

RANCH AT ROARING FORK
Fishing Advisory Committee
Minutes of June 30, 2010 DRAFT

Present: Dan Bishop, JP Pfaust, George Pucak, Stephanie McConaughy, Steve Coley, and Rick Carsten were present at the gazebo.

Others Present: Richard Sierzant.

Absent: Arnie Goldblatt

Old Business:

FAC Liaison to the BOD. Via email, the FAC learned that the Ranch Board of Directors (BOD) appointed Ryan Grobler as FAC liaison, following the resignation of Gordon Nelson.

“Demucking” Upper Spawners. This FAC recommended project was turned down by the Ranch BOD. The BOD decided that it is important first to close out existing permits with the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) before applying for any new permits. It is likely that a 404 COE permit would be needed for the “demucking” project (see FAC minutes 03/06/10). Richard Sierzant again raised the fact this project was not on the list of priority stream work as identified in the questionnaire about possible stream projects provided to the Ranch community prior to work done in 2009 (see FAC minutes 12/29/09).

Grass, brush and willow cutting. Steve Coley reported that the Ranch staff is proceeding with grass cutting along the sides of the streams, as described in previous FAC minutes. Most of the work is being done with a DR mower and a brush hog to establish paths and fishing access, generally leaving a 2-foot buffer zone between the stream edges and walking paths for fishermen. Willows and grass in the 2-foot zone can be cut as low as 8-10 inches. The FAC recommended more cutting of willows in key areas to provide easier access for casting in fishing holes. This can be done by leaving clumps of willows (instead of a “wall” of willows) along with some wider open areas for access to the stream edges. Dan Bishop will continue to act as advisor to the Ranch Manager and staff on grass cutting.

Dan Bishop, Richard Sierzant, and Rick Carsten reported that they planned to walk the streams to identify areas for experimental cutting of pond weed in the stream beds. Subsequent to the FAC meeting, (07/06/10) Dan, Richard, and Rick identified four areas for in-stream grass cutting: (1) Kelso Ditch, (2) an area on Sopris creek below the Twin Bridges where there is a picnic table by the tall cedar, (3) an area further down about 200 yards on Sopris Creek, and (4) a long stretch of Sopris Creek above the Weir pool. As stated in the FAC minutes (03/06/10), the plan is to take pre and post pictures and to monitor water temperatures in the selected experimental areas.

New structure for open space. In the past, several Ranch homeowners have suggested that the Ranch consider building one or two new shelters on the property to provide protection from sudden thunderstorms and lightning, as well as other uses, such as

picnics. The FAC plans to recommend to the Ranch BOD that one new shelter be built as part of their open space management efforts. The shelter can modeled on the one at the golf course, but with a gravel floor instead of a concrete floor. JP Pfautz had previously discussed cost and construction with Tom Vail. They estimated \$5,000 for materials and \$3,000 for labor. Costs might be reduced by making use of volunteer work by Ranch homeowners. The FAC will recommend one possible location somewhere near Sopris Creek below twin bridges. Since the shelter would serve all Ranch homeowners, the FAC felt that this project should be financed out of other appropriate budget lines, perhaps with some partial funding from the FAC budget. The FAC felt that it would be important to get community input on the shelter project if it were approved by the BOD. More specific information is needed to make a proposal for such a new structure to the BOD.

Long-term fishing/waterways management plan. There was not sufficient time to discuss issues related to a long-term fishing/waterways management plan. The FAC thanks Tom Neel, Mike Fordyce, and Bob Tucker for volunteering to meet with the FAC to provide their historical views of what has been done in the previous 12-year period. This was postponed to a future meeting. George Pucak suggested that as a first step for a long-term management plan, the FAC could review the current fishing philosophy stated in the Ranch fishing rules. He also distributed a copy of a fishing philosophy drafted by Tom Neel.

