



photo: Martin Dreiling

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## GREETINGS

This Issue:

- Combo Change
- Thanks
- Long Term Maintenance Strategy
- Road Update
- Road Dues
- Road Use Reminders

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## GATE COMBO CHANGE

The gate combo will change on:

Sunday December 19, 2010

The new combo will be:

Front Gate: #####

Big Iron Gate: #####

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## THANKS

Thanks to Art Viramontes and his crew for incidental road work last month. Art's guys did some ditch and berm work when they were moving their equipment out.

Thanks also to David Otero for his annual coordination in support of propane deliveries to ranch owners. Propane deliveries are feasible for the vendor if they can sell a full truckload. By coordinating deliveries, we keep the vendor

interested in coming out here to what might otherwise be an unprofitable trip.

Thanks to Joe White for painting the front gate and for spraying the star thistle along the front ranch sections of road.

Thanks to various unidentified people for removing trees from the road during the late summer and fall. Some of these appeared to be substantial tasks.

And thanks to everyone for picking up litter, removing big rocks, shoving trees off to the side and the host of other small tasks that keep the road

looking natural and keep it relatively free of hazards.

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## LONG TERM MAINTENANCE REFRESHER

The following is a recap of the long term maintenance strategy for the road that we have been implementing for the last 8 years.

We have typically pursued a fiscally conservative approach to road maintenance that focuses on projects that will utilize road resources in the most effective manner offering the longest term results.

Thus, rather than utilize resources year after year to grade the road, install and remove water bars and otherwise make it pretty on the surface, we have, instead, focused on structural changes to selected sections of the road that will reduce the long term maintenance costs of those sections.

We have typically focused on the worst sections of road each year, starting with Lower Snot Hill about 6 years ago. That particular section has required almost no maintenance since that time and is only now showing signs of wear needing light grading repair.

Thus each year we end up with a new “worst section” that is usually less worse than last years worst section. This year the worst section is the first mile and the 2 Mile Hill complex and we are planning on adjusting those sections in 2011.

Our strategy has included several key steps. On any given section our first priority is to remove incidental berms, make cuts and generally improve the drainage on an immediate basis. This has been done to most of the road.

Level 1 Task: When we decide to address a “worst” section of road the first major chore is to adjust the grading for long term stability. This includes out sloping, full berm removal, where appropriate, and crown development where appropriate. Where base material is poor we also rock the surface. This has been done on about 5 miles of the total road surface.

We are attempting to do Level 1 tasks on all pertinent sections of road before moving to Level 2 tasks. The remaining sections requiring Level 1 Tasks are:

- The first mile (partially graded several years ago)
- 2 Mile Hill
- Near the Gap (mile 3.0)
- Lower Snot Hill (possible grant candidate)

- Upper Snot Hill

Level 2 Tasks include fine tuning of various details on a given section and may include final rock and surface grading, culvert replacement and heavy rock application at corners. Additionally we are planning greater frequency of rolling dips and critical dips at stream crossings.

Of course we also address specific needs of each section of road according to the context and conditions present.

As an example we are combining Level 1 and Level 2 tasks on 2 Mile Hill in 2011 because we have several critical culverts exposed at the surface there.

This overall approach has generated lower maintenance needs on much of the road and continues to pay off in winter performance. Of course it means we don't spend money polishing the road and that translates to a more rustic road that requires slower speeds and greater caution, an outcome preferred by any of us who have come face to face with speeding drivers.

We also try to generate larger projects as these are more efficient for our vendors and generate a better ratio of actual costs of overhead / mobilization costs. We do this by avoiding incidental and cosmetic projects in dry years and retaining road dues for focused, results oriented projects.

As we move into Level 2 tasks that include culvert replacement we will do well to structure these tasks into two year cycles so that the mobilization necessary to replace a culvert can be spread over a number of culvert locations.

As always, project priorities are looked at both from the “whole road” point of view and from the “logical project” perspective.

Whole Road means that we look at the problems and conditions that exist over the whole road and focus on the highest level of need. This means we may ignore a bad spot one year so that we can focus on a worse spot further up the road.

Logical Projects mean that we group tasks together so that projects can be focused on specific types of work that share similar sequences and tools.

Thus a particular issue that is non-critical may have to wait until several tasks of a similar nature come due. Rather than renovate one culvert, it makes more sense to wait until we can do a number of culverts in the same year so that we better leverage mobilization and direct construction costs.

This approach accomplishes tasks in systematic nature at the lowest reasonable expense to the property owners.

Finally, we are always keeping an eye out for supplemental resources that may benefit the road and the owners. We pursued a grant several years

ago for Lower Snot Hill and are keeping that on the back burner should Program funds become available again. In all cases we look at programs that have few, if any, strings attached because we don't want to allow a one time program to generate a long term maintenance burden for ourselves.

That's a general overview. If anyone has any questions please feel free to write or call the Road Committee.

See below for specific 2001 Project Targets

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## ROAD UPDATE

This update is based on observations taken on November 28. They do not reflect conditions after the more recent rains.

We've had very good performance from the road this winter, even with a heavier than normal rainfall cycle. The Mile 3.0 and Mile 6.5 sections that were hardened last year are holding well, though they still require their final grading.

