

Districts plan actions in case water supply is low

by Harry Williamson

Representatives from the valley's water districts, along with town and county officials, met yesterday with Jim Daxton, East Grand water commissioner, to determine what will happen if there is a call on the Fraser River.

There was no immediate report on what actions, if any, the representatives decided on.

This is the second meeting held between Daxton and the water users to

discuss how to handle possible water shortages resulting from what is now being called the worst drought in the state's history.

Bruce Hutchins, director of Grand County Water & Sanitation District No. 1, said at the initial meeting Daxton asked all of the districts to provide a copy of their water rights portfolio, "to make sure the state has the same information."

"Jim is expecting a call on the Fraser

River, and if a call comes through he was going to tell us (at yesterday's meeting) who will go out of priority first," Hutchins said.

Hutchins said his district's concern is having replacement water for augmentation if calls are made on area streams, such as the Fraser River. He added that the Hammond Ditch, which contains the oldest water rights in the valley, is his biggest worry.

"When it's dry like this our end (of

the county) is irrigating more, and it takes longer for this water to return to the river," Hutchins said.

In a recent interview, Daxton said so far there have been 24 streams on call, adding that "We are quite likely to see the upper Fraser in a call." A call means a senior water user, of which there are several in the Hammond Ditch, has asserted his water rights, perhaps depriving junior water users of water.

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Winter Park

Manifest

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Fifty cents

Maryvale meadow gets help

Rendezvous & Denver Water work to lessen meadow density

by Harry Williamson

As part of a process that started shortly after it purchased what has now become Rendezvous, Koebel & Company is in the final stages of purchasing approximately 600 acres from the Denver Water Board.

Officials of the two entities said this transaction is being done primarily to allow a further reduction of approved zoning density in the so-called "Maryvale meadow."

Another stipulation of the contract, which was signed this past December, is that the total density in the entire Rendezvous development, including the added Water Board land, will not be increased.

Officials said an exact legal description of the property to be sold is expected within two weeks.

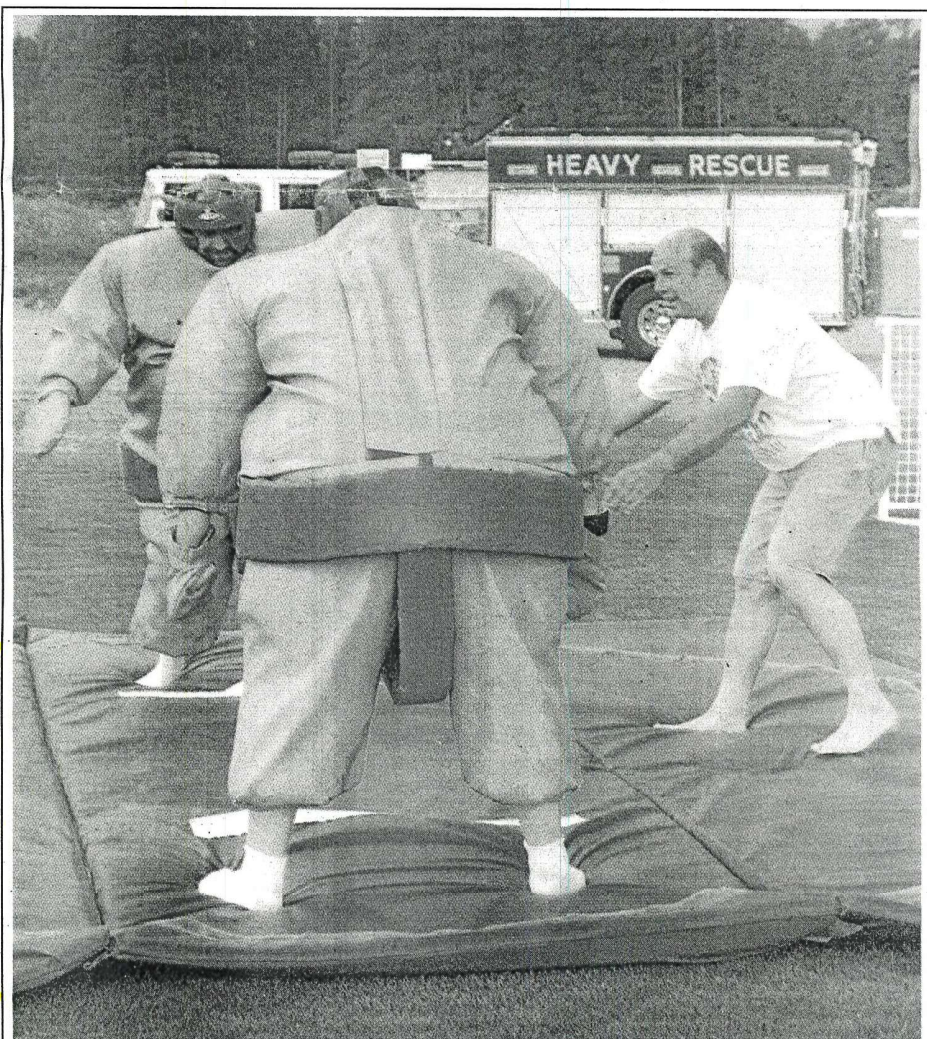
Buz Koebel, president of Koebel & Company, said the contract dictates that the amount of open space in the meadow, including golf, will be more than doubled from what it was when the original Planned District Development (PDD) plan was approved by Fraser. The original plan called for 48 acres of open space in the meadow, while the Koebel firm and the Denver Water Board have agreed there will be 115 acres once the land transfer is complete.

