Article: "Wildcat Ranch, Snowmass, Colo.; 12 Home Sites On 6,500 Acres"
By Lettice Stuart, March 24, 1991, NYT
And Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Wildcat Ranch

The largest ranch in the Aspen-Snowmass area, where developers once planned to build a town of 10,000 residents, is now being subdivided into 12 large home sites with price tags of $2 million to $5.5 million.

The actor Michael Douglas and a Houston real estate developer, Niel C. Morgan, won approval in December from Pitkin County planners to divide the 6,500-acre Wildcat Ranch into 12 lots of 500 to 540 acres each.

The fate of Wildcat, nestled in the Elk Mountain range adjacent to Snowmass Village Ski Resort and seven miles from Aspen, has concerned county officials and residents for years. It is the largest privately owned parcel in the county, and the 50-acre lake in its midst is the largest private body of water in the county.

Mr. Douglas and Mr. Morgan have been battling for permission to subdivide the ranch since 1989, when they bought it for $15 million from a group of Texas owners headed by the United States Secretary of Commerce, Robert A. Mosbacher. The Mosbacher group bought Wildcat in 1975 from a financially troubled company that had planned to develop a ski resort for 10,000 people.

County officials had given that proposal preliminary approval, but then denied the Mosbacher group permission to build a ski resort with only 160 home sites in 1984. The county's change of attitude resulted from years of watching open space diminish at Snowmass and Aspen.

A proposal by Mr. Douglas and Mr. Morgan to divide Wildcat into 35 home sites won initial county approval, but a cry of opposition from residents forced planners to reconsider. Some opponents expressed concern for a herd of 200 elk and other wildlife living on the property. Others sought to block access to Sinclair Road, a winding residential street that is one of Wildcat's three access routes.

The developers ended the battle by dividing the property into 12 larger parcels, exempting it from many restrictions applied to subdivisions with lots smaller than 500 acres. More than 98 percent of the ranch will remain open space.

"We clearly have a legal right to use Sinclair Road and would have ultimately overcome the opposition, but this way we killed several birds with one stone," said Mr. Morgan. Having fewer but larger lots makes the property even more exclusive, he said. Mr. Morgan and Mr. Douglas, each keeping one lot, expect that it will take four years to sell the rest of the sites.

Wildcat amenities will include a boathouse on the lake, 27 miles of riding trails, an on-site manager, security gates and a continuing wildlife management program.

Next page, Wildcat Ranch FAQ's

Wildcat Ranch: Frequently Asked Questions ... FAQ's
(Contact broker: Tim Estin, www.EstinAspen.com 970.309.6163, Aspen Snowmass Sothebys International Real Estate for more details and answers.)

What are the local jurisdictions?
•Wildcat Ranch is annexed to Snowmass Village. The building/zoning regulations are determined by Snowmass Village. It is in Pitkin County, Colorado.
•A real estate transfer tax of 1% is paid by the buyer to Snowmass Village.

How big is the ranch?
•6500 acres
•Originally, there were 12 Homesteads. However, with some trades with the National Forest Service, three more Homesteads were created. Homestead 12 (in the Old Snowmass Valley) withdrew from the Homeowners Association. Now, there are 14 Homesteads.
•All Homesteads, except for one, are improved with guest house and/or house and outbuildings.

Who developed it?
•The ranch was developed by Michael Douglas and Neil Morgan in 1990's.
•Bill Hegberg, Wildcat Land Company, was instrumental in the development and sales of the Homesteads.

What are the water rights?
•Water rights are extensive, including the water in the 50-acre lake.
•Water rights are owned and managed by the Wildcat Homeowners Association.

How is the Ranch accessed?
•The Ranch has three gates ... all are secured by a gate which is opened by a security transmitter or by a security code.
•The Main Gate, off Highway 82, is for the use of owners; guests; ranch manger/personnel and others who are approved by the Ranch Manager. All deliveries and construction must via the Main Gate. Access codes are given to users by the Ranch Manager.
•The other two gates are located at: (1) top of Wildcat Ranch Road, adjoining Sinclair Road, providing access to Snowmass Village (2) Wildcat Way which goes to Snowmass Creek Road, providing down valley access.
•These two gates are for owner use only, not employees for guests, and require a specially coded transmitter to go in or out.

Who is the Ranch Manager?
•Wildcat Ranch employs a full-time, on-sitemanager who is responsible for the Homeowners Association, ranch facilities, security, management of lake and trails, maintenance of roads (including snowplowing), domestic water system, and maintains a string of horses for the home owners. In addition, the Ranch Manager oversees a Wildlife and Aquatic Mana
gement plan for the entire ranch.
•The Ranch Manager has a staff to implementthese responsibilities, as well as to provide other services requested by the homeowners.
•The ranch headquarters are located at the intersection of Lake Wildcat Road and Wildcat Way.

What is the trail system?
•The thirty miles of trails within the ranch connect with the Rim Trail for over 40 miles of trails.
•The trails are available for hiking, running, horseback.
•The trails within the Ranch are available only to owners.

What are the rules about horses?
•Owners may bring their own horses.
•Wildcat also maintains horses for owners to use.
•Owners may keep horses at their respective homesteads with adequate fencing, shelter and water.
•Horseback riding is allowed on all the roads and trails.
•A horse "wrangler", who is a trained riding instructor, is available all summer.

What wildlife will an owner experience?
•A herd of over 200 elk make Wildcat Ranch their residence.
•Mule deer are plentiful, as are other small animals ... fox and coyote.
•Bears are also sighted, and ownersmust protect against intrusion.
•Birds are abundant.
•Trout in the lake are large and abundant, both in the summer and via ever-popular ice fishing in the winter.
•Proliferation of wildlife is encouraged and protected by enhancement of natural habitat.

What are other amenities/extras of the Ranch?
•Picnics at the lake are a highlight ofthe summer; ice skating is sometimes possible in the winter.
•Families participate in the Fourth of July parade in Aspen with a float created for the kids.
•A rodeo for kids is also put on during the Fourth of July, along with a fireworks celebration at the lake.
•Tracks are set by the Ranch Manger for cross country skiing in the winter.

What are the travel times to Wildcat Ranch?
•Aspen to Highway 82 Entrance: 11 minutes
•Aspen Airport of Highway 82 Entrance 5 minutes
•Highway 82 Entrance to Ranch Manager's House/Headquarters 6 minutes
•Ranch Headquarters to Wildcat Lake 4 minutes
•Wildcat Lake to Sinclair Road Entrance 2 minutes
•Sinclair Road Entrance to Two Creeks 5 minutes
•Sinclair Road Entrance to Brush Creek and Highway 82 7 minutes
•Sinclair Road Entrance to Aspen Airport 9 minutes

How long does it take to get to skiing?
•Seven minutes to the Snowmass base area
•Many Wildcat owners have purchased Timbers Club parking spaces at the base of Snowmass Ski Resort, which allow for underground parking and ski storage, and access to the well regarded facilities of the Timber Club.
•Twenty-two minutes to Aspen Mountain; about the same to Aspen Highlands