

WICKERSHAM ROAD NEWS

WICKERSHAM RANCH ROAD ASSOCIATION

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before printing this document.

FEBRUARY 1, 2022

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GATE COMBO CHANGE

FRONT GATE: **XXXX**
MIDDLE GATE: **XXXX**
DATE OF CHANGE: **2/13/21, SUN**
AFTERNOON

DUES DUE

2022 Road Dues are due and payable. Thank you to the Owners who have already paid.

Regular Dues (all parcels): \$500 per parcel
Ag / Comm: Amounts vary, see your invoice.

Dues invoices will be sent to Primary Owner for each parcel. Primary Owner is responsible for collecting all dues from partners.

Mail dues to:

Wickersham Ranch Road Association
c/o Carol Terrones
1103 Juanita Ave.
Burlingame, CA 94010

BIG THINGS

- Snot Hill Renovations this Spring
- Spring Fir Fest: March or April. Dates TBD. See article below.
- March Owner's Meeting: Wildland Fire Planning. Please suggest dates. See article below.

THANKS

Thanks to Dave Otero and Heinz Moser for spending a morning filling potholes along parts of Gibson Ridge and west of Black Oak Ridge at the end of December.

Rock was pulled from the quarry and placed in selected potholes for compaction by regular traffic.

We welcome Owners wishing to do volunteer work. Please let the Road Committee know ahead of time so that we can make sure work meets road standards and is supportive of road goals. In the past we have had Owners do volunteer work that undid valuable road work already completed. We've also seen Owners do work right before a formal project that was going to accomplish the same work.

The work Dave and Heinz did was valuable and fully supportive of overall road needs. Thank you.

Also: Thanks to Dave Otero for upgrading the combo locks at the two gates.

Finally, several trees have fallen across the road over the winter so far. Thanks to the Owners who have cleared the road when this has occurred. We're certain everyone appreciates a clear road when they see the evidence of a fallen tree moved off to the side.

ROAD WORK IN 2022

Two substantial projects are lined up for 2022.

Culvert at 4.43

The large culvert install at Mile 4.43 was originally the primary project for the year. It was likely to absorb nearly 100% of the annual budget (that's why we bought the pipes last year). We had budgeted between \$15,000 and \$18,000 for the install.

That plan was based on the possibility that we would have another light winter and could commit much of present resources to the work.

Now that we are seeing a normal winter, road surface needs are becoming more

important.

Snot Hill Selective Renovation

Over the entire road, Snot Hill is now one of the oldest surfaces. It was partially rocked in 2002, mostly outloped in 2003 / 2004, and rock was repaired at various locations in 2009. General surface grading occurred in 2019 but no rock renovation was done at that time. Snot Hill has had a number of non-critical “bleeders” for a few years now and they are reaching critical levels. Several have generated notable gullies, though not nearly as bad as was normal 20 years ago.

As always, we do not perform regular maintenance on every foot of road each year. That would break us and cause substantial shortages in maintenance resources. It would eliminate the possibility of maintenance-reducing improvements.

Instead we outlope and, where necessary, harden a road surfaces so that they can perform well for 5 - 15 years. Which means road quality in those sections slowly degrades until the end of service life of the last major maintenance.

Portions of Snot Hill are at the end of that service life.

Thus we will be performing a general maintenance and selective major maintenance on Snot Hill in Spring while ground moisture is still high.

Work will include rock application to sections in need, general surface grading where necessary and minor adjustments to cross slope and berms.

Snot Hill work will absorb most of our 2022 resources. We will budget between \$10,000 and \$15,000 for the work.

Most of Snot Hill has been structurally upgraded in previous projects. It has generally met the standards sought on the Long-term Maintenance Plan. The final component of the Long Term Plan was rock application / renovation at key locations.

Snot Hill is one of those locations.

Back to 4.43

The culvert install at 4.43 has two options to proceed:

We can choose to wait another year once we see how winter goes.

The present two-pipe situation is sub-standard but it remains functional, partly because the lower pipe was re-opened in 2019 and capacity from prior years is effectively doubled.

