

Edelweiss Maintenance Commission

POB 846 • Winthrop, WA 98862 • Tel 509-996-9897



Spring 2012 - Newsletter

Save the Date! Annual Meeting - May 26 - at the pool! Pot Luck - Bratwurst on the Grill - Great Company

President's Message from John Kirner

Greetings from the beautiful Methow Valley!

Clearly you share this sentiment, as you are a property owner in the Edelweiss Community. As President of the Edelweiss Board, I want to take this opportunity to share information regarding issues which are being discussed by the Board, and possible resolutions of some of those issues.

There are a number of operational issues which are always of concern to the Board and the community. The three big ones that seem to come up year after year are: 1) the water system, 2) the large on-site community sewer system that has the potential to serve about 80 lots in Edelweiss, and 3) the maintenance of the roads.

During the past year, the water system has moved to the forefront of Board concerns because of pressure issues at a number of lots and the question of on-going financing of maintenance, repairs, and capital financing for major replacements. Last year's major main replacements caused a significant drain on the funds available for water system repairs. This caused the Board to take steps to replenish this fund, and also to review our long-range planning to determine what the long-term financial needs of the water system may be. We had hoped to be further along with long-range planning by now, but it appears it will take until the end of the summer before we have a draft plan for water system improvements over the next 10-20 years. In the meantime, the Board has taken steps to begin to replenish funds for water system maintenance and replacement through the budget process. We hope to have the final water system report available for review before the end of 2012, with any needed action presented to the community at the annual meeting in 2013.

As many of you may know, the large on-site sewer system that serves about 80 of the lots is owned and

operated by Okanogan County. You may not realize that replacement and installation of the drainfields to serve this on-site sewer system are the responsibility of the Edelweiss Community. Over the years, a hook-up fee has been collected from Community members hooking up to this system, and this money has been held in a dedicated fund for drainfield replacement. That fund stands at about \$200,000. This amount is sufficient to replace or install (as new) a significant amount of drainfield.

Unfortunately, there has been a loss of institutional knowledge over the past 35 years regarding what was initially installed and the on-going need to continuously increase the size of the drainfield. We recently received a demand from the State Health Department that we stop connecting new homes to the large on-site sewer system. Clearly, people who own lots destined for hook-up to this system have a right to connect, and we are taking immediate action to address the Health Department's concern. The initial approval of our system by the Health Department envisioned a phased installation of new drainfield as new houses were connected to the system. Although the current system appears to be functioning properly and no failures have been observed or reported, the Health Department has required that we review the use of the system (i.e., number of homes connected and using the drainfield) and ensure that adequate drainfield capacity is installed to meet current and future demands on the system. We concur that this review needs to be done, and we are working with Okanogan County and the Washington Department of Health to ensure that any necessary corrections are made as soon as possible. If you have a lot that is planned for connection to the large on-site system, and you had planned to build this year, please contact Dick Volckmann as soon as possible. We have been advised by the State Health Department that they will attempt to address immediate needs while corrections are being made. Roads are of concern to all Edelweiss property owners, and the issues of snow removal and dust suppression are always

at the forefront of any discussion. Last summer's dust suppression using lignin was not entirely satisfactory in the first application, but the contractor returned to re-do areas that were inadequately treated. I believe that these applications met the expectations of most residents. This is a particularly interesting time of year, as the roads are already dusty. But, as your Board, we are reluctant to apply lignin prior to the July 4th weekend, as we traditionally receive considerable rainfall in both May and June. The lignin used for dust suppression is water-soluble, and heavy rains will just wash the lignin away. Since each application of lignin costs about \$8,000, the Board is reluctant to risk the need for two rounds of lignin application over a single summer.

We used Palm Construction, Inc, as our snow removal contractor this past winter, and that company agreed to introduce some new equipment at Edelweiss due to issues encountered the previous winter. I think those who frequent the roads of Edelweiss during this winter found the work done by Palm very satisfactory.

All of my comments above are provided from a Board perspective as well as the result of personal communications with members of the Edelweiss Community. If you have a different viewpoint, please contact Dick Volckmann or myself to express your concerns. Particularly of interest: if you think an existing service should be extended or if a new service should be provided, let us know. If enough people want to see changes and are willing to pay for the cost of implementing them, we will certainly explore ways of making them happen.

On a last but very important note, one of the most important actions at the annual meeting is the election of new Board members. I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce you to three members of the community who have expressed a willingness to serve a three year term on the Edelweiss Board. Will Fohrell, Steve Edgar, and Chris Skagen have been approached by the Board, and have expressed their interest in serving the community in this manner. Their biographies follow this message. Additional nominations from the community will be accepted up to the meeting date, but these candidates are the recommendation of the Board.

Hope to see you at the May 26 annual meeting, hanging out around the pool, or just enjoying the beauty of the valley and the recreational opportunities that abound here.