The revised Maryvale PDD, which was in place when Koebel bought the development in 1999, also approved by Fraser, had extensive commercial centers and townhome construction in the meadow, along with a golf clubhouse.

Jack Bestall, Rendezvous project manager, said the added land "will give us a real chance to move any development out of the meadow. There will be less visible impact in the meadow itself."

"By transferring development to ad-

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Throwing their weight around

Two participants don sumo wrestling costumes in the above photo in one of a myriad of activities that took place on July 4th at the Fraser Valley Outdoor Sports Complex. The activities were attended by many, including the approximately 500 people who stayed to watch the movie, "Shrek," which took the place of the fireworks. (Photo by Jean Landess)

DWB land once owned by Norgren

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 jacent land we are able to lessen the amount of building in the meadow," Bestall added.

"We see this as a joint effort to do the right thing," said Chuck Smith,

real estate manager with the Denver Water Board. "We're looking at this for the valley's good. We would rather see any building in the meadow be in the trees."

Another important feature of the

transaction is that a sizeable donation, described by Koelbel as being "north of \$400,000," will be made by the two organizations at the completion of the transaction. This will be "seed money" for the Rendezvous Foundation. This foundation, which will also receive a one-quarter of one percent "community enhancement fee" on every property sold in the development, was recently established by Rendezvous to help benefit local organizations.

Smith said that Rendezvous agreed to pay five percent above the appraised value of the property, with these funds to be placed into the foundation as the Denver Water Board's share. This five percent will be matched by Rendezvous.

"We've worked with this developer (Koelbel & Company) for more than 30 years, and they are as good as they get. I really believe they are trying to be the best possible neighbor in the valley, and they are going to be around forever — not in and out like some developers," Smith said.

The land, which Smith said will be somewhere between 600 and 700 acres, is located west of Leland Creek and extends to CR 72. The land connects on the north and east side with additional land purchased by Koelbel, the approximately 200 acres under contract from the Johns family.

The land that is immediately west of the Elk Run subdivision in the town of Winter Park is not included

in the transaction. Koelbel said it was realized almost immediately after purchasing the Maryvale property in 1999 that there was a local concern over how the meadow was to be developed.

"We understood the gravity of that concern," he said. "We also realized that the only way to accommodate a reduced amount of density in the meadow was to find a place to move it."

Koelbel said initially the two adjacent landowners, the Johns family and the Denver Water Board, were "for different reasons" not interested in selling.

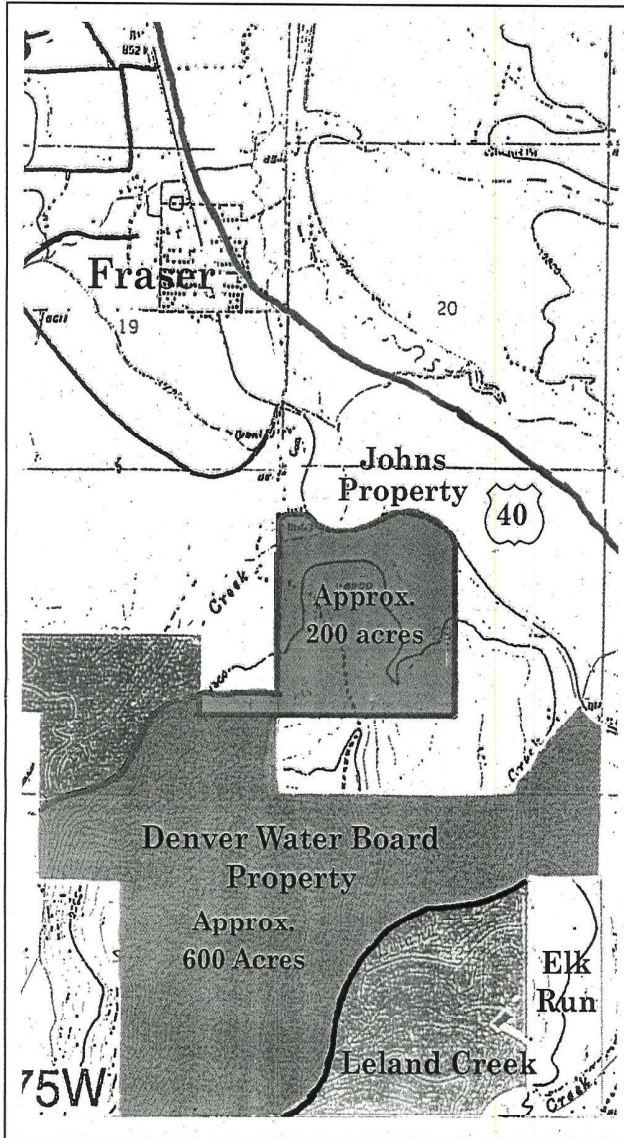
"Our advantage was that my family had a relationship with both (parties) for more than 50 years. At least we had a friendly face on the other side of the table," he said.

