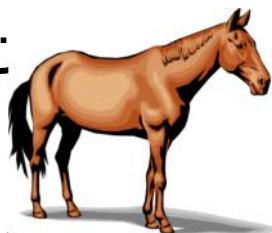


Notes from....



Serrano Creek Ranch Equestrian Center

DECEMBER 2007

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I am proud to say that I have never been more honored to be associated with Serrano Creek Ranch than in the last month. The spontaneous outpouring of assistance for the evacuated horses was nothing short of amazing. How nice that when the going gets tough the folks of Serrano Creek get going.

This is especially true of our young adults who displayed the maturity one rarely encounters. Special thanks and acknowledgement goes to Brittany Hipp, MJ Melanson, and Tori Moyer, who took charge of greeting the incoming evacuees, assisting them to the proper place to go, and making sure that adequate feed and water was provided. The relief on the faces of those escaping the fires in the canyons as they drove into the stable was inestimable.

As the emergency dragged on, it was decided that after a few days of being tied to the rails, it would be better to convert the bull pen and front arena into mare and gelding pens so the horses could move about. Additionally a few stalls were cobbled together for those horses that couldn't get along, or were too old to be in a herd setting. Over the previous days these dedicated folks had developed a good understanding of the psyche of the evacuees. In a short time they adroitly determined where each horse belonged by placing compatibles together, and separating out the troublemakers. In a short two hours, every horse was able to either walk about freely or lay down. There is absolutely no way that if these young ladies had not been here from morning to night, that these horses could have been cared for so well.

Special thanks are also due to Nicole, Leslie, and Marc for working very long hours starting Sunday night. Each put aside their own business to dedicate the next four



© Photos by Kimber Scott

days to evacuate horses from the canyons. Also in the honorable mentioned category is Peggy Weber for her late evening work.

During this latest crisis, we received several well justified inquiries as to what the emergency plan for SCR is. What follows is a summary of a much more detailed plan that is being created so that anyone can manage the stable before, during, and after a crisis.

To develop a plan we had to first get some good advice as to what dangers there really are. Our first step was to have a fire expert walk SCR and the surrounding areas. Some who might have visited the office during the day might have had the opportunity to meet "fireman Jim". I met Jim during the creek restoration days when he just retired from the Santa Ana Fire Department after 30+ years. This guy has been in the Malibu and Laguna fire storms as well as numerous urban conflagrations.

According to Jim, two ingredients are required for a conflagration: wind and wood shingle roofs. With the strong Santa Ana winds, burning brush sends embers (also known as brands) ahead of the fire. These allow the fire to hopscotch ahead and preheat the brush. As winds increase the flames and heat lay over horizontally, rather than rising through the air. This super heating dries out brush head of the fire, so that when the fire actually reaches the brush, it is much more combustible. Fire breaks, if wide enough break this horizontal blast effect so that fire is either stopped or slowed down. Based on this preheating effect, as well as convection forces, fire tends



to roar uphill and go more slowly on level or down slopes.

Besides strong, dry winds, shingled roofs easily catch fire from blown embers. The dry wood quickly ignites, and then itself sends huge amounts of embers down wind. When roofs are made from non-combustible materials such as clay or tile, the embers just lay on the roof and eventually cool off. These roofs then act as small fire breaks, rather contributing to the fire storms

For SCR, we are in a good place. We have a wide road which is a strong fire break. Then there is the self storage that has metal roof, and asphalt roads. Next comes the stable with dirt arenas. Even though the tack sheds are made from wood, you need fire at the base for them to catch on fire. In our case we have dirt, not brush. The roofs of the buildings and tack sheds are covered in a class "A" asphalt shingle that are fire resistive. While these asphalt roofs would eventually burn if exposed to a large fire source, they are quite unlikely to ignite from flying brands or embers.

Jim did see a threat to the stable from the creek. Even though the creek for the most part is composed of green wood, with enough heat, the brush and trees would be dried as detailed above. All plants and trees have some varying amount of toluene (which is an oil that is very combustible.) Normally with green vegetation, the moisture wets the plant so that it can't combust. If fire should get started in the creek up stream, and with strong winds, the flames would lay over and begin to dry the green vegetation until a point that is combusts. As the fire grows, more bush is preheated, and the fire grows, cycling on itself until you have a major storm. Thus the creek could become a fire storm by the time it reaches SCR. Additional sources of fuel for the fire are more obvious: the hay stack, manure and shavings piles.

The good news is that the creek is narrow by the stable and there isn't much fuel. To further reduce the available fuel, we will begin an annual program in the fall to clear out dead branches and debris that borders the stable. Additionally the dying cedars will be removed to maximize the distance between the creek and SCR grounds.

Over the years we have been on a project to relay the water main for the stable. Only about 500' remain. As part of the project, the final stage will be installing 2" fire hose connections so that either SCR staff or the fire department can use this water for those areas that are potential ignition / fuel areas. These fire connections will be located at:

- By the large gate of the front area. This will allow a hose to reach the creek at Trabuco bridge
- At the end of the patio by Fernando's house
- At the corner of Stall #70
- By the Manure and Shaving storage area
- At the point where the stable drains into the creek near the Lifo's tack shed
- At the hay stack to wet the hay and water the creek vegetation

The water supply to the stable is fed by gravity rather than pumps. The advantage is that even in the event of mass electrical failure, water will continue to flow to service SCR's water line. Our 2" line can deliver 180-200 gallons per minute. This is the equivalent of a helicopter water drop every minute. Actually it is better because the water can be sprayed from the many access points exactly where it is needed. Sprinklers will be installed that can be placed on the manure, hay (which will be tarped), and shavings so that critical efforts can be directed elsewhere. Other than these few fire points, SCR is essentially a very large fire break.

