

# WICKERSHAM ROAD NEWS

WICKERSHAM RANCH ROAD ASSOCIATION

Please consider the environment  
before printing this document.

JANUARY 20, 2023

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## DUES DUE

Road Use Dues for 2023 are due and payable immediately.

Annual dues are **\$500.00** per parcel

Commercial dues are prorated for length of road and precise amounts will be listed in your Parcel Statement.

Annual statement will also be included in your Parcel Statement.

Thanks to those who pay early.

## AND THIS SILLY BIT

For efficiency in communication everyone should assume that references to “Wickersham Road” also include the portion that was renamed “Tombs Creek Road.” It is tedious to type Tombs Creek Road / Wickersham Road every time we need to refer to the road in this newsletter and in other communications.

We will refer to Tombs Creek Road distinctly for issues pertaining only to that section of road or where there might be legal or technical implications.

But anytime we simply write “Wickersham Road” it will mean the entire road from the front gate to Mile 12.2 (or so...)

## THANKS

Thanks to Owners or Guests who have cleared fallen trees during the recent rains.

Thanks to all who have stayed off the road during rains. This helps the road surface last longer and reduces near-term maintenance costs.

## ROAD WORK IN 2023

### Rain?

Remember rain? It’s starting to look like a normal year at the Wickersham. Rain amounts are reported variously as approaching 40 inches for the year. Lake Sonoma is about 60% full which is 99% of historic normal for this time of year.

It’s highly unlikely that things are generally back to normal, but this year is looking like it might be a proper wet year. Maybe...

The continuous rain the last few weeks has required some immediate attention so we have had crews on the road at various times clearing ditches and culverts, and taking care of a few critical dewatering issues.

The road has performed well and nothing has occurred that is not normal. It’s a rustic rural road and this is what used to happen in winter. In fact it was often much worse before the road was improved to the level it is now.

But... the wet winter means we will shift priorities slightly for the 2023 work.

### The Gap

We will likely have increased surface grading repairs this spring over what was planned (which was none...). This means we will shift resources from the Gap, where we planned on extensive rock application to other areas of the road.

In fact, the Gap has performed well and the slop has been limited to the west side where it usually occurs.

Martin Fornage has offered the use of nearby rock for the Gap. We will use some of that rock to address the slop on the west side of the Gap but may not rock the entire planned length of 1/4 mile. This will still improve the winter situation there.

### Culvert at 4.43

We are still planning on installing the big pipes at Mile 4.43 once the streams are fully dry in late summer.

The existing pipes handled this year’s flows (so far) with one period of blockage of the upper pipe (which is severely damaged anyway). But once cleared, the lower pipe handled most of the drainage except for the periods of flash flood during the heaviest downpours.

## Incidental Culverts

There are three small culverts (Snot Hill, 2 Mile Hill) that have been blocked at the outflow for several years. These have been non-critical culverts because very little water feeds them. This year they did send some water over the road.

These are easy fixes requiring short lengths of pipe so we are pricing new pipe and may choose to replace these this year when we have the right equipment nearby.

## The Hairpin

The steep hairpin at Mile 7.69 (Bottom of Middle Snot Hill) has always been difficult. It collects a lot of water and the drainage is confused. The amount of surface water continually erodes surface rock and generates gullies.

It also has a very steep grade on the outbound approach and then turns sharply. If a vehicle is sliding it can easily go over the edge.

We have been considering a substantial alteration to the uphill grades so that the outbound approach is closer to level. Since the surface is already degraded and the applied rock is nearly gone, this will be a good year to adjust that grade.

It can be easily accomplished with a day of dozer work and we have a capable machine out at the ranch already.

Thus it is feasible that we may take care of that this spring.

## Dewatering Upper Snot Hill

We have had a persistent problem near the top of Snot Hill with downhill gullies from road water.

It has been non-critical and, in fact, was not a candidate for the NOAA grant we were pursuing years ago because it doesn't cause a silt problem in the streams below. The water dissipates before it enters Tombs Creek.

But the gullies have approached the road this year and so it's time to address that.

We have done remedial work to get us through the season but this section will be a candidate for some grade adjustment to send the water in different directions.

## Signage

We're still planning on installing an informational sign past the front gate. Since the Front Ranch has sold to a known owner, we are not in as much of a rush which means we can design a more attractive sign.

Once a revised design is complete we will initiate a sign order and proceed to install it.

