



Fall 2011
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Yellowstone River Ranch Newsletter

From Your Board

By Kim Skelton President/Treasurer

It's been a beautiful fall season here on the ranch this year. Warm temperatures during the daytime, and cool temperatures at nighttime coupled with dry weather and very little lightening has made for some quality time to get outdoor chores completed before winter sets in as well as some quality time spent on the river floating and fishing. The leaves are turning color and the many beautiful sights of fall season surround us. This is a special time of the year here on the ranch, as the season changes and we see our neighbors preparing for the winter months. I can hear the sound of gun shots in the distance, as hunters prepare themselves for hunting season. Football season is here, the Holiday season is coming, and the snow will start falling from the sky soon enough.

The road work for this season is now finished and plans for next year's road work will begin soon. If you have comments or concerns regarding our roads, please visit our website at www.yrrlc.com and communicate with us. Those of us who live here on the ranch year round will once again rely upon each other for help and fellowship as we hunker down for the winter months. Neighbors helping neighbors is what I've witnessed here on the ranch over the years we have lived here; it's a beautiful thing to see.

Roads 2011

This year we did work on the following roads: Winding River Road from the intersection of Night Hawk to the

intersection of Wild Horse Run was crowned and material was added. The road was topped with a new material which is ¾ inch rock combined with cement. This is a stronger binding material and should hold better on the hills.

Work was done on Cougar trail between Owl Canyon and Haystack Coulee and the road was crowned and topped with ¾" material. A 200 foot section on Owl Canyon was repaired. A low spot on Winding River Road where it intersects with Balfour Loop was repaired. A culvert was put in on upper Wild Horse Run. A section of Night Hawk road was repaired.

The board is working with Central Excavating on a comprehensive road maintenance program and will be driving all of the Ranch roads with Dean.



Picture Courtesy of Kristi Skelton

Welcome to the Ranch

Keith and Emily Hanson purchased the log home on lot 2 off of Winding River Road. We would all like to welcome our new neighbors to the Ranch.

Late Season Fly Fishing

By Dave Chaudoir

Late season fly fishing in Montana brings to mind just one thing, Hoppers, Hoppers and Hoppers. From mid-July through the first hard freeze, trout will gorge themselves on these not so tiny morsels. Other than hoppers, only a few small mayflies – mainly blue winged olives will appear on the surface of the Yellowstone River during October. If you're looking for big fish, especially browns stick with hopper patterns and don't worry about delicate presentations. One old master fly fisher told me once, that you first need to get the attention of a big fish – learn to "plop" a hopper pattern. By the way, the old master was none other than the father of American fly fishing – Lee Wulff.



A brown trout that fell to a hopper pattern.

There are a few guidelines that will help your productivity in fly fishing with hopper patterns

1. Fish downstream of grassy fields
2. Early morning hopper fishing is not productive – wait for the dew to evaporate
3. Fish the banks – hoppers are not long jump champions
4. Fish like oxygen, so fish downstream of riffles
5. Which hopper pattern is not as critical as the size of the pattern – early season small (size 10, late season large (Size 6-8)

6. A Midwestern axiom to hopper pattern fishing, don't forget about crickets.



The author with a Rainbow Trout that fell to a Madam X

About equipment, the most useful rod for Montana is a six-weight nine foot graphite rod and matching reel that could hold at least 100 yards of backing plus the 30 foot weight forward fly line. A 5X tippet and a hopper pattern and you'll be ready to go. This matched set will serve you well on calm mornings and the afternoon winds the Montana valleys are known for.

Hopper patterns are as diverse as the size of snowflakes during a Montana snow storm when elevation is a variable. When I started fly fishing some 37 years ago, the Letort and Joe's hoppers were about the only nationally recognized patterns. The Letort is a pattern made famous on the Letort River in Pennsylvania and Joe's hopper was made famous by Joe Humphrey, one of the sports legends. Today you enter any fly shop and they all have a "must have" foam hopper pattern. Some work, some don't and some are tied on the wrong hook (insufficient gap). Attached are some photos of the hopper patterns that you'll have success with – they include Joe's Hopper, Dave's Hopper (no relation), Whit's Hopper, Madam X, and the Henry's Fork Hopper. As you see many are just

variations of others – but sometimes that's important



Recommended Hopper Patterns

So, grab your fly rod and walk down to the river and try your luck. I know some people on the Ranch that can help you get started, so learn and enjoy.