Koelbel said they first reached an agreement with the Johns family for a portion of their land, and then were able to develop "a package" that appealed to Denver Water Board officials.

He said the Water Board officials realized they would likely sell the land at some point in time, and that it made sense to sell to an adjacent land-owner with which they were familiar. Koelbel added that the aspects of the package were based on Denver Water Board officials wanting to do what was important for residents of the valley.

"They saw a responsible developer looking for ways to respond to the

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Amount of open space in meadow is doubled

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 needs of the valley. They liked that," Koelbel said.

He added that aspects of the package included reducing the amount of building in the meadow, not increasing the project's overall density and providing funding for local organizations through some benevolent fund.

"Ironically, the DWB refers to this tract of land as the 'Norgren/Nilson Ranch,' because it was part of the original purchase my grandfather made with Askel Neilsen," Buz said.

Koelbel said that if negotiations on the land's exact legal description are completed within a couple of weeks, he hopes to have an annexation request for both the Johns and the Denver Water Board property ready for Fraser town officials "sometime yet this year."

The Denver Water Board owns between 4,000 and 5,000 acres of land in the upper Fraser Valley, purchased before and during the 1950s to acquire the land's water rights.

He said the Rendezvous Foundation is a unique enterprise, designed to "raise funds under a charitable umbrella."

"This allows us to take development funds and to contribute to a smorgasbord of community causes and needs in Grand County," he said.

Koelbel said it will work collaboratively with other local foundations, such as the Grand Foundation, and could either contribute through the other foundations or receive requests directly and make donations.

It will be administered by a six-member board of directors, currently comprised of people working on the Rendezvous development, but which he said will likely later be expanded to include local community representatives.

"This is a pioneering concept we're working on," Koelbel said. "This not only gives us an opportunity to raise funds and determine where

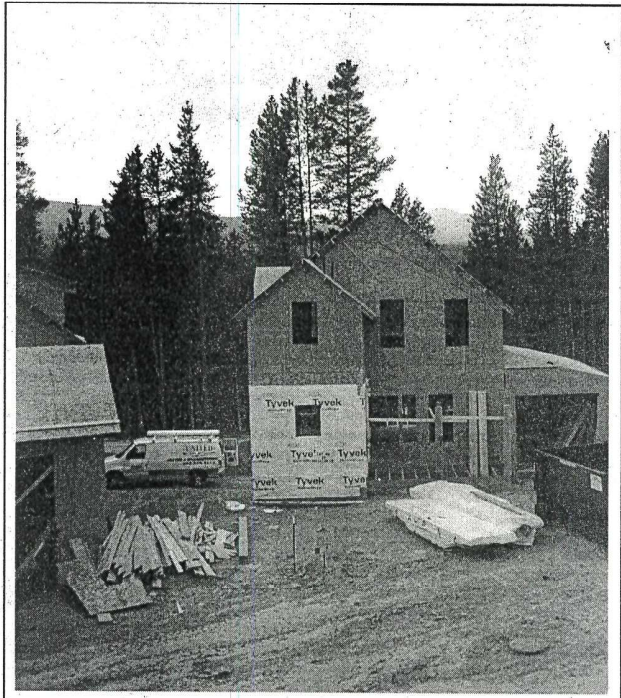
they should go, it allows us a means to give back to the community."

Koelbel is president of the Denver-based firm, which was started by his father Walter in 1952. His mother, Gene, was the daughter of Carl Norgren, who first came to the Fraser Valley in 1915, working as a logger. Norgren and Askel Neilsen later purchased Byers Peak Ranch and both men were close friends with President Eisenhower, who in the 1950s, often visited the valley. The land purchase included a Fraser approved PDD hammered out over a three-year period with the previous owners, Maryvale LLC. It replaced a PDD, approved by the town in 1986, which was developed by Regis University and annexed into Fraser.

Maryvale LLC bought the 700 acres in 1994 for approximately \$1.5 million and added 250 acres mostly purchased from the Denver Water Board, selling it to Koelbel for a reported \$10 million.

Koelbel has since spent an estimated \$24 million on infrastructure work.

The firm is in the process of donating additional land to the Grand County Historical Society to allow an addition to the Cozens Ranch Museum. Last Friday, Rendezvous officials submitted a plan to do a seven building development, including its Discovery Center, on land on both sides of the museum.



CABIN CONSTRUCTION — Pictured above is the construction under way on two of the first five cabins at Moosehorn at Rendezvous, the first actual building started. Work on several homes may also begin this summer.

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