

September, 2007

Edited by Martha Crawley

From the President's Corner

by Jeanne Loughrey

We appreciated the good attendance at the annual meeting along with the varied input, although at times it was quite contentious. We need to know your thoughts on all issues dealing with the Ranch.

Soon you will be receiving the Minutes of the annual meeting with a ballot to vote on the issues raised at the meeting. This ballot is **very important - PLEASE VOTE!!**

I have sent out the invoices for the annual dues. Any added contributions are always appreciated. These added monies help keep our dues at \$100 per year. This year we have improved the ingress and egress to the well on L106. This would be a good time for those of you who use the well to chip in a little extra to help pay for this improvement.

Thank you.

Memo from Martha:

I have to put in my two cents worth on the meeting:

I was disappointed by the "shouting down" and rudeness at the meeting. We all have our own opinion about things, and we all want to be heard. A few decided who we all were allowed to hear, and I resent it. I think most of us would appreciate it if whoever has the floor at the meeting is allowed to speak. Jeanne set a 3-minute timer so nobody would run on too long. I know the discussion gets lively, and everyone talks at once, but if we all make an effort to minimize that and treat each other with basic courtesy, our meetings will be more pleasant and more productive.

If you have an opinion on this, I'd like to hear it.

Dave and I have had a lovely summer, spent mostly at the cabin, with company and without. Lots of nice weather, and lots of thunderstorms too, which I love. You can't take the Midwest out of the girl...

The following Quote is my justification for being SO LAZY all summer:

Thought for the Day:

"The time you enjoy wasting is not wasted time." Bertrand Russell

Good Neighbor:

Every year we have more houses on the ranch. If you keep the Golden Rule in mind and act accordingly, it will help to avoid discord and we'll all enjoy our places more:

Lights: *Light pollution can spoil one of the most beautiful parts of our experience on the ranch, the glittering night sky. Turn your outdoor lights off when you're not specifically using them. Annoying lights are prohibited by the CC&R's, as well as the Golden Rule!*

Pets: *If you have a dog, be sure it isn't annoying your neighbors by barking or otherwise*

being a nuisance.

Garbage: *Since both Black and Grizzly bears live in our area, we all must be aware of how our behavior can impact theirs, and their survival. One of the main things we all can do to minimize our impact on bears is to keep our garbage where neither bears nor other animals can get to it. If a bear, even ONE time, gets a food reward in association with the scent of humans, he will seek that out again. That sets the bear up to be a "nuisance" bear, which can lead to aggressive behavior toward humans, and possibly a tragic encounter resulting in injury to someone and destruction of the bear.*

Ranch Recipes:

This recipe is from Jodi Wells, and takes advantage of the delicious and plentiful tomatoes this time of year. It is excellent with any grilled or roasted meat, so throw something on the barbecue on a warm September evening, whip up one of these, and you're in for a treat! Thanks, Jodi.

Wells Ranch Tomato Pie

1 - 9" piecrust
2-3 medium tomatoes, sliced (or 2-3 layers)
¼ t. pepper
½ t. dried basil
¼ c. chopped fresh chives
¼ c. mayonnaise
1 c. shredded cheddar

Set oven at 425.

Pre-bake piecrust for 10 minutes. Reduce heat to 400.

Line crust with tomatoes, sprinkle w/pepper, basil and chives.

Mix mayonnaise and cheese, spread over tomatoes.

Bake for 35 minutes more.

Hoolan's Report:

Bill sent us both a history and a wildlife article this time:

History

The Lewis and Clark adventure 200 year celebration came and went, many people paddling and hiking their same paths across Montana, with much being said and written locally. We all know the story, Jefferson sent co-captains, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark with a small group west to see if a river system could be found that would allow easy crossing of the new and unknown land. All Americans know of their success being the first eastern Americans to come out here and get back to tell about it, but now the rest of the story.

