, fox, bobcat, coyote, a variety of bunnies, a multitude of rodents, the occasional mountain lion and bear and the many beautiful songbirds and raptors. The magical sound of a coyote can send shivers up anyone's spine. Learning to live with wildlife is not just for entertainment or educational value – it is a responsibility we should all take very seriously.

Predators

The predators in our area prefer to have nothing to do with us. They would be happy that our paths never cross. This includes coyote, fox, bear, lion and bobcat. People moving from urban areas often have a fear of these animals, thinking that they will harm humans. The fact is that the incidence of any local predator attacking a human being is almost nonexistent. These incidents are very, very rare – particularly if you use caution and act wisely. The key is educating yourself and mitigating your own property. Following are things you can do to help enjoy the wildlife in your area without borrowing trouble.

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1. **DO NOT FEED THE WILDLIFE!** This includes deer. To begin with, the food we feed them can easily harm and/or kill them. Secondly, encouraging wildlife into the community will also encourage predators we may not want knocking on our windows. Predators follow deer. A deer grazing in the yard is a lovely sight. A lion eating a deer in the front yard may not be as much fun. In nature, one thing leads naturally to the other. As we humans introduce unnatural feeding areas and/or grains, it can seriously affect not only the animal being feed, but also the entire ecosystem of plants and animals alike. Children learn these basics in grammar school. We, as adults need to educate ourselves, use this information in our own homes and act as role models for others coming into the area.

(Head's up...CMR is on the radar of the Department of Wildlife. There are hefty fines involved if you are caught feeding wildlife).

2. Put up your garbage. We do not have many skunks or raccoons in the area - yet (however we DO have more than our share of mice and rats). If we are not vigilant with our garbage we will be seeing more and more of these creative and aromatic creatures.

3. Coyotes like kitties. Just be aware of the fact that your sweet little yard kitty can be Oscar Coyote's next meal. Keep in mind that keeping our Coyote community healthy helps keep our rodent and bunny population down. Coyote survive mostly on rabbits and rodents. If we do not let them hang around we could easily become known as Cedar Mesa Ranches Mouse and Rabbit Farms. Coyote are shy creatures and will not harm a human – in fact take great lengths to avoid us. Just respect their place here and they will respect ours (with the possible exception of those house kitties).

4. Do not let your dogs chase the wildlife. While it may seem entertaining, your dog is at risk of injuring himself and or the wildlife.

There are excellent websites, which can help you better understand and live with the wildlife in our area. For more information log on to Desertusa.com (a great web site with lots of

information about living in the desert) or The Colorado Department of Wildlife at www.wildlife.state.co.us. You can also get a ton of valuation information from the San Juan Mountains Association at SJMA.org (we are fortunate that a CMR resident, Susan Bryson, is the executive director of this organization.)

Recreation

Welcome to our winter wonderland. If you enjoy skiing you will be glad to know that all the runs are open at Telluride and Durango Mountain. Cross-country and backcountry opportunities are as near as your front door, across the street at Mesa Verde. Groomed trails abound at Chicken Creek, Trout Lake and other areas. For the indoor group, the recreation center has swimming, yoga, Pilates, racquetball and an expanding weight room at very reasonable rates. There are weekend plays, music and various cultural events, which are listed, in our local paper the Cortez Journal (cortezjournal.com). And for the die-hard bicyclists, they just pray for dry roads or in a pinch, the spin classes at the rec center.

If you're out and about try out the new coffee houses in our area. *Spruce Tree* and *Let It Grow* serve up coffee, books and unusual gifts to browse through.

Community Service Opportunities

Living in a small community is very different than in a larger city. The resources in our area are very limited. We have a large number of small non-profit organizations, which are always in need of active Board members and/or volunteers. To mention just a few: Hospice of Montezuma; The Pinion Project (which helps families); Renew (for battered and/or abused women); Partners (a mentoring program for children); The Bridge Homeless shelter (ALWAYS looking for shelter volunteers – any volunteer time is welcome and needed); The Child Advocacy Center; Southwest Open School; The public library; The Cortez Cultural Center; Our own KSUT Dry Lands Community Radio; and the Montezuma Leadership Summit. There are many more to choose from. Making the decision to give back to your community is a wonderful way to utilize your time and life experience. Feel free to call me for

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more information on these and other organizations, which need your help.

Nancy Schaufele 970-565-8385 or nschaufele@frontier.net

Nancy Schaufele at nschaufele@frontier.net or Ruth at the above address.

ADDRESS CHANGES

Staying in the loop

Please note that the current means of communicating updates is through the minutes of the Board of Director Meetings. You are welcome to a copy of this upon request of Ruth Bignell as she sends email notices of the minutes to members.

Since we are providing much of our information via email, please notify us of any address changes or changes in ownership of your lots so we can make the appropriate correction in our database.

In order to save postage, we would like to email the minutes to as many as possible. Currently, we have 39 that we send by mail.

Special Thanks

Kudos' to our Board members, past and present that have worked diligently in behalf of all Cedar Mesa Ranches lot owners. While it is indeed a thankless job, it is one that carries a great deal of responsibility. We encourage ALL lot owners to consider either joining the Board or one of the committees. It takes participation of many to govern even a small development like CMR. If you have a question, comment or criticism, please consider becoming a part of the CMR HOA Board. Change can only happen if people participate.

You should all be receiving the monthly Board meeting minutes via e-mail. If you are not, please let us know.

Email Ruth Bignell at biggyr02@aol.com

Sign Your Letters

Feel free to contact the Board with any questions or comments you may have about the governance of CMR. The Board is directed through the By-Laws to address any member concerns. However, if you do not sign your comments, the Board cannot or will not act on your behalf. Please know the Board will adhere to confidentiality as requested.

Key Phone Numbers

Sheriff - Emergency	911
Fire/Ambulance	911
Assessor's Office	565-3428
Sheriff – Non Emergency	565-8452, option 1
Blue Stake – Locate	800-922-1987 (Allow 2 days)
Montezuma Water	882-2226
Empire Electric	565-4444
Mancos Post Office	533-7754

Newsletter

If anyone has an interesting article or news to put our next newsletter, please email Ruth Bignell at biggyr02@aol.com or mail to 10208 Road 35, Mancos, CO 81328. We would also love a volunteer to take over some of the newsletter duties. If you have some spare time please contact