Given the above, our primary plan is to "shelter in place", rather than a mass evacuation. Any fire that would come through the stable would be through the creek and would be over in a matter of minutes. Mass evacuations pose a very calculable risk to horses, as panicky horses are quickly loaded. Additionally if horses are sent large and varying distances away, this means owners will have to travel long distances to care for their horses. Many of these facilities don't have such a strong volunteer base, and this means that individual owners will have to feed and clean their own. Still a detail evacuation management plan will be implemented for those who desire to leave prior to the approach to a fire

A few specific actions would involve having horses in the eastern (Trabuco side) moved to the back arena, or in available pipe stalls. All barns would have their shavings watered as insurance against an ember floating in. Managing the parking and lanes of the stable to keep access open for emergence equipment

This plan will have a fire disaster captain that will be able to open the plan and essentially run the crisis. Why is a plan important? Disaster can strike at any time, and key personnel can be on vacation, sick, etc. A good plan should be written clearly enough that anyone with a modicum of horse sense and a clear head can run SCR flawlessly. One of the key assumptions is that Southern California will be in chaos. The lesson from the latest fires is that equipment will be spread thin if non-existent. Orange County centralized communication will be disorderly and not helpful. We should be prepared to have to operate our facility in a safe manner for both animals as well as people.

A certain number of volunteers will be required run the fire operation. In this latest fire, as well as the 1993 fire, the office was overwhelmed with offers of assistance. Clearly assistance will not be a problem if our stable is facing a fire. As the plan takes shape, we'll circulate the plan to those who wish to comment on it.

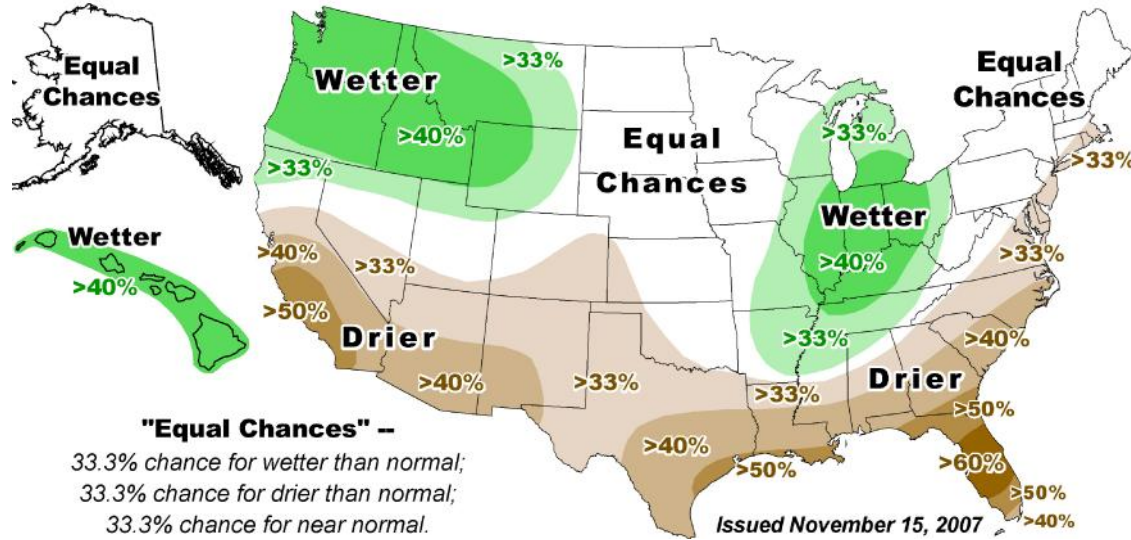


Precipitation Outlook

December 2007 - February 2008



Chances for **Wetter Than Normal**, **Drier Than Normal**, or **Near Normal** Precipitation (based on 1971-2000)



The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has issued its precipitation forecast for the winter. The forecast calls for the chances of Southern California to likely be drier than normal based on historic data.

As a reminder, SCR boarding rates will be adjusted beginning in January 2008. Below are those new rates

Stall Only- No Feed	Price/mo.
24' x 24' Pipe Corral - 1/4 cover	\$265
24' x 24' Pipe Corral - 1/3 cover	\$282
24' x 24' Pipe Corral - 1/2 cover	\$298
18' x 24' Pipe Corral - 1/3 cover	\$257
16' x 24' Pipe Corral - 1/3 cover	\$254
12' x 24' Breezeway	\$265
12' x 24' Pipe Corral - 1/3 cover	\$232
12' x 24' Pipe Corral - 1/2 cover	\$248
Box Stall - Small	\$456
Box Stall - Standard	\$495
Box Stall - Large	\$514
Box Stall - Small In and Out	\$495
Box Stall - Large In and Out	\$514

EXTRAS:

Tack Shed	\$ 25
Trailer Parking	\$ 50
Feed Box	\$ 9
Drystall charge - per day	\$ 5

FEED

Description	Price/mo/feeding		
Per Flake of Pail	¼	½	1
Cubes	\$ 7	\$12	\$23
1 Feeding Hay/ Grass	\$22	\$29	\$46

Special thanks to everyone for getting your stall-a-grams in on time. This year we were able to work in an extremely organized and efficient fashion!