John Kirner
johnckirner@gmail.com

Prospective Board Member Information

Steve Edgar: My name is Steve Edgar. My wife and I live in Seattle with our two kids Gillian (13) and Max (11). We bought a small lot up on Ayers Court in 2005, built in 2007, and have been enjoying Edelweiss ever since. As an Aerospace Engineer for the FAA, I manage multiple programs to maintain the safety of older commercial airplanes and to conduct research and development. In addition to my work for the FAA, I am the chairman for the board of a childcare center near my home. The common skill set that I bring to both of these – being able to listen to perspectives of many different parties, to identify common interests, and to help parties come to useful solutions that meet the core needs of everyone involved – is also what I would bring to the Edelweiss board. During the annual meeting in 2001, I remember vividly realizing what a special place Edelweiss is. I came to my first annual meeting to meet neighbors and to get a better understanding of the community. Honestly, I was not sure what to expect. But I was amazed to see not only a good turnout and, more importantly, an energy and enthusiasm by many people to work together for solutions. You didn't just come to here or gripe, but you came to be part of making Edelweiss a great place. I would be proud to be a part of making this a great place by representing you on the Edelweiss Board.

Will Fohrell : My name is Will Fohrell. I am a retired civil engineer specializing in wood structures. Most of my career was with Weyerhaeuser R & D as a scientist and as a manager. My wife, Jan and I spend about 1/3 of our time at our cabin that we purchased in 2005 here in Edelweiss, and the remainder in Renton. We are here most of each winter skiing and taking classes offered by the Methow Conservancy and Bill Hottell. I have a strong affinity for the Methow Valley and specifically the Edelweiss community where my wife and I have invested considerable time organizing and leading the effort to re-establish a walking trail system. This resulted in 7 new trails forming a network of about 3/4 of a mile, all at basically no expense to our residents. Additional volunteer work in the Methow has included pruning and weeding the landscape at our community pool, helping to build the Winthrop ice rink, and completing a small project for the Methow Conservancy. My hope is that Edelweiss will continue to improve the shared environment of the community and continue to build and maintain a high quality infrastructure. I would like to serve on the Edelweiss board to be a part of making this happen.

Chris Skagen: My name is Chris Skagen. My wife, Heather (Mahoney) Skagen, and I own a home at 24 Eagles Nest Rd that has been in her family for over 10

years, although Mazama has been a huge part of her life for almost 30 years. We live full time on the Westside, but enjoy spending the majority of our free time here in Mazama, and we love bringing friends and family over to the Methow so they too can experience what we know and love about the Valley. I have been with Marysville Fire District as a full-time Firefighter/EMT for over four years and regularly work with our Board of Commissioners by attending monthly meetings to establish staffing plans, renew contracts and see to the continued success of the District. As a Firefighter/EMT I am part of the Local 3219 Union, and previously served as the Vice President and the Secretary/Treasurer of the Firefighter Association. I also had the opportunity to work with the Washington State Patrol Association when I was a State Trooper, before leaving to join the fire service. To serve as a member of the Edelweiss Board is a privilege I would embrace and enjoy taking responsibility for, if given the opportunity.

Managers' Message from Dick Volckmann, General
Manager, and Craig Hook, Operations Manager .

We've come through another winter with a total of slightly more than 8 feet of snow. That 8 feet translates to many 5:00 AM calls to our plowing contractor, Palm Excavation, to report that we had more than 4 inches of snow overnight. The response of the 'plow guys' has been rapid and thorough; often the roads in Edelweiss were cleared before Goat Creek Road. You could get out of our community, but at times the drive to route 20 was be a challenge! On days when no plowing occurred, Craig was out early in the morning, and if he determined it was called for, he spent many hours spreading sand on the roads. With the few exceptions when the weather through us a curve ball, this has been the best winter yet for driving on our roads.

But first, here's what we're NOT going to talk about. We're not going to suggest that you should, at all costs, avoid attracting bears with bird feeders, unprotected garbage cans and such. We're going to avoid the normal warning about being extremely careful of fires, leaving none unattended. We don't intend to make negative reference to annoying outside lights left burning all night long. And, nowhere will you see a plaintive request to please, please drive slowly through our community. Because you already know all that.

With that out of the way, we thought you might like to know a little of what it takes to keep Edelweiss running, so with that in mind here's a brief description of the day to day activities involved with the management of Edelweiss along with a summary of what your management team has been up to over the past few months.

Routine activities include:

- Monthly taking of water samples which are delivered to the Okanogan County Department of Health for testing (we have had no negative tests in the past few years).
- Daily monitoring of the booster pumps that provide water from our wells to the reservoir tanks above the community.
- Rolling out the dumpsters at the garbage area for garbage pickup every Monday morning.
- For the first part of the year, cataloguing owners payments of dues and fees and delivering them to our accountant for posting and depositing.
- Approving vendor's bills and invoices and delivering them to the accountant for payment.
- In spring - mending the fences between the National Forest and Edelweiss to keep the cows off our lawns and flower beds. Also preparing and submitting several different reports to the Department of Health regarding the quality of our water and the efficiency of the water system.
- All summer - maintenance of the pool area, cleaning and monitoring the chemicals of the pool, watering the plants and flowers, mowing the lawn, etc.
- In winter - as mentioned above, monitoring snowfall and supervising the plowing of the roads.
- And always - answering a plethora of phone calls and emails on all sorts of issues related to Edelweiss.

