

## **UPPER SNOWMASS CREEK CAUCUS UPDATE**

September, 2020

This has been a strange summer. There have been no new land use applications to review, and no issues demanding attention. Covid has kept us at a distance. Consequently, there has been only one meeting of the Board. In spite of that the Board has been active.

Beginning in June and finishing in early July, this year's clearing of the central evacuation artery, Snowmass Creek Road, was conducted. This was the first public/private effort in Pitkin County. The County's Roads and Bridges department provided waivers of permit and dump fees, and dumpsters and hauling to the dump to leverage our donations and grant money and thereby allow greater removal of fuel along the roadway. Thirty-two acres and 3.4 miles were mitigated. This effort resulted in more than vegetation removal. Traffic site lines are greatly improved and provide safer conditions for cycling and automobile traffic. Nearly four miles of old barbed wire fencing was removed enabling wildlife to more easily traverse terrain. Trash was also removed along the roadway as part of this endeavor. We are thankful to both Western Vegetation Management and Pitkin County Roads and Bridges for assisting us in our objective of making our valley safer.

Additionally, the Caucus would like to acknowledge and thank those neighbors who voluntarily cleared their portions of Snowmass Creek Road and further extended our line to safety. Because of your participation and community good will, we will achieve our objective of enhancing the safety of Snowmass Creek Road in a timelier manner. Your helpful neighbors include:

Mary and Tim Ammons, Aspen Camp for the Deaf, Beverly and Gary Beck, Lynda Cameron, Mara and Dave Deniger, Jane and Michael Eisner, Cynthia and Ben Guill, Mindy and Jeff Hildebrand, Ann and Randy Lipton, Rosemary and John Lowenberg, Art and Jan Martin, Lee and Craig Williams, and Debbie and Raymond Woodrow.

Thank you to our generous donors who made the matching grant possible. Because of you we were able to make a significant impact on fuel removal.

The Caucus also donated \$2,500 each to Shield O Mesa and Shield O Terrace to be used for fuel mitigation along their entrances to Snowmass Creek Road. Both these projects have been completed and will provide safer access in the event of an evacuation of the area.

The Caucus continues to manage the Fire Danger signs at the intersection of Capitol Creek and Snowmass Creek roads, and the bottom of Watson Divide.

The Caucus has begun a new initiative in concert with Roaring Fork Fire. New software enables the fire department to aggregate critical information on structures in their response area such

as the location of propane tanks, gas shut-offs, electric mains, fire suppression connections, dry and wet fire hydrants, ponds, etc. This allows the department to pre-plan how to address fires at a particular address, and therefore, saves valuable time as well as increasing the safety of fire personnel in combating a blaze.

This summer the Caucus along with a fire representative began “mapping” those properties with multiple structures to avoid confusion in the event of a fire. Because of the inability to gather due to Covid restrictions, single structure properties will have to wait until next summer to input their information. It is hoped that a Caucus sponsored fire education event next summer will provide an opportunity for residents to bring their critical information to a fire representative and watch as it is input into the system.

The Caucus continues to advocate for improvements to Watson Divide. This summer a follow-up letter from the February meeting between Caucus Board Members and the County was sent to Pitkin County Road and Bridge and County Commissioner Steve Child requesting that money be budgeted for an engineering study outlining the process for improvements to the road. Brian Pettet of Road and Bridge responded that the financial outlook for Road and Bridge Special Fund has not improved and that “They do not anticipate a study or additional surface changes to Watson Divide for the foreseeable future”. Commissioner Steve Child did not respond. Despite this rebuff, the Caucus will continue to lobby on behalf of road improvements on the Divide. Safety requires it.

The Caucus Water Committee has stayed in touch with the Snowmass Water & Sanitation District during this time of pandemic. While there was nothing specific to Snowmass Creek this season, there is some general information.

Water Treatment Plant Production is up slightly from last year to 82.4 MG versus 79.9 MG for the month of July.

Snowmass Creek Average Stream Flows are down significantly from last year. Flows in July of 2019 were 372 cfs versus 80 cfs this year. Obviously, the relative lack of rain in August contributed to the large drop.

A good source of water news on the Western Slope is the Colorado River District at [coloradoriverdistrict.org](http://coloradoriverdistrict.org).

Your Caucus is and will continue to work on your behalf to realize the goals put forth in the Master Plan.

UPPER SNOWMASS CAUCUS BOARD

