

April 18, 2024

To: Arica Andreatta – Commissioner District - 2

Through: Huerfano County Administrator, Carl Young
401 Main Street, Suite 101
Walsenburg, Colorado 81089

From: Don Pino, Wildfire Protection Representative, Navajo Ranch HOA

Subject: Letter of Appreciation for Ross Hallihan, Mitigation and Planning Specialist

Ross Hallihan's proactive assistance was not just helpful but crucial in enabling the Navajo Ranch Community to significantly reduce the wildfire fuel load on Seneca Circle. His dedicated efforts led to the disposal of approximately six acres (4,804,689 cubic yards) of Pinion and Juniper Slash on Seneca Circle. This remarkable achievement has not only improved our community's safety but also provided a substantial reduction of wildfire fuels within the road easement of Navajo Ranch, making us feel more secure and protected.

Ross's 'Yes, we can ' spirit boosted morale among us. His safety briefings on using the HC Chipper for each volunteer ensured our safety and fostered a sense of shared responsibility.

On Saturday, December 2, Ross and I and seven other Navajo Ranch volunteers worked tirelessly to remove ladder fuels from mature Pinion and Juniper trees with chainsaws. Despite the challenging weather conditions and the physical demands of the task, we also cleared damaged trees, saplings, and undergrowth on NW Seneca Circle. Together, we cut and stacked approximately one-quarter mile of slash, a testament to our collective effort and shared responsibility.

Ross has continued to support us by providing the county's chipper on four other occasions on some of the coldest days in January. This ongoing support is a clear testament to his dedication and belief in our cause. As Navajo Ranch volunteers, we deeply understand the significance of our work in preserving our community in the event of a wildfire and protecting our homes, a responsibility we take with utmost seriousness and commitment.

In Navajo Ranch, we are working on reducing wildfire fuels. Our work has focused on removing ladder fuels from trees and thinning out trees' considerable amount of wildfire fuels (Pinion & Juniper) in the road easement on Seneca Circle. Eliminating these fuels has widened the corridor and removed the density of accumulated growth in this understory. Trees on corners and curves created blind spots. This dangerous situation has prevented one from seeing oncoming vehicles. We are working to preserve our community in the event of a wildfire and to protect our homes.

Please extend my most profound appreciation to Ross Hallihan for his assistance in reducing the wildfire risk in the Navajo Ranch community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Pino". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the left from the start of the name.

Thank you