

Property Management Committee Report  
Submitted by Steve Boone, PMC Chair

The year was a year of continued transition, with owners and the PMC adapting to last year's change of the association weed control policy. It was also a year in which we were all reminded of the threats we face living and owning property in a rural and rugged canyon. June 14 proved once again to everyone how challenging it can be living in a Wildland-Urban-Interface.

**Snow Removal:**

The winter of 2019/2020 proved to be one of moderate amounts of rain and snow. In contrast to last year's record amounts of snowfall, this year proved to be a series of moderate snowfalls broken by mild temperatures. This resulted in the association spending about 1/3 to 1/2 it's snow removal budget.

Re the new Road Monitor program, whereby key local members monitor the weather forecasts as well as survey the road conditions during and after snow events, proved to be very successful. Cecil, our road maintenance/snow remover extraordinaire, was able to be proactive in positioning his equipment at key positions prior to the heavier storms. He was also better able to be reactive in response to reliable reports from volunteer observers inside the canyon. Well done all! All in all, the new system of local road monitors and a responsive and experienced snow plow operator kept the roads open and passable, if not always easily drivable.

**Road Repair and Maintenance:**

Conversely, the routine maintenance of our roads, together with a very ambitious Elk Spring Ranch road improvement, the costs of which we pay two thirds of, challenged our annual road maintenance budget. In addition, the fire in mid-June and the resulting parade of the much appreciated fire fighting vehicles, especially up and down G3, caused extensive further damage to our roads. Fortunately, the increased spending on road maintenance was offset by underspent snow removal funds. Going forward, Cecil will address the standard, routine areas of concern. No extraordinary projects are anticipated at this time.

**Grazing Lease:**

As reported last year, the PMC and the board continue to engage Shaan Bliss, our representative at the Natural Resource Conservation Service, NRCS, to provide assistance to the association's management of our grasses, as affected by several factors, including moisture levels as well as grazing herd size and length of season. This assistance includes providing 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 grazing season. Finally, a post graze assessment will be accomplished, to be conducted early fall. Shaan Bliss, our resource assessor out of Pagosa Springs continues to be very responsive and proactive in providing the assistance we need. Again, this spring he came and did a pre-graze assessment tour of the canyon with the PMC chairman. The exclusion boxes installed two years ago were inspected. It was determined the grasses in the canyon, north to south, were relatively healthy and would support a regular grazing season with a moderate herd. With this information, and

with having had a moderate winter that had snow levels that, while below last year's record snowfall, were well above the recent years of drought level snowfall, the Committee determined the canyon would support a herd matching last year's herd of 30 pair plus one bull. We authorized, with the board's concurrence, a herd of 30 pair and 1-2 bulls. The herd is still present and will be removed upon the instruction of the board after considering input from the PMC. I'd like to now include some notes I received from Maddy Butcher, who while sitting on the PMC contributing in all areas of the PMC responsibilities, has played a very active role in organizing and managing the canyon's Grazing Policy. I'm including her recent report which I had asked for of a summary of this year's grazing season as pertains to herd management.

"The grazing has gone well this year, despite the fire and the drought. I've been helping Wayne with the 30 pair and a bull. During the fire, my dog and I moved them regularly, to keep them out of harm's way and to keep them away from wherever the fire fighters were gathering and parking. Since then, I have moved them north a few times and moved them off of people's property when requested. They often linger around the Boone's pond and parts south and might need a little prodding to explore grazeable acreage up G3. Aside from a few incidents, there have been far fewer issues than last year (when I moved cows multiple times from Elk Spring and spent a lot of time fence-mending along that boundary). I expect Wayne's cows will be headed out within the next few weeks. If you have any questions, let me know. Expect to see the portable corral set up soon and trucks will be in the canyon shortly. If you are driving while we're gathering them, please be respectful of the livestock traffic."

I'd like to reemphasize Maddy's thoughts and requests in her final paragraph. Slow down when encountering unaccompanied cattle moving through the canyon along the roads. And just as importantly, slow down, if not stop, when encountering the cowboys and their vehicles and equipment when they're moving into or out of the canyon. Second, I'd like to extend my gratitude to Maddy for all the volunteer time she puts into assisting in managing the herd. Thank you Maddy, your efforts are greatly appreciated.....

#### Weed Mitigation:

With the new ESR Noxious Weed Management Policy now firmly in place, Tyler Willbanks of Rocky Draw Ag Services began last year with new standing marching orders. Expressly, he has now been instructed by the Elk Stream Ranch board to aggressively attack weeds ONLY on the association roads and common elements. The weed management of individual lots throughout the canyon is now the sole responsibility of the individual owners. Tyler and Rocky Draw Ag, as well as other weed management outfits, are available to be contracted by individual owners to address their individual needs. It must be stressed, the control of weeds on individual lots are the SOLE responsibility of the individual owner. Failure to address their weed needs can and will result in warning letters of notice from Montezuma/La Plata County Weed Control. Failure of timely and effective response to these notices by the owner will lead to Enforcement Notices being sent. At this time, I know of at least 3 notification letters and at least 8 enforcement letters. Failure to heed these notices will result in the county contracting a weed control outfit to

address the weed problem, with the costs and possibly a penalty, forwarded to the owner. It is **STRONGLY** encouraged that individual owners, especially those not in the canyon on a regular basis, enter into private agreements with the weed management outfit of your choice to regularly address your mitigation needs. Noxious weeds on any one lot affects the health of all the grasses on adjacent lots. We all have a responsibility to keep our lots, as well as our canyon in general, free of invasive and aggressive weeds. Please, please, be responsible, and be proactive! If you have any questions, please refer to Policy #15-2018:Noxious Weed Management Policy, which can be found at the Elk Stream Ranch website, [elkstreamranch.org](http://elkstreamranch.org).....

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PMC Chair