

# Falls Creek Ranch Board Meeting

**Status:** Approved    **Date:** Oct 23, 2025 5:30 PM MDT    **Location:** Online

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/yxh-huud-jmy>

Or dial: (US) +1 262-864-1592 PIN: 469 558 732#

More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/yxh-huud-jmy?pin=9208654690166>

## Attendees

- **Board Members:** Pat Fettinger, Pamela Flowers, James Trammell, Justin Poehnelt
- **Guests:** Mark Smith, Joe Scarpino, Tom Allen, James Grizzard, Paulette Church

## Approval/Changes to the Agenda

- No changes

## Conflicts of Interest

- None

## Open Period Comments

- None

## Approval of Previous Minutes

- Pamela motioned to approve, James seconded. Motion was approved.

## Treasurer's Report

Capital	\$53,148.53	Bank of San Juans
	\$158,358.90	Bank of San Juans - Water Reserve

Operating	\$113,666.55	Bank of San Juans
Grant	\$1,000.12	Bank of San Juans
<b>Total Cash</b>	<b>\$326,174.10</b>	

All assessments have been paid as of today, 10-23-25.

The following accounts have no monies budgeted for 2025-26 fiscal year:

- 8010 - Ranch House Capital Projects Current Exp: \$22,436 Work is on-going with more expenses expected in the next few weeks from the credit card bill
- 8102 - Well Drilling Total Expenses: \$19,602 for the additional well. **Addendum:** Funds of \$40,000 were budgeted for the previous fiscal year. Work was done late July (paid \$8K in FY 24-25) and finished early August.
- 8020 - Road Improvements Current expense: \$5,000

Total fire mitigation expenses are \$24k of \$82k budgeted for the 25-26 year.

The Caretaker and Help budget is \$87.5k with \$3.6k spent as of Oct 10th.

Robin Lucie is still finalizing 2024-2025 accounting.

I have completed all of the paperwork to open business visa accounts for Mark Smith and Geary Baxter with Bank of the San Juans. I am waiting for final approval and will contact them this week to discuss the timeline. The card limits will be \$5,000 each for a HOA total of \$10,000 per month. Mark said this would be a sufficient amount to meet the needs of the Ranch.

We may need to create expense accounts for snow removal and road maintenance, since we have hired an outside company for these expenses. They are currently sitting in a prepaid account.

Small overage on expected budget for ranch house with significant remodeling and improvements accomplished.

Reimbursement still expected for new water tank road, waiting on aggregating road expenses with Mark Smith.

*Justin Poehnelt motion to approve the Treasurer's Report, Pat Fettinger seconded the motion.  
The motion was approved.*

## Committee Reports

### **Common Property**

Mitigation work for this Summer and Fall has been completed. A large area east of the Oakcrest homes has been cleared of brush and small trees. Brush piles from this clearing have been created and will be burned after there is adequate snow cover. This should coincide with the Forest Service burning of the piles north and south of our subdivision.

Please do not place any more bags of leaves, cones, needles or brush along the road. The season for that sort of clean up is over for the season.

### **Community Garden**

No report.

### **Architecture**

No report.

### **Beautification**

No Report.

### **Bees and Chickens**

The Committee met on 10/14/25. The Committee decided on methods to overwinter chickens which included cleaning and feeding instructions for the flock. Run will be improved to keep out snow. Changes to the flock were made to make sure we had egg producers for the spring.

### **Dam**

October rains made a huge difference in the water level of our lake. Today, we are about 24 inches below full, Falls Creek is running and we are not releasing water to downstream water rights holders. All in, as we enter winter, our lake dam is in great shape with a normal snow

year, the lake should fill there will be water for irrigation next spring. Sometimes it's good to be lucky.

## **Entrance Gardens**

No report.

## **Emergency Response Team**

Purchasing magnets with phone numbers to share.

