

Hoback Ranches Service and Improvement District

P. O. Box 33, Bondurant, WY 82922

July 14, 2018 Annual Meeting

MINUTES

A public meeting was conducted by the Board of Directors for Hoback Ranches Service and Improvement District at the St. Hubert's Church in Bondurant, Wyoming.

Directors in Attendance

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| Bruce Bartley | Chairman |
| Dave Nemetz | Treasurer |
| Sally Ruosch | Secretary |

Chairman Bartley called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. Approximately 35 people, including Directors were in attendance. Chairman Bartley welcomed returning and new residents. He asked all present to introduce themselves and give their property address. Chairman Bartley thanked retiring Board Chairman Bill Conley for his nine years' service and presented him with a plaque. Mr. Conley thanked the community for its support.

Approval of Minutes and Rules and Regulations June 2018 Appointment of Bill Conley JWW Legal Case Representative

Minutes from Annual Meeting, July 15, 2017

Minutes from Early Meeting, June 16, 2018

Director Nemetz moved to approve the minutes from both meetings and the Rules and Regulations June 2018, and Director Ruosch seconded the motion. Chairman Bartley reported that Bill Winney registered an objection to the Rules and Regulations June 2018. Motion was approved unanimously by the Board of Directors. Director Nemetz moved to appoint Bill Conley JWW Legal Case Representative and Director Ruosch seconded. Appointment was approved unanimously.

Election 2018

Chairman Bartley provided the election results as approved by the Sublette County Clerk Mary Lankford. The vote total was as follows:

Total ballots mailed: 255
Sally Ruosch 90

Guest Speakers – Fire Mitigation in Hoback Ranches

Chairman Bartley introduced Willis Day, Fire Prevention Officer from Sublette County Unified Fire. Also present were fire prevention officers from the BLM, US Forest Service, Bridger-Teton National Forest and Sublette County. Mr. Day said he would like to form a collaboration group with Hoback Ranches and area fire prevention entities using a facilitator to determine which areas of Hoback Ranches would be best suited for fire mitigation. He encouraged all residents to contact him before August 1 so he can determine if there is enough interest in forming the group. Mr. Day's phone number is 406-370-2019 and his email is willis.day@sublettefire.com.

The possibility of obtaining grants for fire prevention treatment in the Ranches was discussed and Mr. Day said he knows appropriate grant programs available.

Diane Abendroth, a fire ecologist and fire behavioral analyst from Bridger-Teton National Forest and Grand Teton National Park presented a Hoback Ranches Area Fire Behavior Analysis. She used the July 17, 2016 Cliff Creek fire as a model. She did a wind analysis and determined that prevailing winds are from the SW in Hoback Ranches and occasionally from the NW. She showed how areas of the Ranches would be affected by 20 mph winds from these directions and at different flame heights.

Ms. Abendroth emphasized that **defensible space** around homes is all important and that you can't stop a fire. You can only slow it down. Evacuation is the first priority. Everyone should know the best route out of the Ranches, in case a fire is spreading from either the southwest or northwest. After evacuation, the next priority is getting equipment and fire fighters in.

Area treatment requires reducing forest density by limbing trees up from the ground and removing trees so there is less possibility of torching and spotting. Ms. Abendroth said treated areas result in less fire damage on both federal and private lands.

Year In Review

Chairman Bartley presented the "Year in Review" which is attached to the minutes.

Winter Committee 2017-2018 Access Review

Gary Ryan, Winter Committee Chairman, reported that this past winter was "uneventful" compared to the previous 2016-2017 winter. He said payment for all winter road maintenance is through donations and that the amount donated by summer residents is as much as donations received from year-round residents. Mr. Ryan emphasized that volunteer labor by residents contributes greatly to making winter access possible. Mr. Ryan said the focus is on safety for both vehicles and snowmobiles.

Road Maintenance Update

Director Nemetz reported that Hoback Ranches now owns a grader that was purchased by an anonymous donation. Troy Jerup has agreed to maintain the grader and park it on his property. Matt Brunette is now working with Troy to maintain the roads. Matt has over 20 years' experience working for the Sublette County Road and Bridge Department. He operates the grader and Troy hauls the gravel. With Matt and Troy working together it is possible to take advantage of rare summer moisture that helps the gravel stay compacted. Director Nemetz reported that Sublette County may have a water truck for sale if Hoback Ranches is interested.

Director Nemetz thanked Matt and Troy for the spring road cleanup which is almost complete. Residents commented that the roads are in good condition. Director Nemetz also reported that construction projects have caused some damage to the roads and responsible property owners have agreed to pay for damage.