The mile .5 – Mile 1 section remains sloppy due to poor grading. This section is slated for structural changes in 2011 so please bear with the slop for one more season.

### Surface Conditions

We are getting a few "bleeders" on Upper Snot Hill and some incidental gullying on various parts of the road surface. We will watch these to make sure they don't get too severe. In most places where this occurs the road is due either for Level 1 grading changes or light long term maintenance.

### Drainage

There are several catch basins that are full or blocked in non-critical drainages but these will need dipping before the season is out.

There are also several old head cuts at the edge of the road that have been there for several years. We are watching these for further cutting but most appear stable. Many were caused several years back when severe storms caused a number of culverts to block with debris and basins overflowed. In most cases these basins have remained clear, as those storms flushed the drainage well.

Now that it has been several years, the drainages have accumulated debris and we will be watching these drainages carefully.

### 2011 Work Targets

For 2011 the following projects have been identified. These are listed in priority and will reflect available resources.

1. Grade adjustments at mile .5 - 1.0 and rock from gate to mile 1.0. This requires development of a rock source at the front ranch. We have a target location and are discussing this with the Property Owner.
2. Grade adjustments and overall drainage redirection on Lower and Upper 2 Mile Hill. Culvert replacement on 2 mile hill: the "shiners"
3. Incidental grade repairs throughout the road, especially on Silva Ranch and Snot Hill. This will include incidental berm removal, drainage cuts, rolling dips and critical dips at selected crossings.
4. Rock at selected corners and culverts in the first four miles: This is for the ones that get swampy in the winter and dusty in the summer.
5. Additional culverts as we can afford them. The focus would be on some of the old drill pipes that are too small and/or shotgunning.
6. Refresh Rock from Toombs Creek to mile 6.8 (The gray stuff. This just needs slicking with the rock that is already there.)

Additional projects may unfold as the season proceeds.

## ROAD DUES

Annual Road Dues are due and payable on January 1, 2011. We will get invoices out in the next newsletter, but don't be shy about sending checks anytime.

We will also send the annual financial report in that newsletter, though there have been only limited expenditures this year.

## REGULAR ROAD USE REMINDER

The following is the regular reminder about use of the Road. Please share this with all guests and vendors.

### **Please note:**

The chain at the Big Iron Gate does not have to be tight for the gate to do its job. It's OK to leave a little slack in the chain and it will make it that much easier for the next person to open the lock.

There continues to be incidental litter at the gates. Please pick up what you drop and advise your guests to do so as well. And, if you are so inclined, pick up what you didn't drop.

The Big Iron Gate has been found open by a number of Owner's. Please keep it closed and locked. This is not our choice, but the requirement of the property owner who is not part of the Road Association.

### **Poaching**

The Owners of the front ranches have had several incidents of poachers either trespassing from the public road or hunting while traversing the road legitimately. They have advised the Road Committee that they are serious about reporting and prosecuting poachers, as demonstrated by the arrest last year.

Please remind all guests that the road crosses private property and that there is no hunting allowed from the road on the properties of others unless specific permission has been given by the property owner.

### **The Usual Stuff:**

- Always lock the gate; regardless of whether it was unlocked when you got there.
- Make sure the combo is NOT left on the lock or the lock will not lock. Spin the numbers before locking and test the lock to make sure it is locked.
- If you wish to leave the gate open for a car that may be following, please wait at the gate while it is open.

- Please pick up litter and debris that does not belong on the road. If you are at the Front Gate and see litter, please assist in picking it up for removal. This makes the Front Gate more attractive for all users.
- Please remove rocks or trees that have fallen onto the road. (If you remove a large tree or perform other substantial work in keeping the road open, please advise the Committee so we can say thanks.)
- Please get permission from the owners of the front ranch to park cars inside the front gate. Contact:  
Dean and Kelly Falkenberg  
(707) 431-1517  
dktfalken@aol.com
- Please park between the front gate and the second green-post and chain fence. This way the Owner can tell that you are a guest and not a trespasser.
- Please drive slowly and carefully.

### **Guests:**

- Please advise guests that they are traveling over private property and that they should respect the privilege to do so. It is not appropriate to stop for sightseeing or personal relief on other's property.
- Please advise your guests regarding Road Etiquette including basic driving methods for rural roads and basic courtesies.
- Please ask guests to say Hello and readily identify themselves and who they are visiting when meeting someone on the road. (It's always nice when I encounter a stranger on the road and they tell me who they are without me having to ask.)
- Please advise all of your guests regarding the importance of locking the gate. It is your responsibility to ensure that your guests understand how to operate the gate.

- Please advise guests not to litter the area around the gates. (I pick up trash there almost every time I enter. This is not road trash but it came from people using the gate.)
- Please advise guests to assist with Road maintenance by removing rocks or trees that are in the path of travel should they encounter them.

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## RESOURCES

### **Ranch Mailbox**

**wranch@dtbarch.com**

Thanks to Tami Bobb and David Otero for their efforts in sharing space on their personal ranch site for our benefit.

### **Ranch Website**

**"<http://www.wickershamranch.com>"**