If it performs well this year, with somewhat normal rainfall, replacement can safely be delayed another year.

If we really want to install new pipes this year, installation will have to occur in August / September when the stream is fully dry. We'll also require a Supplemental Assessment of \$500 per parcel to ensure adequate resources in 2022.

That decision can be made after winter is over. Snot Hill is still the highest priority for 2022 road work.

ROADSIDE TREE WORK

Overview

The roadside veg. management work we've been doing along the road has three main goals:

1. Creation of a shaded fuel break along the road to improve access by fire fighters should they need to get to properties deep in the ranch. This also improves access and operating clearance for equipment performing maintenance on the road.
2. Position the road as a useful control line (PCL) for wildfire and prescribed burn management. By reducing fuel along the road, it becomes useful as a place to set backfires should a serious fire approach. It also becomes a valuable burn boundary for prescribed burns occurring above or below the road.
3. Simple beautification. The road is choked with invasives that would normally be controlled by natural fire. Reducing tree density and removing invasives opens the woodland to more natural conditions, allows views into the woods and down to the stream courses, and makes it easier to see wildlife (and approaching vehicles...).

In 2021 we initiated preliminary work along many sections of the road. Our goal was to test the extent of the need and model the likely costs should we decide to simply hire crews to do the work. That effort verified that roadside tree work could absorb as much as \$5,000 - \$10,000 per mile. Since we have about six miles of dense forest along the road that could translate to \$30,000 - \$60,000.

Clearly we don't want to burden the regular road maintenance resources with this, as the road already uses every penny.

That leaves three options:

1. We accomplish the task as a neighborhood volunteer effort.
2. We pursue a Supplemental Assessment that could double annual dues (if we want to accomplish the work soon.)
3. We seek outside resources (via wildfire mitigation grants)

The November Fir Fest was a great example of the Neighborhood option and we managed to treat about 1/2 mile of road. Plus we all had a pretty good time.

Everyone who participated made it clear that we should do it more often. **Big thanks, once again, to all who were there.** It was a successful day and fun just to get together and do some valuable work on our shared road. It was also great to get together afterwards and just hang out as a neighborhood.

Ongoing Work

Since November Fir Fest we've done some clean up of the piles

along the road and built several burn piles in openings along the road. These piles will be burned in early spring after they have seasoned a bit.

Martin Fornage has continued to work along his section of road chipping, cutting additional trees and doing some burning.

We will likely be cutting additional trees along these sections as we approach Spring.

Available Equipment Kit

I've purchased a Vermeer BC1000 chipper for my own use but it will be available to the Road Association for use along the road for chipping trees that are not located near sensible burn sites. Cost will be limited to fuel only. (I'll need to operate it.)

My excavator will also be available for stacking / moving additional trees from mid-February to early March so this will be a good time for a few of us to get together cut some more trees along the road. (I'll need to operate that as well.)

Big Picture

The emerging wildland fire planning effort west of Lake Sonoma is starting to focus on fuel breaks associated with wildfire control lines as a valuable first step in stabilizing the planning unit for fire resilience.

Wildland fire management largely depends on fuel breaks that slow a fire's progress and strategic lines where backfires can be ignited to remove fuel from the fire's path. Fire fighters require such features to be close to an active fire front but not too close.

The larger wildland fire plan has identified a number of key ridges that are good candidates for fuel treatments. As these proceed, the Tombs Creek / Wickersham Road becomes a critical asset that can link fuel breaks and control lines on various ridges.

Marshall has expressed increasing interest in improvements along our shared road and such work may be included in a grant application in the near term.

The work we've already done, and, hopefully will continue to do, can be quantified and included as a "matching" amount when preparing such a grant application. A higher matching amount means a higher score on a grant application.

What's Next

We will certainly arrange another Fir Fest next fall but it would be highly valuable to do some work on our road this spring, simply to better position it for the coming fire season. All fuel treatment benefits are analog so every 1/4 mile counts.

