## HPFAA Proof of Loss–Summars/Forest



## Forestland

Having more than twenty-five acres of dense forestland growing across both tracts of the parcel, no time was wasted to begin thinning trees. Requiring five cords of firewood to keep warm each winter, I began by thinning the standing dead and dying trees on both tracts to the tune of thirty trees each fall. No healthy, living trees were felled until road building up the south slope began in 2020 when the first fifteen live trees exhibiting no signs of distress or disease were harvested early that spring to thoroughly season over the next six months for use as firewood that winter. All of this harvesting of timber amounted to just over five hundred trees harvested for firewood alone during the seventeen years I lived year round at Los Veranos. Other choice trees were harvested and milled for use constructing interior features of the home/studio.

## SIGNIFICANT COMPENSATION FOR LOSS OF FORESTLAND IS REQUIRED

Without this natural resource, survival at Los Veranos is not practical, if not entirely impossible. I have saved money by harvesting and processing my own firewood, using solar power to run the splitter during daylight hours to easily get that step of processing completed without incurring any major expense. With 100% of my private forest burned to death I cannot survive winters living at Los Veranos from this point forward even if the homestead site was not now too environmentally hazardous for human habitation.

Beyond its practical uses, before the Hermit's Peak Fire destroyed the forest it provided calming comfort in peaceful nooks and crannies beneath its canopy as well as spine-tingling inspiration when viewing its more majestic features from afar. These valuable assets of the forest cannot be quantified in terms of money.



View from the north tract access gate at county road A042 across the meadowland of the south tract.



Forestland up the north-facing slope of the south tract was growing dense on steep terrain.



The Rito Garcia drainage extends up slope more than 4 miles west of the parcel into steep terrain.



Considerable amounts of rain and snow can fall in a short amount of time on every acre of the parcel. HPFAA Proof of Loss Page 3 of 10 Summars/Forest



Considerable amounts of precipitation can fall in the Rito Garcia drainage in a short amount of time.

Threat of large debris flows from the west (from the left in the Google Earth aerial image below) is significant due to extensive burn scar on both sides along the up slope length of the Rito Garcia drainage. Debris flows are practically guaranteed to come from that direction during future severe rain storms.



Shape of my homestead property's terrain and all terrain surrounding it are extremely conducive to land and mud slides, and to debris flow incidents. Burn scars in every direction are too extensive and the soil in those burn scars too severley scorched to apply thorough, effective debris flow mitigations measures in any reasonable amount of time. And even after such measures may or may not be implemented, they will never be thorough enough. The only direction debris flows may not occur to affect areas within the boundary of the homestead property is the easterly direction, down hill from the property.

The south tract across its entire width, from the far side of Rito Garcia all the way up to the south property boundary where it abuts the Santa Fe National Forest, up slope through the national forest to the ridge, and over that into and beyond the valley on the other side is charred, dead trees and scorched soil. Likelihood for landslide, mudslide and debris flow from that direction along the entire length of the north-facing slope is significantly high. The dark forestland up to the ridge in the photo below is totally burned.



The north tract is in the same condition up that south-facing slope. Nothing but dead trees and scorched soil over its entire area. Landslide, mudslide and debris flow potential poses unacceptable risk to the entire meadow area of the south tract from the county road down to the north bank of Rito Garcia. There is no location anywhere on the property stable enough now to rebuild the homestead.



County Road A042 also poses risk for flooding and debris flows. I've witnessed it exhibiting stream behavior in the past when the forestland was still healthy and able to suppress runoff from intense storm precipitation falling up the canyon to the west.

Topographical information available for the parcel and surrounding region clearly show high risk drainage slopes to the north, west and south. More than four (4) miles of steep, constricted drainage slopes along both sides of the length of Rito Garcia from its headwaters to the parcel boundaries were severely burned by the wildfire.



Burn scar extent along more than four miles of the Rito Garcia drainage up slope from the parcel as well as burn scars on and surrounding the parcel's north and south slopes are severe. Flooding and debris flow risk are now significantly more extreme during heavy rains.



Zoom into any of these larger photos and screenshots to see more detail revealing the extent of environment instability now present on the entire area of the parcel and surrounding region. Rebuilding there isn't an option.



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The parcel is just under one mile in length with average slopes exceeding 14% on each tract from highest points north (right) and south (left) down to lowest point at Rito Garcia (at the dotted vertical line):



Rito Garcia runs more than 4 miles from its highest point west (right) to the place it intersects with the west boundary of the parcel. Average slope over that distance is more than 17% with extensive burn scar damage along both sides of the water course:





The forestland on Los Veranos had more than 3,600 marketable, live and healthy conifer trees standing before the fire swept through, as well as thousands more immature conifers and scattered small oak and aspen groves. The conifer and oak were key to living and would have provided decades of timber for my specific uses. But that all burned in the Hermit's Peak Fire. The wildfire burned so hot and winds were so high, none of the marketable timber survived. Harvested in unsustainable fashion, the forestland timber supply would have lasted more than a century. Carefully managed harvesting could have stretched that out much longer, possibly indefinitely.

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But that doesn't matter because forestland was burned to death like this for thousands of acres in every direction, with a significant amount of burn scar spanning forestland upstream of Los Veranos on either side of Rito Garcia and up slope in every direction from the homestead site. This dead forest now poses decades-long environmental instability, which has rendered my homestead unsafe for human habitation.

The house is a total loss. All of its steel frame structure was compromised by heat of the fire which raged inside the building and all contents inside were incinerated, so it must be rebuilt. But vast stretches of surrounding dead forest on steep sloping terrain to the north, south and west pose significant threat to every possible building site within the property's boundaries every time heavy rain falls over the region, especially from vast burn scars west of the homestead site along the entire length of the Rito Garcia drainage. These threats are not trivial, as has been observed and studied in wildfire damaged areas across the United States for decades now:

USGS Landslide Hazards – <u>https://www.usgs.gov/programs/landslide-hazards/science/how-often-do-rainstorms-cause-debris-flows-burned-areas</u>

Colorado Geological Survey Post Wildfire Hazards – <u>https://coloradogeologicalsurvey.org/</u> 2021/56770-haz-2021-01-post-wildfire-hazards/

California Department of Conservation – <u>https://www.conservation.ca.gov/index/Pages/</u> <u>Fact-sheets/Post-Fire-Debris-Flow-Facts.aspx</u>

University of California, Riverside – <u>https://news.ucr.edu/articles/2020/10/22/wildfires-</u> can-cause-dangerous-debris-flows

Quoting from the Earth's Future research article "Forecasting the Frequency and Magnitude of Postfire Debris Flows Across Southern California" – <u>https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/</u> <u>doi/pdf/10.1029/2020EF001735</u>:

"While debris flow hazard assessments are routinely conducted after wildfires, time between the fire and the first rainstorm is seldom enough to use this information to fully develop and implement effective emergency response plans."

The burn scar left by the Hermit's Peak Fire is so severe and so extensive in the region surrounding my homestead, there is no way to reliably understand the complexity of debris flow threat there, much less implement reliably protective measures. This makes my homestead too dangerous to inhabit now. Rebuilding there would be folly.

None of my homestead's forestland and supporting soil can be instantly repaired or replaced. Healing of the wild land and wildlife will require decades beyond my remaining years of life. The only way my homestead can be made whole again is to find a comparable parcel of land with comparable property rights and natural resources which I can purchase a package of rights to exercise and effectively leverage in comparable fashion as I have the Los Veranos homestead since July 2001.



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