



# RUBY HABITAT FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

*BALANCING WILDLIFE,  
AGRICULTURE,  
RECREATION, AND  
EDUCATION  
SINCE 2002*



# Comments from the Executive Director

I may be biased, but I believe the Ruby Valley is a spectacular place. The Ruby Habitat Foundation's Woodson Ranch holds a prominent place here. It is a fabulous property with a wonderful heritage. The ranch is ideally situated within the productive floodplain of the Ruby River. Farming and ranching were well established on these lands soon after the 1863 discovery of gold in Alder Gulch. The ranch's earliest water rights date back to 1865 on Alder Gulch, California Creek and the Ruby River and 1866 on Clear Creek. In his 1868 survey, of what was then called the Passamari Valley, John S. Corbett, a United States Deputy Surveyor, boldly claims that the specific area containing the Woodson Ranch was "...largely settled – being the most reliable farming portion of Madison County." Pasture grass, wheat, hay, cattle, horses, sheep and apples are all documented, early agricultural commodities of the area. That heritage of agricultural production and the obvious stewardship of the property's natural resources go hand-in-hand. Without these deep, healthy soils, abundant, clean water and a robust community of native and introduced species, the early settlers would not have survived.



Personally, my admiration for those early settlers is not based entirely upon what they did, like digging an irrigation ditch by hand, but rather, upon how and why they did it. They were courageous, resourceful, innovative and determined. Certainly, they were proud of their successes and flexible in their failures. They seem to have been determined to persevere, leave a legacy and create a thriving community within which to live and raise their families. As much as we may cling to our agricultural heritage, such attachment comes with a caveat. Dallas Mount, an agricultural consultant out of Wheatland, Wyoming, puts it this way: "Agriculture is steeped in tradition. These traditions serve as a source of pride and continuity which help make us who we are in agriculture. However, these same traditions create a paradox of sorts when it comes to managing the business of ranching. Balancing respect for traditions and fostering innovation can be tricky to navigate." That is our aspiration at RHF, to foster innovation, while respecting our traditions. You will observe examples of, and solutions to, that paradox in our projects like the pivot irrigation system, our Heritage Orchard and our Clear Creek restoration efforts.

Many of you have enjoyed the amazing natural wonders of this unique place. You may have come to the ranch to fish, hunt or commune with nature in some other form, but undoubtedly, you departed in awe and with a desire to return. Whether recreating, working, learning or just observing, there is something about this place that imparts a lasting impact. That impact is the desired outcome of our founder, Craig Woodson, and those of us who strive to carry on his legacy. It has become the heritage which we will leave to future generations.

We remain proud of our symbiotic relationship with the Montana Land Reliance. Their encouragement and wise counsel have contributed, in large measure, to the Foundation's financial and operational success. You, our loyal supporters, donors, and advisors have also participated in building a lasting legacy. Our outreach and education efforts rely upon your generosity and we look to you for inspiration and recommendations.



The projects detailed in this annual report are a testament to our commitment to leaving a legacy. Please take time to review this 17th Edition of our Annual Report. Revisit with us the highlights of the past year and consider our progress toward accomplishing our purposes. We trust you will continue to partner with RHF as we strive to maintain the integrity of this place we cherish and our western landscape and heritage.

We hope to see you on the ranch in 2020!

Les Gilman,  
Executive Director, Ruby Habitat Foundation

# From the Chairman's Desk

The Ruby Valley has always been a remarkable area. Sheltered behind a loop in the Continental Divide the Ruby drainage is protected from extreme winter weather. Ol' Man Winter still seems to sneak in on occasion and remind us he is not fooled by a bend in a mountain range. The earliest mention of agriculture in the Ruby Valley that I know of is Johnny Grant using the area to open range graze cattle and horses as early as 1850. Much has changed in the valley since that time but agriculture continues to play a very important role in managing the natural resources; providing open space and good habitat for the abundant wildlife in the area as well as contributing to the social fabric of this rural Montana area.

