

WICKERSHAM ROAD NEWS

WICKERSHAM RANCH ROAD ASSOCIATION

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before printing this document.

JUNE 19, 2024

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DUES DUE

2024 Regular Dues were due on December 31, 2023. The following parcels still show outstanding dues (including past due amounts from prior years):

\$250 Parcel 23 Combs
\$500 Parcel 25 Katz
\$500 Parcel 26 Katz
\$500 Parcel 32 Anderson
\$4,000 Parcel 34 Uri Ranch
\$1,800 Parcel 37 Beal

Apart from URI Ranch (which is likely uncollectable until the parcel sells) there is no excuse for past due amounts. This is real money that we need to keep the road in shape. If you don't pay everyone else pays more.

We would like to avoid draconian policies such as annual penalties, removal from the mail list, suspension of voting rights and filing of liens.

GATE COMBO CHANGE

Normally we would change the combos about now however we are going to wait until the Tombs Creek Project is complete and access by the Contractor is no longer required.

Expect a combo change sometime in July.

THANKS

Thanks to David Otero for getting the key lock at the Big Iron Gate repaired (again!!!). This time there was internal breakage in the lock coupled with a worn key problem. It seems that worn brass (soft) keys can be removed from the lock without fully rotating the cylinder, thus making it impossible for the next user to access the lock.

Dave has requested that all old keys be returned to him so he can replace them with hard steel keys.

Please refrain from using old keys if you're still carrying them.

TOMBS CREEK PROJECT STATUS

LSW: Strategic Control Network Phase 2, Las Lomas / Tombs Creek Road

The Tombs Creek Project is nearing "completion."

As most who have seen the work will attest the ladder fuel reduction and general veg. treatment has resulted in a whole new forest. The views into and through the forest have made Wild Cattle Creek and upper Tombs Creek visible for the first time in decades. The resulting tree count and forest density will promote forest health and over the next few years and we should see the canopy fill in and better shade many parts of the road and roadside.

As everyone also can see we had a higher incidence of leaf scorch in many areas of the project than was expected.

This mostly resulted from an extended rainy season that kept ground fuels wet well into the burn window and made early burning difficult.

It was also the result of the decision to cut early and allow fuels to cure longer before burning. While this sounded like a good idea it meant that flash fuels burned hot and fast while larger fuels remained too wet to ignite.

Finally some of the burning was performed using head fires (fire moving uphill) which cause faster, hotter burning while failing to consume fuel. In this kind of treatment backing fires (burning down hill) give better results, burning slower and cooler but actually consuming more fuel.

Finished Burning

Given the present hot conditions and the amount of dry fuel we have in the unburned areas we are ceasing burning for the year. Some burning will be delayed until fall and some areas will not be burned at all. Project scope will be modified as follows:

- Portions of the treated areas where cut fuels are moderately dense will be left as "lop and scatter." This option is available in the Project Specs. It will allow material to remain and decay naturally, though it will take a couple

of years for this to occur. Fuel values will decline with each rainy season.

- Portions of the treated areas where remaining fuels are dense will be burned in the Fall when conditions are more favorable for a thorough, lower temperature burn. There are several jackpots along the road where downed fuel density is high, partly from project work but also from trees downed by the snow two years ago as well as some large trees that came down this winter.
- Portions of the treated area where burning has occurred but small fuels remain will be stacked into piles for burning in the fall.
- The roadside will be cleaned throughout the Work Zone. Remaining material will be moved downslope away from the road or piled for pile burning.
- Because conditions have gotten so dry remaining grading will be surgical, addressing damage caused by the work, ditch cleaning and selected areas that are very rough.

What to Expect

All burned areas will start improving in appearance immediately. As scorched leaves fall the trees will start looking greener. The Live Oaks have already started leafing out and you can see tan areas starting to turn green. Scorched needles and leaves will start falling, turning the black ground tan. And within a month or so plants and grasses will start re-sprouting.

The big recovery will start when the rains come in Fall.

As always, anyone is welcome to come over and see the various stages of recovery in my forest. Areas that were burned this time last year are almost fully recovered.

Overall We're Ahead

While we had hoped for a 100% burn over the entire Work Zone, the amount of fuel reduction that has been accomplished is substantial. Recall how thick the forested areas were before we started.

We now have near 100% ladder fuel removal for the extent of the Work Zone, about half of the flash fuels are burned off and the remaining fuel is more compact and close to the ground.

While the remaining fuel can carry fire it is likely that any fire will be less severe because of the ladder fuel reduction. If we don't have a fire this year, remaining ground fuels will pose even less of a threat next year.

FUEL BREAK MAINTENANCE

Several Owners have asked about maintenance and what happens when all this stuff grows back.

First it's important to understand that most of the ladder fuels will not grow back. In shaded conditions most trees won't sprout new branches down low.

Second, where shade is increasing grow back of ground fuels will be slowed. Sprouts that we see now will not pose an increased fire threat for a number of years because the ground litter is reduced and young tan oak and maple sprouts can't carry fire without substantial ground litter.

It's anticipated that maintenance will be required no sooner than three or four years. That maintenance will not be anything like the present "renovation." It will likely involve casual burning or brush-whacking of sprouted material.

So who does this maintenance?

Forest health is generally be the responsibility of the landowner. It is our job to keep our lands healthy and we have all learned some hard lessons in recent years: mostly that nature won't take care of it for us (unless we let nature use fire.) If we own forest lands we need to take care of those lands.

Grant funded fuel projects like Tombs Creek are one-time capital improvement projects. They are substantial renovation projects addressing decades of deferred maintenance.

Once renovation is complete, it is the landowner's responsibility to keep things in order. In many cases this will include what should become causal periodic fire use: the occasional burning of lands as fuels re-accumulate, suckers sprout and stuff just grows.

Since Tombs Creek Road is a common asset used by the entire Wickersham Road Association, the road and its surrounds should be maintained for fire tolerance as part of the maintenance responsibilities of the Road Association. It would not be fair to expect one landowner to maintain a section of road that 30 neighbors use.

It's also not practical to burden the current Wickersham road maintenance budget. That resource is just about perfectly matched to current road needs and has no room to spare.

Instead we will be proposing a Veg. Maintenance Plan supported by a permanent fee on top of the regular road dues.

We will present this proposal to the Owners for discussion, debate and a vote later in summer. Such a fee will be collected each year with regular dues and used periodically to perform veg. maintenance on selected sections of the road. This will be an ongoing task.

AOR BUILDOUT

The AOR is functionally complete. It requires only signage installation (by end of June) some minor painting on the existing posts and staking at the helipad corners and key perimeter corners (for mowing guides.)

AOR Maintenance:

The AOR is ready for mowing. As noted previously annual mowing is the responsibility of the affected landowners. This means the six or eight properties that most benefit from the presence and function of an AOR. It's a neighborhood thing.

John Machado has volunteered to do the bulk mowing as he has the mower deck out there. There is also fine mowing and weed-eating required close to posts, rocks and other tight areas.

It appears that last year's burn piles were not burned so they will wait until fall or winter.

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
- 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 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.

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

WICKERSHAM RANCH ROAD ASSOCIATION

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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.