

NEWSLETTER

Bringing Our Community Together via Communication



2022 Ranch Budget

The Willow Brook Metro Board (WBMD) met on November 19 and adopted a budget for the forthcoming fiscal year, calendar 2022. The Board approved a budget which will increase property taxes +9% in the General Fund for next fiscal year, for two main reasons. First, major infrastructure improvements primarily in our water and road systems pulled down our reserve funds which now require rebuilding so that the total reserve is about equal to one year's spending in our General Fund. The Board has approved a General Fund Reserve Fee that will be used to build back the operating reserve. The Board feels the reserve should be about \$300,000 and is currently about \$120,000 so the 2022 budget sets aside \$33,000 to begin to build back the operating reserve.

Second, the budget continues to build on the improvements which have been made in the Ranch over the last several years by funding important new initiatives, improving the appearance of the Ranch, the quality of life, safety of the owners, and the value of our properties. These include:

- Replacement of one of our two working water wells

Editor's Note

These newsletters decrease in frequency as winter comes to Ruby Ranch and operations outside go inside. The chief exception to this rule is the fall budget meeting of the Willow Brook Metro Board, which operates the infrastructure on the Ranch including roads, water, trash, the Stables, the meadows, etc. The Metro Board allocates the property taxes voted by the Owners and sets the fees for water and trash services.

The primary focuses of this newsletter are on introducing four of our new neighbors and reporting key decisions taken by the Metro Board as they worked out the details of next year's Ranch budget. We hope you find this information both informative and helpful. As always, EJ Olbright welcomes any comments you have regarding the work and thinking of the Metro Board. Please send along comments to EJ at ejo@wbmetro.org.

Thanks as always to John Longhill for his spectacular photography! Also, thanks to Ashley Johnson and her family for their now-annual decoration of the main gate. It looks great Ashley!

- Replacement of our aging mechanical water meters with “smart” modern meters that are more accurate and provide constant cellular feedback on water usage
- An aesthetically pleasing signage package, covering the basics such as speed limits but also signage for the Main Gate
- Postal service on the Ranch, as service continues to disintegrate at the local Post Offices
- An upgraded stable area/trash enclosure system to improve the look of that area

Summit County is in a real estate boom, with housing prices up >25%. Ruby Ranch has at least kept pace with that increase and the Board feels that our success stems in part from the aesthetic and functional improvements made in recent years. This is the context for the 9% property tax increase and the decision to build on recent momentum.

Meet Our New Neighbors

The Ambrose/Glick family built the new home at the corner of Garnet and Jade Roads.

Christa Ambrose and John Glick are just finishing the final touches and landscaping on their new-build home at 66 Garnet Rd. Christa, John, their 2 children, Katie (8) and Eli (7), and 18 month-old Bernese Mountain Dog (Baloo) primarily reside in Boulder but spend most weekends and holidays at the Ranch. They have been renting ski homes in Summit for 15 years and are delighted to finally have a real home base.

Christa is a family physician at the People’s Clinic in Boulder where she serves the needs of the un- and under-insured. She has a strong commitment to care of vulnerable and marginalized populations. In addition to her day job, Christa is currently getting her Masters in Public Health to work on more “upstream” initiatives alongside her clinical work. Christa is from California but has spent significant time in both upstate New York and Chicago. Christa loves both the ocean and the mountains and enjoys skiing, scuba diving, boating, fishing, and entertaining.

John is also a family medicine physician. He is currently a clinician and the medical director at Yuma District Hospital in Eastern CO as well as the medical director for the nursing home in that area. John has been a pilot since he was 16 and flies his 1958 Beechcraft Bonanza to and from work. John loves to telemark, rock climb, mountaineer, travel and spend time with his family. Christa and John look forward to getting to know the Ranch community and are very grateful to their neighbors for putting up with a long, difficult build.



The Metcalf family bought the home formerly owned by Larry Hough and his family on Pearl Lane.

Hi! We are Pete and Debbie Metcalf. We moved to 264 Pearl Lane in October from Keystone where our family has enjoyed spending summers and winters since the early 90s. We split our time between Southwest Missouri and Colorado. Retirement has given us the opportunity to spend more days in beautiful Summit County. We have 3 sons, 2 daughter in-laws and 6 grandchildren. We look forward to meeting everyone.



