

# Madison River Ranch Newsletter

Madison River Ranch Association

June 1, 2019



Clark Cabin in February

## From the desk of MRR Board President John Clark

Spring has finally arrived in the Madison Valley after a very snowy winter. What started out as a relatively dry early winter, February and March turned into one of the coldest and snowiest winters in recent memory. The snowpack is well above average which should bode well for the reservoirs and rivers as well as the health of the trout population. It was late April before the Ranch roads opened for travel and they are in relatively good condition. All the roads will be graded this year with an additional half mile of new road base added to Flat Iron Trail. We continue to see new owners buying lots and existing homes or building their special place in Montana. We welcome all our new neighbors and ask to please take the time to introduce yourselves and get to know your neighbors. Overall the Ranch is in excellent condition with all the capital improvements made over the last few years. The Reserve Study committee is in the process of assessing the condition and long-term fiscal analysis of the Ranch's infrastructure and will be reporting their results at the annual meeting. The revised covenants are completed, and everyone has had the opportunity to review them. If there is greater than 50% of the Owners represented in person or proxy at the annual meeting the revised covenants will be voted on for approval, otherwise a mail vote will be taken following the meeting. If you have not sent your recorded deed to our secretary, Dana Dawson, please do so before the meeting so that you are eligible to vote as per our revised Bylaws. If you will

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*We hope you enjoy this issue!*

Please note: The members of the MRR Board of Directors will hold their board meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, June 28th at the Cliff Lake ghost town school house. You are welcome to attend.

MRR  
April 2019



**John Clark**, *continued from page 1*

not make the meeting please send your proxy to Dana prior to the meeting. We would like to have as much participation as possible.

This will be my final newsletter article as President of the Association. In order to be in compliance with the revised Bylaws that limit BOD members to three, 3-year terms I am retiring from the Madison River Ranch board immediately following this year's annual meeting. I have served on the BOD for 13 years and as I was reluctant to run for another term last spring in anticipation that the revised Bylaws would pass. I contemplated retiring last fall after the Bylaws were recorded but wanted to see through the implementation of the new provisions directed in them. I also felt that after Roger Stommel sold his property and resigned from the Board last summer that it would not be the right time to retire until we found his replacement and give some continuity to the transition of our new board member, Mike Carpenter. The implementation of the revised Bylaws are almost complete; Jennings Law Office is now the Association's registered agent, the Ranch website is being updated with a "Members Only" section to include the meeting minutes and financials. We are collecting and filing Owner's deeds for voting compliance and the corporate records will be centralized and protected in a secure safe on the Property. It will be up to the acting BOD to find my replacement and elect him/her to complete the remaining two years of my term, per the Bylaws. The Association is an all-volunteer organization which depends on its Owners to be active participants, so please think about volunteering to serve on the BOD, a committee or one of the volunteer projects that have been organized by your neighbors. It has been a pleasure and an honor working with all the current and past board members on behalf of our Association.

I hope to see you at the annual owners meeting and on the ranch this summer.  
*John*

**Cooking with Martha****Best Marinara Sauce Yet**

2 (14.5 oz. each) cans tomatoes (stewed, chopped, whole, doesn't matter!)

1 (6 oz) can tomato paste

4T. fresh parsley

1 clove garlic, minced

1 t. dried oregano

1 t. salt

1/4 t. black pepper

6 T. olive oil

1/3 c. finely chopped onion

1/2 c white wine

1 T. sugar

In a food processor place tomatoes, tomato paste, chopped parsley, garlic, oregano, salt and pepper. Blend until smooth.

Sauté the onion in the olive oil for 2 minutes. Add the blended tomato sauce, white wine and sugar.

Simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

This makes plenty of sauce for a batch of meatballs made from a pound of meat. Or serve it over fresh ravioli which you can buy in the refrigerated section of your grocery store. Sprinkle some Parmesan cheese over and voila! Dinner!

*Martha*

**Have you Voted?  
MRR Board of Directors  
Election Ballots must be  
returned by June 17**



**Madison River Riparian Restoration Plan**

The first project of the Madison River Riparian Restoration Plan, the Three Dollar Bridge Project, is currently underway. Project work at Three Dollar Bridge began on May 6th once winter conditions subsided enough to begin on-the-ground work. To address impacts from human foot traffic in the riparian corridor, the first phase of the project involves trail work in the wetland areas to route traffic behind riparian vegetation and direct users to specific river access points in gravel or cobble areas without disturbing sensitive wetland habitat. Wildwood Trails, Inc. is installing formalized paths by way of 200-250 feet of plank bridges and crib steps. Traffic on existing undesirable trails will be minimized by planting vegetative screens such as willow walls. Ted Wood, the owner and foreman of Wildwood Trails, has an extensive background in design and building sustainable and long-lasting trails that fit the natural landscape.

The second phase of the project will begin shortly and involves the installation of wildlife exclosure fencing and fence extensions for future temporary electric fencing grazing pastures for livestock. Previous electric fencing that is no longer utilized will also be removed from the area.

Phase three will include planting additional wetland vegetation to support the current vegetation in the wetland area and the installation of an education sign to inform the public of the importance of a riparian corridor and a map depicting the locations of the newly installed formalized access routes.



Thank you to all of our generous donors and partners including Geum Environmental Consulting, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Wildwood Trails, Stosich Inc, NorthWestern Energy, 3 Rivers Communications, and Three Dollar Ranch for making this project possible!

