

## Santa Fe Trail Ranch Property Owner Information

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*Welcome to Santa Fe Trail Ranch, a community of people who have moved here from all over the United States and a few countries beyond. Regardless of place of origin or reason for buying land on this ranch, you'll find that all property owners share a strong sense of adventure, a love of nature, and an appreciation for peace and privacy not possible in most other areas.*

*As a community, governed by covenants, and managed by an elected Board of Directors, we work together to take care of our ranch and to handle common challenges, such as wildland fires and noxious weeds. Many in our community are active in the surrounding communities, both as volunteers and as members of civic organizations. Many in our community are artists or are skilled in crafts and construction. We tend to share our talents and learn from each other. Many in our community came here to be alone and enjoy the opportunity to be left alone. All of us, either full or part-time residents, feel we have a little piece of heaven here.*

*We hope you benefit from the following pages of information which encompass how we've chosen to govern and organize ourselves, how to build structures for human habitation on the ranch, and how to live in harmony and respect with our wildlife neighbors, both flora and fauna.*

*We are pleased to have you join our community.*

## **Ranch Operations and Governance**

### **Website**

The ranch's website, [www.santafetrailranch.com](http://www.santafetrailranch.com), is the best place to access and share information about the ranch. Board meeting minutes, financial reports, governance documents, contact information, property owner listing, a discussion forum and articles of various interests are just a few of the items you'll find on the website. To access owner-restricted areas of the website, you will need to obtain a password from the [webmaster@santafetrailranch.com](mailto:webmaster@santafetrailranch.com).

The ranch, its residents and its governance, exists in an ever-changing environment, and, therefore, to that end, this document cannot contain details such as current board members. It is incumbent upon all property owners who wish to keep abreast of the most current happenings to access that information on the website. Throughout this document, you will be directed to the specific website area where you can obtain the desired information and/or document.

On the website, you may also elect to receive various POA announcements via email thereby saving time as well as the conventional mailing costs.

## **Property Owners' Association**

The Santa Fe Trail Ranch Property Owners Association (POA) was incorporated in June 1990 by the developer, Charles Baldwin. The Board of Directors (BOD) –from three to nine members – who are elected annually by the POA members to three-year terms manages the POA. The current BOD and their contact information can be found on the website under “Board Information”. Articles of Incorporation, Protective Covenants and By-Laws govern the POA and its board. All of these documents are available on the website under “Governance”.

### **Board Meetings**

The BOD generally meets every other month. The current schedule can be found on the website under “Board Meeting Schedule”. The annual meeting is usually scheduled in October when annual elections take place. Information about the annual meeting can be found on the website under “200\_ Annual Meeting Information”.

### **Finance and Legal**

In order to provide necessary services to property owners, the BOD collects annual dues and oversees the expenditure of these funds for such activities as road maintenance and trash collection. The budget and dues amount for the next year are established at the last meeting of the previous year – usually in December. The annual dues are then billed in January. Financial statements can be found on the website under “Financial Reports”, and the annual budget can be found at the very bottom of the main website page under “Legal Disclosures”. It is important that property owners maintain their current contact information so that dues statements are properly billed. That can be done on the website under “Search/Update Owner Info” or by contacting the current Board Secretary.

It is also the responsibility of the BOD to enforce the Protective Covenants. Property Owners should take the time to familiarize themselves with the Covenants in order to avoid inadvertent breaches. A copy of the covenants can be found on the website under “Governance”. The BOD has the authority to take legal action, when required, to protect POA interests and property owners' rights.

### **Committees**

The BOD has established various committees to oversee ranch activities. This information can be found on the website under “Committees”. Property owners are encouraged to join committees and participate in the decision-making process.

### **Contracted Services**

The POA contracts with various vendors to supply services to SFTR. For example, the POA contracts with a road contractor to maintain the roads and remove snow. A property owner should contact the applicable committee chairperson if there is an issue with the vendor's performance and/or services.

## **Metropolitan Water District**

In October 1997, the POA membership approved the formation of a Metropolitan Water District to oversee the funding and completion of the ranch water system.

There is some understandable confusion on the part of some of our property owners as to the difference between the POA and the Metro.

The POA is that association comprised of all the Santa Fe Trail Ranch property owners. Its function is to manage and administer the affairs of the POA, through the elected Board of Directors, in accordance with the Governance documents and the wishes of the owners.

The Metropolitan Water District (Metro) is a Special District formed under Title 32 of the Colorado Revised Statutes. It is a quasi-governmental entity, managed by a five member Board of Directors, and was formed to manage and operate the ranch's water system.

While there is a symbiotic relationship between the two organizations, they are independent of one another.