## LONG TERM ROAD WORK

General Plans for road projects over the next several years include the following. These are target goals:

**2023: Rock the Gap, Partial**

**2023: Install big pipes at Mile 4.43**

**2023: Structural grade changes at the "Hairpin" (Mile 7.69)**

**2024: Incidental rock renovation on portions of Snot Hill. Additional rock beyond Mile 11.82**

**2024: Develop rock source at Front Ranch and rock key corners, road sections. Mile 0.60-0.80, 1.17.**

**2025: General grade maintenance at worst sections. May include rock application. May include structural changes near Mile 3.**

**2025: Replace several deficient culverts on 2 Mile Hill, Front Ranch**

**2026: Replace several deficient culverts on Snot Hill**

**2026: General grading refresh, approx 50% of road**

All such plans depend on resources available and how much we need to spend on repairs should we have rough winters.

As always, plans evolve and change and new priorities may arise. But this list reflects the most likely large tasks on the horizon as indicated in the Long Term Master Plan.

Incidental tasks will also be included or may take precedent.

## ROADSIDE TREE WORK

We have no plans for another Fir Fest this year. Instead the Wickersham SFB/SCL project will address most tree issues along Wickersham Rd. That project will be funded either by the Sonoma Co. Ag & Open Space Grant or a Cal-Fire Grant.

We are currently working on those grant applications as part of the LSW Plan.

### However

If you see a tree or situation that needs attention, feel free to address it. If you do any roadside Veg. work please stack the debris along the downhill side of the road where it can be accessed for chipping or burning.

If you throw the branches over the side we still have a near-term fuel problem. It's better to stack them for future dispatch.

## WILDLAND FIRE PLANNING

From now on most discussion about Fire Planning will occur on the Lake Sonoma West mail list unless it is only relevant to Wickersham Owners. If you are not subscribed to that list please let me know. The last posting was earlier this month on 1/9 so if you didn't get that you may not be on the list.

**Wickersham Specific Notes:****Wickersham Neighborhood Workshop**

The two meeting dates available for a Wickersham Workshop are:

**Friday, Feb 10**  
**Friday, Feb 17**

**Clary Hall**

Please let us (Martin) know your preferences as soon as possible.

We will be looking at maps and talking about likely near term projects that make sense. These may include:

- **Wickersham Shaded Fuel Break / Strategic Control Line (2023):** Affected landowner participation.
- **Tier 2 Shaded Fuel Breaks / Control Lines:** Possibly occurring on various properties and allowing Fire Department access deeper into the ranch properties during a fire.
- **Areas of Refuge:** How do we get started on these? Requires landowner commitment.
- **Wide Area Veg Management:** Initial wide area fuel treatment projects, prescribed burns, hybrid projects.

**Early Session:** “Personals” and strategies for individual property

Separate invitations and notifications will be sent.

**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.

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 there is no hunting allowed from the road on the properties of others, unless specific permission has been given by the property owner.

**Basic Road Courtesy**

Anytime you encounter anybody on the road that you don't recognize it is entirely reasonable to ask them who they are and which property they are visiting. These are all private properties and we are all interested in just who might be fiddling around back here.

When a car approaches that you don't recognize, slow down, roll your window down and act like you expect them to do the same.

If someone asks you who you are, it's not rude. It's a practical way that we all get to know who's who out back.

Please remind any of your guests that they should identify themselves and which property they are visiting. That means they should stop and chat with anyone who looks interested.

We all get a little concerned when cars we don't recognize go speeding past without so much as a wave. And there seems to be more of that going on these days.

Besides how are we going to stretch our drive time out to 2 hours if we don't stop and B.S. with everyone we meet... ;)

**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:  
**Ken Wilson**  
**ken@wilsonwinery.com**  
**(We get no response from Ken on any emails we send)**  
**(No phone number available yet)**  
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.

## RESOURCES

**NORTHERN SONOMA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
(NORTHSoCo FIRE)**  
707 857 3535

**FIRE CAMERAS: ALERT WILDFIRE (TWO SITES)**  
<https://alertca.live/cameras>  
Best Cameras: Oakridge 1,2; Pine Mtn.

<https://www.alertwildfire.org/region/northbay/?camera=Axis->  
Best Camera: Rockpile

**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/>

### KEYS FOR THE BIG IRON GATE

Keys are available for the Big Iron gate from the Road Association. The cost is \$20.00 each. Please contact Martin Dreiling or Dave Otero if you'd like one.

## INFORMATION

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### Road Committee:

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David Katz, Parcel 25, 26, [davidkat@sonic.net](mailto:davidkat@sonic.net)

John Machado, Parcel 12, [cynmachado@comcast.net](mailto: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.

### Keep our Road Washboard Free

- All vehicles using the road should be All Wheel Drive or 4WD at ALL TIMES.
- Please use 4WD or set your All-Wheel Drive to 4WD/ increased traction mode. (This may require you to turn a knob to a picture of trees or a snowflake on some cars...)
- Don't let the vehicle decide or you may still have micro-slips that generate washboards.