## **FireWise**

Love the soaking rains, and sorry they caused so much damage for so many. We moved from Severe Drought to Moderate Drought last week on the national Drought Monitor that is published every Thursday. The southern portion of La Plata County went from Extreme Drought to Moderate, a huge jump in one week.

We submitted two requests for reimbursement for our current Colorado State Forest Service grants, one across from the stables and one below Oakcrest. Both are creating shaded fuel breaks to protect the ranch from fires moving in or moving out into SJNF. The total requested from grants was \$47,461.90. This will cover work done in the last fiscal year and we have remaining funds to draw down for this fiscal year for continuing work on both areas.

We submitted two new grants to CSFS, one to purchase a disc mower for the meadows and along our road shoulders. It rides to the side of our tractor and tilts up and down to match the slope. It also is great under trees to interrupt biennial weeds and small diameter ladder fuels. The second request is to build three shaded fuel breaks, two along Main and one to the west of Ponderosa Park for the trees that are tall and spindly growing over the ridge. This will protect the homes around this grove and remove the dead trees that are an increased fire hazard. The value of the two grant applications is \$72,000 and they would be funded through 2029.

We are working to bring firewood logs up from the lower fuel break project area and will place them where the fire exit road meets Mason Cabin. They will be 4 to 6 ft. lengths, so you may need a chainsaw to cut them shorter to haul them home.

We finished our home hardening grant, which provided 1/8th in wire mesh screen and two loads of gravel to be placed around wood-sided homes. All materials were used with several great projects completed by homeowners!

We plan to have a fall workday and will get the word out in advance.

## **Horses**

No report.

## **Lake**

No report.

## **Roads**

Potholes and washboards are being worked on this week. We rented a blade for the Kubota tractor, which is being used to reestablish ditches and repair damage from the recent rains. It may make sense to purchase instead of rent.

An electric line has been run to the entrance gate. Agreement to pay the firehouse electric bill, but need to contact LPEA to transfer. Need the account number to get added existing accounts which are split to different budget line items.

Need to decide on an accounting line item for the power bill.

## **Utilities**

No report.

## **Welcome**

No Report.

## **Ranch Manager**

No Report.

## **Old Business**

- Automatic Gate
  - Questions and feedback can be submitted here [Form to Submit Feedback](#), responses are here  Proposal to install an automatic gate (Responses)

- Preliminary draft document at  
    ☰ Proposal: Installation of an Automatic Gate
- Will collect last information around cost and send email to all residents.
- *No decision at this time.*
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## New Business

- Board Vacancy - Teresa Rushton resigned on Oct 15, 2025
  - Communication processes could be improved to:
    - Members raise topics with appropriate committee
    - Use [board@fallscreekranch.org](mailto:board@fallscreekranch.org) email instead of personal email or phone of board members
  - More equal sharing of tasks across board members
  - Justin will send an email.
  - *No decision or vote.*
- James Grizzard: Covering the cost of certifications and training for the emergency response team. Request to purchase magnets with group phone numbers to share with residents.
  - Consideration of legal liability.
  - *Pat Fettinger motioned to approve \$400 in expenses for the Emergency Response Team. Justin Poehnelt seconded the motion. The motion was approved.*
- James Grizzard: Replacing gas pump at lake with electric pump. Electric for the ranch house well is 100ft from the current pump. Could possibly reuse unused submersible well pump and wiring.
  - Will do additional research to understand there are no impacts to ranch house water and electrical to the well.
  - *Will defer until more information is shared.*
- James Grizzard: Request to approve an electrical fence line for orchard.
  - Some disagreement on whether it falls under: "improvements that change the character of the Common Property".
  - Justin Poehnelt: Stated that an electric fence is consistent with the historic and present character of Falls Creek Ranch as a working ranch. The use of electric fences for ranching in Colorado predates the establishment of FCR.
  - Followup will be done with fire officials/experts.
  - Followup with our insurance policy.
  - *Will defer until more information is shared.*

