

MRR Newsletter

Madison River Ranch Association

Fall, 2013

**Happy Holidays
to you and yours**

Introducing... The Toalson Family

Hi, I'm Pat Toalson, your newest member on the ranch board of directors. While several people on the ranch may know us already, many folks don't, so when Ann asked me as a new board member to write about our family for the fall newsletter it sounded like a good idea. *continued on page 4*

John Clark

Annual dues and capital assessment was due August 31st. If you haven't paid please send \$350 to:

**Madison River Ranch
c/o John Clark
7456 S. Brook Forest Rd.
Evergreen, CO 80439
email: jclark4js@aol.com**

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Fishing Report...

By Gene Welch

Read about the 50 year-old Montana Stream Preservation Law *page 5*

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From the President's Corner

By Mike Wells!

Greetings...from the stormy Madison River Ranch. It is October 28th and a winter storm has blown in after a beautiful fall week with barely a breeze and daytime temps in the mid to upper 50's. Most of us are ready for a change after another summer of unrelenting heat. Seems it hit 80+ at the end of June and stayed that way through the end of September!

The fishing/catching on our part of the Madison was somewhat inconsistent this season due to fluctuating stream flows and the high air and water temperatures. PPL was regularly adjusting the flow out of Hebgen Dam, which messed with the fish and fishermen. By the end of August and into mid-September it seemed almost too cruel to pull a fish from the low, warm waters. We did have a spectacular caddis and salmon fly hatch in early July, which lead to some quite amazing days on the river. Most of the deer and elk left the Ranch in late spring only occasionally offering glimpses of them when they briefly returned while traveling through. Unfortunately our "resident" elk herd of 50-75 animals has apparently relocated since they have not been spotted on a regular basis since late spring. We did have several bands of

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Mike Wells, *continued from page 1*



10-20 pronghorns roaming the Ranch for the majority of the season and a multitude of bird species were always present.

The 2013 Annual Meeting was well attended and fairly short due to Ranch business running very smoothly and the lack of contentious issues. Please refer to the 2013 annual meeting minutes that our secretary Frank Davis so painstakingly and brilliantly compiles, to keep your finger on the pulse of Ranch business and important issues. We held our second Annual Potluck and Social the night before the Annual Meeting and our regular Annual Work Day the day after the meeting. More folks came out for the Potluck and Social this year and it was a good time catching up with old friends and making new friends not to mention the sumptuous array of food and beverages available. The Annual Work Day was scaled back a bit due to the anticipated hot weather but the participants got a lot of chores done and had an enjoyable time doing it.

All the regular Ranch maintenance has been completed. Roads were graded, automatic gates were serviced or repaired, weeds were partially sprayed and easements mowed.

We graded ALL the roads this year. Many of the lesser-used roads had not been graded for several years or more and encroaching vegetation had significantly narrowed them. The contractor did the work at the end of June and because soil conditions were favorable and required less of his labor, he only charged slightly more than half his original bid price. All the roads held up well except the section from the main entry gate up Flatiron Trail to Echo Trail where construction traffic began to take a toll in mid to late August. If we drive as close as possible to the suggested speed limit and accelerate/decelerate slowly into and out of turns and up and down hills the roads will remain in better condition longer.

The weed-spraying contractor wasn't able to do the early season spraying typically done in mid to late July and didn't inform me of this situation until mid-August. He did do the late season spraying in September. Consequently, the roads and easements are still relatively weed free but the infestation in the Common Area and river corridor was not effectively treated this year. We are already planning to perform additional spraying in the Common Area and river corridor next year and in subsequent years to get that infestation under control and have found an herbicide that can be sprayed to the water's edge and is non-toxic to fish, wildlife, insects, etc.

Additional improvement and repair projects that were completed: the northwest fence that borders the National Forest was replaced (thanks to Dave Crawley and John

Clark); the large rocks in the mowing easement along Pronghorn Trail were removed or relocated (thanks again to Dave Crawley); the main entry gate sign that blew down in a wind due to rotting hanging hardware was refurbished and re-hung (thanks again and again to Dave Crawley).



