



Edelweiss Maintenance Commission

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Fall 2014 Newsletter

General Manager's Message from Dick Volckmann

Whew!! - What a summer it has been! And now - TGIF!! (Thank goodness it's fall). Summer is behind us and good riddance. The forecast is for rain in a day or so, and that means the fire season and the angst that it caused is over for another year. Now we can sit back and revel in the cool nights, the warm days and the golden aspen-glow of a Methow autumn, as we point our hopes toward the snows of winter. Edelweiss was spared the devastation that affected the lower part of the valley and our hearts go out to all those whose lives were turned upside down from the inferno that swept south from Winthrop. Yes, we were somewhat inconvenienced by the fire, and the attendant power outage, but nowhere close to the disruption felt by the folks down-valley.

Fire, Water and Power - On July 16, the Okanogan Power Utility District gave notice that the power to the valley would be shut off due to the forest fires on the Loup Loup power line. On that day a notice was sent to all Edelweiss homeowners advising of the impending outage and stressing the need to conserve water during the outage, as our pumps would not be supplying water to the reservoirs. Especially important was the need to discontinue the use of irrigation, as all our water would be needed for household consumption, and we had no idea as to the length of the power outage. Unfortunately, many part-time residents were not present to turn off their irrigation, on the day that power was terminated (July 17th), so it continued to run on battery, or on battery back-up. If all irrigation had been turned off, and with most of our part-time homeowners not in residence, our water usage should have approximated our typical winter usage - approximately 20,000 gallons per day. And with proper conservation, water usage could have been as little as 15,000 gallons per day for the whole community. At that rate we should have had enough water for domestic use to last the entire **7.5** days of the power outage. Instead, our water usage was more than

44,000 gallons per day and the upper part of Edelweiss ran out of water in four days. Clearly, it needs to be stressed, that during a power outage, it is imperative that individual irrigation systems be shut down. I intend to develop a strategy to assist owners who are not in residence in the temporary shut-down of their irrigation. The first step is to ask all home owners whose AC powered systems have battery back-up, to remove the battery. That will insure that the irrigation will not come on automatically during a power outage.

Equally as important, when water recourses are in danger of being compromised, is the need for the community to join together and to shift into 'conservation mode.' Don't let the water run while brushing your teeth, don't flush for 'everything', limit your shower frequency and time, drink bottled water. In essence, make the most of the water we have left.

The good news was, that despite that our water lines ran dry in the upper portion of the system, the 10 separate samples required by the Department of Health after our water supply was re-established, proved to be free from any contamination.

Generators - During the power outage, management was approached by several property owners with the question as to why we weren't using back-up generators to run the water pumps. Hooking up large generators to our system is not simple. Three enormous generators (2-20K and 1-30K) would be needed to power the water system. To purchase and hook them up would cost over \$40,000. And they would likely sit idle for years. To rent them would cost over \$6,000 per week plus the cost of an electrician to hook them up, if we could find someone capable in a power-out situation. The generators would have to be run manually, as our telemetry would not be functional. And we would have a problem in obtaining and storing the fuel necessary to run them.

The fact is, in its entire 48-year history, Edelweiss has never run out of water because of a power outage until the summer of 2014. And if we had had better control

over our water resources, our water would have lasted through the outage. For a full analysis of our research into the use and cost of generators, please refer to the discussions by Craig Hook and myself immediately following the Board meeting minutes of August 25, 2014, available on the Edelweiss website.

Cows - Cattle getting out of the National Forest and into Edelweiss have become, to some, a matter of great concern this summer. A large number of trees were blown down or were weakened by the heavy winds and rains that we had during the month of August. Several of these fell across the fences, creating avenues for the cattle to cross. As soon as we thought we had all the gaps in the fence repaired, a tree would fall, and one would open up somewhere else. To make matters worse, three of the breaks were obviously man-made - wires cut, or unwrapped from around a tree. And finally, we found some fence breaks far up the steep mountainside above Heather Road where we had never needed to investigate before (or so we thought). Thankfully, the rancher has been very cooperative in retrieving his cows from our property whenever he (or we) could find them. Recently, twelve of them were particularly easy to locate when they walked, uninvited, mind you, into the open gate of the swimming pool enclosure. They spent a comfortable night there before being escorted to other environs. (Free fertilizer is available - first come first served.)



We would like everyone to know that, although the presence of cattle in Edelweiss is a concern, Craig and I do, indeed, try our best to keep some three miles of fence line intact. And until and if, western range law is changed, it is up to the private landowner to protect his property from cattle, not the Forest Service or the rancher.

