



Sun Mt. Ranch Club Newsletter Fall/Winter 2020



MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

These are trying times. We try to do things and we can't!

The board cancelled its Nov 21st scheduled meeting due to COVID – they wanted to meet in person but with cases rising – it just wasn't safe. We may organize something before the year ends but it is hard due to members having family's with illness or being unable to attend. We are all volunteers, so we have to be patient.

I am not sure if we ever welcomed our new board member, Gus Clay, who was appointed to take over Robert Walton's place as he moved from our neighborhood. Welcome Gus! He has already proven to be a valuable member, organizing the takedown of a dead tree threatening our garbage/recycling area, and full of ideas for improving neighborhood and willing to pitch in and make it happen.

We are sending out our fall/winter newsletter to give you all some idea of what has been going on in the neighborhood, as we can't have meetings. This issue our treasurer has contributed, as well as our new Firewise Board, and of course, there is the ongoing saga of the garbage/recycling area. And the TWIN trail.

As secretary of the board, I have seen a marked increase in communication to our board. People email us with questions, comments, interest in buying in SMRC, or are new to the community and want information. Please read our Treasurers Report! And there have been many letters concerning the garbage/recycling area. Either because they got a warning or have questions about the area.

We have had some very lovely comments thanking us for our work!!!

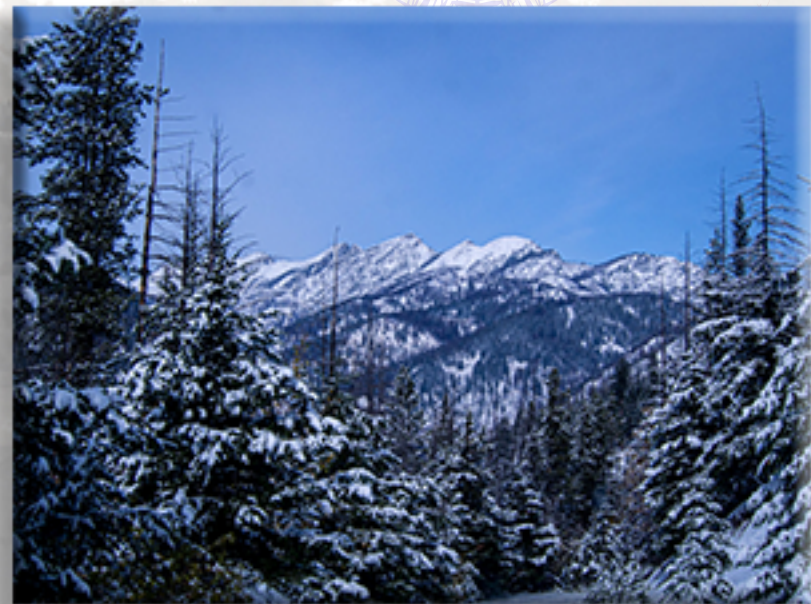
And we have heard from a few people who want to be more involved. It is hard to have you come to meetings with a pandemic in full force. Be assured, we welcome your involvement and when things calm down – we will need you! As always, we encourage you to check out our website – sunmountainranchclub.org.

Keep safe and well everyone –

Karen Mulcahy, Secretary
secsmrc@gmail.com

WELCOME NEW OWNERS!

Wow – 26 properties have sold in our development this year. We want to get the word out to all of you about our website and our facebook page. Our website is sunmountainranchclub.org and we do try to keep it updated. Our facebook page is the same name – Sun Mountain Ranch Club and Steve Giambone has been doing a good job putting items of interest there.



And for all our new owners, here are some specific tips and facts:

Your dues cover road maintenance including snow plowing and dust control, the garbage and recycling facility access, and access to the pool/bathhouse at the park, as well as some general activities of the membership like our annual general meeting.



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The Board of Directors is an entirely volunteer group, and this group gets most things done in the development.

We do pay a bookkeeping service to process our dues billings and payments received. We also contract for our cleaning service for the bathhouse and for the pool and park maintenance.

Normally, our treasurer receives a request from the title company involved in the sale of a property for specifics like the status of dues, etc. You can also expect a \$100 transfer fee when you purchase and possibly a request for dues for the coming year. Our dues bills go out in January, and you can pay in full or in two segments, half in April, and half in October - like your property taxes. If you would like to help us save costs, opt-in to have your dues notices and other communications sent via email. It's a win-win!

And finally, please note we post copies of the newsletters on the bulletin board at the Pool/Clubhouse, and on our website.