Lately, Western historians have been gathering information about explorers that might have come before our famous captains. One of the most interesting and with a fair amount of accuracy is a tale about a French Canadian Sier deLaVerendre. He and his companions trapped north of Lake Superior in Canada and in the summer of 1768 he and a small group of trappers headed southwest into land claimed by France and Spain at the time, what is now North Dakota. They found their way to the Missouri river in present day eastern Montana and traveled up the river going west as far as present day

Helena. Lewis and Clark came by this spot on the Missouri 36 years later. These Frenchmen were probably the first non-Indians to see the great falls on the Missouri. These were the four falls Lewis and Clark had so much trouble getting around in 1805 with all their supplies (it took them two weeks) though in Verendre's sketchy recordings there is no mention of the falls. The Frenchmen headed south and went as far as the Wind River in Wyoming before returning home. They might have traveled close to our ranch on their way; it is in almost a straight line from Helena to the Wind River Mountains. On their way home they crossed the Missouri where they first met it coming west, years before. They referred to the crossing place in May of 1774 as "Petite Cherise" or little cherries. The whole Missouri river region is known as "choke cherry country". Both Lewis and Clark in their later writings tell of a delicious dessert Sacagewea would make using these small cherries on the Missouri.

Before the French Canadians left the river they were supposed to have built a large stone monument, and of course claimed the new land for France. They traveled down the river a short way, turned north, arriving home on July 2, 1774. Many historians agree with Verendre's claims of travel at least as far as the Gates of the Mountains, 30 miles north of Helena. It is from that point on, going west, that Lewis and Clark were the first European-descended Americans to see and explore a path to the Pacific Ocean.

Now if that wasn't sketchy enough, read on. A book was published in 1758, 10 years before Verendres Trip titled "Historie la Louisiane" written by Le Page du Pratz. He tells of a Yazoo Indian named Montacht Ape, who traveled up the Missouri to its source in the mountains, then crossed the Shining Mountains (Rockies). The Indian said they were high and dangerous, the tribes he met let him pass, always going west, until one day he reached the ocean. Of that view, he said, "I was so delighted, I could not speak. My eyes were too small for my soul's ease. The wind so disturbed the water, that I thought the blows it gave would beat the land to pieces." Anyone who ever stood on the cliffs in Oregon or Washington State during a storm watching those 40 foot waves hit the rocky cliffs can understand the Indian's words.

What historians find most interesting about this Indians claim of crossing the West from the mouth of the Mississippi to the Pacific and back, 50 years before Lewis and Clark, is that Lewis and Clark probably believed him because after all, they carried Pratz book with them on their journey.

This article was gathered from many sources, especially from Mark Perrault's works.

Madison River Ranch Wildlife

Sandra and I bought our 20 acres Sept. 2, 1989. WOW, how times flies. In less than a year we had a small cabin as a base of operations to explore this beautiful 3000 acre piece of Montana. We hiked up and down the treed draws and over the flats, the place was empty in those days. We met the wildlife as we went, a deer or two, a few antelope on the top bench and an occasional rough grouse. Here we are 18 years later and after 5 or 6 years of no grazing, I see and have been told by many of our neighbors just how much the place seems to be healing from the impact of cattle grazing for so many years.

The rough grouse have increased 3 or 4 times, I personally have seen the Hungarian partridge flocks go from 5 or 6 to over 30. We have 20 or 30 full time deer, both white tail and mule deer. The does seem to be having twins each year lately, but what is most impressive is the change in the elk. Three years ago a few cow elk came back up the valley from the winter range, 3 of them stayed on the ranch long enough to have their

calves and then moved on. Last year, 10 cow elk again came up the valley and 3 more calves were seen before they moved on south. This year everything changed, it's mid-August, 19 elk cows had 7 calves on the ranch and have just stayed. I guess they can't think of a better place to go, all you can eat and no one bothering you! Their favorite place in the open is usually in front of Pat Toalson's log home, they stage there in the early evening and at dark walk down to the river for a drink. I've talked to fishermen who tell me that fishing on the big bend can get crowded at dark when all the elk show up. Maybe we could get water from the common well on top to a nearby water tank for the wildlife, just a thought.

