

MRR Newsletter

Madison River Ranch Association

December 2017



Sunrise on a smoky morning in September

Inside this Issue:

Hebgen Dam...The Final Chapter	5
Introducing...Meet your MRR neighbors, Joe and Linda Young. Find out what brought them to MRR, where they are located and what is important to them about living on the ranch3
Learn who is on YOUR Madison River Ranch Association Board	6
Enjoy Martha's recipe for Yellowstone Paint Pots Lava Cake2
Moose!	6
Roger Stommel's Important Message . . .	4

From the President's Corner

John Clark

Another season has passed on Madison River Ranch except for the few hardy elk hunters who remain and those looking forward to some Christmas snowmobiling. It was the hottest and driest July and August that most can remember and a terrible wildfire season for the entire state of Montana. Thankfully none of the fires affected our valley. There continues to be a lot of activity in the real estate market in the area with several lots and a couple of homes sold this summer. I want to extend a special welcome to all our new owners.

There was also quite a bit of building activity going on which led to the decision not to do a fall grading of the roads since there was so much construction traffic. The roads are in a little rougher shape than normal for the end of the year but will be addressed early in the spring. The roads will also continue to be maintained with the addition of road base. A half-mile of road base was added this year starting at the main gate and continuing down Flat Iron Trail. All owners are asked to adhere to the 25 MPH speed limit and ask their construction workers to do the same. I've included some basic rules on how to drive on gravel roads that I found on another HOA's web site. The roads are the Association's most valuable assets and we all need to do our part to take care of them.

In conjunction with all the construction, owners are reminded that they are responsible for weed control on their respective properties which become much more susceptible to noxious weed infestation after excavation. I have included a native grass seed mix recipe, specific for the Madison Valley that can be used to reseed any disturbed area. Reseeding will help in controlling the weed population. It is available from **Feeds n Needs** in Ennis (406-682-4122) or any nursery that sells custom native grass seed.

I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season and winter. If you have any questions or concerns for the Board please contact any of us on the Ranch's website: www.madisonriverranch.org

Continued on page 2

John Clark, *continued from page 1*

How to Drive on Gravel Roads

SLOW DOWN – The best thing you can do to prevent rough washboard roads is to slow down. The ideal speed is less than 25 miles per hour. When you drive too fast, the dust trail following you is the smooth part of the road blowing away and leaving washboard and rocks behind. Please limit your speed to save our roads and to protect the people and the animals that live here. If you drive slowly you get to see more of the wildlife and are less likely to run it over. Driving slowly around other vehicles and homes is just good manners. No one wants rocks thrown up damaging their vehicles or their homes. **The slower you go the longer our roads and your tires will last.**

Once we have maintained the roads near your property, please drive on the whole road and slowly. At lower speeds, your tires compact the road making it more solid and sturdy. If tracks start to form, drive on other parts of the road to compact the rest of it and prevent ruts from forming.

If your road is wet and muddy please allow it to dry as much as you can before you drive on it. Driving our roads when they are wet and muddy is one of the best ways to damage the roads. If you let the roads dry naturally the damage will be minimized.

Never speed up when you are traveling up hill. Keep a steady and slow momentum going.

Madison Valley Native Seed Mix/per acre

- Idaho Fescue 2.5 #
- Slender Wheatgrass 2.5 #
- Green Needle grass 3.0 #
- Mountain Brome 5.0 #
- Blue Flax 0.5 #

We need your help!

Writers are needed for the newsletter...about your area of interest ...fish, birds, other wildlife, the MRR area, and ecology - whatever you are willing to share.

We also need volunteers for "Introducing..." to write about you, your family and how you became a property owner at the MRR.

Please contact Ann Costello, newsletter editor, if you are willing to contribute, noniann@gmail.com

Thanks so much!

Cooking With Martha

This is a repeat from 2012 since Martha is still recovering from her broken ankle. We continue to wish her well and will look forward to a new recipe for the spring edition.

Yellowstone Paint Pots Lava Cake



"I discovered this recipe when I needed a dessert and just happened to have all the ingredients for this one on hand. I was VERY skeptical that it would actually work, but it does! After baking, the cake is on top and the warm chocolate pudding is underneath. Prepare for Ooooo's and Ahhhhh's! This is from The Best of Bainbridge Cookbook."

