

Historic High Country Ranch Preservation

Two centuries ago people came to the West with dreams of starting their own ranch, rural prosperity and a chance to live free independent lives. Today, many of the original farms and ranches are gone, but the spirit of independence remains an indelible part of western life and culture. With the cooperation of valuable partnership organizations, the US Forest Service is working hard to restore, preserve, protect and ultimately make available for public use some remaining historic ranch facilities on or near public lands. These historic ranches are physical links between us and the past that broadens our awareness of our deep connection to the land, its uses and with each other.

Our main goals for historic ranch preservation are to: 1) Preserve and protect the historical ranching legacy in tradition, story, and song; 2) preserve the structures that housed this important history and make them available to the public; 3) increase the social, recreational, and economic attractions of the region. Since 2000 the US Forest Service has been involved in restoring historic ranches and cabins to provide recreational experiences in authentic, unique and accurately rendered settings. If visitor awareness of the early Colorado ranching lifestyle is increased, and if public appreciation for the ongoing preservation efforts of the partners is enhanced, our goals will have been met.

The Ranches

At its peak, the [Beckwith Ranch](#) was one of the largest cattle operations in Colorado. During the 1870s the Beckwith brothers built a ranching empire and held one of Colorado's earliest reported brands-the Lazy T. Set against the spectacular Sangre de Cristo Range, the ranch endures as a picturesque reminder of western heritage.

Like other settlers migrating to the Leadville area during the 19th century mining boom, the Staley family found sole dependence on ranching difficult and looked to summer tourists as a source of additional income. They built the [Lakeside Ranch](#) which would later become the luxury 2000-acre Inter-Laken Resort on Twin Lakes.

Established during the peak of high country ranching, the [Mingus Ranch](#) was operated by the same family for 63 years. The modest ranch buildings, set in a mountain meadow, are typical of small cattle ranching outfits and the independent spirit that made them successful.

The Music

The [Rocky Mountain Nature Association](#) (RMNA), [Greater Arkansas River Nature Association](#) (GARNA), [Friends of Beckwith Ranch](#) (FBR), and the [US Forest Service](#) will support outdoor music festivals at three historic Colorado ranches on May 27, July 29, and August 19, 2006 and beyond. The concerts will: 1) honor the colorful cultural heritage of Colorado High Country ranches, their pioneering families, the cowboys, and the spirit that contributed so much to our western lifestyle; 2) highlight the endangered status of many historic ranches; 3) increase the recreation and economic opportunities for small communities that are not currently tourist destinations.

Each music festival will take place at an historic ranch so people will experience the High Country setting while they walk between the ranch buildings and enjoy the music – they can imagine they are the original settlers and cowboys. Visitors will also learn how Colorado's historic ranches are being saved and how they can help save them. The concert series provides a unique opportunity to share music and history, and will introduce visitors to public land stewardship and volunteer opportunities related to preserving historic ranches and other High Country heritage.

Recreational visitors and tourists will benefit from attending these musical events as they will have an opportunity to learn about local cultural and natural resources through story and song.

[Sons and Brothers](#) – Beckwith Ranch/Westcliffe, CO - May 27, 2006, 2pm

[Fiddlin' Foresters](#) – Red Rooster Visitor Center/Twin Lakes, CO – July 29, 2006, 2pm

[Jon Chandler](#) – Mingus Ranch/Rye, CO – August 19, 2006, 2pm

The Partners

Restoration projects cannot be done without the help of volunteers and dedicated partner support.

[USDA Forest Service - Rocky Mountain Region](#)

[National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

[Colorado Preservation, Inc.](#)

[Friends of Beckwith Ranch](#)

[Rocky Mountain Nature Association](#)

[Greater Arkansas River Nature Association](#)

[Colorado Mountain College](#)

[Colorado State University](#)

Mountain Heritage Associates

[Architectural Preservation Institute @ CSU](#)

European Roofing Designs

Back Again Restorations

[Follansbee](#)

Johnson

[Englert](#)

Become a volunteer!

Volunteering for Historic High Country Ranch restoration is rewarding and meaningful work. Individual and group volunteers are invited to work on these historic ranch restoration projects. Skills ranging from exterior reconstruction to interior redecoration and all abilities in between are welcome!

For More Information:

Contact: [Bridget Roth](#), US Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region

Phone: 303-275-5047

Email: broth@fs.fed.us