Laura Tuck and Jim DeMocker bought the home formerly owned by Jane Peterson and Ken Cremer at the corner of South Ruby Road and Topaz.

Greetings to our new neighbors! We are Laura Tuck and Jim DeMocker, and we're delighted to join the Ruby Ranch community. As you drive the neighborhood (or look up the hill from the Target haha) you might see us scurrying about over the next month or two getting the house at 1305 S Ruby Rd settled. You might also see our son Brian and freshly minted new daughter-in-law Carly coming up to the house from their home in Highlands Ranch.

Laura retired in 2020 from her position as Vice President for Sustainable Development at the World Bank, and Jim retired in 2017 from his position as Director of the Office of Air Policy and Program Support at the US Environmental Protection Agency. We aren't leaving the DC area behind completely, though, since we plan to "commute" between our Ruby Ranch home where we look forward to hiking, skiing, and adventuring with Brian and Carly (and their awesome Australian Shepherd "Hops") and our daughter Tracy and son-in-law Grant's home in Leesburg, Virginia where we get to play with Blair, the first of our grandchildren (another is on the way!).



In a way, Silverthorne feels like a bit of a homecoming since Jim once worked as an instructor for Colorado Outward Bound and spent a good part of the winter of 1979 living in a Wildernest apartment and tagging along after his big brother who was working as a ski patrolman at Copper Mountain. So we have a little sense what Summit County summers and winters can be like, but we welcome any advice from the true veterans here in Ruby Ranch! Hoping to meet any and all of you soon!

Darby Holmes and Becky Tomasek bought the Festa property.

Hello everyone! Our names are Darby Holmes and Becky Tomasek. We recently purchased 632 Garnet Rd (“Bootlegger”). We are extremely thrilled to be here in the neighborhood full-time and can’t wait to meet everyone.

Prior to Ruby Ranch, we split time between our houses in Frisco and Denver. We are both native Texans (sorry)! but have been in Colorado for five years now. The pandemic has allowed us to both work remotely full-time, so we decided to fast-track our retirement plans thanks to such an incredible property becoming available.

For employment, Darby works as a Project Manager for Vestas (Danish wind turbine manufacturer) and Becky is a VP of Energy at Coorstek in Golden. In our spare time we both love to hike with our two dogs, Sophie (Yellow lab) and Truman (German shorthaired pointer).

Eagle’s Nest Firebreak

The US Forest Service has approved creation of a firebreak in the Eagle’s Nest Wilderness adjacent to our western boundary, beginning after the elk calving season next spring. This is the culmination of many years of fire mitigation effort by Ruby Ranch owners and the firebreak will mitigate what most people believe was our largest wildfire danger. A 200-foot firebreak will be cut under the direction of the USFS and we believe the work will be entirely funded in the USFS budget. The USFS will now create a “project plan” and your HOA and Metro Boards will work closely with them to facilitate implementation. Future newsletters will provide information on the “who/what/when/where” details of the plan as they are known.

Snow Plowing Protocol

Patrick O’Flynn, our Ruby Ranch Manager, provides a summary of his excellent work in the nearby “Manager’s Report.” Patrick has also completed a plan for plowing Ranch roads and the map, which is attached to this newsletter and was approved by the Metro Board at their November 19 meeting. Patrick’s approved plowing priority is based on a third-party traffic study done in conjunction with the paving a couple of years ago from Smith Ranch to our Stables. That study showed daily traffic of about 300 trips on the road up to the Stables from the gate, 150 trips both north and south from the Stables, and a lesser number of trips on the small, feeder roads. Plowing priorities will follow these traffic facts.



Ranch Manager's Update by Patrick O'Flynn

Hello Ruby Ranch homeowners. I would like to give an update on the happenings around the Ranch as we transition out of fall and into winter.

First, I would like to thank the homeowners for supplying the Ranch with a beautiful 2022 Ford F450 truck with a plow, sander, and flatbed attachment.

