

a private community

# SUN MOUNTAIN RANCH CLUB

winthrop, washington



SPRING/SUMMER 2023

## **EDITOR'S MUSINGS:**

Okay, I know, spring is long gone, and we are in midsummer now. My only excuse is laziness.

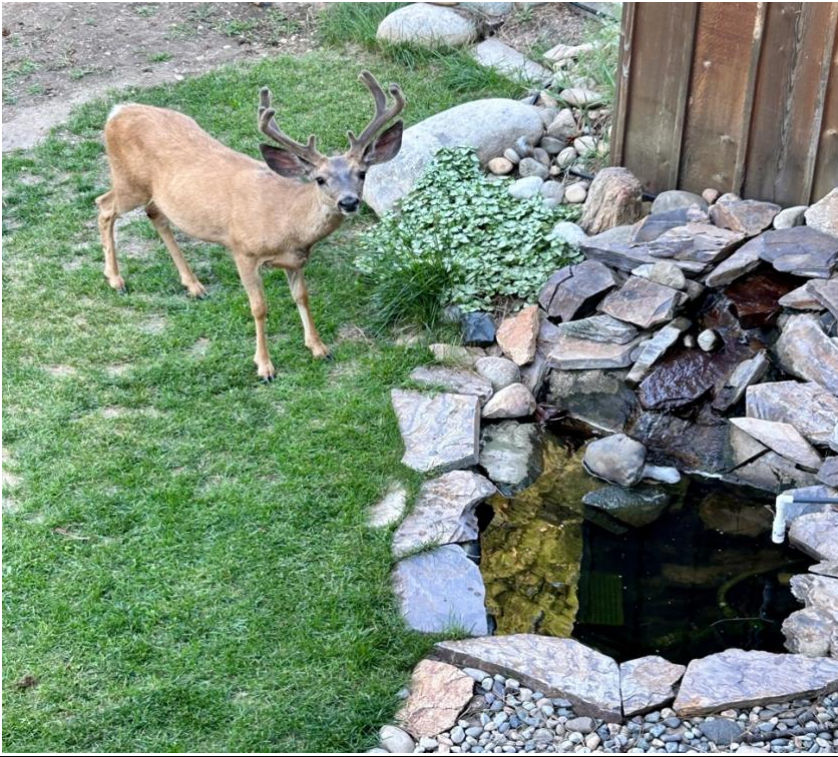
And a basic enjoyment of life these past few months.....

But our community has been busy. You may have noticed there is a lot of construction going on – new homes, additions, lot improvements, firewise work, and a lot of part-timers here for the summer fun.

Hopefully this newsletter can update you all on the latest!! BUT PLEASE REMEMBER TO READ THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS THAT ARE POSTED ON OUR WEBSITE – [sunmountainranchclub.org](http://sunmountainranchclub.org). These meetings contain the latest info on YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.

The HOA doesn't run itself – we need your participation. **The annual membership meeting is scheduled for September 23 and positions open are Director 1 (Kitty), Director 3 (Steve Shipman), Director 5 (Kathi), Secretary (Steve G), and Treasurer (Kathi again).** These positions are only for 1-2 years at a time, and our community needs people to step up and take their turn at keeping things running smoothly. It is not a huge

time commitment – there are many neighbors who will help. Let’s keep our community moving forward.  
**Watch for your Annual Meeting notice coming to your email or mailbox soon!**



### **FIBER OPTIC INTERNET OPPORTUNITY**

Have you signed up yet?????

Methownet (our local internet provider) and Okanogan County Electric Co-Op (OCEC) have partnered to obtain a \$12 million grant to provide fast, reliable high-speed internet to 2600 homes in the Methow Valley. Sun Mountain Ranch Club qualifies! **It is an unbelievable opportunity for everyone here to have the lines run, free of charge to your property/house! There is no commitment.** Methownet and OCEC need to see who is interested to help them with future projects. So far, almost 1600 properties have signed up *as interested* out of 2600.

I know of many folks who can't get internet at their place due to their location. And many have unreliable internet – heck, our clubhouse has spotty and insufficient internet.

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY – SIGN UP AT - [okanogancountyconnect.com](http://okanogancountyconnect.com)

**Here's the details:** They have a special vibrating plough that digs and runs the line at the same time. It will follow our existing power lines, run about 18" deep and a few inches wide and construction for the valley would start in the spring of 2024 and needs to be finished by 2026.