For those of you new to this area, a great number of the valley's 10,000 elk migrate through the ranch in large herds in December. It's truly something to see, in the mornings, hundreds of elk just pawing through the snow for all that good grass. It takes about a month for them to come through heading down the valley to the preserve. Many of us feel our ranch is just about the last place they can get food easily because when they leave here it's an uphill battle regarding winter survival. They stage about 30 miles down the valley and at times the herd is miles across, food is scarce to start with, and by February, none at all. The elk have to just ride it out till spring. The Feds tell me the wolves get 150 of them, and that's how it is, but what is upsetting to the fish and game folks, is the additional 150 that die needlessly when they get caught in barbed wired fences trying to jump over in their weakened state in late winter. Many of the local ranches including ours, are in the process of lowering the top wire down to 42" to solve most of the problem.

Welcome to all the new folks. The ranch has about 40 new names on the roster. You are going to just love the place, though winter is very challenging. Sandra and I moved on to the ranch full time 7 years ago, last year 2 more full time residents joined the crowd. The only way around in the winter is by snowmobile. It is a five mile snowmobile ride to the highway in all kinds of weather and much farther for all those homes in the back upper part of the property. Every year there is more and more talk of getting the roads open all year. There was much discussion at our annual meeting regarding the possibility of winter road access, a committee was formed to look into it. I have been informed that additional information is coming our way for each owner's input later this fall.

We are the lucky ones, we all have a piece of "The Last Best Place".

Best Regards, Bill Hoolan

Fishing With Mike Wells:

Mike submitted something a bit different this time. Different is good!:

Summer Cloudburst

The river whispers secrets on gentle wisps of wind

I draw near to better sense the sweetness in the air

Sage & willow infuse the evening steeping in the steam

Dark emerald wings flash as tree swallows slash through

Glittering clouds of golden bugs fluttering above the gleam

Shining noses dimpling slick surfaces the trout begin their dance

Pink, red & purple streams across heaven send the sun to rest

Swirling off watery mirrors against the mountainsides beyond

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From Our Neighbors:

Gene Welch submitted this info about fish populations. Thanks, Gene:

Madison Fish Abundance

There was a question by a reader regarding the abundance of rainbows that was stated in the March 2007 newsletter. The quantity given in the newsletter was 3,000 1-2 year old rainbows per mile of river, determined in 1999. The reader had noted that a Montana Outdoors article ("Learning to live with Whirling Disease", March-April, 2007) cited 530 per mile of 12 inch and longer fish as an average in recent years. The two estimates are for different size fish in different years. Readers may be interested in an update.

Data from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MTFWP) shows that the estimated population of rainbows 1 year and older was 3,385 per mile in 1999, with an error estimate of ± 465 . However, only about 20% (656) of those fish were 2 years and older, or about 12 inches and longer. The 1-year-old rainbows in 1999 were from a strong 1998-year class – water flow was high with snowy days in June – bad for fishermen, but good for trout survival.

During the period 1999 through 2005, the population of rainbows 1 year and older averaged about 2,500 per mile (2 years and older ~500), which was the origin of the 530 per mile from Montana Outdoors. Browns averaged about 2,000 per mile, or 4,500 per mile for both species. Judging from a size-frequency graph from the 2005 data, there were about 1,200 trout per mile 12 inches and longer and about 700 per mile, 15 inches and longer. There were very few browns 18 inches and longer and no rainbows in that size group.

These population estimates were obtained from the MTFWP routine Pine Butte sampling site, 3 miles upstream from Lyons Bridge. Estimates from a site downstream from Squaw Creek were less.

Thanks to Bill Hoolan, Mike Wells and Gene Welch for their excellent contributions. As always, please send or email me any comments, or anything you think would be of interest to your neighbors, whether it's family news, recipes, reports from the ranch, stuff for sale, letters to the editor, etc. I really enjoy hearing from you!

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