

River Island Ranch POA, Inc.

“The Bridge”

Bringing Community Together

February 2025

Volume 2, Edition 2



“Not Fade Away”

As Valentine’s Day approaches, love is in the air. Snow is predicted for this week. February brings inspiration of hope, growth, and romance past, present, and future. May this image of our humble past encourage all of us to support the preservation of what we have been gifted and invested in. The Board of Directors met last Tuesday to review our fiscal accounting of the past year, our current status, and our forecast of this year ahead. In this edition we will address our financials, an approved budget by the board, and the anticipation of growing our shared interest in self governance. We welcome your feedback, input, and participation to volunteer and contribute to the administration and governance of our community.

REMINDER:

Our annual assessment fees are now past due. The 30 day accounts payable period is now over. If you have not processed your payment, please do so now. We hope to achieve a 100% account receivables without the need to issue any late fees or penalties. Thank you for your prompt payment.

2024 Summary:

RIRPOA finalized our year end with a balanced budget. We transitioned back to self governance and accessed our accounts on 09/20/2024, and we invested in an updated online version of QuickBooks. With a strong last quarter of savings we were able to realize a modest net gain. We transferred all the CD's in our reserve funds to more favorable interest terms. We switched our reserve money market account to a 4.3% interest bearing account which is projected to earn \$6,100 annually. We have eliminated all management expenses and expect to save \$32,000 in 2025. We have fully automated cabin reservations and hired a new cleaning service, which is also available for all members' residences. We have reduced cabin reservation fees, restored maintenance efforts to the Island, and have updated linens, smallwares, and amenities in the cabins.

We have unveiled an official new RIRPOA website, rirpoa.org, and direct everyone to discover all the materials related to RIR within the new site. Many thanks to the member volunteer committee for making our new website possible and extremely affordable.

We have had several new members purchase lots in the past year. Please join the Board in welcoming them. We are searching for members to volunteer for the Nominating Committee and the Island Club Executive Committee.

New Business:

At our February 4th Board of Directors meeting, we established and approved a budget for the remainder of 2025 as an operating guideline. Attached with this newsletter is a copy of the approved 2025 budget, a 2024 Fiscal Overview Summary, a 2024 P&L Statement, and a balance sheet.

We have met and entered into an agricultural lease with Greg Mann for a four-year term. Greg is the son of the late Vernon Mann, who previously held our agricultural lease allowing equine grazing on RIR property. Greg will introduce a manageable size herd onto North Filings 1 and 3 sometime this Spring. We will provide Greg with water for the horses as done in the past. He will manage grazing and prevent overgrazing. This will comply with the requirements for Rio Grande County to allow RIR to maintain its agricultural grazing zoning for property tax purposes. We have submitted the agricultural lease to the tax assessor's office. We are still working with the tax assessor to address and hopefully reverse the change made last year under Elk Peaks Property Management regarding how our common property is being assessed and imposed on each individual property owner.

Recently, several members have contacted the board with concerns of cows and livestock grazing on their property. We have regularly herded cows grazing on the Island back to the Filing 6 hayfields, owned by Tom Smith and leased by local ranchers. The local ranchers have been cooperating with us and our requests to contain them to the hayfields and not allow them to access RIRPOA property. However, fences are breached, they do trespass occasionally, and we are aware of the situation. Living here in the San Luis Valley is a privilege, and consideration to understanding local agricultural traditions and to our neighboring ranchers is necessary and respectful. Please be informed and aware of state laws and our responsibilities as good neighbors.



The State of Colorado, Department of Agriculture statutes sections 35-46-102 state: Colorado is an “Open Range, Fence-Out State.”

This means livestock, horses, cows, etc. may free range openly, on state and federal land, private property, and ranches. RIRPOA property owners wanting to keep grazing off their property *must fence out* livestock from entering their property. Statutes are very specific to adherence for approved fencing to keep livestock out. This may conflict with RIRPOA bylaws and ACC rulings on fencing guidelines. It is the property owner’s responsibility to fence out the livestock should they desire, not the ranchers’ obligation to “fence in” their cattle on free range land. Failure for property owners to comply does not mandate the ranchers to be held responsible for any damage caused by livestock to our property. The only exception of this ruling is when damage occurs to property by the breaching of “installed approved fencing” by livestock, and the subsequent destruction of said fencing, in adherence with fencing codes and statutes provided by the State of Colorado, Department of Agriculture. They will responsibly graze and respect our property. We are blessed and grateful to own property and live in this rural environment.

SAVE THE DATE:

The Board of Directors are happy to announce Saturday, August 16th, 2025, for our Annual Members Meeting. We will meet from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. for a traditional meeting following the Order of Business specified in our bylaws. We expect to follow an agenda including officer reports, committee reports, old and new business, and hold an election for any vacancies or additions to the Board of Directors, following the Nominating Committee recommendations. The meeting will be for members only. Housekeeping rules and restrictions are to follow. Anyone wishing to be heard during the meeting will require registration with the Board of Directors prior to the meeting. Official notification of the date and time in writing will be delivered 30 days prior to the meeting.

Immediately following the business meeting will be a picnic and party celebrating our community from 12:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Live music, BBQ, beverages, and games will be provided. Everyone and their guests will be welcome. This will be an opportunity to meet and get to know your neighbors, have conversations with Board members, share questions and concerns, and revel in the ownership of River Island Ranch POA. The Board of Directors plan a volunteer clean up work day Sunday, August 17, for those members still in town wishing to participate. We will also be scheduling work weekend events for a Spring and Fall clean up. No skills are required and all forms of light landscaping and general maintenance will be performed.

2024 Tax Assessment Good News

The Rio Grande County Tax Assessor has agreed to restore our original classification, taxing the Island, Clubhouse and cabins as an entity of common space owned by the POA. Unfortunately, they were unable to perform the transition by the billing deadline, and 2024 taxes will remain as delivered distributed among the membership. 2025 taxes will revert back.

We were unable to change the tax classification for the 2024 tax obligation due to the volume of members to be transferred back in time for invoicing by Rio Grande County. We are very grateful for them to allow River Island Ranch to revert back. It is a tremendous volume of work for their staff. We are currently in good standing with no tax debt for the Island.

We are expecting a significant storm this week and praying for snow for the rest of the season. Candies Restaurant has reopened in South Fork and the Malt Shop has opened their indoor facility. We have begun to address the reclamation of the quit claim deed of the property adjacent to the clubhouse. Friday night ice skating parties are in full swing and the warm weather last week has reopened fishing at the clubhouse. There are still cabin reservations available for spring skiing.

May everyone be blessed with health, joy, and peace as we continue to romance our way through February and rejoice in the anticipation of marching through the snow and winter recreation still to come, until we see the Spring once again. ***Happy Valentine's Day*** for those romantics among us.

Blessed and grateful, Bob Frank, President and
the Board of Directors of River Island Ranch POA