They will be putting lines in our neighborhood, but they will not run it to your house unless you sign up for the service. Right now, basic service from Methownet is about \$57/month. The fiberoptic service will be faster and cheaper than satellite service, with 100 Mb upload and 100 Mb download. Fiber service may be more than you are paying now but considerably less than other services promising higher speeds. Methownet hopes to get monthly cost figures out to us by December.

It can save you money as there will be no need for multiple services - say good-bye to your Dish or other Satellite streaming service, and to your landline.

It will improve your property value.

It's the most reliable and stable service available and *there are no data caps or overage charges.*

This is a win/win for us all – if you don't do it now, it will cost you thousands to do it later. Right now, the installation will be FREE. And even if you feel your Methownet service is just perfect for you – remember the \$500 you paid for the transceiver when you first got Methownet? It has a 5-year lifespan – you will be paying for that again soon. This fiberoptic cable and modem are all you need – no extra items.

**IF YOU FEEL YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO AFFORD THE MONTHLY FEES – YOU MAY APPLY FOR THE \$30/MONTH SUBSIDY FOR BROADBAND AVAILABLE TO THOSE WHOSE INCOME QUALIFIES. CHECK OUT <https://methownet.com/March2023pdf> FOR MORE DETAILS**

### **FIREWISE NEWS:**

We had a great spring. The May 6<sup>th</sup> BBQ that kicked off National Firewise month was a huge success.

Attendance was amazing – 75+ folks despite the cooler wet weather and it was fun – and informative. We had two yard-waste events that saw tons of waste removed without burning.

**55 properties spent 540 hours bringing 88 loads from 112 acres to remove over 11 tons of yard waste. All for free. DNR covered the bill in its entirety! \$3000.** We also had our volunteers thin and prune up trees along Twin Lakes Drive and Larkspur. What a fantastic crew.



We are hoping to have some thinning done in our common areas this fall on the 50/50 DNR plan. It will be almost \$20,000 worth of work and DNR will pay half – a great opportunity for us and many areas in the valley are using these grants.

And remember, you can have your property assessed by DNR or Okanogan Conservation District. Please look for the info on our website the Firewise tab.

As always, if you have questions, contact me, Karen Mulcahy as [smrcfirewise@gmail.com](mailto:smrcfirewise@gmail.com)

## **THIS PROPERTY WAS THINNED**



## **THIS PROPERTY WAS NOT THINNED.**



We are taking a break through the summer. And what a great summer it has been so far  
We have a burn ban in effect. Keep our community safe – don't burn! Firewise your property, don't drive on dry grass!! Look at your past Firewise newsletters for info. Keep us all safe!!

## **ARCHITECTURE COMMITTEE NEWS**

The Architecture Committee has been busy this Spring. . . We have approved a total of 12 Applications for Construction/Development since the month of April. This included 2 houses, 2 shops/garages, 5 shed installations, 1 house remodel, and 2 for site preparation activities.

Remember, if you are making any material changes to your property (besides landscaping) such as a new driveway, power, well or septic installations, you should submit your Application package at least a month ahead of any dirt movement. And of course, an Application must be submitted before any type of structure is built or installed.

If you have any questions regarding building in the development, please contact the Architect Committee Chair, Kathi Cherrier at [treassmrc@gmail.com](mailto:treassmrc@gmail.com).



## **TREASURER'S NEWS**

Thank you to everyone who continues to make their dues payments on time and saves me the headache of chasing down money for past-due payments (that was my previous life as a banker)

The Club's finances are in good shape and the Board continues to be responsible with your monies while trying to make sure we keep our amenities in working order and the expenses paid. You'll get a full report for year-to-date numbers at the Annual Membership Meeting on Sept 23rd. I am in the process of working on the 2024 Budget, which will be presented at the meeting as well.

We have had to replace water faucets in the bathrooms and install diaper changing stations, make some expensive septic repairs, and do regular maintenance stuff like staining signs and replacing signs. Paying the garbage, electricity, propane, and phone bills every month takes a good portion of the budget just like it does for each of you personally.

