

Let's Keep SFTR Clean

Ongoing information from the Common Area Appearance Subcommittee

by Harriet Vaugeois, subcommittee leader



Since we humans have chosen to move into the pristine area now called The Santa Fe Trail Ranch, we have necessarily and unnecessarily made some alterations to the land. Many of these alterations have been agreed upon as necessary aspects of our experiences here, such as roads and power and, yes, even telephones. (I've developed a much greater respect for telephones since I've moved here, not only for communication between neighbors, but more importantly, for emergency purposes.)

Because we live across great distances from

each other, signs have become an important addition to our environment. Signs provide information and safety guidelines. Many signs attempt to establish limitations for non-property owners as well.

As a community of neighbors, we've also needed common areas for other valuable services such as U.S. mail, trash containers, security cameras, and a community bulletin board.



And now the dilemma: how can we add all these human items and still maintain an overall appearance that doesn't detract from the natural beauty around us?



Over the years, the women of the ranch have researched and discussed ways to enhance and control the look of the ranch entrance and dumpster areas. Other groups have investigated methods of controlling unwanted visitors to the ranch - visitors who take from the ranch, such as poachers and thieves. When one idea for beautification became too elaborate (with

an ornate wrought iron archway that would be clearly visible from the freeway), the need NOT to attract attention to the ranch became a concern. When the addition of signs and common area objects were added with no thought to a unifying theme, we would hear the comment that the ranch was starting to look like a thrown-together trailer park. When a balance between need and beauty was found and "natural" changes were about to begin on the entrance, the water and phone system equipment rolled in to take control of the ranch for several months.

Now it's time again to address the visual impact we've made on this ranch and the look that we'd like to achieve for the common areas in the future. Those decisions include:

- The ranch entrance
- The community bulletin board/postal station/trash container area
- Signage at the entrance and around the ranch
- Monitoring litter in all common areas and around all ponds
- Removal or permanent storage of road and water system equipment

The challenge in finding a visual theme that will be acceptable to all property owners involves the following:

The truth is that everyone bought property here because of the beauty of the place.

The reality is that there are two very different reasons for owning property here:

- **a place to live or visit** - a place with space and privacy
- **an investment** - something that will appreciate in value and be sold for a profit.



The challenge in determining an appropriate look for the ranch entrance:

- something appealing that will draw in potential buyers so the investors can see a profit
- something that does not attract outsiders, so the residents can maintain their peace and privacy

Progress to date:

1. A subcommittee of volunteers has met once to discuss the items detailed above. (The Common Area Appearance Subcommittee meetings are open to all. The next meeting is scheduled for December 8, 2000. Please see the [Meetings page](#) for date, time, and location of all upcoming meetings.) This committee came up with some immediate goals and some long-range goals.
2. **Immediate goals:** Rearrange the entrance signage so that the front Santa Fe Trail Ranch signs stand out better. Remake the rest of the signs on the guard shack to reflect a common look and arrange them on a single information pole rather than nail them all around the shack and guard rails. Start a weed-pulling and rock-wall-building activity to slowly remove unsightly vegetation and gradually surround the shack with a low wall that will hide the emergency equipment stored there. Prevent parking that obstructs the security cameras' view of license plates. Cover the manmade objects with natural objects found on the ranch.
3. **Long-range goals:** Elicit ideas from all property owners regarding a common look or theme that could be used in all common areas of the ranch, and for all signage around the ranch. (We're not suggesting that the street signs donated and installed by POA members be replaced!). Continue to investigate ways to deter ranch entrance by unwanted outsiders without changing the beauty of the ranch. Continue to pursue the construction of a community building and a fire station through the Conservancy, and through private donations. Remove culverts, new and used, from around the ranch. (See [explanation](#), below.) Organize a Saturday morning work crew of ranch owners to pull donated tractors, trailers, trucks, and muscles to move all usable and new culverts to temporary storage on Carl Putz' and Dan Olin's land and move all beat-up, disgusting, and non-usable culverts to the small piece of triangular land at the base of Cottonwood, where a salvage company will be able to easily load them up and cart them away. Extend a huge thanks to Bill Bumstead, Michael Hughes, Dan Olin, Vaughn Roundy, Dale Swett, and Bill Wenstrom for taking care of this for the rest of us!

That's it for now. The next issue will address THE SPEED LIMIT ON THE RANCH!



Why New & Old Culverts Need to be Removed

After last year's freak flood and subsequent washout of Rainbow Springs, Old Mission Ridge, and Fisher Peak Parkway,

the road committee started a massive project to improve and increase the number of culverts around the ranch. To get the best price for the new and larger culverts, the POA bought a bulk load, knowing that we'd need extra culverts in the future for replacement of worn-out existing culverts and for areas where additional culverts will be needed after future rains and land erosions. When the new culverts arrived, they were delivered to various points around the ranch for ease of installation. Old and useless culverts were also unearthed at various places around the ranch. For almost a year now, the unused new culverts and the unsightly old culverts continued to lie at roadsides all over the ranch and, in some cases, on property owners' land. In terms of beautification, even new culverts don't make the grade! Thus, the need to remove and find storage places for the shiney eyesores.