Ruby Habitat Foundation (RHF) works to support agriculture and exhibit the importance of good stewardship by example on the Woodson Ranch. A tour of the ranch is an experience that will long be remembered. The diverse projects that have been developed over the years, from pollinators to nesting areas to wetlands to native grass stands and much more, are all done in an ongoing agricultural setting. The growing of crops and rearing animals for food and a myriad of products is an ancient practice. Science and technology have added an amazing amount of knowledge and expertise to basically harvesting sunlight. Our Heritage Apple Orchard project this year will be an attempt to preserve the 100-year-old genetics but will be irrigated with a very modern irrigation system, thus combining the old with the new.

Agriculture in the Ruby Valley and southwest Montana remains strong and is vital to preserving our open spaces but an understanding of management of our natural resources and good stewardship of them is understandably not familiar to many. Our science/education and general outreach visitors to the ranch were 41 percent of those who came to Woodson ranch in 2019. This brings me much joy that we are reaching out in such a positive way. This would not be possible without our many supporters. You are essential partners in all that continues to happen at RHF. I feel that together we are making a difference. Thank you.

Neil Barnosky  
Chairman, Ruby Habitat Foundation



## A Word From Our Parent Organization

As President of the Board of Directors of the Montana Land Reliance, it has been my honor to serve on the Board of the Ruby Habitat Foundation. The mission of the two organizations is to protect, preserve and enhance Montana's open spaces and agricultural lands. Many of us in each organization have deep roots in Montana's rural heritage and understand the importance of preserving that lifestyle. Through the educational and research activities of RHF, that rural heritage will continue and improve. RHF is a host to many diverse groups for hunting, fishing, birding, hiking and other activities. Visitors also have the opportunity to see a working ranch in many of its normal activities.

RHF has been instrumental in bringing together members of the local community for projects like the Clear Creek restoration. Projects like this benefit the entire valley. We are grateful to Les Gilman, the RHF executive director for his tireless efforts in bringing local people together on this and other projects. His stewardship, knowledge and dedication continue to make RHF a showplace we can all be proud of.

We will forever be grateful to Craig and Martha Woodson for creating the RHF to conserve and improve the ranch. We would be remiss if we did not recognize the contributions of all the board members, from the three local ranchers, the family members and MLR. Each group brings unique skills and knowledge to our deliberations. Martha continues to serve on the Board and represents the family well. Her history with RHF and knowledge of Craig's wishes ensures that we will continue on a path that will fulfill his vision.

George Olsen  
President of the Board of Directors, The Montana Land Reliance





# Outreach Report

The Cambridge dictionary defines *heritage* as “features belonging to the culture of a particular society, such as traditions, languages, or buildings, which come from the past and are still important.” Woodson Ranch is about to create a “heritage apple orchard”, and we came to this designation because the apples themselves are varieties that are not common, and the trees from which the source-DNA, or grafts, come are 100 years old or more. Their age alone places them at risk of disappearing, and we want to prevent that. Further, those source-trees exist on homesteads that were established when this part of Montana was first settled by people from eastern states, and we want to preserve this link to the past.



In this context, the designation of the orchard as “heritage” seems apropos. European settlers came to this part of Montana some 60-odd years after Lewis & Clark first explored the area in the early 1800s, and some 20-40 years after the area was inhabited by competing groups of trappers. It’s also important to note that these settlers and explorers were far from the first humans on site. Native Americans, existing in complex and often resource-competitive tribes, were well-established for centuries before Jefferson gave the marching orders to Meriwether Lewis.

These native peoples hunted, cultivated crops, recreated and enjoyed the rich resources afforded by the landscape of southwest Montana. Evidence exists that they may have used fire on the landscape to improve the resource, as they surely had learned that the game they targeted were attracted to the new grass which followed a fire. Those activities are strikingly similar to the mission of Ruby Habitat Foundation which promotes a balance between agriculture, wildlife, recreation and education. In some profound ways, Ruby Habitat Foundation is not just following in the footsteps of those earlier land stewards who planted apples in the late 1800s, but also emulating those peoples who were here before as we attempt to balance these activities while improving the landscape for future generations.