The Capital Improvement Fund is in good shape according to our Reserve Study, but could use some improvement, more on that at that annual membership meeting.

As always, if you have any questions regarding any of the Club's finances or your dues, etc. please zip me an email at [treassmrc@gmail.com](mailto:treassmrc@gmail.com).

### **COMMON AREAS – Jil Wickander, Chair**

With the warm evenings now is a good time to look up. The night sky is on display in August with shooting stars. The middle of the month the sky will be really dark with the new moon. So find that place to sleep out and watch the night sky.

I attended an event in Twisp sponsored by the Methow Dark Sky Coalition. What was most startling were the slides showing how much light is shining up into space over the United States.

We live in a very rare place in the country. We have a very dark place to live. Even so, Winthrop and Twisp did show up as tiny dots of light on the map. The Paysayten Wilderness was one of only a few places on the West Coast that has totally dark skies.

A lot of information was given, so here are the highlights of light pollution below:

1. Impacts wildlife—plants and animals depend on cycles of light and dark to sustain their lives. Artificial light at night can be adverse and deadly on many species.
2. Waste of energy—In Washington state alone over \$70million is spent on light going up into the sky. The energy costs quoted for the whole country was over 3 Billion\$\$\$\$
3. Scientist are studying what wasted lighting is doing to not only the energy economy, but also human health.
4. The Social costs in a neighborhood—Is your light shining across the neighbors lot? Shining into their windows?
5. Light to Protect the Night—Use light only if needed. Direct light so it falls only where needed. Light should be no brighter than necessary. Use timers or motion detectors. Use LED lights with the yellow warmer colors.

For more information contact the International Dark Sky Association [www.DarkSky.org](http://www.DarkSky.org) and the local chapter [methowdarksky.org](http://methowdarksky.org) or [facebook.com/methowdarksky](https://facebook.com/methowdarksky)

I have not fact checked this, but I am told a few of the other HOA's in the valley have added to their CC&R's requirements for outdoor lighting. I will be checking into this along with the Okanogan County Planning Department to see what they have done.

So not only look up this month, but look down. Yup, those noxious weeds now have gone to seed.

Please do contact me to learn if and what weeds are spreading on your lot. I will be checking into a spray program for next year. Those green fringes along the roads?? WEEDS!!!! Not my first choice to spray herbicides, but pulling some of the tumbleweeds by hand is a daunting task. Other weeds pull quite well by hand. And little bugs were seen on Toadflax and Barnaby here. Those little beetle bugs are the biological approach to controlling the spread of the seed. Not sure how they got here but they are most welcome. If you spot them, leave them to do their work.

And soon the bears will be foraging in the neighborhood before their hibernation. Please leave them alone. If they are into something at your place, take a look and see why they are interested in it. Chasing them just costs them calories that they need to store to make it thru the winter. If we have nothing to offer them in feed, they won't stay long in the area.

The community pool sure has been popular this summer. There was a request at a Board meeting to look into having Adult Hours at the pool. I plan on putting this topic on a Homeowner Survey that is coming later this fall.

Enjoy the warm days! Jil

### **MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS:**

We are inviting our members to contribute something to the newsletter with a few caveats.

No more than 150 words

No business advertising or requests for money/support (unless it's a non-profit 501c3 they are part of)

Here is the first contribution from David Lukas!

### **Methow Nature Notes**

If you enjoy observing and learning more about our local plants and animals, you'll enjoy Methow Nature Notes. This is both a Facebook group with over 2000 members who post photos, observations, and questions every day about the plants and animals they're seeing around the Methow Valley; and also a weekly email newsletter if you don't use Facebook or if you'd like more in-depth stories about local natural history. Check out Methow Nature Notes on Facebook or learn more about the newsletter at [www.methownaturenotes.com](http://www.methownaturenotes.com).

### **EDITOR HAS THE LAST WORD!**

Please remember to attend our annual meeting September 23<sup>rd</sup> – you may have already received your notice via email and snail mail notices will be coming soon. Secretary and Treasurer positions are up for renewal – these are one-year positions. Director 1,3 and 5 positions are open, and they are two-year positions. Only Kathi Cherrier is willing to run again so we have many vacancies.

Come to the meeting and socialize afterwards – we have a great community. Let's make it even better.

Thanks to all who contributed!

Karen Mulcahy

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