

RUBY HABITAT RESEARCH FOUNDATION
ANNUAL REPORT



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CONSERVATION THROUGH PRACTICE & EXAMPLE

The Ruby Habitat Research Foundation was formed to carry on research and development projects that will have the effect of preserving and enhancing agricultural operations and wildlife habitats in the Ruby Valley and Southwest Montana. The Foundation addresses many wildlife issues, including wildlife habitat improvements, irrigation techniques, and the search for other sustainable agricultural practices.

Current projects include:

- Wetland restoration and enhancement
- Drought resistant grasses
- Grasses suited for winter grazing
- Alternative plants and methods
- Perennial plants for wildlife food and habitat
- Sources of supplemental income
- Low-cost stream bank stabilization methods
- Integration of agricultural operations and wildlife habitat needs
- Development of outdoor classroom, visitor center, and nature trail for local students
- Intensive grazing research
- Native grass re-establishment methods

"I marveled at the thought and foresight that is going into the projects. The land stewardship is a sterling example of ties to the earth.

Our children are our legacy, for sure, but what (the Woodsons) have done to those acres and for that community is also a legacy you both need to relish with pride."

Michelle Holt

CONSERVATION THROUGH COMMITMENT: OUR MISSION

The Ruby Habitat Research Foundation is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the natural resources and the social and economic climate of the Ruby Valley and Southwest Montana by:

- supporting agricultural operations to ensure the long-term viability of working ranches
- working with landowners, educational institutions, foundations and other entities to protect and enhance wildlife habitats
- encouraging education and training efforts to broaden the understanding of resource management issues and responsible management of private lands
- promoting the concept of resource accountability and developing examples of minimal impact resource management for agricultural and recreational uses while protecting the environment

"We enjoyed learning about the efforts being made to introduce the type of management practices being employed on the ranch. It must be a real pleasure for you to work with people like the Woodsons that have committed their resources for the benefit of the land and wildlife."

Doug Smith

CONSERVATION THROUGH EDUCATION

In keeping with the Mission Statement of the Foundation, the Board of Directors and the Woodson Ranch have begun a collaborative effort with the local school district and other agencies. The northern end of the Woodson Ranch is being developed into an outdoor classroom for use by various instructors at the school.

In the spring of 2004, following an outing to the ranch to GPS a location, the 4th Grade class from the elementary school along with the High School Agriculture classes, came to the ranch to begin construction of a nature trail.

The nature trail will serve as a safe and convenient location for any teacher to bring their students to the ranch and observe first hand the diverse wildlife habitat opportunities and their coexistence with the agricultural operations. Physical education classes and science classes have made outings to the ranch. In the fall of 2005, the local art teacher brought her class to the site and created environmental art. In addition, plans are being developed for a small interpretive center in an old abandoned ranch building. Donations from supporters of the foundation will be supplemented by student "sweat equity" to clean up and roof the old building to display educational information.

In cooperation with the local Natural Resource Conservation Service, demonstration plots of native and introduced grasses, shrubs and forbs are being planned near the visitor center. Such plots will serve to educate students and adults regarding plant physiology and appearance as well as site suitability.

The visitor center and nature trail will broaden the Foundation's outreach potential significantly.

We believe that the foundation should serve as a hub of information, practicing applied science and providing educational opportunities by example for students and landowners

We also believe in responsible stewardship. That we are obliged to protect our natural resource and that the resource itself will hold us accountable.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

GROUP A: MONTANA LAND ALLIANCE

Roy O'Connor, business owner, rancher
Rock Ringling, managing director

GROUP B: WOODSON FAMILY

Martha Woodson, rancher
Leslie Vanderpool
Robin Mitts, learning and organizational effectiveness
consultant, *Shell Oil Company*

GROUP C: RUBY VALLEY COMMUNITY

George Swan, business owner, rancher
Neil Barnosky, rancher

DIRECTOR EMERITUS

Craig Woodson, rancher

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Les Gilman, *Ranch Resources*, rancher