- 1 cup flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ T. baking cocoa (the powdered kind)
- 2 T. melted butter
- Chopped walnuts (optional)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ t. salt
- 2 t. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- Sauce:
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar
- 4 T. baking cocoa
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup boiling water

Mix first 9 ingredients, or 8 if you're not using walnuts. Pour (or spread – mine was pretty thick) into greased 9 X 13 baking dish. Combine sauce ingredients. Pour over batter. Bake at 350 for about 30 minutes. Spoon into individual serving dishes and serve warm with vanilla ice cream.

Enjoy! *Martha*

Introducing... Joe and Linda Young (Lot 101)

We found a property advertisement on my company bulletin board when I was working at a facility in Dallas Fort Worth, Texas. We have been interested in purchasing some property for a cabin in a remote area. This property was located near the Madison River, on the Bench over looking Wade and Cliff Lakes. We had been planning a trip from Texas to Salt Lake City where our families lived and thought this would be a great time to visit the subject property to see if it really was something of interest.

We contacted Rein Gillstrom, one of the property salesmen who was working out of Bozeman, Montana and making appointments to show the property to interested prospects. Rein invited us to meet for lunch at a restaurant in West Yellowstone for lunch before viewing the property. We had camped in the target area when we were younger and were looking forward to the trip and thought of the property as another excuse to get nearer nature, while we were vacationing near Yellowstone Montana, land of big game, bears, etc. I had camped at Coffee Pot Camp grounds on the Snake River in Idaho when I was learning how to fly fish, so I was familiar with the area.

As our trip planning continued, the trip seemed better and better. Now, what trip near Yellowstone would be complete without direct encounters with wild life? As we traveled west on the highway from Yellowstone, we passed many fishermen casting into the Madison River and watching the eagles nesting in the pines alongside the river. Just before we came to where the mountain came down into the river forming Quake Lake, I had to brake to allow a female moose and her calf to cross the road ahead of us. There were cormorants diving for fish from dead trees in Quake Lake. Rein turned into the area passing the Mennonite village and we picked up about fifteen or twenty head of Antelope running along with us adjacent to the dirt roads we were traveling on.

We stopped at the junction of Gravelly Trail and Vusovich Trail, which is the corner that goes on to Bruce Sterling and Joyce Huisman properties. As we passed that junction, the antelope pulled off and a small herd of Mule deer came up from the hollow and crossed over the trail and dropped down into the canyon east of Gravelly Trail. By that point, I had concluded that sales group had staged game and released them whenever we came near. Ray Strickland had a sawmill set up on his property and was using it to square up some logs that he then stacked and nailed together. He

had a D-6 Cat that he chained a log across his bucket and used it to place his milled logs on the walls before he nailed them together to form a solid wall. Ray also had four horses at that time that he found time to feed, ride and care for while he was building.

We made an offer on our cabin in April 1990. We had Hungry Harrison grade our site, pour a slab and install a septic system in 1992. Ours was a pay-as-you-go system so we saved up and had things like a well dug after we tried a water collection system with filter, but didn't use this for potable water, just flushing the toilet. We had our well dug and pump installed in 1994, 610 feet deep and more money than I care to admit, but it has been a reliable source of water.

In 1995, I arranged for the log builders in Rigby Idaho to sell and truck over a load of milled logs, Swedish Cove cuts with sufficient length to complete one of their cabin plans. They shipped up a full truck pulling a twenty-foot pup full of logs

continued on page 5



A Message from Roger Stommel

Hello everyone!

It's exciting to see many of our properties selling after a long hiatus of nothing moving. We even have cabins selling, not just vacant tracts. Several of our new owners are planning to build their dream homes starting next summer. For those of you planning to build in the future, our recently created Architectural Review Committee is your resource to help you understand the Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions. This particularly applies to the outside finish of your homes, garages, and storage buildings. Article 6.12 plainly states which exterior material, finishes, and colors are allowed. If you have any questions or concerns as you move forward with your building plans, ask a member of this Committee for clarification.

