

# 2014 Property Management Committee Report

PMC Member - Steve Boone, Odin Christensen, Keith Payden, Philip Walters

## Snow Removal

2013/2014 was another relatively light snowfall year. However, as we've sometimes seen in the past, even a light snow year overall can still challenge our budget, depending on the demands of Elk Spring Ranch as well as that of maintaining an accessible G3. Fortunately, periods of snow were relatively light, and while there were some days when plowing might have been in order, communication and coordination between the owners in the canyon at those times determined removal was not required, saving the association unneeded expenditures. Having said that, the PMC is committed to always maintaining an accessible canyon for all our owners and licensees alike.

## Road Repair and Maintenance

Notwithstanding our other obligations, Weber Fire related road rehabilitation and drainage improvements were the primary focus of your PMC this year.

After the 2013 monsoon season continued to cause major damage to Road 46 and its drainage systems, we needed to develop a more robust plan to deal with the flood runoff from the Weber fire burn area. To kick this off, we sought guidance from professional hydrologists on what sort of field data we should gather. Philip Walters gathered the field data and mapped the cross drain (culvert) sizes, locations and watershed acreage. This was compiled in the report Elk Stream Ranch Post Fire Road Damage Observations dated October 29, 2013, which was shared with you.

Special thanks goes to Susan Behery, hydrologist with USGS for her guidance and feedback in the initial field data gathering effort, and for looking over Philip's relative culvert capacity calculations.

Additional thanks goes to Dr. Chris Rasmussen, fluvial geomorphologist and river restoration ecologist with Eco Mainstream Contracting LLC. Chris also reviewed the field data and analysis and provided Philip with tweaks to improve the analysis. Additionally, Chris drove and walked East Canyon with Odin Christensen and Philip Walters and gave us detailed input on drainage and erosion control measures we could take to mitigate the impacts from the Weber burn runoff.

Odin took detailed notes during the inspection with Chris which Philip then combined with the cross drain analysis to produce a draft drainage improvement plan. Some back and forth discussion of priorities between Odie and Philip resulted in the document Elk Stream Ranch Drainage Improvement Plan 2/24/2014. (This plan is on the Elk Stream Web Site under Director Meeting Minutes)The plan was blocked into three phases, each phase having a contractor portion and a volunteer portion. The phased approach was deemed necessary in order to maintain good financial control. The biggest impact items were placed in the earliest phases in order to maximize early benefit.

The contractor portion of the plan, executed by Thurman Excavation, called for 6 new large corrugated metal pipe cross drains, 4 of which represented new locations, the other 2 being placed to augment existing cross drains. All of the planned cross drains have been installed except for the Phase 3 location CL16.5 drain. We want to see how the CL16 to CL17 segment performs before going forward on another drain in that area. Contractor work also included building a number of stone filled wire cages called gabions as diversion backstops, and mattress gabions were placed at the outfall of some of the new large cross drains to limit scouring. Great thanks to Cecil Thurman and Oscar for their hard work, and for working with us to track and control costs.

The volunteer portion of the plan called for a number of items to be built by volunteers. Elk Stream resident volunteers contributed over 250 hours to build 37 erosion control structures along Road 46 during 2014. These structures were placed based upon the input from hydrologists, as well as our observations of flow related problems. These structures perform several functions; they reduce ditch cutting by spreading flow and reducing the flow velocity; they serve as hardened diversions to keep the cross drains filled with water instead of being bypassed; the reduced velocity allows debris to settle in the ditch instead of plugging the cross drains; and finally, lateral structures perform similar functions upon the flows before they enter the ditch. There are a few planned structures that remain to be built, (~10% of plan) but the highest priority items are complete.

Huge thanks is due to Odin and Phyllis Christensen for important contributions in developing the overall plan, and for building about 20 of the erosion control structures in the lower canyon, including hand building two of the planned gabions, saving on contractor costs. Philip

Walters acquired the required material, contributed labor to the structures in the upper portion, and provided backhoe services to dig in the structures. Additional thanks to Ken Surabian, Steve & Gem Boone, Keith Payden, Barry Stone and Linda Walters for helping build structures. Again, we estimate that in excess of 250 volunteer hours went into this project. Thank you all!

The cost estimate for the entire original plan was \$29,500, however some items originally planned for the contractor were done by volunteers, such as two gabions built by Odin and Phyllis, saving \$2,000, and some other items have been put on hold.

So, looking only at the work that has been completed, the plan was expected to require around \$21,500 to fund the work, \$18,824 of which would have been capital improvements. So far ~\$16,300 in capital items has been spent on this and \$2,091 in supplies for the volunteer built structures, so the work completed has cost ~\$3,100 less than estimated in the plan.

We can't guarantee that we are safe from future road damage; in fact we can pretty much promise we will still have some flood and mud damage in the future. We do expect that the magnitude of the damage will be much less, and we should see far less ditch cutting, culvert plugging and road surface scouring.

Again, heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped in the research, planning, and execution of this plan!

## Weed Control

The weed control program was again performed by Odin and Phyllis Christensen in the southern part of the canyon, and Kenny Smith and Premier Weed Control in the northern part, basically north of the driveway at lot 25. Major, major thanks to Odin and Phyllis, who as always, rise well above and go far beyond their fair share of weed mitigation efforts. We all owe them a great deal of gratitude. Regarding Premier, their diligence and success in the past warranted continuing with their services. Unfortunately, their efforts began a bit later than normal due to their early unavailability resulting from awaiting new state of the art equipment that was not delivered to them until early June. Once received, Kenny was in the canyon within days. One significant issue the canyon is faced with this year is an explosion of Cheat Grass. While it was a bit late to attack this weed in June, major efforts will be made in the fall to apply a pre-emergent to reduce its proliferation next spring.

And thanks go to Keith Payden, who last December drafted a letter to be presented by Kenny Smith to the Montezuma Weed Advisory Board. This letter requested reimbursement of herbicide costs incurred by Elk Stream Ranch in our efforts to regain control of noxious weeds which had exploded as a result of the Weber Canyon fire. Keith's efforts resulted in a reimbursement of approximately \$3800, which were returned to our general operating fund for future use. Thank you Keith for your diligence.

## Grazing Lease

Grazing options were discussed during a PMC meeting early in the year. It was pointed out that Steve Myers of the NRCS had provided his professional opinion the canyon would benefit from once again bringing cattle in to graze the canyon. Therefore, we again contracted with Wayne Robb to bring in about 50 pair of cattle````. They arrived in mid-June and should be out by the middle of August. Due to the general lack of available water, Wayne brought in one or two cisterns which are strategically placed in the canyon and are replenished by truck as needed. Furthermore, salt licks are in the canyon and routinely moved to ensure no excessive 'camping' of the cattle in any one area of the association. Thus far I have received no adverse reports. One minor issue which did arise was the need to clean out the cattle guard at Elk Stream Ranch's gate to ensure cattle could not traverse it. This was accomplished by Cecil Thurman and no further related issues have been reported. Appropriate documents have been filed with the county Assessor's office for tax purposes.