The Board in Session

RHRF SUPPORTERS

- Sarah Barton

Oliver Birckhead

Allen Bjergo

Gregor Campbell

Eric Carson

David & Julia Clarke

Samuel S. Corl III

John & Cheryl L. Dale

Frederick Danziger

A. Newton Dilley

Michael Edwards

Michael Gettelman

Fredrick Goldberg

John R. Green

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James Jordan

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Ron Kunkel

Albert & Eugenia Lamar

Michael & Kathy Landert

Steven D. Lockshin

Richard Lower

Phillip McCrury
- Larry McKinney

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Loisjean Moody

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Richard Norton

Roy S. O’Connor

Tommy O’Connor

Sherry O’Hearn

J. R. Oosting, D.D.S.

Stephen E. Parks

Terry and Janis Phillips

Maurice R. Povich

John and Heidi Rabel

John Sampson

Robert Schoenfeld

William D. & Janet Simpson

Gary P. Skinner

Douglas C. Smith

Peter J. Solomon

Thomas J. Stoecker, MD

William W. Taylor, III

Betty & Ralph Thisted

Bobbi Uecker

Steven and Leslie Vanderpool

James B. Vogt

- Scott and Jane Waldie

Jeremy Wilson

Craig Woodson

Martha Woodson

Gettelman Philanthropic Fund

Montana Land Reliance

Oconnor & Company, Inc.

Old Hotel

Oosting Family Investments

Peregrine Capital Management

Ruby Springs Lodge

Saltchuk Resources, Inc

Seligman Cash Mngt Fund

Steven Strauch Living Trust

Vanderpool Family Fund

- In Memoriam

William Hart

Bud Kanouse

Betty Lehwald

Ruby Habitat Research Foundation 2004 Financials

Rural Heritage & Open Lands Fund: \$35,204

Designed to provide funding for outreach and land conservation efforts. General fund surpluses and designated gifts create the balance of this account.

Hill Education & Outreach Endowment: \$10,027

Income finances conservation education and outreach to landowners and the general public. These funds come from specifically designated gifts.

Woodson Endowment: \$70,000

The income from the corpus will be used for operation and maintenance of the Woodson Ranch, to ensure its protection and continued viability. The ranch is home to the foundation and its research efforts. The principal for this endowment, as well as current ranch operating capital, is being provided by Craig Woodson.

General Fund: \$70,831

Pays the day-to-day expenses that finance our operation.

Equipment: \$1084

Total Assets as of 12-31-04: \$187,146

2004 General Fund

Income: \$116,393
Expense: \$27,547

Net Income: \$ 88,846

From The Land Reliance:

“The Montana Land Reliance (MLR) congratulates the Ruby Habitat Research Foundation (RHRF) on a great 2004. Only two years in operation and the Foundation ended the year with \$187,000 in assets. In addition RHRF continues its important educational outreach work at the community level as well as statewide. Through RHRF’s educational outreach other landowners understand the art of the possible.

Partnerships are all the rage these days, but it’s not often one works as well and as smoothly as the relationship between RHRF and MLR. In 2004 MLR took advantage of RHRF’s hospitality to bring eight separate easement donors to the ranch for discussions with Les Gilman and Craig Woodson on management issues ranging from riparian management to reintroduction of native grasses. Further, MLR was able to use the ranch for educational purposes and resource development. RHRF staff was also able to educate MLR donors and easement holders on stewardship and the value of well-managed agricultural lands. The partnership also resulted in the Sywassink Property and the Cowles Property becoming two new MLR easement properties.

From the Board and staff here at MLR, congratulations on a great 2004. We look forward to working with you in 2005.”

The Montana LAND RELIANCE



RHRF is a 509(a)(3) tax-exempt support organization to the Montana Land Reliance, a 501(c)(3) corporation. Our Tax identification number is 45-0487621. Each entity is audited annually and independently by Kindred, Booker & Co., P.C. Audit copies are available upon request.



RUBY HABITAT RESEARCH FOUNDATION



"Land owners and resource managers are inherently bound to a high level of resource accountability. We are bound by law to protect the environment and prevent resource degradation, but we have a higher obligation to be good stewards of our natural resources, sharing them today and preserving them for future generations. The decisions we make and the actions we take affect our own environment as well as that of the wildlife, our neighbors and future generations." (Craig Woodson, founder RHRF)