

Wissler Ranch Homeowners Association Newsletter

May 2010

We are fortunate to have 133 association members who are working together to maintain an upscale quality of life and solid property values in our community. We do not have the array of problems which have plagued some of our nearby homeowner associations.

The two highest priorities of our President and Board Members are the conservation of our well water and the prevention of a Fire that could destroy our Ponderosa Pine Forest, which protects us from the wind and adds so much to our quality of life.

Each homeowner can take 122,194 gallons a year from their well. Most homeowners use much less than their annual quota, which is state imposed. We had two water offenders, both of whom had their homes foreclosed by their bank. The banks resolved the water issues with our association. Every year we have one to five homeowners who exceed their quota by less than 10,000 gallons, usually due to malfunctioning or improperly set irrigation systems, or excess watering of vegetation. We impose a \$35 fine as a token measure to get the violator to comply with the usage quota. If the problem persists for a second year the violator will get a court summons to resolve the issue. As an average you shouldn't be using more than 10,100 gallons a month. Using November as the first month, do the math and keep an eye on your usage. Board member, Bruce Froehler, is our water committee chairman.

Board Secretary, Rhoda Musella, wrote our Wissler Ranch Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), which can be downloaded from our website www.wisslerranch.com. Rhoda was assisted by State Forrester, Dave Root and received some input from board member Jack Windeler. Rhoda Musella, Jack Windeler and Brian Freese will be leading a volunteer effort to get the worst of the ladder fuel removed from all our lots. Most of our trees, be they six inches to two feet thick, are about 120 years old, as this area was extensively logged in the late 1800s. Our forest will live until a crown fire destroys it. Numerous ground fires have passed thru and will continue to pass thru our forest. We cannot control temperature, humidity and wind or lightening strikes. What we can do is remove all the ladder fuel, which might allow a ground fire to climb into the crowns. That ground fire is coming. We just do not know when.

Getting rid of slash from snowstorm damage to trees is a priority of our CWPP. In 2011, we will attempt to organize a slash disposal day, probably the third week-end in May. We can rent a 9" chipper for about \$400/day and organize a volunteer labor detail. More on this topic in April 2011.

The secondary threat to our forest is the Pine Beetle. At the present time we have found no pine beetle infestation within our forest. Our local forest is separated by at least a quarter mile for grassland in all directions from the rest of the Black Forest. Pine Beetles normally swarm from an infected tree about 20 June and hit adjacent trees within about a 100 foot radius. A pine beetle hit can be identified by a sap tube above waist height to about 20 feet in the newly infected tree trunk. Turpentine beetles come up from the ground and hit the tree trunk knee height or below. The sap tube a pine tree emits in response to a turpentine beetle hit looks just like a pine beetle hit. The difference is the height of the hit. The Pine Beetle emits a toxin which kills the tree. Turpentine Beetles do not release a lethal toxin, which means they will not kill the tree and it does not need to be removed by May the following year. If you inspect your trees for beetle hits between August and October and find any pine beetle hits (sap tubes above waist height), call Jack Windeler, 540-2000, or Brian Freese, 481-3853. They will be happy to inspect your tree. If the tree is infested with pine beetles, it must be cut down and removed from our forest by the beginning of May, next spring. This is a forest protection, not a covenants issue.

Our covenants are pretty straight forward. You can download them from our website. Your board is not in the business of harassing our membership over issues which do not affect the quality of life or property values in our community. Dogs and cats become an issue when they become a neighborhood nuisance by running loose, chasing wildlife or excess barking. We are currently not aware of any dog or cat issues. If you encounter one, call a board member so we can get the nuisance resolved. Please make sure your dog is on a leash anytime it is off your lot. If you are bike riding, jogging, or simply brisk walking, and approach a dog walker from behind, please give a warning so the dog walker can pull his dogs in. Don't let your dog run off your lot and harass leashed dogs being walked in the street.

If you want to build a structure or fence, contact our Design Review Committee, Michael Laukert, 487-0164, or Jack Windeler, 540-2000 to get your plan approved before you start construction.

Our daily walkers report that speeding violators include Wissler Ranch homeowners and a small number of contract workers, who appear to be the same group that occasionally throws trash on our streets. Thanks to the community for continuing to watch their speeds and keep our streets safe for wildlife, pedestrians and children.

The only covenant our board has problems with is Section 4.21 Nuisance. "No boats, trailers, campers, motor homes, wrecked or partially disassembled cars, tractors, equipment, machinery, or any such item, shall be kept or stored so that they are visible from neighboring lots or from any street". Every year the board gets one or two inquiries as to the intent, or meaning of this covenant. Your board does not consider the parking of recreational vehicles (RVs) in driveways, while they are in use, to be a section 4.21 covenant violation. Board policy is that all RVs and other vehicles, except operational automobiles and light trucks, should be stored in a garage, or offsite when not in use. If an RV will not be used in 15 days, it should be put back in your garage, or stored offsite. Our concern is the fire hazard the fuel in all vehicles stored outside garages poses.

Last fall the Tri-Lakes Little League requested use of our softball field for practice. After input from our association membership, your board voted to deny public use of our common area in February. One of our homeowners hosted two little league practices, one in April and one in May. If any homeowner hosts an activity in our common area, please insure that the guests use the parking lot and do not block access to our mailbox area.

We recently had the forest in our common area thinned and cleaned out to reduce fire danger. Rhoda took the lead in bringing this project to fruition. We paid John Psensky of TreeMasters \$6,000 for this work. Thanks to Rhoda who attained a grant from the State of Colorado, our association was reimbursed \$3,000. Thanks again to Rhoda Musella. If any of you need forest work on your individual property, we recommend John at TreeMasters (492-8129). John offers a 10% discount on all work done for Wissler Ranch homeowners.

Michael Laukert and Jack Windeler looked at the ice hazard around our mailboxes caused by windblown snow. We currently keep a shovel and snow melt crystals at the mailboxes, so any member can address ice buildup issues. Michael and Jack recommended we install a two foot high outdoor plywood fence around the back three sides of the enclosure. Outdoor plywood matches the color and texture of the vertical posts. The fence will be mounted with deck screws in November and removed in May so it does not become an eyesore. Materials for this voluntary labor project will cost us less than \$100.

Michael and Jack also looked at our entrance signs. We paid about \$15,000 to have these entrances installed a few years ago. The logs are weathering and turning grey. The signs at Lockridge and Wavy Oak entrances are also weathered; most people do not even notice them when they enter our community. There is no sign at the Kersdale Entrance. Arrowwood III paid \$3,000 each for the four stone signs they installed last fall. You will observe one of their signs on the right side after you pass Kings Deer, if you drive Highway 105 into Monument. Michael and Jack recommended we spend less than \$500 to clean our logs with deck wash and re-stain the exposed wood. We are considering building our capital reserve fund up to \$12,000 so we have the option to upgrade our entrance signs to maintenance free stone at some future date.

We only have one association member who is more than one year in arrears with their homeowner association dues. We are taking court action to settle that delinquency.

We encourage all of you to contribute your time to serve on our board or one of our committees. We welcome you to attend any of our board meetings which are held at 7pm, the third Wednesday of each month, except for July and December to find out what we do and what positions may be open. Active participation of the community on our board, helps us maintain the high quality of life and the upscale environment which motivated us to buy, build and settle here.

Please contact any board member if you have covenant issues, or simply need information. We are always looking for good ideas.

YOUR BOARD AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS