

IMPORTANT NEWS AND NOTICES FOR **ALL 9 MILE RANCH LAND OWNERS**

PLEASE READ

This is a newsletter from the board of the 9 Mile Ranch HOA, created to inform you of important notices and issues, and we ask that you take the time to read it thoroughly.

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SEE ENCLOSED SOLICITATION FOR CANDIDATES for DIRECTORS ELECTION!

ROAD REPORT & UPDATE

This winter brought a lot of ice, creating dangerous driving conditions for a long period of time. Sanding was required more than past years for safety. Sanding may become an increasing cost in years to come. Please see the related article on page 2 for greater possible solutions.

Once the roads clear they will be evaluated for needed spring road work. This includes clearing culverts and crowning the roads. These actions are important for the roads to be able to handle the spring melt and other wet weather conditions. We'll pick up where we left off last fall with new work this spring. You can go to the HOA website to read last fall's Road Report and the November 2020 Newsletter to see plans for continuing road work to come.

There are also several road sections that have needed serious improvement since the beginning of the Ranch 20+ years ago. All Lots are guaranteed under our CCRs to be provided access to using Ranch roads, and these road sections are not adequate year-round. One repair is scheduled for spring and the others will require that the HOA will vote to secure funds for; more will be reported about this in the next communications to you.

Presently the HOA has \$17,000 of special assessment funds ready for gravel placement. Fall 2020 road work was scheduled to be able to place some of this gravel, but the early onset of winter changed those plans too. Gravel will start being placed this spring, as fast and as much as we can depending on haulers' time schedules and the availability of gravel.

When more workable material is placed on the roads the new HOA road rake can be used even more. Past neglect on the roads outpaced the replacement material for many years, thus many of our roads are down to base, creating boulder heads sticking up. Those boulder heads cause major problems for road maintenance and snow plowing. The 2019 special assessment for gravel and a road rake has been a blessing for the HOA in this process, and last fall the HOA gained back about 7% of the purchase cost of the rake from the savings of just one raking by owning the rake instead of paying a contractor to use their rake. Note that all special assessments funds are being spent strictly for gravel now that the road rake has been purchased.

LAWSUIT AGAINST OUR HOA

James Mathis, member of the HOA, filed what the Board and HOA legal counsel believe to be a frivolous lawsuit against the HOA in December 2020. You can see the timeline of documents regarding this issue on the HOA website. The HOA insurance company is now also involved. Presently, the suit is in the hands of the HOA attorney and no court hearings have occurred yet; we will be updating you on the HOA website.

CONTACT and FEEDBACK

Remember to keep checking the HOA website for updates and information on all subjects. Please do contact the Board if you have any questions or comments you want to share. Contact information is on the website.

HOA MEETINGS via ZOOM

The HOA is working to conduct meetings through Zoom video conferencing. The Board used Zoom for its January 2021 meeting, and now we would like the membership to be able to join our Board meetings... it may not be smooth and it will likely have technical issues but we'll give it our best! The next Board meeting is March 31, 2021. If you would like to attend via Zoom, please refer to the HOA website (9mileranchhoa.org) for instructions to join the meetings. Instructions will be posted by March 15, 2021. The Board will open up the meeting for HOA members comments and questions after the Board completes its business.

COVID-19 affected our HOA with regard to open Board meetings and last year's Annual Membership Meeting. Our meetings were held at the Oroville High School commons room, allowing for members to be present and speak. Then COVID-19 hit. Everything changed. Being volunteers with limited time, the Board coped with this situation moving forward with business and communicating to the members by posting our meeting minutes ASAP and informing through newsletters. At this moment, Okanogan County is still in Phase 1; not allowing in-person meetings. Nothing beats face to face basic human connection. It is also a concern that internet service for some Ranch residents is inadequate, but this is what we are left with right now.

WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE PROJECT: BETTER SANDING SCENARIOS

This winter we experienced the reality of the need to create greater capacity to sand icy Ranch roads for winter driving safety. Our HOA is moving more toward municipality-type and sized needs to some degree; we manage 32+ miles of year-round roads with a growing volume of use and residents.

This subject has many complicating factors that have and continue to make it challenging... it is relatively easy to hire a contractor to spread sand but everything else needed to support the subject are major issues:

- Larger quantities of dry stored sand are needed, without greater costs, to access and distribute on the roads at a faster pace.
- Sanding requires loading trucks using a constantly-available loader stationed at the sand storage site.
- Sanding costs at this time include long, expensive transportation fees; we need a very local, easy-to-access-and-load supply of dry sand.
- With our own dry sand supply, and available loader close by, any contractor could access it; this would provide us guaranteed sanding service even as sanding contractors may change or increase in number.
- There is a potential solution...

Right now the Road Committee is developing a proposal for stable and adequately-sized sanding capacity within the parameters above, involving a small investment of HOA ownership, and letting private sources provide the rest. The scenario being considered and developed for potential right now is leasing a spot at an existing commercial mini storage facility at the base of Nine Mile Ranch in Oroville where sand can be stored dry and the proprietor's constantly-available tractor can be accessed whenever our sanding contractors need it to load sand. The HOA would own and install a low-cost sand storage structure there that would be almost all portable so that it could be easily disassembled and relocated if our HOA progressed to owning its own facility one day. We have procured preliminary agreement from a mini storage owner – to have a low-cost 10 year lease for the site space and the tractor use, with all tractor maintenance and fuel provided by the owner. At this moment here are the features that appear possible from preliminary indications:

- Sanding contractors can be changed, as circumstances may require, without sacrificing the significant availability of the stable sanding scenario.
- Dry sand being available and loadable at the base of the Ranch will eliminate significant transportation fees, whereby paying off the sanding site investment in approximately 6 years. This availability will also allow sanding to occur at no less than twice the speed as current and would allow multiple contractors to use it, if needed, and in that circumstance even more sanding could be accomplished faster if desired.
- A total of approximately \$11,000 of investment is projected, equal to a one-time special assessment fee of approximately \$37.00 per lot.

Once the Road Committee is finished with this feasibility study the Board will deliberate it and bring the final information, and further fiscal considerations and proposals, to the membership for their consideration