MESSAGE FROM YOUR TREASURER

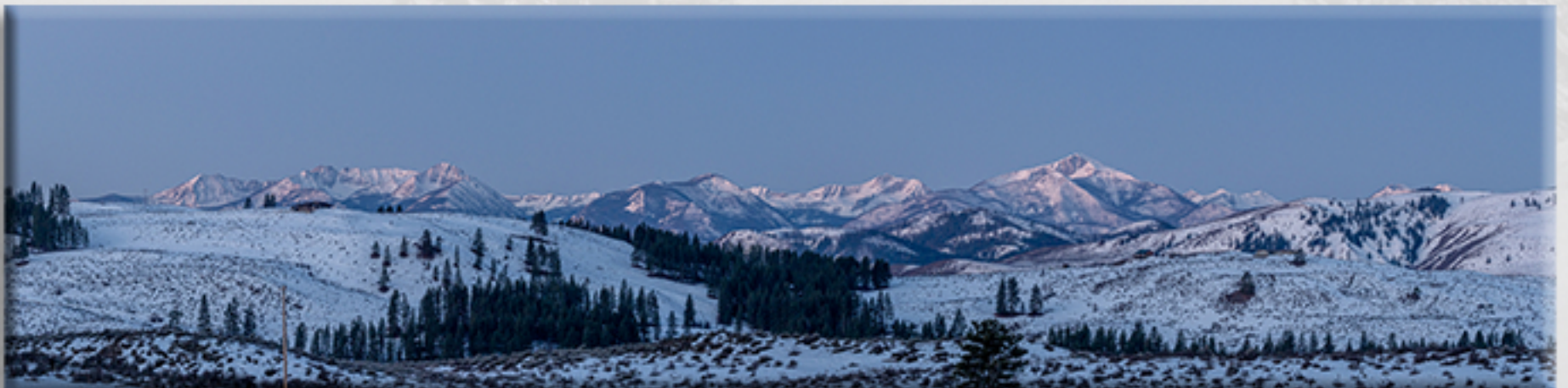
First and foremost, I would like to thank all of the lot owners who have continued and repeatedly paid your dues in a timely manner. This has helped tremendously with bookkeeping costs and administration time for me in keeping track of the Club's income and expenditures. We have narrowed the number of properties that have a lien for Dues in arrears to 5. And the November Treasurer's Report to the Board has only \$9,959.68 for Dues unpaid for 2019 and older.

Second, I would like to thank all those lot owners who responded to my "Opt-In/Opt-Out" notification on this year's Dues Invoice. We have 104 of the 280 lot owners agreeing to receive their Dues invoices via their email beginning in 2021. That is a direct cost savings of \$63.24 in just envelopes and postage, exclusive of the time paid to the bookkeeping service for the printing and stuffing of envelopes for mailing.

We now have email addresses for 245 of our 280 lot owners. (There are 300 lots in the community). It helps tremendously in getting you timely information regarding what's happening in the community. . . like a bear notice at the dumpster, and in receiving this Newsletter from our Secretary, Karen Mulcahy, and Steve Giambone, our Website Coordinator. (There's that costs savings again!)

Third, 137 of our lot owners have opted-in to receive their Annual Meeting documents via their email which equates to \$84.94 in cost savings. And it saves Karen and me a lot of time printing and stuffing those envelopes!

Fourth, we have had 23 of our neighbors sell their properties in the community, and there are 3 more sales pending as of this writing! This means we have 23 NEW neighbors to welcome to the community, so get out and about and get to know your new neighbors from a proper social distance.





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Last, but not least. . . Our Mailbox Coordinator, Alan Sodell has been very busy renting new mailboxes to our community members. . . there have been 12 new boxes rented this year, mostly to those new neighbors moving in. The Club has 96 locking mailboxes, 72 of which are now rented. So, if you've been thinking about getting one, you should download the Mailbox Rental Agreement from the website and get it in while you can.

As always, I am available for any questions you may have regarding your dues, etc. And if you want to Opt-In for email notifications, send me your permission via email so we can sign you up.

Hope you and your family stay well and have the best of holidays.

Kathi Cherrier, Treasurer
treasmrc@gmail.com





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FIREWISE NEWS

On October 21, a group of SMRC residents gathered to formalize creating a Volunteer Firewise Board. The Board consists of Karen Mulcahy, President, Board members Steve Giambone, Kitty Ryker, Alexander Hunhold and Drew Katz, and Secretary Patti Nordby. Firewise is a program of the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA.org). Its purpose is to help educate people living in wildfire areas about how they can protect their homes and neighborhoods as well as their family's safety. The Volunteer Firewise Board was formed with the intent to certify SMRC as a Firewise community.

Part of that process required us to develop and submit an annual action plan for our community. We identified 3 key areas to work towards:

- firewise community education (through newsletters, website, social media)
- main road mitigation (limbing trees near roads, mowing grass lower so it won't produce high flames or catch fire)
- and individual lot fuel reduction

We are happy to report that SMRC has been certified as a Firewise Community. Now the real work begins!

In order to maintain our certification, yearly, we need to compile the number of volunteer hours spent working towards our goals. We have 300 lots in SMRC and all we need is one hour per lot, total, for the year, to remain Firewise compliant. I was heartened to learn that even raking and burning pine needles count as volunteer work hours for Firewise compliance!!!! And our recently held Free Chipping event counts towards our accomplished activities. This event, sponsored by the Okanogan Conservation District had 17 lots participate, saved us \$1720 in chipping costs, prevented a lot of smoky air, and reduced fuels in our neighborhood!