**For more Three Dollar Project updates, check out the Madison River Foundation's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.**



## River Crowding on the Madison

Jim Dawson

If you've been concerned about the growing numbers of fishermen plying the Madison river, you are not alone. Over the past several



years Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks has been keeping track, using everything from cameras to angler surveys to determine not only the numbers of anglers, but how satisfied they've been in using the river. Their findings show some concerning trends, namely that over the past 5 years the number of "angler days" spent on the Madison has doubled, making the Madison river the most heavily fished river in the state while, during this same time, angler satisfaction has been in decline. If you have tried to launch a drift boat during the Salmon fly hatch or have driven home across the \$3 Bridge in July, you already know what the issue is.

In attempting to address crowding before it impacts the fishery, FWP made a proposal one year ago that would have placed limits on the number of float trips that could be sold on the Madison. They also proposed a redefinition of the walk wade sections to ban the usage of fishing boats, even just to transport fishermen as is the case today, in the section of the river that flows thru the Madison River Ranch. FWP's proposal was suspended by the department's commissioners who asked that a negotiated rule making committee be formed to find consensus on steps that could be taken to alleviate crowding. A 10 member committee was formed, half of whom were commercial users of the river and the other half not. The committee met 6 times and failed to come up with a consensus of what could be done.

It was clear early in the process that a major disagreement existed between the commercial and non commercial users of the river due to the fact that any commercial limits would negatively impact outfitter income. In a weird twist that directly implicates home owners in the Madison River Ranch, outfitters claimed that by redefining the walk wade section to exclude the use of boats in the area of our ranch, FWP was violating the state's own stream access laws. They claimed that because staying below the high water mark is nearly

impossible, by eliminating boats from this section they were in effect "privatizing" the river to the benefit of "rich upstream landowners", ie the Madison River Ranch Homeowners Association. Of course this is crazy untrue as FWP would never propose regulations that would violate their own stream access laws; but by framing this, on the surface, as a stream access issue, it inflamed many and drew a large number of people to their cause, many who otherwise celebrate Montana's world leading access laws.

Actually, the motivation for making such a claim was economic as outfitters would like to sell float trips anywhere on the river, not only between Lyons bridge and the town of Ennis, as has been the case for 30 years. It is important to note that FWP set aside the walk wade sections in the 1980s to alleviate conflicts that were taking place, even then, between wading and floating fishermen. FWP specifically chose the upper river because of the multiple access sites and parking it includes. (Reynolds pass, \$3 bridge, Snobal, Pinebutte, Sundancebench road, Hutchins bridge, etc.)

Given the failure of the rule making committee to achieve a consensus, the crowding issue has been referred back to FWP for a final designation. Something that could happen as soon as 2020.

Since we live in a community where fishing is a big part of the economy the impact of these decisions can be significant and they should be carefully and thoughtfully considered. Given the Madison River is a finite resource in a world of infinite potential demand, something should be done before it is too late. Only addressing the commercial use of the river is inherently unfair, as commercial users only represent a portion of the river's users. However, conservation must be everyone's priority because if we allow the river to hit a tipping point, everyone loses.

Finding a balance between commercial use and conservation needs to remain a top priority and I am hopeful that both sides of this issue can come together for the benefit of the overall river and especially its inhabitants, the fish.

#morebiggerfish #notatreehugger  
 #lovemtstreamaccess #dontuseaworm  
 #barblessisgood  
 #hireaguideandcatchmorefish

**NEWS RELEASE****Burning to Begin on the Madison Ranger District to Improve Aspen**

Ennis, MT May 31, 2019—

**Fire officials from Madison Ranger District will soon begin prescribed fire activity starting June 8 for approximately one week.**

District personnel will be burning piles and jackpots of conifer slash material generated during aspen restoration projects in the southern Gravelly Mountains, primarily in the Bogus Basin and Lyons areas. Fire crews will burn under prescribed weather and fuel conditions and monitor these burns after ignition to ensure they stay within prescribed boundaries.

Aspen stands have been declining on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (and much of the Northern Rockies) for the last 75 years due to multiple factors such as conifer encroachment and fire exclusion. These restoration projects support the objective of increasing aspen health and productivity within lodgepole pine and other vegetation types on 67,000 acres as described in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Forest Land Management Plan.

**Travelers and residents along Highway 287 between Cameron and Reynolds Pass may see smoke from these burns, however little impact from the smoke is expected. For more information contact the Madison Ranger District at 406-682-4253.**

Link to Madison River Ranch website:  
<http://www.madisonriverranch.org>

**Madison River Ranch Board of Directors**

**John Clark, President**

Lot 7

**Dana Dawson, Secretary**

Lots 64A, 64B, 95

**Sue McMahon, Treasurer**

Lot 68

**Mike Carpenter**

Lot 40

**Pat Toalson**

Lots 93, 94

Marv Gibbs, Webmaster

<http://www.madisonriverranch.org>

Ann Costello, Newsletter

[noniann@gmail.com](mailto:noniann@gmail.com)



Don't forget:

The gate combination is #1004

Fed Ex and UPS box combination is 5971

**We need your help!**

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

Do you enjoy reading about our MRR neighbors? If you haven't contributed your story, it's your turn to write about you, your family, how you became a property owner at the MRR., and why you enjoy being at MRR. Please volunteer!

Please contact Ann Costello, newsletter editor if you are willing to contribute, [noniann@gmail.com](mailto:noniann@gmail.com)

The MRR Homeowners Association will have its annual meeting on Saturday, June 29th in the Cliff Lake ghost town school house from 10:00 - 1:00. If you are unable to be there, please submit your proxy. The meeting will be followed by the potluck picnic social - please bring a side dish or dessert to share. We hope to see you there!