On August 12th, lightning in the Gravelly Range started the Eureka fire. The fire was within 10-12 miles of our Ranch at times, threatening to spread in our direction and eventually burned around 6500 acres. It was a terrifying time for those on the Ranch and in the Valley. Fortunately the wind and the incredibly efficient firefighting crews drove the fire to the northwest toward the Ruby River where it was finally contained with no structures or lives lost. The firefighting cistern we installed last year did give us a modicum of comfort during such an unpredictable event and we will pursue installing more firefighting cisterns under the guidance of the local fire department as funds allow. Please remember to maintain a "defensible space" around your structures to help mitigate the possibility of wildfire destroying them.

FYI...there are 3 new homes being built on the Ranch this year (Clark, Roll, Adamson) and there were 8 wells dug (Stommel, Kimbrel, Adamson, Gibbs, Clark, Welch, Nielsen, Ox Bow Ranch). Congratulations to all on your



successful endeavors to enhance your Montana dream!

Have a great winter!

Mike

John Clark

The Ranch had a total of 8 water wells drilled this summer! Hopefully all the drilling activity didn't disturb your serenity on the Ranch. The use of the common well should decrease significantly. There was also 6300 feet of underground power line laid along Flatiron Trail.



Cooking with Martha

By Martha Crawley

Hi Neighbors. I am here at the ranch, in early October, looking out on a snowy world. All day yesterday looked like we were inside a snow globe that somebody really shook up! It's melting now, and we're hoping to have some lovely Indian Summer weather before we leave October 30.

This recipe is from our daughter, Jill Griset, and is a favorite with our family. Also, it calls for fennel, so if you've never used fennel, now's your chance! If you think you don't like fennel, give this recipe a try anyway. I almost guarantee it will change your mind. It's easy and an absolutely delicious meal.

Mustard-Roasted Chicken with Vegetables

Serves 4

1 4-lb. chicken, cut into 8 pieces (I use chicken thighs)

3 T. whole grain mustard (I like Maille brand)

2 T. low-sodium soy sauce

Kosher salt and pepper

4 small carrots, cut in half crosswise

1 med. fennel bulb, cut into wedges

1 red onion, cut into wedges

8 sprigs thyme

2 T. olive oil

Heat oven to 400. Pat chicken dry with paper towels. Combine mustard, soy sauce, ¼ t. pepper. Pour over chicken in bowl; stir to coat.

Combine carrots, fennel, onion, thyme, oil, ½ t. salt and ¼ t. pepper in a roasting pan (I line it with non-stick foil). Nestle chicken, skin side up, among vegetables. Make sure each chicken piece is coated with the mustard mixture, especially on top.*

Roast until chicken is cooked through and nicely browned and vegetables are tender, 50-60 min.

**Recipe may be covered and refrigerated at this point until ready to bake.*

Dave Crawley: Ennis 4th of July Parade



The Madison River Ranch had its first entry EVER in the Ennis Fourth of July parade this year. As we stopped in front of the reviewing stand, our county commissioner, Jim Hart, read from my entry form: "This bright yellow 1930 Model A Ford belongs to David and

Martha Crawley and represents all of the owners of the Madison River Ranch which is located 40 miles south of Ennis across the Three Dollar Bridge. We all love the Madison Valley and we love Ennis." We then got a great big round of applause.

Our guests from Spokane for the weekend were Steve and Jan Drennon. They sat in the rumble seat during the parade, waved their American flags, and displayed the Madison River Ranch signs.

Our car was also entered in the Fourth of July car show at the Sportsman's Lodge and won the trophy for "Best Antique" (pre-1950).



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My wife Deena and I are the owners of Lots 93 and 94 at the end of Hilgard Trail and have a log home on lot 93 which we built it 1998.