New Business:

Financial report, badge sales. Steve Coley distributed a financial statement for 05/01/10 to 05/31/10, showing income pertaining to the fishing fund and expenses for administration, fishery maintenance, and reserve expenses, plus a report of badge sales for 2010. Steve reported that badge sales to date totaled \$56,150, which is down from the \$71,950 projected for 2009-2010. A day permit for 5 days currently costs \$250. The FAC suggested perhaps raising this day permit fee for next year. The FAC also asked for clarification as to whether unspent funds allocated to the fishing fund would carry over to the next budget year. Steve reported that he discussed the carry-over issue with BOD treasurer, Dennis Reynolds, who assured him that unspent fishing funds would be considered carry-over into the next budget year. Steve reported that, according to Dennis, current carry-over funds include \$23,296 from 2008-2009 and \$16,610 from 2009-2010. (The \$23,296 for 2008-2009 includes money from prepaid badge fees in 2006. The \$16,610 for 2009-2010 includes \$10,000 of unspent funds for fishery/waterways maintenance in the current budget.) The FAC, with input from Ranch community members (Bub Smith, Peter Breitenstein, and Richard Sierzant), asked Steve to develop a format for the fishing fund financial statement that more clearly shows income from badge sales and all expenses allocated to the fishing fund. Steve plans to reconcile the fishing fund account for the FAC through further discussions with Dennis Reynolds. Richard Sierzant also requested that the fishing fund financial statement clearly show the percentage and amount of expenses for Ranch staff work that is allocated to the fishery maintenance budget. (This is a separate line item from the \$10,000 currently allocated for fishery/waterways maintenance.)

Water management, head gate issues, silt management. Steve Coley summarized the recent events in June 2010 related to unusually high water from early melt out in high elevations. Steve reported that the Roaring Fork reached peak levels on June 8 to 10, with 6,000 CFS in one day below the head gate. Typical flow is approximately 250 CFS. He also reported that Blue Creek coming from neighboring St. Finnabar overflowed and bypassed our head gate. Flood waters washed out parts of the road along the Roaring Fork, which is now scheduled for repairs. For at least one day, Steve said that there was little control over water flow throughout the Ranch. He was especially concerned about the stability of our ponds in high water and a part of Blue Creek downstream from the Ranch that appears to be destabilizing. Steve is pursuing possible remedies with appropriate people at St. Finnabar.

Richard Sierzant informed Steve and the FAC that the stream side along the Roaring Fork from below our head gate to the Catherine Store bridge is property of the BLM. Therefore, any flood mitigation in this area to benefit the Ranch and St. Finnabar may not be possible. Richard reported that this was a design element approved by the Army COE resulting from the 1995 Flood; this same pattern is the prominent feature of design between the Catherine Store bridge and the bridge that which crosses the river on Highway 133. Steve planned to investigate this further.

The high water in June added to already existing problems with erosion and silt build-up in Sopris Creek and the new stream. Considerable concern was raised about the extent of erosion and silt build-up in several bends on the new stream. Richard Sierzant provided some history of the 1995 Roaring Fork flood and subsequent actions taken to prevent flooding and erosion problems in the future. These included adding riprap on the banks and rock barriers in the Roaring Fork designed to divert flow away from banks. A good example of this type of flood control work can be seen on the Roaring Fork below the bench near the maintenance barns. Steve Coley took these remarks under advisement for future waterways management projects at the Ranch.

Permit status. Steve Coley reported that he will walk through the Ranch with members of the Army COE on July 9, 2010 to determine what needs to be done to close out our 2006 and 2009 permits. He will inquire at that time if a new permit is needed for work on Upper Spawners and similar types of maintenance projects. The FAC is reconsidering whether to recommend the “demucking” work on Upper Spawners in light of new concerns that have arisen from the high water and flooding in June. (Steve reported later that the walk through with the Army COE was rescheduled for July 27.)

Additional stocking. Via email, Bub Smith suggested additional stocking of big fish in the trophy ponds. The FAC did not receive any other requests for additional stocking this year. The FAC decided against additional stocking this year, given other concerns about likely stream management projects next year, and the reassurance that the FAC will have carry-over funds in budget for next year.

Handicap policy. The Ranch BOD asked the FAC to consider a policy related to motorized handicap access to streams and other Ranch property. Via email, Bub Smith

had requested use of a golf cart for stream access by handicapped people, including people undergoing medical treatments that limit energy and motor movement. The FAC declined this assignment because they felt that a handicap access policy would necessarily involve issues beyond access to streams. Therefore, the FAC felt that it was more appropriate for the BOD to develop a handicap access policy, if so desired. All persons present at the FAC meeting raised concerns about the feasibility of delineating appropriate restrictions on handicapped use of motorized vehicles, given the large and diverse community at the Ranch. Steve Coley said that he and the Ranch staff will continue to maintain existing areas accessible by vehicles and will continue cutting good pathways along the stream banks, keeping handicap access in mind.

Next meeting: The FAC will schedule their next meeting for sometime in September, 2010.

Submitted by Stephanie McConaughy, Secretary