It seems even grander, then, when we talk about creating an orchard planted to honor those people who came before us to steward this landscape. It adds gravitas when we consider the longer history of this place, and it highlights the responsibility we have to make decisions that not only acknowledge and honor the past, but which also set the stage for future generations to look back and understand their own heritage. Planting an apple tree is easier than grafting an old apple tree to new root stock; and planting a heritage apple orchard is considerably more complex when considered against the backdrop of both the past and the future. No one said doing the right thing would be easy, though, and so we persist.

In sum, a heritage apple orchard is not as simple an endeavor as it might seem, but it is centered in the bullseye of our mission, and we look forward to sharing its progress with you and, with a little luck, future generations!

Dave Delisi,  
Outreach Coordinator,  
Ruby Habitat Foundation





# Joe's Garage

If you have been on Woodson Ranch in the summertime, you have seen the flowers, the gardens, the landscaping, and the evidence of caring that each of those things represent. Maybe, if you have your own property, you have marveled at the dearth of noxious weeds on the paths and roadways here. Those who have stayed in the Hill House, our off-the-grid and on-site lodging, may have sampled some of the fare from the vegetable garden planted there for just such a purpose. Perhaps you have been turned around on the ranch and suddenly a gentle man comes up and helps you find your way. Or, perhaps you have seen a guy driving around on a 40cc motorbike, beeping a hello as he passes. Or a person diligently adjusting irrigation pipe. If you are lucky, you have spent a few minutes talking to this gentle, funny, and hardworking man.

Juventino Colado has been part of Woodson Ranch since Craig Woodson bought the place in 1993. Laboring with affection for the land, toiling regardless of weather, and with apparently ceaseless energy, Juventino--or, "Joe" as he is often called--is as much a part of Woodson Ranch as the Great Basin Wildrye and the cottonwood grove he helped plant 25 years ago.

For these reasons, and so that future generations never forget why the ranch looks better than most and feels like a place where one can connect with some sort of inner peace, we recognized Juventino this year by re-naming our ranch shop, the place you can find Juventino when he's not out and about making something better on the ranch, "Joe's Garage." Thank you, Joe, and also your wife, Luisa, for your tireless dedication to Craig and Martha Woodson's vision for this place. Without your efforts, every person's visit to Woodson Ranch would be something less.

## JOE'S GARAGE

**Named in Appreciation  
and Honor of**

**LUISA & JUVENTINO  
COLADO**

**for their Dedication & Loyalty  
Since 1993 to  
MARTHA & CRAIG WOODSON  
& RUBY HABITAT FOUNDATION**

**Presented with Gratitude in 2019  
by Martha Woodson**





# Fishing & Hunting

*Several folks have inquired about the success of our hunting and fishing programs, so here is a summary overview of each.*

**FISHING:** Our fishing program on the ranch is designed to accomplish several things. First, we view managed recreational access as one of the keystones of our mission. When Craig Woodson envisioned how future generations would use this space, he hoped a significant feature would be an *education* component. He wanted people to see how agriculture and wildlife can affect each other in positive ways. One way to do that is to allow people to see and experience this space up close, and flyfishing works well for that. Of the 1850 people we welcomed to the ranch in 2019, approximately 400 came to flyfish.

Species of fish break down a little differently depending on which waterway one fishes on the ranch. The Ruby holds mostly browns and whitefish, while Clear Creek is almost entirely browns. Alder Creek has a few more rainbows than either of the aforementioned streams, likely due to the slightly colder water. The spring creek system, aka Cattail Creek, used to be stocked with rainbows, but they are now few and far between, with browns currently comprising the majority species.

The fishing in 2019 was average when compared to the past five years, but the local fisheries biologist has noted a decline in fish per mile in the Ruby, as well as other rivers throughout Montana. He and others at MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks, have begun work to determine the cause of this decline.