Director Nemetz said that with the approval of Resolution No: 18-005, the HRSID intends to apply to the Wyoming Department of Transportation for Congestion Mitigation Air Quality funding and if awarded, these monies would be used for chemical dust suppression on Rim Road. The grant would pay 80 percent and HRSID would pay 20 percent for the magnesium chloride treatment which costs \$4500 per mile. The grant application requires a vehicle count and Director Nemetz said this would require volunteers to do the counting.

There is a possibility that the section of Rim Road on US Forest Service land could become a county road. The road easement from the Forest Service must be 60 feet wide for Sublette County to consider making Rim Road a county road and agreeing to maintain it. At the present time, the Forest Service easement is only 40 feet wide, but Director Nemetz is optimistic that the Big Piney Forest Service Supervisor may increase the easement to 60 feet. If this happens, the Sublette County Commissioners would need to vote to make Rim Road a county road.

County Commissioner Candidate Forum – Thursday, August 9 at 6:00 p.m. Bondurant Fire Hall

Chairman Bartley announced that all candidates for Sublette County Commissioner have been invited to the County Commissioner Candidate Forum. Each candidate will have five minutes to present his/her platform. This will be followed by questions from the floor when voters will be encouraged to ask candidates their position on road maintenance, garbage collection, law enforcement and other county services not presently provided to Hoback Ranches.

There are 80 Hoback Ranches voters registered in the Bondurant precinct, which is one-third of the total number of voters in the precinct. Hoback Ranches has the third largest tax base in Sublette County, behind Pinedale and Marbleton (and is rapidly closing in on Marbleton!) For these reasons, Hoback Ranches voters should be important to County Commissioner candidates.

Weed and Pest Update

Mr. Conley reported that he recently completed spraying all roads in the Ranches with 70 gallons of Milestone. He suggested that in the future volunteers sign up to spray the road or roads to their house. He said all types of thistles should be sprayed and that burr vegetation should be pulled out or sprayed.

Fencing

Mr. Conley reported that the Ranches have received a \$463,000 grant to replace the entire perimeter fencing. Most of the current fences are 40 years old and will be replaced with wildlife friendly fencing, starting in clear areas and progressing around the perimeter. This will result in a new fence with an anticipated life of at least a 25 years.

Hoback Ranches will continue to pay \$5,200 per year for four years, plus \$10,000 per year for four years in donations that Mr. Conley has guaranteed. He is soliciting donations from property owners and checks may be made to HRSID and designated for fencing. Mr. Delaney has donated use of his skid steer and staff to help remove the old fencing. The skid steer rolls up the old wire, but volunteer labor will be needed to remove the old metal posts.

A notice for fencing bids was posted in the Pinedale Roundup and three contractors are interested.

Budget Review

Director Nemetz provided documents updating the Ranches' budget situation. He reported that 2019 property tax revenue is projected to be \$55,800 which is about the same as in 2018, and that interest on the emergency fund is projected to increase to \$1,430 due to investing funds in Edward D. Jones at higher interest rates. \$25,000 taken from the emergency reserve funds for Winney lawsuit expenses, and \$10,450 in committed donations bring the total 2019 budget to \$92,698.

Director Nemetz reported that he is hopeful the insurance company will pay a portion of the legal fees expended on the Winney lawsuit. A total of \$35,000 has been transferred from the emergency fund to the operating account to cover these legal fees. If any of this money is remaining after the lawsuit is settled, it will be transferred back into the emergency fund. Property owners at the early summer public meeting June 16, 2018 expressed their desire to repay the full \$35,000 to the emergency fund. When the net cost of litigation (after any insurance reimbursement) is determined, a separate special assessment ballot (approved in Resolution of Intent 18-006) will be sent to voters in April 2019 with the 2019 Director ballot. The special assessment ballot will be tallied by the Sublette County clerk at the same time the Director ballots are tallied.

Chairman Bartley reported that the Winney lawyer objected to the 2018-2019 budget.

Relevant budget documents can be found on the Hoback Ranches website.

Resolutions

Director Ruosch read Resolutions of Intent 18-001 through 18-006. Director Nemetz made a motion to approve each resolution and Chairman Bartley seconded. Resolutions passed unanimously.

Other Discussions

Fire Tree

Lucy Conley asked all residents to update their phone numbers on the list used for fire notification and emergency evacuation. Within the next couple of weeks, the Fire Tree volunteers will be conducting their yearly test. An email will be sent out and then we will attempt to contact everyone on the Fire Notification list. If residents would prefer to receive texts, please notify your volunteer when they call. Residents are encouraged to also sign up for Sublette County Alert System Sense, the County notification system.

