

Edelweiss Maintenance Commission

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Summer 2012 - Newsletter

Managers' Message from Dick Volckmann

Well, summer is in full swing here in the Methow Valley. Those of you who have experienced the weather, are aware that the temperatures have been quite a bit higher than they were last summer. The good result is that we've used less propane to use the pool (which has received a lot of use) - more about that a little later. The bad result is that those lucky enough to have air conditioning, have used a bunch of electricity running it. However, if you can wait until midnight or so, it always cools down enough to open the windows. In spite of the increased heat, however, we're fortunate that we haven't had the extreme hot weather experienced by the rest of the country.

Anyway, here are some highlights of the past three months.

Sewer Issues: As you may remember from the Spring newsletter, in April, Edelweiss was ordered by a representative of the Washington Department of Health to cease making connections to the common sewer system. It is his opinion that the drainfields in the upper and lower meadows are not adequate to handle the amount of effluent currently entering the system, let alone adding any more. His directive was such that no further hook-ups will be allowed until new drainfields have been designed and constructed. Currently, of the 80 properties that are certified by the County for connecting to the system, 39 are already connected.

Since then we have done extensive testing and made a number of calculations related to the volume and frequency of flow into both drainfields. In addition, we have had soil tests done to determine the load capacity of the soils. Our findings indicate that 1- The drainfields are capable of handling the current volume, 2- A few more connections would not overload the system, and 3- If we want to be able to handle full build out, the drainfields will, indeed, need to be expanded. But not yet! Now we are in the process of trying to convince the DOH that our findings are accurate, and that we deserve a reprieve from the order to refrain from making further connections. We'll keep you informed by email as soon as we have some new news.

Pool Issues: As in every spring, Craig spent a lot of time readying the pool for the summer's use, priming and painting the bare spots that had shown up over the previous year, replacing broken tiles, servicing the pool heater, etc. The painting has had limited success due to the general deterioration of the epoxy underwater surface. Because of this deterioration, we considered having the pool resurfaced (the underwater portion), and with that in mind we contacted a company which does that sort of work. The work would entail removing (power-hammering) all the surface down to bare concrete and then completely replastering the surface. Unfortunately for Edelweiss's budget, the bid we received for doing the job was \$18,000.00!! So we have shelved the refinishing idea for now.

This brings up a subject which a few property owners have voiced. If it would cost \$18K to refinish our old pool, how much more would it take to build a completely new pool? Well, it could be as much as \$100,000.00 to demolish the present facility and start from scratch, with a new state-of-the-art pool and deck. We could build it to reflect current desires, such as making it 'lap-friendly', having a true 'deep end', having a shallow end safe for small children and lending itself to being easy to cover. We would welcome any input from you all as to how much the pool means to you as a recreation venue, and as an aid to increased property values. And - - donations would be welcome!

And speaking of the pool, on the Wednesday before the Saturday annual meeting and the pool's unofficial opening, a pipe burst under the pool-house concrete - the pipe that serves as the return from the filter to the pool. Due to the diligence of Jerry Palm and his crew who immediately responded with jack hammers and other implements of destruction the pipe was fixed on Friday evening. Craig was then up until the wee hours, making sure the pool was filled, heated and chlorinated in time for the EMC members to use it on Memorial Day weekend.

Water System: The Edelweiss Long Range Planning Committee has mandated a thorough review of the EMC water system. This involves taking water pressure readings throughout the system and pairing those readings with field-derived elevation readings. Distance measurements are

then made between the data points. All the data will be fed into a computer model to determine a variety of system needs, such as where to place pressure-reducing valves, how to increase pressures where they are low, what size and type pipe should be used when replacement is necessary, or what pipe should be replaced now. To date, Craig has taken pressure readings from all the stand-pipes in the system. Last week I spent two days with a surveyor with Erlandsen Surveying while he took GPS elevation readings at the points of pressure readings that I had flagged the week before. I am now in the process of 'wheeling off' distance measurements between the readings. We hope to have all the data accumulated by the end of the summer, at which time we'll turn it over to a systems engineer for analysis.

Also water related - we have discovered that our water tanks and reservoirs have not been cleaned for several years. Silt and sediment can collect in these tanks and a biofilm can cover the tank interior surface. This can lead to the growth of bacteria which can return bad test results. Although our water continues to test free from any contamination, we feel it is time to have the tanks and reservoirs cleaned. This will be done, sometime in late September, by a professional reservoir cleaning company based in Denver, CO. The process involves a diver entering the enclosure and scrubbing and vacuuming the sides, bottom and top. The company has done tank cleaning for Edelweiss in the past, so they are quite reliable. (On a side note, you couldn't pay me enough to dive into a restricted water tank, much less spend any time in there!! There is always someone who will do anything.)

Roads: Our decision to wait until after the July 4th holiday to apply lignin sulphonate to the roads appears to have paid off. Because of sporadic rainy weather we had to wait until July 18th to actually get the lignin applied. That was followed by two full days of hot sunshine which 'cooked' the material into the roads surface. This was a stroke of luck, because on the third day we had a real frog strangler of a rainstorm which would normally have washed away our precious lignin. It held up well, however and I'm optimistic that it will last until late in the fall. Driving slowing on it will help a lot!

Cows: So far so good. Craig and I spent several days in May repairing the fence between the National Forest and Edelweiss. Craig took the eastern portion, I took the west. In all my varied endeavors through the years, I never thought ranching would be one of them. The work has paid off to date, but the summer is not over yet.

Bears: We always have to mention them, but they haven't been a nuisance this year, with very few sightings. It's nice to see bears behaving themselves.

Weeds: I spent many hours this spring and summer applying broad-leaf herbicide to the weeds (mostly white

top, knapweed, mustard and mullein) in the meadows and along the roadsides. It will take a few more years to completely gain control over these invasive plants, as they have not been properly treated in the past. If any property owner would like to know what sort of invasive species you have on your land, let me know and I'll try to help you out.

Edelweiss Accounts: As of today's date (I haven't picked up the mail yet), only 12 homeowners are still in arrears as to their Edelweiss fees - mainly snowplowing. If you are one of the dozen, Management and the Board of Directors would very much appreciate your payment.

Other Activities: I have elected not to go into detail about all the everyday activities of Craig and myself. Suffice it to say that somehow we always find something that needs to be done. And we try to take care of the little problems before they become big ones. Like the water leak Craig discovered on East Fawn Creek Road, that could have become a major washout - and didn't. But our eyes and ears can't be everywhere. So if you see something (or someone?) suspicious, maintenance or otherwise, please don't hesitate to let one of us know. We'll check it out.

In Conclusion: Craig and I want to thank you for the support and encouragement we have received from many of you recently. It's always a good feeling to know that our efforts are appreciated. We want you to know that we feel it is a privilege to have you all as our 'working partners', and we continually strive to make Edelweiss a better and better place to live.

And one more thing. If you received this in the mail, It's because I don't have an email address for you, or the one I have is not correct. It's a lot easier to communicate by email lately, and unless you don't have one, I would very much appreciate having your email address. I don't share it - with anyone - really!

Have a great rest-of-the-summer. I'll talk to you in the fall.

Dick Volckmann, General Manager
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Methow River, Swing Bridge and Goat Peak