*With a smile nearly as big as her fish, Jillian holds the catch-of-the-day from Clear Creek.*



*Armed with primitive weaponry and dressed for a rendezvous, Tom, one of our dedicated volunteers, heads out in search of victuals.*

**HUNTING:** The hunting on Woodson Ranch is generally limited to whitetail deer and waterfowl. No lead ammunition is permitted and reasons for this can be found on our website.

The whitetail deer program began 11 years ago in response to a burgeoning population of deer in the valley as well as on Woodson Ranch. The need for population control is an aspect of land stewardship for which we are responsible. Thanks to the generous donation of time and talent by a couple local volunteers, the hunting program for whitetail deer welcomed over 110 people in 2019 and the collective harvest number of 95 is particularly encouraging considering the emphasis we place on safety.

2020 will be a different type of hunting year on Woodson Ranch and likely all properties within the Ruby Valley because Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), a complicated and persistent prion disease, was identified in a few deer from the valley in 2019. It is likely that all deer taken from Woodson Ranch will be subject to mandatory CWD testing and certain transportation restrictions. While the news of the discovery of CWD was met with sadness and concern, it is worth noting that the disease has been found in about half of the all states in the US, and we can learn from the methods of control practiced in those other places.

We look forward, regardless of changes to our process, to welcoming hunters out to the ranch again in 2020!



# Reaping What We Sow

*A few comments from our guests, plus one that guides us in our work*

Just a note to say thank you for providing a place to hunt. Without ranches such as yours, us old retired boys wouldn't have a place to go except to go compete on public land. We were so impressed with the property: we saw bald eagles, pheasants, ducks, geese, swans, porcupine, raccoon and of course whitetail deer. The ponds and maintenance of the river and surrounding landscape made it a beautiful place to see and hunt. The blinds were great and well constructed and it was nice to sit up high. You made our day. Thank you!

*T.J. Johnson, Certified Master Hunter*

We should all be so fortunate to have a facility such as yours in our communities. I appreciate what you do and the spirit in which you do it. Keep up the good work—especially in education!

*Eric Scranton, Certified Master Hunter*

It's a special time we spend at the ranch and provides gifts for the vets AND us. We are truly blessed.

*Bill Long, treasurer of Montana's Mending Waters*

Bill & I really enjoyed speaking with you about current projects and about the upper Ruby Valley. We remain wildly impressed with your passion and commitment to the good work being done on and around the Woodson Ranch. As always, everything was perfect during our stay. The Hill House is such a lovely and comfortable setting from which to fish and explore the Ruby River and its breathtakingly beautiful surroundings. We cannot wait to return...we are grateful for the Foundation's continuing commitment to preservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of this special area. Thank you for the work you do on the Woodson Ranch and in the Ruby Valley.

*Susan Cardenas & William Belobraidich*

We sure enjoyed our visit! Loved the company as well as the fly fishing, moose viewing, and property tour. What a lovely thing you guys are doing for our future!

*Linda & Gary Edmiaston*

This internship has given me the opportunity to test myself by designing improvements to the Cattail Creek system and push myself out of my comfort zone by doing things like driving large farm vehicles and working with cattle. I have learned and experienced so many things I never expected or hoped to, but I have enjoyed it so much and had a great time this summer.

The balance between agriculture, wildlife, and recreation is a challenge faced throughout the West. The Ruby Habitat Foundation sets a precedent for fellow ranchers and land-owners in the Ruby Valley and Montana to follow to protect wildlife and open spaces. It has been a truly special experience getting to feel like I had a small role to play in this organization with such an important mission statement.

*Dominique Shore, 2019 Summer Intern on Woodson Ranch*

**This we know...the earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected, like blood which connects one family. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life—he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.**

**Chief Seattle, 1854**



# Clear Creek: Past, Present & Future

Certainly by now, most of you know about our Clear Creek project. It is the largest, most expensive, most time consuming, and potentially most-impactful project that Ruby Habitat Foundation has ever undertaken. This year, 2020, promises to be the year in which the physical reconstruction and enhancement efforts, on that portion of Clear Creek lying within the boundaries of Woodson Ranch, will finally begin!