Much time and research were put into this purchase, and I believe we have produced a great truck for snow plowing on the Ranch, as well as a very functional truck for non-snow related tasks. I look forward to our first snowstorm, hopefully sooner than later. Continuing the topic of snow, we have completed the snow contracts for the 21/22 snow season. We had more interest than had been anticipated, which we are thankful for. We would like to thank all the homeowners for their interest in this service, and we hope that we can accommodate more if not all interested parties in the future. The final number of driveways taken on by the Metro District this year will be 15 for over \$18,000 in revenue. In total we wrote 21 quotes for over \$26,000 this year. I would consider these encouraging numbers for our first year of operation.

We have continued to prepare for this winter. We now have an account with Peak Materials north of town. We will be using a 5% salt/sand mixture for spreading on roadways and easements around the Ranch. We have prepared a snow plowing and snow removal policy for the board to review. This will be available for all homeowners. It will be guidelines on how we plow and remove snow on the ranch during and after a storm. We have continued to update, add, and remove road delineations on the Ranch. Green reflectors indicate the roadway, while orange reflectors indicate drainage. I have continued to gather information on the best options for rental snow removal equipment. As of now, when we determine heavy equipment is necessary, we will be doing daily rentals from Wagner Rentals in Silverthorne.

The Ranch Manager shop at the barn has been completed. I have moved tools and other supplies into the shop and have been setting up a workspace area. As we continue to gather tools and supplies, I will continue to improve this area. It is a great start to the shop, and I look forward to seeing how this space turns out.

We completed a light road maintenance application at the end of October. Grading was performed in the most troublesome areas, as determined by the Metro District. The operator hired to perform the application did a great job, and I consider this a viable option for future road maintenance needs.

Irrigation ditches were shut down in mid-October. Flow numbers at the head gate flume of all three ditches were recorded weekly and documented throughout the summer. Summit County requires that we submit these numbers to the water commissioner at the end of the water year, November. Numbers were reported for this year and the irrigation ditches are shut down for the winter season. Head gates will be opened again in May.

Work is continuing in several projects that are ongoing. I continue to explore options for updating our water meters within the Ranch. I have continued to research the process for bringing community Post Office boxes to Ruby Ranch. The signage project is ongoing, as well as continuing to update and revise our community GIS. The Cellgate program we use for our gate security has been updated several times now, as we have had several properties change ownership. Old homeowner accounts have been deleted, and new homeowner accounts have been created. Old gate RFID tags have either been migrated to the new homeowners or have been deleted. With nice weather in the forecast for the foreseeable future we will continue to repair and replace fence in our pastures as well as overseed common areas. Trash/recycling will continue to be monitored as well.

Thank you, homeowners for the continued support, I am very pleased with the Ranch Manager position. I look forward to what can be accomplished this winter.



Our Water System

Water fees for in-home consumption will also cost more in the coming years, reflecting the need to update/replace parts of a system that are as much as 40 years old and are wearing out.

Based in part on recommendations from the hydrologist hired by the Board to study our water system, the Metro Board is increasing the water base fee from \$41/month to \$55/month so that routine water maintenance and operator fees are covered by the base fee. Additionally, in the Water Operations Fund, a project reserve fee of \$49,500 is “pledged” for future water capital projects. This equates to \$75/month per owner.

As you’ll recall, Well 1 serving the southern half of the Ranch went dry late last summer and the Well’s pump burned out as a result. The Well is back online but restricted to pumping 5 gallons per minute rather than the 8 gallons previously. Well 1’s water is now cloudy with air in the water because the plastic piping in the well house needs to be replaced with copper piping, which is being done.

But in any case, the hydrologist recommends digging a new, deeper well to replace the 40-year-old well in place. The uphill storage tank supplied by this Well remains full, with 50,000 gallons of water available to fight any fires that might occur.

The hydrologist also recommends redrilling Well 3 (near the emergency road off Pearl) as a back-up to prevent future problems.

Lastly, but still water-system related, the Board currently has “smart” water meters in test on the Ranch, with plans to replace the aging, sometimes inaccurate meters in 2022. The new meters will allow owners to track water usage on their cell phones, minimizing the chance of “unpleasant surprises” and out-sized water bills discovered long after the leaks occurred. The new meters should also measure consumption more accurately and eliminate the need for physically reading meters at each home quarterly. The Board will inform owners re: implementation if/when the new meters are to be installed.