If you are interested in participating in our Firewise endeavors, please see our SMRC website (sunmountainranchclub.org) and click on Firewise Information. As we all know by now, it's not a matter of if, but WHEN wildfire will affect our area. And being a Firewise community helps improve our chances when it does come our way.

Things you can do:

First, get a free Firewise Assessment of your property -

This can be arranged through either the Okanogan Conservation District or the DNR. Let us know when you have done this, and we will document it.

Get your blue reflective signs with your address on them

911 depends on this and if you don't have a street address, apply for one. Signs can be purchased through the Winthrop Fire Fighters Association (winthropfirefighters.org) or online at various locations.

Check our website for Firewise Information (it has its own heading)

Our action plan will be posted. And there will be a Volunteer Hours form you can print to document your work for us, and we can use it in our yearly November tally.

Rake your pine needles and dispose of them – it counts!

Heavens, I know I have spent at least 20 hours on that per year (that's a low estimate!)

It will be hard during COVID to organize community events, but we will keep working towards having more involvement in the neighborhood. We will strive to keep you informed and, hopefully, active in the efforts! Questions? Contact Karen Mulcahy secsmrc@gmail.org





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GARBAGE/RECYCLING NEWS

The board would like to thank all the people who are helping keep the garbage area tidy. We were talking to Casey of Wastewise and he said our recycling and garbage area is greatly improved!!! It takes a village, and it helps all of us if some of you see a mess and fix it. Straighten up stuff when you go there – especially the cardboard if it is sliding out and becoming a walking hazard. Keep the recycling in the blue containers or clean and empty in paper bags, only if the blue bins are full – try to push the recycling down and get your stuff in the bins. Special thanks go out to the volunteers who have tirelessly straightened the messes, shoveled the snow, and have kept an eye on the place.

Our garbage had been going out all summer long about twice a week as we had so many more members staying here all summer. We are charged \$57.54 for mileage per trip. The disposal fee is \$81.50/ton, which can often be almost 2 tons a trip (\$163). Hauling costs, each time, for one 20 yd. dumpster is \$148.58 – so, you do the math. Recycling goes out once a week and costs about \$400/month, so it is less costly. We have seen a LOT of things go in our dumpsters that increase the tonnage, including cardboard, motors, large pieces of metal, patio umbrellas, patio chairs, mattresses, animal beds, cat scratch posts..... Recycling these items is always better and reduces our tonnage costs!

REMEMBER IT'S YOUR MONEY FOLKS. Everyone wonders why our dues have gone up. Well, costs are going up for everything! Our disposal company in the valley, Wastewise, raised fees 30% (they hadn't raised them in several years and recycling costs went up). We are listening to you and are trying to help keep our costs down – but we need your help with this.

We have been monitoring the cameras and sending warning letters, canceling keycard access if we find multiple violations. These violations are costly for us all. First of all, Wastewise charges a \$25 recovery fee for each item that can't go into landfill, and then a \$20+ disposal fee for each item. For example, one client (not in our development) was charged almost \$600 for numerous pint paint cans they threw in the garbage. Remember, we get fined if we put the wrong stuff in there. And we are charged extra every time they have to move the garbage around to get the lid to shut for transport. As well, if things are not in bags, it is hazardous for the workers and makes it difficult to move.

So – here is what you can do.

Everything must be bagged as stated on the signs. This means Styrofoam, paper, any garbage – no loose items.

Don't throw non-household waste into the dumpsters – for example, kiddie pools, motors, couches, TV's, mattresses, medical waste etc etc etc..... Think of it this way – would you be able to get a kiddie pool into your curbside garbage can in the city? A mattress? A motor? Remember, our garbage is charged by weight.

Toss everything as far as you can to the back, so we don't have it all pile up in the middle front. We volunteers are moving it all to spread it out when we can, but Wastewise will charge for moving it around. And they will charge us for non-landfill items.

Use Methow Recycles (997-0520) to dispose of your glass. It does get made into new glass and decreases our tonnage costs. They also have a "Take it or Leave it Tent" where you can take your unused, but still usable, construction items. Here in our development we accept a lot of recyclables that aren't even taken at the recycling center without costing extra – make sure they are empty, clean, and dry.

Bring those pots and pans and clothing and household items that are still in good condition to the Senior's Center (997-7722). If you leave them in the garbage area and they don't get taken, somebody has to deal with it. So please, you deal with it, and take them to the center yourself.

Let's all of us pitch in to help us keep our costs down.

METHOW VALLEY TWIN TRAIL

In our last board meeting in September, Methow Trails presented a proposal concerning the TWIN trail, a multi-use trail that will go from Winthrop to Twisp.

FROM STEVE SHIPMAN, VICE PRESIDENT: "We are in very early discussions with the trails association and nothing will be decided without further feedback and engagement from the membership as a whole"

That is all the news we have at present on this matter.