Metro assessments are in the form of the Bond repayment (the \$1,800,00 bond which was used to finance the original installation) for which most property owners receive a quarterly invoice for \$93.00, and the Completion loan repayment (the \$550,000 loan made by the Metro to complete the work on the water system after the original Contractor abandoned the project) for which some property owners receive an annual billing of \$225.00. The completion work is still ongoing, but it appears highly unlikely any additional assessments will be necessary.

The water system has been functional since October 2004 and is accepting applications for service. If you are interested in applying for service, contact Jeanie Blasi at Century Business Solutions in Trinidad at 719-846-2080. All of the application documents can be downloaded from the website at "Water System". Once the water is installed, you will be billed quarterly for water usage and maintenance fee.

## **Guidelines for Ranch Living**

Beyond property owners' individual parcels, we all share the use of many "common areas". These areas include over eighty miles of roads, fifteen feet of easements on both sides of the roads, and various small parcels throughout the ranch where water tanks, mail boxes, etc. are located. Because we share the common areas, we must cooperate to maintain and protect those areas. This section explains the protocol and requirements of common area use.

### **Common Areas**

The only legal entrance to the ranch is across the metal bridge at Exit 6. Once across the bridge, security cameras can record the car license numbers of all vehicles entering the ranch. After dark, security lights on the "guard shack" are motion-activated.

A parking area is located just south of the entrance for guests and others sharing rides. Temporary parking of small vehicles, motor homes, construction vehicles and recreational vehicles is permitted. Please be sure to park in the parking area and not in front of the bulletin board or the mailboxes.

The bulletin board is for the use of property owners.

The U.S. Postal Service provides mailboxes. Residents acquire a ranch mailbox by signing up with the Postmaster in Trinidad. Please remember that the mailboxes are the property of the postal service. Do not write your name or any other information on the mailboxes. If you received another's mail in your box, please place it in the slot labeled "Misdirected".

### **Dumpsters**

The disposal of garbage and refuse is the responsibility of each property owner. The BOD contracts for the collection of household garbage and refuse from the designated collection site.

The contract with the garbage collection company is strict. The dumpsters are for regular household trash **ONLY!!** No toxic materials such as car batteries or paint, no construction materials such as drywall or lumber, no tree cuttings, no tires, and no household items such as mattresses or furniture are allowed in or around the dumpsters. It is each owner's responsibility to instruct their contractors and sub-contractors that they must remove their refuse from the ranch and not use the dumpsters. If disallowed materials are placed in the dumpsters, we face the possibility of having our collection contract voided. Any items outside of regular household trash must be taken to the city landfill located at the northwest end of Trinidad. The fees are very reasonable, and the hours are convenient.

No trash is to be left outside of the dumpsters, and the chains must be secured to protect our bears. The dumpsters have "bear-proof" lids that must be handled with care due to their weight. After depositing your trash, please be sure to close and latch the lids.

## **Roads**

Our roads are fragile and sometimes dangerous. The largest portion of our POA budget is spent maintaining these roads. With years of thoughtful planning, the various road committees are slowly improving the contouring and surfacing of our roads. The extreme weather conditions we experience can quickly deteriorate our roads.

Maintaining and improving our roads requires the cooperation of all residents, visitors and contracted service providers. The road committee monitors road conditions and stretches the budget as much as possible, but road users must treat the roads with care by maintaining a reasonable speed at all times and by staying off the roads as much as possible when they are wet. The best advice here is **SLOW DOWN!** The ranch's posted speed is 25 mph, however, with blind spots, limited visibility and unexpected wildlife, it may be prudent to at times adjust your speed downward.

The website lists snow plowing information under "Snow Plow Road Listing", and additional road information and tips are under "Committees" then going to the "Road Subcommittee Charter".

## **Obtaining an Address**

Any new construction will be assigned an address number by the Address Committee. Article 5.1.1 of the Covenants details this process and requirements to display the address on the driveway.

## **Installing a Driveway/Culvert**

Driveway installations are considered an opening onto the roadways (which are POA common areas) to provide access to individual lots. To aid owners and their contractors in building driveways, the POA has set forth the following specifications and guidelines to minimize impact to the roadways. When in doubt, please contact a road committee member.

1. Driveways should approach the roadway as close to 90 degrees as possible for maximum visibility.
2. Finished grade of any driveway shall be below the grade of the edge roadbed at the approach to the main road. The driveway approach shall not extend out into the main road. In no case shall the driveway approach impede the flow of traffic on the roadway, nor shall any driveway approach alter the grade of the roadway nor shall any driveway approach alter the width or profile of the roadway.
3. Driveway approaches to the main roadway shall not impede the flow of water in the drainage ditches of the main road. A culvert must be installed in the drain ditch of the roadway to facilitate normal flows within the ditch.
4. Driveways shall not discharge water onto the main road. Property drainage ditches along the driveway shall channel drainage into roadway ditches.
5. Driveway approaches shall be constructed with sufficient width to facilitate vehicles turning into and out of the approach. In no case shall the main roadway be altered to facilitate turning or altered to expand the turning radius into a driveway.
6. Driveway approaches to individual lots lying below the grade of the main road shall not be cut out of the roadbed. The approach of such a driveway shall be

filled with material from the individual lot to match the grade of the edge (shoulder) of the main roadway.