What we now call Clear Creek is a natural braid of the Ruby River. Some early maps refer to it as the West Channel of the Ruby. An 1870 Survey map, a portion of which is copied on page 9 of this report, illustrates the location of that channel in the southwest corner of the map, running parallel to the “Stinking Water River”. In his notes, John L. Corbett, Deputy Surveyor for the Territory of Montana, consistently refers to our valley as the Passamari Valley. However, on his maps he uses both Passamari and Stinking Water as the names for the river (see side bar). In an earlier survey, dated 1868, Corbett writes: “Passamari”, as in the Snake Indian language signifies ‘Wintering Valley’.



*Clear Creek on a Cloudy Day*

The attached 1870 map does not however, identify the western channel by name. Surveyor Corbett, referred to the channel simply as “a creek”, even though his extensive surveyor’s notes indicate that it was approximately half as large as the main stem of the river. According to his notes he, and his crew of five assistants, crossed the river and the creek frequently. Each time they crossed, they measured and recorded the width and the geographic direction of flow of each channel. The main river channel consistently measured in the neighborhood of 60 links (40 feet), while the creek consistently measured 30 links. FYI, a link is exactly 66/100 of a foot, or 7.92 inches. The unit is based on Gunter’s chain, a metal chain 66 feet long with 100 links that was formerly used in land surveying.



*Students Examine Macroinvertebrates on the Banks of Clear Creek*

Although both the river and the creek sinuously make their way down the valley, at one point the surveyor mentions that “The salient angle of the river is running N.40°W”. Interestingly, according to this survey map, and another survey of the area to its south, the precise locations where the creek diverges from the main stem of the river and then reunites with it, are the same today as they were one hundred and fifty years ago, when Corbett surveyed the area.

For much of the past century, Clear Creek functioned primarily as an irrigation water conveyance channel. Somewhat prophetically, Surveyor John Corbett states, “The Township embraces a large number of settlements and capable of supporting a dense population if water for irrigating was supplied to the Terrace

lands, which are of good quality.” Since that time, and depending upon available flows and irrigation needs, water from the main stem of the Ruby River has been diverted to meet the needs along Clear Creek and vice versa. The earliest water rights from Clear Creek are dated 1866. The list of ditches that historically have drawn water from the stream, reads like a who’s who of early pioneer families. The Peterson, Marion, Ayotte, Gervais, Hayden, Boatman and Marshall Ditches all bear the names of families that



# Clear Creek: Past, Present & Future (cont.)

settled along the banks of Clear Creek and dug ditches with shovels, slips and plows to transport water and irrigate newly planted agricultural crops. Claims and appropriations continued to be filed for more than 100 years, with the latest being claimed on June 1, 1973. Currently, more than 65 distinct water rights are claimed by at least 20 entities. As is the case with most streams in the arid intermountain west, Clear Creek is obviously over appropriated. The completion of the Ruby Reservoir in the late 1930s made more water available for irrigation and extended the period of time that the river and the creek had adequate flow to meet irrigation needs.

Although the main focus for the water in the system has been for its use as irrigation and livestock water for the past century and a half, Clear Creek and the Ruby River have maintained their value as a viable, and some may say exceptional, fishery. Locals have long claimed that Clear Creek was just as good a fishery as the Ruby. Some would say better. However, the local Conservation District has long been concerned about natural resource issues associated with Clear Creek. In 2012 the Conservation District commissioned the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to conduct an exhaustive Riparian Assessment of the lower Ruby River and Clear Creek. The results of that assessment, which quantified what we already knew, were the catalyst for change on Clear Creek.

