

Elk Stream Ranch Property Stewardship Proposal

INTRODUCTION

Wildfire and invasive plants present a significant threat to the safety of residents and the natural integrity of the lands of Elk Stream Ranch. Both are a part of nature, unavoidable, and part of living in the wildland-urban interface. However, the potential impacts of both can be substantially reduced by prudent land stewardship.

THE PROPOSAL

We propose that the Elk Stream Property Owners Association require each property owner to complete a minimal amount of work on their property to reduce the wildfire hazard and/or to combat the spread of invasive plant species. It is suggested that each property owner should complete a minimum of \$500 worth of work each year on their property. Work completed in excess of this amount can be carried forward for one year (that is, an owner could complete work valued at \$1000 in 2007 to apply for both 2007 and 2008. For now, we propose that Elk Stream Ranch POA adopt this program for calendar years 2007 and 2008; if the program is considered successful, it can be extended.

DISCUSSION

For the past several years, the Elk Stream Ranch Property Owners Association has completed work on "community lands" to reduce the threat of wildfire and combat invasive plant species. This has included clearing fuel along Roads 46 and G.3 and weed-spraying the road rights-of-way and the central meadow area. The Association does not have the authority or responsibility to clear beyond the rights-of-way or to reduce fuel loads on private land. We all recognize that there are some properties with serious accumulations of fire fuel and robust communities of invasive plant species. Hazard conditions on any property threaten all properties; hazard reduction on each property adds protection to neighboring properties.

In effect, requiring property owners to complete work valued at \$500 each year for the next two years amounts to a special assessment of \$1000. A benefit for each property owner is that the work will be completed on their property specifically. A benefit for the Association is that fire-threat-reduction work and weed control will be completed on every property throughout Elk Stream Ranch. We envision that this may instill a greater sense of ownership to many of the non-resident owners. Some owners may elect to work together, improving our sense of community.

This program will complement, not supplant, the ongoing community fire and weed control activities of the Association.

Ideally, annual work completed on each property will include a measure of both fire threat reduction and invasive plant control. It is recognized that both require consistent annual attention to be effective. The Property Management Committee and Range Management Specialist can provide guidance and recommendations to property owners who wish to take advantage of their expertise and assistance.

THE MECHANICS

We recommend that this proposal be presented as a normal budgetary proposal during the ESRPOA annual meeting, not as a change to the bylaws or covenants. A majority vote will be required for approval.

Owners may contract to have this work completed or may complete the work themselves. Property owner work will be valued at \$125/person-day.

Property owners who do not wish to, or cannot, complete the required work during the year will pay the special assessment of \$500 to the Association with their next annual dues payment. Funds so collected will be available to the Property Management Committee for application to community fire threat reduction and invasive plant control needs (not restricted to any property).

The program will be coordinated by the Property Management Committee. The responsibilities of the PMC will include:

- Providing educational materials and references to property owners. We recommend the use of the Association web site for this.
- Maintaining a list of recommended contractors who can complete fire-fuel reduction and invasive plant spraying.
- Coordinating this work for non-resident owners who request assistance. Ideally, work for several owners might be completed by one contractor.
- Providing guidance to property owners who request this assistance.
- Documenting that the work is completed.

A MOTION

A draft motion for presentation at the annual meeting will be similar to the following:

"We move that all property owners within the Elk Stream Ranch subdivision be required to complete fire-threat-reduction and/or invasive plant control valued at a minimum of \$500 per property during each of the calendar years 2007 and 2008. Owners who fail to complete this work in any year will pay a special assessment of \$500 to the Association, due with their next annual dues payment. The Property Management Committee will provide reasonable assistance to property owners and assure compliance."