

Subject: Shaded Fuel Break on DR Open Space

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To: DR Board of Directors
From: DR Firewise Committee
Subject: Shaded Fuel Break on DR Open Space

At a meeting on Monday the 5th with the Firewise Committee, Mike and Cathy Rheinberger presented a plan to mitigate on Douglass Ranch Open Space abutting Lots 18 and 19.

Several aspects to the plan are presented in this email. The purpose of this email is to secure DR Board concurrence to move ahead with the task. It is desired that a decision be made before the next Board meeting. Contractor support for this project is essential and contractor's project schedules are rapidly filling out.

The threat of wildfire to the south and west of the subdivision is discussed in the Douglass Ranch Firewise Community Assessment. The DR Assessment describes the lack of a fuel break to the southwest of the subdivision as a threat to the neighborhood.

The Rheinbergers propose a shaded fuel break (SFB) in the Douglass Ranch Open Space land on the southern side of lots 18 and 19. The SFB would be about 300 feet wide as recommended by the Colorado State Forest Service in Fuelbreak Guidelines for Forested Subdivisions & Communities. A detailed plan of the trees and brush to be cut would be provided by the CSFS.

Since the Open Space terrain is steep it is unlikely that mechanized mitigation is possible – the thinning would most likely be by hand. Trees would be reduced to short logs and piled separately from the branches (slash). After a year of drying out, the slash would be burned with Elk Creek Fire Department supervision. A winter burn is envisioned. ECFD has not yet confirmed they will supervise the burn.

The Rheinbergers desire to begin the two lot project this year and will pay the

total cost of the project.

The effort might be expanded this year to implement a 300 feet wide SFB along the nine DR lots facing the Open Space. Approximately 19 Open Space acres need mitigation. Total cost would be in the neighborhood of \$48K.

In looking at the bigger neighborhood picture, we realize the threat of wildfire to the east of the subdivision as discussed in the Elk Creek Fire Protection District Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Appendix C.

Extrapolating the Open Space cost to include a shaded fuel break around the east side of the neighborhood yields a rough cost of about \$144K.

A three stage effort to implement the shaded fuel breaks is proposed.

1. Approve the Rheinberger's request to mitigate on Douglass Ranch Open Space abutting Lots 18 and 19.
2. Approve implementation of a shaded fuel break along the nine DR lots facing the Open Space.
3. Approve implementation of shaded fuel breaks in the Open Space and along the eastern side of the neighborhood.

The shaded fuel break(s) are for the benefit of the entire neighborhood. The entire neighborhood should contribute to the cost of their implementation.

The costs could be assessed over a few years as follows:

1. The \$48K Open Space shaded fuel break, divided by 42 lots, is \$1142. Increase the HOA fee now to implement the Open Space SFB this year.
2. The remaining \$96K for the eastern shaded fuel break can be assessed in two subsequent years at the same annual rate. The assessment will then no longer be needed.

When we discuss wild fire mitigation it sooner or later comes down to money. Either we acknowledge that wildfire is a real threat and do something about it, or we simply hope that it never happens. The burned areas to the south of the neighborhood are silent testimony to reality.

As mentioned, it bears repeating that the work will enlist the services of a trained mitigation specialist to plan the details of the tree thinning task. Further, the work will not begin without Elk Creek Fire Department reassurance that they will supervise the burning of Open Space slash from the mitigation task.

The Firewise Committee recommends implementation of a neighborhood special assessment of \$1142 per lot this year to implement the Open Space shaded fuel

break.

Further the Firewise Committee recommends extending the assessment for two more years to complete a shaded fuel break on the eastern side of the neighborhood.

At a minimum, the Firewise Committee strongly recommends Board approval of the Rheinberger's request to mitigate on Douglass Ranch Open Space abutting Lots 18 and 19.

The Firewise Committee and the Rheinbergers look forward to your concurrence to proceed.