ListServ

Carol Artes reported that ListServ has had 80 posts this year and has 90 email addresses. It offers an online posting of information pertinent to Hoback Ranches. All postings are reviewed for content before going online. Anyone wanting to sign up for ListServ should go to hobackranches@wyoming.com.

Bear Alert

The same bear has been seen twice in the Upper Picnic Ridge vicinity in the last month. Fish and Game will be notified if it is sighted again. Residents are reminded to use good judgment for food storage, and that bird feeders are bear attracters. Feeding all wild animals is discouraged. Adherence to our covenants is important to minimize predator food sources, and appropriate management of trash will minimize odors that attract bears.

Email Addresses Needed

Mr. Conley said there are 224 property owners and the District only has email addresses for 168 owners. Spring and fall newsletters are mailed at a cost of \$225 to \$500, which could be saved if the newsletters were emailed.

Speeding

There was a car accident last month in the Ranches, and residents, guests and service providers need to be reminded that the speed limit on all District roads is 20 mph. Construction workers were mentioned as those most often driving too fast. Chairman Bartley suggested contacting the building property owner or the contractor and ask them to remind their workers of the 20 mph speed limit.

Barb Burris thanked the Board for doing a good job of managing the road district. The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 pm.

The 2019 Hoback Ranches Board of Directors election will be by mail-in ballot, as in years past. The ballots will be mailed the first week of April 2019. The annual election day is May 7, 2019.

Next year's early summer meeting: June 15, 2019

Next year's annual meeting: July 13, 2019

1. Director, Bruce Bartley, with help of a dozen volunteers, plus Sam Clark and his backhoe, began a clearing process along Rim Road to help create a proper fire break for future evacuations.
2. Again, special thanks to Bill Fischer, who donated the use of his chipper to aid in the clean-up of the slash from the dead tree project. More work will be scheduled for later this year.
3. Statistics: HR Parcels: 287, HR Property Owners: 223, HR Voters: 80, HR Property Email ID's: 168
4. Rim Road US Forest Service special easement annual update was completed in May 2018. Director Dave Nemetz is pursuing a new approach for dust abatement including a grant for materials for 2019.
5. Director Bruce Bartley led the effort to seek grant funding from Wyoming State Forestry Division, to assist Hoback Ranches in improving the forest throughout the ranches, removing dead fall and standing dead trees, remaining from the beetle kill epidemic. (2016 State Bark Beetle Damage Mitigation Projects). The State of WY Forestry **again denied** any funding at this point **however** Sublette County Unified Fire Command is pursuing federal funds approval.
6. HRSID re-applied for a grant through Wyoming Game and Fish to replace the fencing on the entire ranches boundary with animal friendly fencing, where is has not been replaced by the Ranches or private property owners. The grant under the Red Desert Hoback Basin Mule Deer route project **WAS APPROVED**. The total applied for was \$462,400 which includes completed work, in-kind work, donations, Hoback Ranches annual funding for maintenance and \$128,000 grant funding from PAPO. **The grant funds will be spread out over a four-year period with HR volunteer labor assisting to lower costs, and some self-raised donations over the four years to complete the entire project. The life cycle of the fence is determined to be 25 years. Special thanks to Phil Damm, Wyoming Game & Fish for helping prepare and present the application.**
7. Volunteers restored road signs; painted Kiosk, sprayed weeds; cleared standing tall, dead trees that littered roads; cleared beaver blocked culverts; and fixed fences damaged by angry cows.
8. Snow came early in October, but levels remained at normal levels, giving the snow plowers a relatively mild winter to deal with.
9. Stephanie Housley and the Winter Committee raised adequate funds money to deal with snow at a normal-levels. Many people who came into the ranches daily or at least on a regular basis heard the winter committee pleas and donated to the snow removal process. Thank you.
10. Special thanks to Jim Gray for again letting HR use his property for critical winter parking.
11. The Board spent an inordinate amount of time, and emergency funds on legal advice regarding private road easements and covenant issues raised by the Winney lawsuit. Fortunately, both insurance companies finally stepped up to assist in the litigation. To date, Winney lawsuit cost the District 25,000+ and diverted critical management energy away from District issues.
12. There continues to be confusion on the Covenants, which are becoming more frequent in the HR community. **New residents are not being properly indoctrinated by either previous owners or real estate agents.**
13. District Rules & Regulations were updated, based on revised Wyoming statutes, replacing outdated 1997 regulations, and put in place after the June 16, 2018 public meeting held to review and address public input.