Over the past 30 years, significant changes in irrigation technology and a notable shift in the recognition of the value of the fishery resources has resulted in changes in the way the system is managed. Most recently, in order to address the recurring problem of “not enough water in the system”, Ruby Habitat Foundation worked with local landowners, the local Conservation District and the NRCS to reduce the demands for irrigation water from Clear Creek by installing an extensive pivot irrigation system, on adjacent agricultural lands, to improve the efficiency of the water that is used. Additionally, the source of the water for that system now comes from the water stored for irrigation purposes in the Ruby Reservoir. Consequently, Clear Creek no longer suffers from extremely low flows during key portions of the irrigation season. The benefits to the creek are visible and measurable:

- In 2018 and 2019, there was more water in Clear Creek during those peak-demand points than at any similar time in memory.
- In 2019, the additional water in Clear Creek ensured that the monitored water temperatures never exceeded 70 degrees.
- Last year, Ruby Habitat Foundation guests saw an increase in the quality of fishing experiences in Clear Creek.
- When Fish, Wildlife and Parks biologists shocked the river for fish counts in 2019 both rainbow trout and whitefish, which had recently been notably absent, were counted in the population.

The physical reconstruction and enhancement work on Clear Creek, mentioned in the opening paragraph, is set to address the next issue called out in the 2012 Riparian Assessment, water quality. Historic flooding events and intentional agricultural efforts to expand acres and improve efficiency, had straightened portions of the Clear Creek channel on the Woodson Ranch. Consequently, the stream was moving faster down the landscape than it did historically, resulting in accelerated erosion and channel deepening. Over time, the stream completely “disconnected” from its flood plain. In the fall of 2010, our founder, Craig Woodson, had begun conversations with the NRCS about a joint effort that would restore Clear Creek and create a Wetland Reserve on the Woodson Ranch. Craig’s passing in the spring of 2011 and some funding concerns at the NRCS put the project on hold. Recently, the project was resurrected. Working collaboratively with the NRCS, Spanish Peaks Engineering and Kingfisher Consulting, we have devised a plan that will slow down Clear Creek, reestablish some lost meanders, eliminate fish barriers and reconnect the stream with its flood plain.

The cost of this enormous undertaking will be covered by the NRCS Wetland Reserve Easement program, as part of the creation of a nearly-400-acre Wetland Reserve Easement on Woodson Ranch. The easement deed has recently been signed and recorded, protecting that portion of the Ruby Valley from further development in perpetuity. As this summary is being written, we are preparing to bid out the construction work which we anticipate will begin later this year. It took a little longer to get to this point than we thought it would, but we are now ready to start digging! Once complete, we will have restored the stream channel and protected and enhanced the adjacent wetland resources of the historic Clear Creek channel.

