

Falls Creek Ranch Board Minutes

Status: Approved

Date: Apr 24, 2025 4:30 PM MDT

Location: Zoom

Attendees

- **Board Members:** Paulette Church, Justin Poehnelt, Robin Lucie, ~~James Trammell~~, Charlie Simons
- **Guest:** Joe Scarpino

Approval/Changes to the Agenda

- None

Conflicts of Interest

- None

Open Period Comments

- None

Approval of Previous Minutes

- No objections, minutes have been accepted.

Treasurer's Report

Capital	112,119	Bank of San Juans
	80,801	Bank of San Juans - Water Reserve
	52,797	Vectra CD
Operating	71,544	Bank of San Juans
Grant	1,000	Bank of San Juans
Total Cash	318,261	

Budget files have been distributed to all Board members and Committee chairs. I've [Robin Lucie] received a couple files back and am not seeing much increase in costs so far.

Robin and Justin will join a call with Buildium to address some reporting issues around separating some accounts. This is one area we will be spending less money, \$6000, and much simpler.

Need to correct a published financial report that was recently published to the website.

No objections, the treasurer's report has been accepted.

Committee Reports

Common Property – Clearing small brush on a fire break across from the stables is complete. It will be important to get significant volunteer help to remove the light slash to piles so that it can be chipped. Next steps will be to remove a very few large trees and grub out the oak roots with equipment. This fire break should serve as an important defense against any fire occurring in Falls Creek Canyon.

Work will continue in unit 11 (down the hill east of Oakcrest) thinning the forest per the direction of Colorado State Forester who is providing our grant money.

The egress road toward CR 203 is being improved in an attempt to make it more passable for conventional vehicles. Also, we plan to remove brush on either side of the road where it is thick.

We are still waiting on a renewed permit for the air curtain burner. Please store bags of needles and leaves on your lots, but away from your homes until we can begin burning again. The pile at the orchard area is at its maximum.

Construction of the new access road for the upper tank is underway.

Construction of the new trail from the north meadow to the upper tank and down into the National Forest trail to the east is scheduled for late April or early May.

We have requested an onsite meeting with the County Weed Coordinator to review and launch our weed management plan for this summer.

Community Garden – No report

Architecture – We currently have 10 open projects on the Ranch. Our committee could use one or two more members. If anyone is interested in joining us, please contact Co-Chairs Erica Harrington or Mary Ann Bryant.

Beautification – We have purchased 50 pine tree seedlings from the CSU garden to plant in areas where we lost trees in the Valley Fire and 416 fire. Some will go at the new entrance structure. If you would like to adopt and plant 5 pine trees, please let Paulette know so she can get them to you to care for until the committee decides where to plant each grouping. We have support poles, a wire protective mesh, time-release fertilizer, and moisture-holding gel to help get them started.

Bees and Chickens – We will have our first committee meeting of the season scheduled in the beginning of May. We plan to begin creating our chicken flock in April and add chickens throughout the summer.

Dam – We have started the summer operations schedule by installing our 'Hobo logging system' which allows us to accurately measure lake water level, water release volume & water temperature. As of 4/15 our lake was 12 inches below full, we are releasing water at a rate of 1.1 million gallons a week as required by FCR agreement with downstream water rights holders.

Entrance Gardens – Gates ordered and working on the space between the gates. Working on heavy duty hinges, Working on lighting.

FireWise – We have received a community grant from CSFS and will have an organizational meeting with Wildfire Adapted Partnership, the fiscal agent, this week. Work continues mitigation projects on the Ranch as weather and ground conditions permit.

PLEASE DO NOT TAKE PINE NEEDLE BAGS TO THE SORT YARD – Store them at your property, 50 ft. from your home, for pickup when we get the air curtain burner permit. Our revised application has been filed since October 15 but no idea when it may be approved by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

Horses – No report

Lake – Water temperature was a brisk 54 degrees which is way too cold to swim. Given the very low level of spring runoff from Falls Creek, unless we get a lot of snow in May, lake water level will certainly fall throughout the summer.