As a Board, we recognize there have been, over the years, homes and structures built that were not in compliance with our Covenants. Our goal is to not allow that to happen going forward, thus preserving the nature and beauty of Madison River Ranch. Hence, the creation of the Architectural Review Committee. Article 9.6 states that when the Board fails to enforce any part of the Covenants, however that happens, such failure does not constitute a waiver of future violations. In other words, because a home or structure was built not in compliance does not mean future homes or structures can be built not in compliance. Thankfully, these situations have been few.

Article 6.14 talks about maintaining our tracts/lots in good repair and appearance. At our annual meetings, the Board has repeatedly asked us to screen or conceal white propane tanks with earth-tone fencing or paint them if you own it. (Leased tanks may not allow being painted.) Also, we've been asked to paint white doors in a darker color. Camouflage netting over white water tanks will help keep them from view, as well. While it's not specifically prohibited in the Covenants, storing vehicles, boats, trailers, and other items out in the open over the long term is not in keeping with the spirit of the natural beauty, view and surroundings of Madison River Ranch. Next summer, a member of the Association's board will personally contact those not in compliance. Please be cognizant of anything on your property that would detract from the overall appearance of the Ranch. As the Madison River Ranch continues to mature and more owners build homes and spend more time on their property it is incumbent on all owners to be good neighbors by minimizing their impact on their neighbor's view by maintaining a slightly appearance on their property.

When you need to contact the Architectural Review Committee, please do so from the Ranch website under the "Contact us" tab.

I hope you have a safe and happy fall, winter, and spring! See you next summer.

Roger Stommel
Vice President
Chair – Architectural Review Committee



Joe and Linda Young

Continued from
page 3

as well. I was able to coordinate my lumber delivery so they could unload my logs using the equipment they brought to off load the lumber and Metal Roofing I had purchased from them. My parents gave me their Airstream trailer that they had used for camping and let me keep it as a builder's office for sleeping and cooking and storing food when we weren't working. My family (especially my father-in-law) helped with the building while he was still able to put forth the effort. During my building phase, I would drive up from Salt Lake work on Thursday evening and work on building the cabin Friday, Saturday and drive back to Salt Lake Sunday afternoon for work on Monday morning.

It took about three years to completely close the cabin. We now have our interior finished, had an exterior garage built, drilled a well for reliable water, added a storage shed for my tractor and mower, had our Septic system finished so our creature comforts are now met. It has been a great adventure and after discarding our water collection system prior to drilling our well, we concluded that some options were worth the additional costs. We also have added a propane interior heater to supplement our wood-burning stove. Since both my wife and I have retired, we now chose to spend most of the summers at the cabin and occasionally invite close family members and friends to spend time with us.

I think my dog (a 90 pound Black Lab) likes the open area and the game to chase best of all! I worry about her trying to chase something that would like to have a Black Lab for dinner whenever she is out trying to find something fun to chase, but so far she is still with us (3 years old and still learning to mind).



Newly installed outlet pipe lining
Photo courtesy of NorthWestern Energy

Hebgen Dam...The Final Chapter

Dustin Jones, *West Yellowstone Star*
November 7, 2017

Hebgen Dam has been under construction since 2009. Since then, NorthWestern Energy and the prior dam owners, have poured more than \$40 million dollars into the project, which is nearly complete. “We are real close to being done and we are really excited,” said Butch Larcombe, media contact for NorthWestern Energy. “The work has gone really well – we are ahead of schedule – which is all good.”

Project history

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission required the rehabilitation project in 2009, said Larcombe. NWE purchased the Hebgen Dam, along with 11 others, in 2014. “It is an expensive (project) – we bought a series of 12 dams late in 2014, so this project was underway, and we planned to continue the work,” Larcombe said. “This work was required by the FERC.”

The first phase of the rehabilitation process started with the intake structure – this work took six years. The intake structure was completed in 2015, and construction crews moved right along, completing work on the spillway at the end of 2016. The outlet pipe was the third and final phase of the project – the 100-year-old wooden staves that lined the pipe had to be replaced. Work on the outlet pipe was expected to conclude later in 2017, but crews were able to complete those repairs by the end of September, according to a NWE news release. October was spent patching surface irregularities and other minor work, including the removal of materials from the tailrace used for access and site clean up.