Sweet and Spice Smoked Trout

Recipe

- 2 ½ cups brown sugar
- ½ cup rock salt
- 1 Tbsp chili powder
- 1 Tbsp onion powder
- 1 Tbsp garlic powder
- 1 Tbsp white pepper
- ½ Tbsp cinnamon
- 1 Tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 Tsp cloves 2 Tsp allspice
- 1 Tsp nutmeg 1 Tsp Ginger

Mix ingredients together, lay fish skin side down in glass container pour brine over fish and refrigerate for 12 to 24 hours. Rinse, pat dry and let sit for 2 to 3 hours. Smoke to desired texture.

Recipe came from "Smoking Salmon & Steelhead Scott and Tiffany Haugen"

Spring and Summer in the Ranch



By Renate Nieman

This spring and summer we had an abundance of beautiful wildflowers in the ranch. The meadows were filled with a kaleidoscope of color. Delicate pink Prairie Smoke bloomed with wild white lilies. The hillsides were speckled with Lupine in deep blues, purples and pinks. Little Sun Flowers line the roads while wild roses bloomed along the river. All of our seasonal creeks were flowing. This abundance of color was from our very wet spring and summer.

The heavy rains this spring combined with a large snow pack in the mountains had the Yellowstone River raging. It was truly the mighty Yellowstone.



Boat Ramp Area June/July

The spring runoff lasted into mid July. We saw giant logs and trees float down the river. Our community park, like most of the state parks along the Yellowstone, was under water until late July. Our Community Park flooded and parts of Elkhorn road were closed for several days due to high water. By late July the waters receded and we are once again able to enjoy the river and parks. Fishermen and rafters were again enjoying the Yellowstone.

Fire Committee Update

By Mike Fatchett

Knock on wood! We might be out of the woods this year for a major Wildfire event in the district. Columbus Fire

Rescue was busy this summer helping other agencies that have been helping us the last few years. There is still grant money available for those wishing to start or continue a fuel reduction program. Call Nick Jacobs at 406 322 4302 for more details. There are still plans to continue work in the BLM lands on the ranch but the fuel team has been working on other projects and spent a good portion of the summer out of state fighting the fires in Texas, Arizona and Colorado.

This summer the big white water tank at the corner of Lost Cache and Wild Horse Run was buried. A special thanks to all the volunteers that helped dig the hole, helped drag the tank into the hole and plumbed the tank with the proper fire department hookups.



At press time we are still waiting for the top access hatch to be installed. A sign needs to be ordered and we would like to add some gravel around the tank so that an engine

can pull off the road to get access to the water without blocking the roadway. We have all but one part to complete the water point plumbing project down at the park. The installation will be postponed until spring.

The Reed Point annexation to the Columbus Rural Fire District is still ongoing as we collect the necessary signatures. Once the annexation is complete we will be able to stage a Structure engine in Reed Point along with moving other resources around to provide better fire protection to the western portion of the district

Brush Engine 456 spent another summer at the ranch and responded to numerous calls and even a truck fire on Owl Canyon this year. The fire was contained to the truck and extinguished quickly preventing any chance of the fire spreading to the forest.

The Fire Department is always looking for volunteers. Prior fire training is not necessary and we have many positions that do not require fire fighting. We can always use EMT's and Firefighters. If you would like to help, please call Chief Rich Cowger at 406 322 4302.

If you have any questions about the Fire Department, fuels reductions or anything fire related please contact Mike Fatchett mike@mallardcove.com or Dwight and Diane Day ddd5051@gmail.com

Contact Your Board

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Hunting This Fall

By Dan O'Neil



Picture courtesy of Ron Hartman

Although we've had warm days and cool nights recently, fall weather is just around the corner. With the cooler temperatures comes the hunting seasons and one of the many reasons we choose to live in Montana. Ask any number of residents on the ranch and I'm sure that the outdoor activities including hunting and fishing are high on the list of reasons for living here.

Opportunities abound not just on the ranch but close by on many pieces of public and private land. Areas on the ranch where you can hunt without asking permission of the landowner includes the full section of state land on the south edge of the ranch and also the two smaller pieces of BLM land just off of Cougar Trail and Northern Harrier Rd. As a reminder, Montana law requires that all hunters get permission from landowners before hunting on private pieces of land. Way back in the past when much of the lots were still owned by the developer most of the ranch was open for hunting by landowners because the developers at that time had given permission to use their parcels for hunting. Unfortunately most of the lots have been sold so it's no longer possible to hunt where we please. Remember if you are hunting on land that is not your own, make sure you have permission from the other landowner.

A couple of other policy reminders in case you've just recently bought here. Guests who come to the ranch to hunt must be accompanied at all times by the landowner. Also it has always been

ranch policy in order to limit the spread of noxious weeds as well as to limit damage to others properties that you don't drive off the roads on any other landowners' property without their permission.