Roads - We budgeted to have the main roads graded and treated with lignin sulphonate this summer, but when the target date of application was upon us, we were stymied first by a shortage of lignin supply and then further, Cascade Concrete's truck that applies the lignin broke

down. By the time the truck was fixed, it had been put on loan to the Forest Service as a water truck to help with efforts in fighting the Carleton Complex fire. As a result, lignin was applied only on Highland Road from the entrance pavement to the intersection of Quaking Aspen Road. And by the time everything was back to normal in August, we felt that it would be a waste to make the application so late in the summer. We did have McHugh Excavation grade all the roads, which helped in filling in the streambed conditions created by the torrential rains that we experienced a couple of times in August.

Trenching across West Fawn Creek - There has been a noticeable occurrence of low water pressure on Eagles Nest over the past few years. It is suspected that leaks have developed in the water line up the steep ravine from West Fawn Creek. With the aim of replacing that line in the near future, Craig has spent several hours of time and effort obtaining a permit from various State agencies to dig a connecting water-line trench across West Fawn Creek. A.J. Wright Construction Co. is scheduled to soon begin trenching the creek, laying both a sheathed 4" water line pipe, and (for OCEC) an electrical conduit. Excavation should begin as soon as we get a final OK from the Department of Wildlife Management. The pipe will eventually connect our system to a new water line up to the services on Eagles Nest Road.

Snowplowing - Palm Construction will once again be plowing our roads this coming winter. They will be using two new snow blowers, exclusive to Edelweiss, that used in tandem should be extremely effective in clearing our roads quickly and they make nice neat banks, without the tendency for the snow to keep falling back on the road surface as occurs with conventional plowing.

In Conclusion - Although it's been a rough summer, Edelweiss is in good shape going into the winter months. We have some new neighbors and have said goodbye to some previous ones. We've come through an anxiety-ridden time together and now are looking forward to the peace of a snow-softened winter. Time to get the skis and sleds ready and to find our snow boots and parkas. In short, time to get ready for my favorite time of year! And time to wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and a safe and secure New Year in 2015.

Dick Volckmann

President's Message from John Kirner

The Latest On Our New Swimming Pool - The Long Range Planning Committee and the Edelweiss Board have been refining the design and cost of a new pool since the ballot of all Edelweiss owners and discussions at the 2014 Annual Meeting indicated broad support for that effort. We now have sketches of the proposed pool, one of which is shown on the next page. We have also refined the costs of the project, and we have been disappointed that the anticipated costs have gone up.

The proposed pool is estimated to have a cost of about \$640-\$650 per lot, which is more than you had previously been advised. This would be a substantial addition to your Edelweiss expense if it were raised through the normal assessment process in a single year.

The Board is exploring the viability of borrowing from an existing Edelweiss fund and paying back this loan over three years. This would allow the cost of the pool to be spread over three years and would result in three payments of about \$215 per lot in each of the three years. When this approach to funding the pool has been proven feasible or infeasible, the Board would again put this issue to Edelweiss members for a vote. I hope this can happen sometime this fall in order to allow an early Spring start to construction, if the membership supports the project.

The Edelweiss Board of Directors is convinced that the new pool would be a valuable asset to the community. The current pool was not sized to meet the needs of our community as we move to the future. It would cost in the vicinity of \$80,000 to make repairs and upgrades that are necessary to meet current State requirements, and we would still have an undersized facility. In the new design, we will have nearly twice the surface area of the existing pool. Decking will be replaced to provide a safer walking surface, pool circulation will be improved to enhance aesthetics and public health protection, and pool entry and exit will be improved to enhance safety for everyone. One 50-foot lap lane would be provided for those who wanted to swim for exercise. And a larger shallow area to the side of the deep zone will provide more space for small children. I hope it would be a meeting and recreation facility that would be a focal point for the community.

Due to improvements in pool equipment such as filters, pumps, and heating equipment, we have been told that operation and maintenance costs should decrease even with the larger pool.

Our current filter and heater will have to be replaced in order to keep the current pool functioning. The filter suffered a crack in its metal structure at the end of the summer and will need to be replaced. At the end of the summer, the propane heater developed a leak in its heating coils and will need extensive repair or replacement before it can be used. It should actually be replaced with a more efficient heat pump. And finally, we have received notice from the Department of Health that the pool deck presents a tripping hazard and needs to be extensively renovated.

We hope to reach a decision on the new facility before we have to make further repairs to the existing facility. We don't want to spend money on equipment and structure if it will all be replaced soon anyway.

We'll continue to keep you informed on this project. When the key information is assembled the Board will provide a final ballot to all members that will ask you to choose between alternatives for the pool and hopefully present some financing alternatives. Thanks for your interest in making Edelweiss a great place to live.

John Kirner



Designer's concept of new pool.

50 feet long

30 feet wide

Steps shown are at shallow section

Dots on bottom of pool show lap lane