

Property Management Committee Report
Submitted by Steve Boone, PMC Chair
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The year was an overall stable year, with no extraordinary events or needs.

Snow Removal:

Winter of 2016/2017 was a fairly robust snow season, with snowfalls falling fairly consistently from November to March, with a few late snowfalls in April and May. With the assistance of our snow monitors, the roads were maintained in a safe and passable state. The monitors, otherwise know as snow queens, are a vital resource in determining conditions and relaying needed info to Cecil. Our head 'snow queen', Phil Walters, has in the past provided the majority of the snow updates to both Cecil as well as the occupants in the canyon. This upcoming year, however, we'll need others to step up to fill his shoes when he's not available, as he will often be during the 2017/2018 snow season. The Walters have travel plans throughout the winter, and we'll need other eyes in the canyon to alert us and Cecil as conditions change.

Road Repair and Improvement:

Going into the fall last year there were several small projects that needed to be addressed this year, along with routine maintenance chores. Those small projects have been mostly accomplished, save for replacing private driveway culverts that were removed during the worst of the post-fire flooding. They will be installed in the next 6-8 weeks. Overall, I'm happy to report the canyon road system is in excellent shape.

Grazing Lease:

The PMC resolved last year to engage the Natural Resource Conservation Service, NRCS, to provide assistance to our association with regard to grazing. This assistance would include providing both a pre-graze assessment, for determining recommended herd size and graze length, as well as mid-graze assessment, to determine the overall health of the grasses during the course of the season. The office in Cortez was contacted in March, and we were informed they would not have the resources this year to provide a pre-graze assessment, but hoped to be able provide a mid season assessment. We're happy to say the office came through, after a bit of prodding on our part, with a mid season assessment. You may see from time to time a young man wondering the meadows named Shaan Bliss, a natural resource assessor out of Pegosa Springs who has been assigned to our association. He was here about 10 days ago and determined the grasses at that point healthy to continue grazing, on a week to week basis. He was here again yesterday, the Friday before this meeting, and reported the grasses were in relatively good shape. He saw minor signs of selective grazing in the southern part of the canyon, but overall, the canyon was healthy. He suggested the graze could continue for at least two more weeks. However, the PMC has determined, with the guidance of the board, the grazing season will end no later than 20 August. The cattle are currently scheduled to be removed on 19August. Going forward, Shaan and I discussed, beginning this fall, conducting random sampling and measurements of the variety of the grasses in the canyon, and track their growth throughout the year, pregraze, midgraze, and postgraze.

Varmints:

They're back, prairie dogs have again been spotted in EStR, specifically on the northeast corner of lot 20. And where's there's a few, there must be more. Please let anyone on the PMC know if any of these rodents are spotted, or if any obviously active mounds are observed. Remember, the governing documents prohibit discharging firearms in the association unless threatened with physical harm. I don't believe the argument can ever be made that a prairie dog can be life threatening, so don't take eradication by firearm into your own hands. The PMC, under the direction and approval of the board, will address the problem.

Weed Mitigation:

The fiscal year began with the retirement of Kenny Smith, our longtime weed control contractor. His services, as well as part of his operation, were taken over by Tyler Willbanks, owner of Rocky Draw Ag Services. Tyler is an extremely knowledgeable and tireless worker who we believe will be a tremendous asset to the association. He hit the ground running with an aggressive application up on the ridge and down along G3, then worked his way down Road 46 to the BLM. Our plans for the coming months are application of pre-emergents on the obvious large fields of dead cheat grass, as well continued spot treating of late blooming thistle and Mullein.

Elk Stream Ranch Entrance Portal:

The ponderosa log entry arch at our gate fell last year and the PMC was tasked with developing a replacement concept. That concept was presented to the board earlier this year and was met with tentative approval. The next steps, hopefully to begin in the coming months, is getting cost estimates, finalizing the design, and beginning construction as soon as the board approves.