If you want to hunt off of the ranch, there is a lot of block management land available for hunting. Block management is basically land owned by ranchers who have made agreements (in exchange for a very modest fee) with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to allow public access to parts of their ranches for the purposes of hunting. These block management parcels are easy to find just by stopping by a local FWP office and asking to look at the Block Management binders. There you can find maps and descriptions of nearby areas where you can hunt. Upon reaching the block hunting area, typically all you have to do is stop at the sign in station at the edge of the management area (usually a box holding the sign in sheets) and fill out the form with you name etc. Then follow the few minor rules about where to park and the boundaries for where to hunt and have fun!



Of course there are some great areas just a short drive from the ranch where you can go for that trophy bull elk. The Crazy Mountains just to the west of us are a good place to start. Further west toward Bozeman will get you into the Gravelly Range for good elk hunting that is fairly accessible as well. I could go on and on about available areas for great hunting but you get the picture.

If birds are your thing, then going just east of Billings a few miles gets you into some great goose and duck hunting. The major central flyway for geese migration goes over eastern Montana/ western North Dakota. However from

Billings eastward there are principal migration routes and if you can get permission to hunt along the Yellowstone River during December and January you may find some of the best goose and duck hunting in the area. If pheasants are what you're looking for then many of the more open ranches in eastern Montana are the place to be.

Enjoy the upcoming hunting season, hunt safely and remember to ask permission before hunting on private land!

Grilled Venison Back Strap

Ingredients

- 2 pounds venison back strap (tenderloin), cut into 2 inch chunks
- 1 quart apple cider
- 1 1/2 pounds thick sliced bacon
- 2 (12 ounce) bottles barbecue sauce, your choice

Directions

Place chunks of venison into a shallow baking dish, and pour enough apple cider in to cover them. Cover, and refrigerate for 2 hours. Remove, and pat dry. Discard apple cider, and return venison to the dish. Pour barbecue sauce over the chunks, cover, and refrigerate for 2 to 3 more hours.

Preheat an outdoor grill for high heat. Charcoals is best, but if you must, use gas. Remove meat from the refrigerator, and let stand for 30 minutes, or until no longer chilled. Wrap each chunk of venison in a slice of bacon, and secure with toothpicks.

Brush the grill grate with olive oil when hot, and place venison pieces on the grill so they are not touching. The bacon will kick up some flames, so be ready. Grill, turning occasionally, until the bacon becomes slightly burnt, 15 to 20 minutes. The slower, the better. Dig in, and prepare to want more!

WINTER ACTIVITIES

Beartooth Wagon & Sleigh Rides

One of the most enjoyable trips you can take in the winter in Montana is made on a sleigh, pulled by a team of trained Percherons . 406-446-2179



Winter Trips in Yellowstone Park

Park concessioners operate lodging and provide other services, including evening programs, snow-coach tours, guided ski and snow-shoe tours, guided snowmobile tours, and wildlife bus tours. Detailed information is available at the visitor centers, warming huts, and front desks of hotels or by calling Xanterra Parks & Resorts at (307) 344-7311.

Ski Red Lodge Mountain

Opening day November 25, 2011



For information and questions about all things Red Lodge Mountain Resort please contact:

Red Lodge Mountain Resort

406-446-2610
(800)-444-8977
rlm@redlodgemountain.com

SNOW PHONE

406-255-6973

Red Lodge Christmas Stroll

December 2 & 3

Stroll the streets for Christmas gifts and enjoy special goodies from local merchants. Visit Santa, take a wagon ride and spread the holiday cheer!



Check out the Website

Please visit our website at www.yrrlc.com. The board plans to use the web more and more as a way to communicate better with the landowners and to save mailing costs where practical. You will find information on the road, weeds, fire and financial information that we hope you will find helpful.

At the bottom of the main page there is a link to sign up for the ranch email list. The email list is a moderated list where one email is sent to all those signed up. Announcements, news, lost pets, and other items of interest to the landowners are what you can expect to receive from our email list.

The website will continue to be updated with current financial reports and minutes and we will start working on posting minutes and documents from prior years. If you have photos, stories or other items that you feel would be a good addition to the web please submit them to Mike Fatchett, our webmaster at mike@mallardcove.com.

★★★★★★★★★★
This will be the last Newsletter you will receive via U.S. Mail. All future Newsletters will be available on the Website. If you would like to be notified when the next Newsletter is available please sign up for the Ranch Email list.

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Resources on the Ranch

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Picture courtesy of Kristi Skelton



HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Picture courtesy of Ron Hartman