A lake work day will be scheduled to clear debris from cottonwoods and plant trees for shade at "Willow Point".

The aerators are now working again thanks to Bill. Will be evaluating weed conditions and options.

Roads – Work on our Roads continues this spring with some grading and a limited application of Mag Chloride. The entrance gates are ordered and in fabrication; we anticipate delivery in late May. Before the receipt of the gates, we will be working on the island and the lighting. As usual, Spring brings more activity on our roadways. Please drive responsibly.

Utilities Committee - Our committee met earlier this month to review upcoming spring and summer projects and priorities. We are moving forward with drilling a new monitoring well in the picnic area. The area is marked with red flagging. Chris Heine is working with our well driller to schedule this as soon as possible. Tom Riley (ORC) and Tom Allen will conduct pressure testing/inventory of our fire hydrants in May. We are getting proposals from several vendors for inspection/cleaning our two water tanks. We expect to decide on a vendor in May which will determine cost and timing. This inspection will be the basis for a more comprehensive rehab plan and cost for both tanks. Our committee agreed replacing the water service line to the horse corral is a priority due to an ongoing relatively small leak. Cost estimates are being obtained. We are transitioning to our new water meter reading and billing vendor. The meter reading system is working as planned and the billing/payment process should be in place with this month's billing. We appreciate the members' patience as we move through this change. Our committee has submitted a draft budget for next year's operating and capital plan to the Board this month.

Welcome Committee – No report

Ranch Manager Report – Here is a list of the work Bill has been doing:

Shop/equipment yard clean up
Equipment maintenance
Grade Oakcrest
Remove tire chains on Grader & Volvo
Clean up slash yard
Repair lake pump
Work on fabrication of a log arch
Supply runs into town
Repair/adjust aerator system
Build ramps across bar ditch for wood chipper access across from corals
Prep fire exit road & install new reflective markers
Begin building upper tank access road

Old Business

- Remind membership that we need at least three Board member candidates for our three Board openings beginning August 1, 2025, two are for 3-year terms, one is for 1-year term. Leaving the Board are Paulette Church, Robin Lucie, and Charlie Simons.
- Base and Water Usage Fees and "Utilities Water Rate Structure-Attachment 1" on our website. The Board can change these rates in the future and is waiting to see changes in revenue. The Board will evaluate any yearly differences for the amount contributed to the utilities operating expenses.
 - The Board approved the new rate structure. (August 2024 minutes)

- The Board revoked approval of rate structure due to concerns about matching operating expenses. (September 2024 minutes)
- The Utilities committee used the previously approved rate structure in the new water billing system. The Board deferred any further changes to rate structures or requiring changes that might delay the roll-out of the new metering system.
- The Board deferred evaluation of any further changes until new usage and budget amounts are available. (April 2024 minutes)
- Plans to update our FCR Policies and Bylaws to match CCIOA legislation and attorney recommendations

New Business

- Robin Lucie will look into Durango Trash Panda for a roll-off dumpster quote to save money compared to Waste Management.

Executive Session

Announcements

- **April 26, Saturday, 9 to 11 am** – Workday at the oak brush area across from the stables – meet at picnic grounds
- **April 26, Saturday at 1 pm**, Evacuation drill down emergency road off Mason Cabin Rd. near Falls Creek Main– expect calls from Code Red for pre-evacuation and evacuation
- **May 3, Saturday, 8:30 to noon**: FireWise Annual Meeting with potluck to follow - Firehouse

Required Board Actions

- Begin planning the budget for 2026 – 2027 – Robin, Committee Chairs, and Board
- Begin planning of Annual Meeting, July 12, 2025 – Board and volunteers
- Encourage members to run for open Board positions – President and Secretary

Adjournment

- The next meeting is scheduled via Zoom for Thursday, May 22 , 2025 at 4:30pm.