- Barry Bryant: Request approval of bid to install new water line to stables.
  - Estimate\_2218\_from\_Planet\_Excavation\_LLC.pdf
  - planet excavation contract (20).pdf
  - Background: 1000 ft line from Starwood to stables, leaks significant amounts of water. Excavation was down to install valves in the line up from the stables, but was leaking upstream from there. Expected that there might be multiple leaks. Water is turned off and on at the meter, but is difficult to do in the winter. Can likely route around boulders or obstacles. The leak has been ongoing for approximately 2 years.
  - Discussion focused on whether this was a priority project. Could the water line be left open for the winter? Are there other alternatives in the short-term.
  - *Justin Poehnelt motioned to defer approving this project until a capital improvement plan has been shared from the utilities committee detailing projects for the next two years. Pat Fettinger seconded the motion. The motion was approved.*
- Pat Fettinger: Understanding unexpected budget expenses, better planning, committees providing more detailed expense expectations, short brainstorming.
  - E.g. Road grader repairs. grader-repair-quote-2025.pdf Parts have been ordered, repairs will be done soon prior to winter.
  - Many expenses are during the last months of the fiscal year, committee chairs submit budgets in April/May for the majority of expenses over a year in the future.
  - *No action taken.*
- Justin Poehnelt: Storage of personal property, equipment on common property, specifically at the orchard/burn area and equipment shed.
- Justin Poehnelt: Trespassers using common property below Oakcrest. See map at <https://caltopo.com/m/LC9420N>, some photos at <https://photos.app.goo.gl/GANewCC42ahrPSnUA>.
  - Plan to fell trees and block singletrack access trails entering Falls Creek Ranch property.
  - Plan to dig "tank trap" and fell trees to block an illegally constructed road that connects to property owned by Trimble Hot Springs. A "tank trap" is a mound of earth placed across a road to block vehicle access, prevent erosion, and restore natural habitats during road closures. It is commonly used by the USFS.

- Plan to fell trees over fire road to block vehicles that will be removed in the spring before fire season.
  - May want to consider vehicle barriers in a future budget where the fireroad leaves Church Camp to the northeast and another closer to Trimble. These gate locations are not on the fire escape path as that route turns south at Church Camp to the Red Ridge community and its private road system.
- Justin Poehnelt: FCRA registered agent and periodic updates, I suggest that the secretary do this once a year task. Yearly task that takes ~10-20 minutes.
- Justin Poehnelt: Use Buildium for source of truth for resident directory.
  - The list managed by Deirdre Heine leads to inconsistency since there is no single source of truth and 3 separate systems to synchronize.
  - Residents can self-update their contact information at <https://fallscreekranch.managebuilding.com/Resident/portal/profile>.
  - Buildium admin accounts can be created for utilities(Peter) and others (Deirdre) needing access to the list of residents. There is a Contacts page in the resident portal that is opt-in.
  - *No action requested from the Board. Discussion will continue with Deirdre.*
- Justin Poehnelt: Website has been updated with improved search capabilities and committee information has been standardized. Also includes a history of changes for each page. I will continue to make updates. Planning to make a resident only access page with email magic links to sign in. No action requested from the Board.
  - <https://github.com/jpoehnelt/fcr-website>
  - <https://fallscreekranch.org>
  - *Justin will create a link/announcement in Buildium.*
- Paulette Church: Was unable to join the meeting, required to be admitted. Justin Poehnelt will investigate. No other guests had issues.

## Executive Session

## Announcements

- Email [board@fallscreekranch.org](mailto:board@fallscreekranch.org) if interested in serving on the Falls Creek Ranch Board.
- Minimize things that will attract bears around your home. Hibernation will put more pressure on them to find food. Durango CPW will respond to messages. Contact CPW for bear issues at: <https://cpw.state.co.us/contact-us> and 970-247-0855.

- See <https://fallscreekranch.org/residents/calendar> for future Board Meetings
- Lake Cleanup Day on Nov 8th at 9am.

## Adjournment

Justin Poehnelt motioned to adjourn, Pat Fettinger seconded.