So we should all look at possible dates for a Spring Fir Fest in March or April.

WILDLAND FIRE PLANNING

Work on the Lake Sonoma West Wildland Fire Management Plan is proceeding. Much effort has been put into creating accurate and complete base map information.

This work has included mapping accurate topo and vegetation conditions, assessments of highest risk areas for impacts from both regular and catastrophic wildfire, and initial outreach to owners outside of the Wickersham Ranch.

The plan is generating more interest from our neighbors and hopefully that will peak this year.

A separate news update for the Lake Sonoma West plan will be sent to the wider ownership audience.

Wickersham Specific Notes:

First Grant Application In:

As part of the larger Lake Sonoma West plan we have submitted an application for participation in the 2022 Sonoma County Vegetation Management Grant. The application was for \$250,000 to perform initial ridge top veg. management along the Gualala / Russian River watershed divide. This is an important first step in the overall Planning Unit strategy as it creates fuel breaks and Potential Control Lines (PCL) along a critical ridge. The ridge crosses Wickersham/Tombs Creek Road at The Gap.

This project will become a key control / management line for future wide-area treatments that may include prescribed burning.

Decisions on awards of grants are expected by mid-February.

We've worked with key land owners affected by the project and are seeking to expand it as we reach out to additional owners. We also worked closely with Marshall Turbeville in developing scope and language for the application.

Ongoing Mapping / Recon:

I've toured a number of properties in the planning unit and am trying to arrange more tours of individual properties within the Wickersham to validate geographic knowledge of properties so they can be woven into the larger plan. These will benefit the larger plan and we can also talk about owner strategies for fire preparation around camps and on strategic portions of any parcel. Please reach out to me if you'd like to drive or walk your property.

Owner's Meeting:

We'd like to host another **Wickersham Owner Meeting** in March to update everyone and start talking about likely projects to pursue as additional resources become available.

This will be an in-person meeting at Clary Hall and we'll include Zoom access for Owners who can't make the drive.

Please send preferred dates. Friday evening is still best for people driving up to the ranch.

We will hopefully be scheduling some meetings with the larger LSW neighborhood soon after March.

“And what are you getting out of this Martin...?”

My initial interest in wildland fire planning for a larger area started with concern for my own property. I’ve studied wildfire for about 25 years (since I first bought property at the Wickersham) and one fact has become very clear: **fire is a neighborhood thing.**

Fires come over ridges, up valleys, along grasslands and are blown across lakes and freeways. They travel long distances in a short time and they can change course like tornados. For any of us, our biggest wildfire threat is likely not on our own property but somewhere out in our larger neighborhood. Thus the only way to reduce the impacts of fire on our properties is to help our neighbors do so on their properties.

Wildland fire planning is genuinely a neighbor-helping-neighbor effort.

My company is developing a unique approach to wildland fire planning that bridges key gaps in standard planning methods. It includes a robust project identification and management structure modeled on long term facilities work rather than typical land use planning. It utilizes a new approach to measuring context and environmental baselines so that projects can occur with fewer strings. The Lake Sonoma West effort is a model of this method.

Since it’s in my neighborhood, we are performing this work on a pro-bono basis. We’re asking nothing of our neighbors except participation in the planning effort. When we do actual project management any compensation that occurs will be funded within the relevant grant for that project. In case anyone asks... ;)

REVISED AG / COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL DUES

Last year we shared the proposed Ag/Comm/Industrial dues policy. We advised that we would put it in place this year. There were no comments or exceptions so it has formed the basis for the Ag/Comm dues assessment. It currently only affects two properties: #37 and parcel 19.

Key Points:

- Ag/Comm/Industrial assessment will be based on road mileage to better reflect actual impacts of increased trips.
- All commercial uses that generate increased trips will be assessed. This will apply to commercial cannabis operations, other ag operations and any commercial operations that generate trip counts higher than normal recreational uses or increased use of vehicles that cause damage to the road beyond normal passenger vehicle / light

truck travel.