But it all started in the spring of 1990. We liked to ski, hike and as a wannabe wildlife photographer I had taken several trips to the Yellowstone area to photograph. I had a dream instilled by my father's love of the Rockies that one day I would own a piece of property in the mountains. I had been getting information from Yellowstone Basin Properties every few months for a couple of years after seeing their ads in the back of *Backpacker Magazine*. I had even gone to inspect some properties the year before that YBP had in the Paradise Valley north of Gardiner but didn't like the location. Then in 1990 they sent me some info on the Madison River Ranch. I wanted property close to Yellowstone NP and this location sounded like just the ticket. We bought our lot sight unseen from only the photos and property description Yellowstone Basin had sent us. Deena thought I was crazy but I convinced her it would be a good investment and if we didn't like it we could trade for another parcel. We came out a couple of months later in the late summer of 1990 to inspect what we had bought and absolutely loved the area and the lot we had chosen with its timber, meadow and views of the S curve of the Madison River. We brought our two kids at the time, Chris and Lauren, out the next June to camp on our property and proceeded to be eaten alive by mosquitoes. Chris swore that he hated Montana and he never wanted to come back again! Famous last words for a future MSU student. With the memory of all of those mosquitoes etched into our minds, we didn't make any more camping trips to the ranch but in the interim years would drop by the ranch to walk our property every year when we would come out to fish or photograph. Then in 1998 we were fortunate to be able to have our log home built and multiple trips to the ranch in summer and winter by our family became an annual occurrence. We bought lot 94 in 2002 from our neighbor. I served one previous term on the ranch association BOD from 2003-2005.

Deena and I met in pharmacy school at the University of Arkansas and got married just before graduation in 1982; I didn't want to let her get away. I have worked for 30+ years for a pharmaceutical company, Eli Lilly and Company in a variety of roles. Currently I am a Senior Medical Advisor for our US Medical Affairs group. Deena has worked as a pharmacist for 30+ years as well, following my career around the country and working part time while our kids grew. She now works full time as we pay for all of the college tuitions, but looks forward to retiring soon. We have three children now, our son Chris is 29 and did his undergrad at MSU in photography then went to grad school at Rochester Institute of Technology in upstate NY to get his MFA in photography with the plan to be a college professor and future fly fishing guide. Our oldest daughter Lauren is 27 and went to college at Pepperdine in southern California. Erin is our youngest who was born after we bought our property; she is now 20 and a junior at Belmont University in Nashville TN. Lauren and her husband Peter got married in 2011 and live in Dallas TX. Chris and his wife Carly got married last summer on the ranch at our home. They now live in Ft Myers FL so I guess the fly fishing guide in Montana idea went out the window but he's getting pretty good at salt water fly fishing so he can be my tarpon and redfish guide now!

Deena and I reside in Indianapolis IN where Lilly is headquartered but plan to retire in the next 2-3 years and move to Montana full time. We love spending as much time on the ranch as possible each year to relax and fly fish the river with family and friends. Drop by and say hello sometime if you see us on the ranch.



Gene Welch: The 50 year-old Montana Stream Preservation Law

This law, first enacted in 1963, has been effective in protecting natural stream channels. Prior to the law, fish had no rights in construction projects that realigned natural stream channels. Straightened channels resulted not only in the loss of stream miles, but also much of the desirable habitat in which trout thrive such as pools, glides, undercut banks and over hanging brush. Streams naturally meander and in so doing usually create such habitat, which cannot happen if confined to an often ripraped, straightened channel parallel to the highway. However, preserving channel meanders would cost more and highway engineers and administrators were unwilling to spend more than necessary. That changed with the 1963 law that had a two-year life, but was permanently reauthorized in 1965. With those monumental events, Montana became the first state with legislation that forced arbitration between fishery experts and road builders.

How did such monumental, fish-friendly legislation come about? In the 1950s, Montana fishery biologists recognized that many streams were being degraded by mine waste, dewatering, pesticides from forest spraying with DDT, herbicide use with irrigation, and most obvious of all were natural stream channels realigned by highway construction and manipulated and damaged by agricultural activity. To put the stream resource into perspective, and try to resist such damage, these biologists decided to classify the streams, based on their inherent productivity, access and aesthetic appeal. That classification system created the term "Blue Ribbon" for those that would demand the greatest effort of protection from channelization, damming, pollution, and other damaging activities. Blue Ribbon was not invented to attract fishermen, who knew where the good fishing was anyway.