In January we worked closely with the Board of Directors in finalizing the budget for the coming year based in large part on what our expectations were for the costs of routine maintenance plus the additions and upgrades that we hope to make. Also in January, we sent out over 300 invoices for Edelweiss dues and fees along with a explanatory cover letter. As mentioned earlier, much of our time was spent monitoring and supervising the clearing and sanding of the roads. In addition, we purchased and installed an update to our QuickBooks program, posted Board minutes, and financial data to the website, submitted the yearly 'Water Facilities Inventory Form' to the Washington Department of Health, made needed repairs to the campground maintenance shed and the booster pump house, and did necessary auxiliary plowing around the mailboxes, the campground building, and the pump houses.

In February, besides our routine activities, we experienced some significant water issues. Our water system telemetry failed. That's the electronic signal that communicates between the well pumps and the reservoir and tells the pumps when to start and stop. For several days we had to run the water pumps manually, which meant traveling between the different pumps and snowshoeing up to the reservoir to monitor the level of water. The telemetry unit was sent to a facility in Walla Walla, and after extensive diagnoses, and reinstallation, (and with fingers crossed) the telemetry is working well so far. Also in

February, a main water line burst on Highland Road, necessitating shutting of the water to a section of Edelweiss. Fortunately, we were able to get a utility locate and an excavating contractor on the job right away and had the leak repaired within 24 hours.

March brought it's own surprises, including more snow than we expected. We sent out a reminder about the March 31st deadline for mailing in owners checks, an effort that was welcomed by several owners who were thankful for the update. We had a fruitful meeting with Dave Gottula, the new manager of the Okanogan County Electric Coop, who was helpful in explaining how Edelweiss would be affected by the new electrical fees. We met with Mark Hutson of the U.S. Forest Service to discuss the possibility the 'Lucky 5' tract near Edelweiss may finally be logged to completion if a contractor can be found to do the work. The logging would necessitate the use of Mustard Mountain Road and Ayers Court for logging truck access. We began removing redundant or outdated records stored in the campground building. We continued with repairs to the maintenance building and the sand storage area. Finally we began discussions with Richard Benson, of the Washington Department of Health with regard to the state of Edelweiss' common sewer drainfield.

The most significant event in April was the surprise announcement from Richard Benson calling for a moratorium on further hook ups to the common sewer drainfield citing his belief that the drainfields do not have proper capacity to handle the homes now hooked up to them, let alone any additional hook-ups. This will have a deleterious effect on the 40 lots that have yet to be built on, both from a construction and a sales point of view. We are currently in the process of obtaining information on the flow into the drainfields to see if we can obtain a 'stay' on the moratorium until the drainfields can be expanded and upgraded to comply with state standards as regards total build-out. Additionally, in April we gave approval to the Forest Service for the use of Mustard Mountain Road and

Ayers Court for the removal of logs from the 'Lucky 5' tract. We ascertained that the newly repaired telemetry was working well. We removed a 25 foot section of tree that had fallen on top of the reservoir tank (no damage). We began spring rehab on the pool, connecting pipes, installing a new heater controller, pressure washing the pool, raking up dead grass, etc. etc. We had the campground septic tank located, inspected and pumped and rebuilt the campground pressure reducing valve. Using a chainsaw, rock bar and shovel, we cleaned out the upper part of Cassal Creek, thus eliminating the overflow onto Highland Meadow Road. And about 60 yards of crushed gravel was spread on the roads in attempt to combat the worst of the potholes while the roads were still damp.

And now it's May. The snow is gone, and we see the awakening of the green season. The forest floor is a carpet of pink and white spring beauties and blue harebells. The hills are a brilliant display of yellow balsam root and the valleys are lit by the light emerald green of the emerging aspen leaves. And there is mud! And drying dusty roads (in spite of the gravel.) And temperatures in the 70s one day and the 40s the next. And - Washington Pass has opened! Ahh - spring in the Methow.

We're looking forward to another great summer, kicked off by our traditional annual meeting on Saturday of Memorial Day Weekend - May 26. The pot luck picnic will begin at 12:00 PM. We'll be barbecuing brats for the crowd, and we ask that you bring a dish of your favorite picnic food to share. We'll do our best to have the pool open for the weekend; however we will be closing it for swimming during the annual meeting starting at 1:00 PM. SEE YOU THERE!

Dick Volckmann
509-996-9897
emcdvol@gmail.com

Craig Hook
509-996-2427
hocra2@gmail.com