- Full time residential uses that generate increased trips will also be assessed at 1/2 regular dues (presently \$250.00.)
- Initial assessment will be on an honor basis, similar to the way timber harvest impacts are currently reported. If your operation generates higher than normal traffic, and thus a higher impact on the road, please voluntarily participate in the Ag/Comm assessment and the Residential assessment.
- Substantial Project Assessment: Substantial projects generating one time excess vehicle trips will be assessed in the year the work occurs. Assessment will be similar to timber harvest (which will occur under this category) and will be based on loads, trips or other appropriate metric.

Ratification of this policy will be by ballot in March after we discuss the matter at the March Owner’s Meeting.

ROAD USE ISSUES ALONG MILE 1

The tenants at Joe White’s old place near Mile 0.5 have had some issues with trespassing around several of their gates along Mile 1.

I don’t think it’s any of the Wickersham Owners but they have asked us to remind our guests and vendors that the road is private and all property along the road is off limits without expressed permission of the land owner.

Also a reminder that the wide spot near mile 0.20 is still the official Park and Ride spot for anyone leaving vehicles near the front gate. There were complaints (aimed at me) for allowing a guest to park a vehicle elsewhere.

Temporary parking for heavy equipment going in or out is OK just past the front gate.

ROAD USE REMINDERS

The following is the regular reminder about use of the Road. Please share this with all guests and vendors.

Please advise all road users that the road crosses private property and is maintained for access and egress only. All safety is the responsibility of the road user and no liability is assumed by any property owner or any member of the Road Association or the Road Committee.

RESOURCES

SONOMA COUNTY EMERGENCY INFORMATION (SoCoALERT)

<https://socoemergency.org/>

CAL FIRE INCIDENT INFORMATION

<http://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/>

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/>

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/regulations/>

SONOMA COUNTY SHERIFF

<http://www.sonomasheriff.org/>

SONOMA RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

<https://sonomarc.org/>

(707) 569-1448

KEYS FOR THE BIG IRON GATE

Keys are available for the Big Iron gate from the Road Association. The cost is \$10.00 each. Please contact Martin Dreiling or Dave Otero if you'd like one.

INFORMATION

WICKERSHAM RANCH ROAD ASSOCIATION

c/o
1103 Juanita Avenue
Burlingame, California 94010

e-mail:
wranch@dtbarch.com

Road Committee:

Martin Dreiling, Parcel 8,9
md@dtbarch.com

David Katz, Parcel 25, 26
davidkat@sonic.net

John Machado, Parcel 12
cynmachado@comcast.net

Ranch Website (by Tami Bobb, David Otero)
“<http://www.wickershamranch.com>”

Thanks to Tami and Dave for their efforts in sharing space on their personal ranch site for our benefit.

All road use is explicitly at your own risk. Opening of the front gate and entry by any property owner, their guests, or any other individual constitutes acceptance of these terms.

Please remind all guests that the road crosses private property and that there is no hunting allowed from the road on the properties of others, unless specific permission has been given by the property owner.

The Usual Stuff:

- Always lock the gate, regardless of whether it was unlocked when you got there.
- Make sure the combo is NOT left on the lock or the lock will not lock. Spin the numbers before locking and test the lock to make sure that it is locked.
- If you wish to leave the gate open for a car that may be following, please wait at the gate while it is open.
- Please pick up litter and debris that does not belong on the road. If you are at the Front Gate and see litter, please assist in picking it up, even if it's not yours. This makes the Front Gate more attractive for all users.
- Please remove rocks or trees that have fallen onto the road. (If you remove a large tree or perform other substantial work in keeping the road open, please advise the Committee so we can say thanks.)
- Please get permission from the Owners of the front ranch to park cars at the Park and Ride area. Contact:

Hugh Reimers

hugh.reimers@outlook.com

831 682 0245

Please park at the Park and Ride area near mile 0.20. This way the Owner/Tenants can tell that you are a guest and not a trespasser.

- Please drive slowly and carefully.

Keep our Road Washboard Free

- All vehicles using the road should be All Wheel Drive or