7. It is the homeowner's responsibility to be certain that these guidelines are followed. Each property owner is encouraged to seek the assistance of a member of the Road Committee before putting in a driveway or a culvert that will impact a POA road.

### **Conservancy**

The Greenlands Reserve owns the five platted lots along the Gallinas canyon. These one hundred eighty acres are then leased back to the POA primarily for the visual enjoyment of this open space and as a wildlife habitat. To a limited extent certain recreational activities such as hiking are allowed for the enjoyment of POA members. Absolutely no motorized vehicles are allowed in this area.

### **Rancher Lease**

The POA annually enters into a contract with a local cattle rancher who brings in cattle for summer grazing. The cattle, besides helping to keep the potentially fire hazardous grasses under control, also maintains the ranch's agricultural tax status. Since Colorado is a "fence out" state, it is up to individual property owners to erect adequate fencing if they wish to keep the cattle away from their gardens, home sites, etc.

### **Community Preparedness Handbook**

The SFTR Community Preparedness Committee has put together an "Community Preparedness Handbook" with suggestions to help all ranch residents deal with community-wide emergencies such as a wildland fire. The handbook is available on the website at "Community Preparedness Handbook". It is recommended that all fulltime and parttime residents of the ranch read the handbook and develop a plan to deal with such emergencies.

### **Women's Group**

The Women's Group provides camaraderie for SFTR women as well as its fundraising efforts for the benefit of Santa Fe Trail Ranch. Meetings are normally held once a month at a member's home and are casual and informal. The Women's Group takes leadership roles in such activities as the SFTR annual picnic, SFTR logo-wear sales, various other fundraising activities, the distribution of welcome kits to new ranch residents and other similar ranch community activities. Minutes of the meetings are maintained and posted on the website under "Women's Group". Membership is open to all SFTR property owners – residents as well as non-residents. For more information, the group's coordinator may be contacted at [wginfo@santafetrailranch.com](mailto:wginfo@santafetrailranch.com).

## **Wildfire Mitigation**

All SFTR property owners are strongly encouraged to understand the importance of their role in wildland fire prevention. Santa Fe Trail Ranch is a “Firewise Community” which means many of us are working toward reducing the fire hazards that exist on our properties and creating a defensible space around our structures. The local forester is a great help in helping property owners assess their fire hazards and determining how best to mitigate that danger. Contact information for the local forester can be found under “Points of Contact”.

## **Wildlife**

Santa Fe Trail Ranch is blessed with an abundance of wildlife including bears, mountain lions, wild turkeys, rattlesnakes and a wide variety of birds. A few things we should know in order to safely enjoy this wildlife is:

1. Do not feed the animals. When you feed a wild animal, you make them more dependent on and less afraid of people. This can put you and the animal at risk.
2. Keep any attractants out of reach of animals. Put away your barbeque grill after each use, keep your garbage inside your garage, and think about closing first floor windows at night or when leaving your house. Screens will not stop a bear that smells something in your kitchen.
3. Learn what you should or shouldn't do in the event you have a close encounter with a potentially dangerous animal. An excellent source of information is our Division of Wildlife District Wildlife Manager, Bob Holder, who can be reached at 846-4834 or the Trinidad East District Wildlife Manager, Jeremy Gallegos at 850-2634. This contact information can be found on the website under “Points of Contact”.
4. Be sure to visit the “Wildlife Articles” on the website to read about other property owners' encounters with ranch wildlife.

## **Noxious Weeds**

Noxious weeds, and primarily the Canada Thistle, are problems on the ranch. These plants can eventually ruin the grazing for cattle and wild animals. The Canada Thistle is a creeping perennial that has an extensive root system. Horizontal and vertical roots may extend fifteen feet. Tillage breaks up roots and stimulates new growth. Each plant usually produces 1,000 to 1,500 seeds each year that are easily transported to new areas. Seeds may remain viable in the soil up to twenty years.

The Common Area Committee has an ongoing program to spray the Canada Thistle and other noxious weeds in all common areas. However, for the program to be 100% effective, property owners should also spray noxious weeds on their own property.

The best time to control the Canada Thistle is when the plants are actively growing in the spring or summer, at the early bloom stage of growth or after fall rains have caused the plants to resume active growth.

Be on the lookout for announcements on the website for spraying activities.