Of the 8,810 miles classified, only 410 were rated Blue Ribbon.



The rest were Red, Yellow and Gray, in increasing quantity and decreasing class. However, there were

essentially no effective laws to protect streams. Even pollution control, based on the Water Pollution Control Law of 1955, was ineffective from the standpoint of fish. To name a few problems, the Clark Fork was designated for industrial use and ran red all the way to Missoula from uncontrolled mine waste in 1959. The Forest Service was still spraying DDT for spruce budworm in 1962 and killing fish and aquatic insects in the Boulder River near Butte. Fish were dying from herbicides in irrigation ditches. Big Spring Creek near Lewistown was degraded from domestic waste. Many streams received leachate with copper and zinc from abandoned mine tailings, such as Prickly Pear Creek near Helena.

So in the early 1960s, fisheries biologists were getting serious about stream protection and given the increasing plans for highway construction, decided to get the data needed to define the fisheries loss from channel realignment and take their case to the public. To do that, a data gathering pilot program was started in 1961 on the Little Bighorn River, and with techniques learned there, 12 additional streams located around the state, were studied defining the actual miles of natural channel lost and what fish populations looked like in the altered and unaltered sections. The results were dramatic: stream length had been halved and more than three times as many catchable trout occupied the natural sections compared to those altered. The total numbers and weight of trout were much less in the straightened channels. While that was probably not news to most fishermen, it was necessary to get the facts. Armed with the facts and with help from the Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Montana Wildlife Federation, the legislature was convinced and the Stream Protection Act became law by a rather close vote (61%).

With those data and subsequent effort on other streams, a total of 2,401 channel alterations were examined and 354 of 987 miles had been altered. Based on those findings and success of the law in the two-year interim, the law was given permanent status in 1965 with only one dissenting vote in the legislature.

Results of the law can be seen with preserved natural channels and, in some cases, reconstructed meanders, along the Madison, Big Hole, Missouri, Blackfoot, Jefferson, Stillwater, Bitterroot, Clark Fork, St. Regis and Beaverhead Rivers and Little

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Prickly Pear ("Wolf Creek Canyon") and Big Spring Creeks. However, fish still had no right to water quantity and water quality for fish was minimally protected. But by the 1970s, those concerns were being met with expanded state legislation to further protect habitat, water quality and quantity (see Montana Outdoors, 2013). Fish are now upfront in any proposed alteration to the physical habitat of natural streams and they have a right to adequate water quality and quantity. That all started with the "Blue Ribbon" and other color-level classes given to streams in the 1950s.

Sources:

Zackheim, H. A History of Montana, Fish, Wildlife and Parks Fisheries Division, 1901-2005, Annual Fisheries Division Conference, Billings, Dec. 2005.

Dickson, T. Bridging the Divide: Fifty years ago Montanans came together and decided that streams were worth saving. Montana Outdoors, May-June, 2013, pp. 35-39.

Peters, J.C., Lakewood, CO; personal communication.

Peters, J. C. Operations since 1963 under Montana's Stream Preservation Law. Thirty-Fifth North American Wildlife Conference, pp. 276-284, 1970.



Special thanks to all of you who shared photos for the newsletter: Mike Wells, Dave Crawley, John Clark, Pat Toalson, Costello family.

For Sale:

Four Polaris snowmobiles and trailer. They are all 2001 models (2 stroke) with approximately 3K miles on each machine, clean, run great and have new spare drive belts. They are always stored indoors with jacks to raise them off the tracks, engines oiled for storage and have covers available for each. Three machines are Polaris RMK550 Indy SuperSport models and one is a Polaris 550 Trail Touring two person sled with reverse, electric start and hitch. The trailer is a flat bed, dual axle 22' four place drive on - drive off snowmobile trailer. Machines all have permanent MT state registration stickers. Would like to sell all together but may consider selling two machines only. \$7,500 for all four machines and trailer. Call Pat Toalson @ 317-445-495 for more information.

Don't forget...the gate code is 1004

MRR Association

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