Dam construction can be tough, especially in a location like Hebgen. The site sits at 6,500 feet above sea level, resulting in a short construction season. “It is tough. Hebgen, like a lot of the area, is at a high elevation and you get a long winter, which has made the project move slower,” Larcombe said. “Winter comes early and stays late.” Hebgen Lake is also isolated – it can be hard to find crews. It is a remote location, so it is a pretty big undertaking to get contractors lined up to get the work done,” Larcombe said.

Flows from Hebgen Dam to the Madison River have changed several times since construction began. Water typically exits through the outlet pipe, Larcombe explained. While working on the outlet pipe, water exited over the spillway. The issue can impact aquatic life downstream – water exiting from the outlet pipe is significantly cooler than water from the spillway. The warmer surface water could have an impact on insects and fish in the Madison River; fortunately, the populations are doing just fine. “I can tell you the fish populations are fine,” said Travis Horton, fisheries manager with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. “Overall, there weren’t any affects on the population from the construction.” Horton did notice a change in the size of fish downstream of the dam. There were more large fish than in years past.

“We run population estimates most years, and the number of fish, the larger group of fish ... is more than we had in the past,” he said. “More larger fish than we have seen in the past.”

One guess of why, Horton explained, is the warmer water released from the spillway may have resulted in more insects – more food for fish. “When they release warmer water from spillway, the water will be warmer, it could increase production and growth of insects in the water,” he said. “That results in more growth for the fish. That is a theory, one thing that could have driven that.” The Madison River fishery remained healthy throughout construction, but things could have turned out differently. “The populations are doing great. We got lucky; we could have had low flow years while they were doing that,” Horton said. “I am just very happy they are done.”

Larcombe is also excited the project is near completion. “It is something we had to do, but we will be glad when it is done, and we imagine those who recreate in the area will be glad when it is done too,” he said. “We have been trying to keep people up to speed with what we are doing, there has been a fair amount of interest in this project.”



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If you have moved, or have a new email address, please let us know so that our records can be updated.

Links

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If you are receiving a black and white version of the MRR Newsletter by mail, we encourage you to sign up for electronic delivery. You will enjoy it much more in color! Go to the Madison River Ranch web site, click on the "Contact Us" tab, and sign in to make sure we have your correct email address. It is also posted on the website.

The Spring Edition will feature **NEW CONSTRUCTION** on Madison River Ranch. Are you building a new cabin, adding a garage, or any other building projects? If so, please send your photos as attachments and email to Ann Costello, noniann@gmail.com

Hearty Moose

The Madison County population is healthy according to Fish, Wildlife and Parks Summer survey

Over the summer, Montana FWP biologist Dean Waltee classified 121 moose across the area to determine post neonatal calf and bull to cow ratios. Through this process, Waltee is able to provide data on herd production through an accumulation of pregnancy, female health and calf survival.

According to Waltee, "Pregnancy rate is influenced by bull performance during the breeding season and female nutrition; female health is influenced by nutritional condition, disease and stressors, such as predation; neonatal survival is influenced by weather, habitat condition and predation and all factors are influenced by habitat condition.

Waltee classified 52 cow moose, 26 calves, seven yearling bulls and 36 adult bulls. This was the third consecutive year he classified 26 calves.

Waltee said that ratios for moose remain relatively healthy as aspen woodlands continued to be enhanced through conifer forest removal in the West Fork of the Madison River. The Bureau of Land Management, department of Natural Resources and Conservation and the US Fish and Wildlife Services have forest management projects ongoing in the Centennial Mountains that are expected to increase aspen habitat. "I expect thee projects to benefit moose in the future, as well as elk and mule deer," said Waltee.

Waltee said he is working with the Forest Service to implement a project designed to remove conifer trees competing with willows along the upper Ruby River floodplain, an important wintering habitat for Moose, which he hopes to revisit next year.

Information from article in The Madisonian, written by Caitlin Avery,

**Happy, warm
holiday wishes
to each one of you!**