## Etymological Heritage: The Ruby River

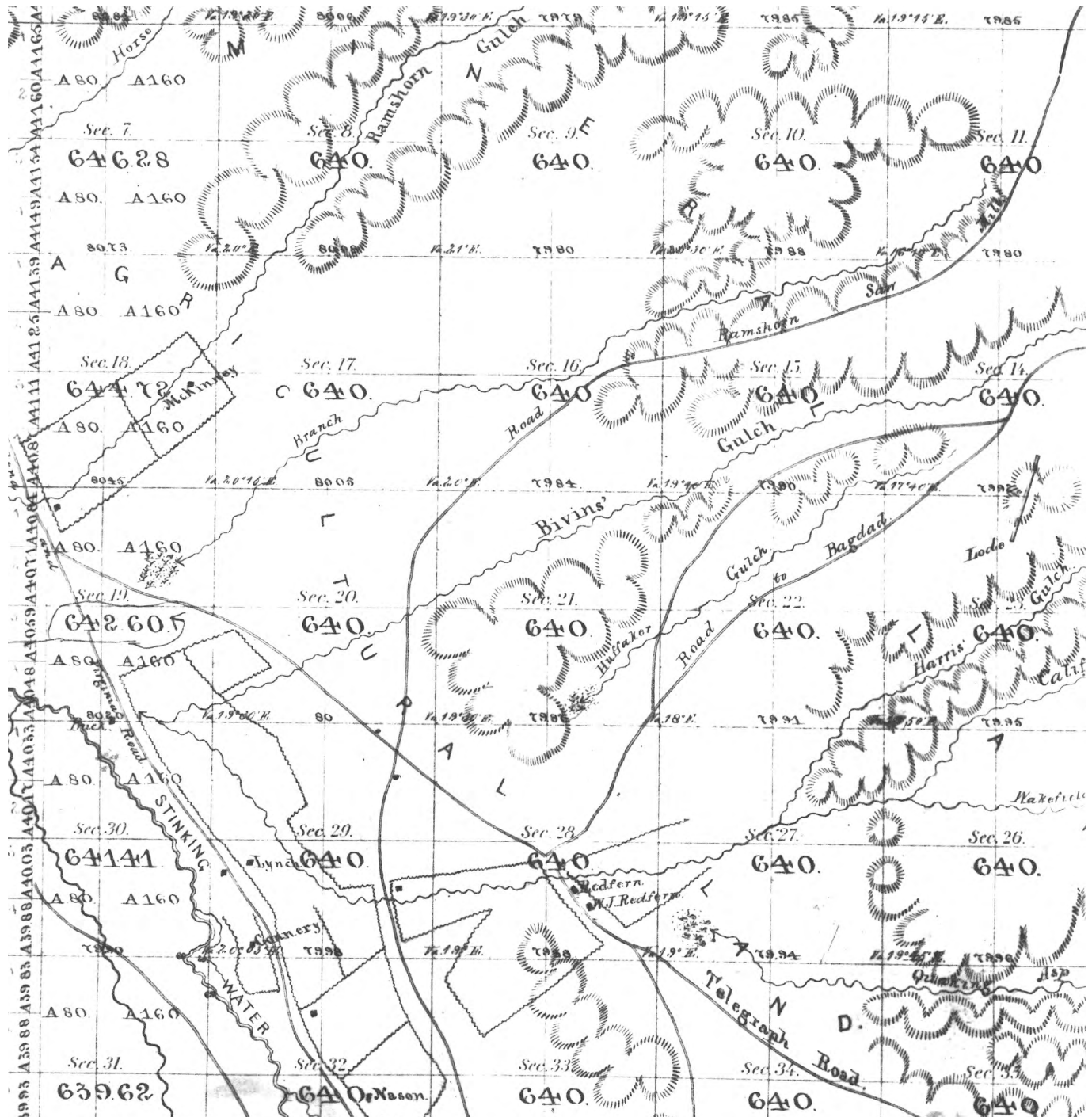
*Capt. Meriwether Lewis named this river Philanthropy on August 6, 1805 after one of the cardinal virtues of his mentor, President Thomas Jefferson. The Shoshones knew this river as Passamari, “Water of the cottonwood groves.” Stories vary on why early miners called it the Stinking Water, one suggesting it was because of the odor emitted by nearby sulfur springs. The other explanation comes from artist A. E. Mathews, who indicated in 1867 that miners found odoriferous decaying buffalo near the river. The name changed for the final time in 1877, to Ruby River, for the garnets miners panned from the river in their search for gold.*

*\*from “Montana Place Names from Alzada to Zortman”, 2009 edition. Published by the Montana Historical Society and we thank them for permission to publish this quote!*



## Clear Creek: Past, Present & Future (cont.)

So what's next? Clear Creek is an eleven mile long braid of the Ruby River which begins about eight river miles south of Woodson Ranch. As mentioned above, the location of that divergence has not changed since 1870. However, currently at that location, several known issues threaten the flows down each of the channels. A permanent structure that manages flows, during all flow regimes, and allows irrigators to manage water rights while not impeding fish passage or degrading fish habitat and recreational access is needed to address these issues. We have raised about 25% of what is needed to engineer that work and are seeking more financial support, so let us know if you can help. We'd hate to lose the work we have accomplished on Clear Creek to the vagaries of a high-water year, and that is the risk we face without a solution at this point in the river.



*This hand-drawn map was created in 1870 and shows many of the features of the day, including Clear Creek which runs just west of the "Stinking Water" (now known as the Ruby) river.*



# Balancing Wildlife, Agriculture, Education and Recreation

In early July, with the generous assistance of Northwestern Energy, we installed an osprey platform. About a week later, a juvenile pair showed up!



A group of painters came to the ranch for inspiration.



2019 was an excellent year for hay production.

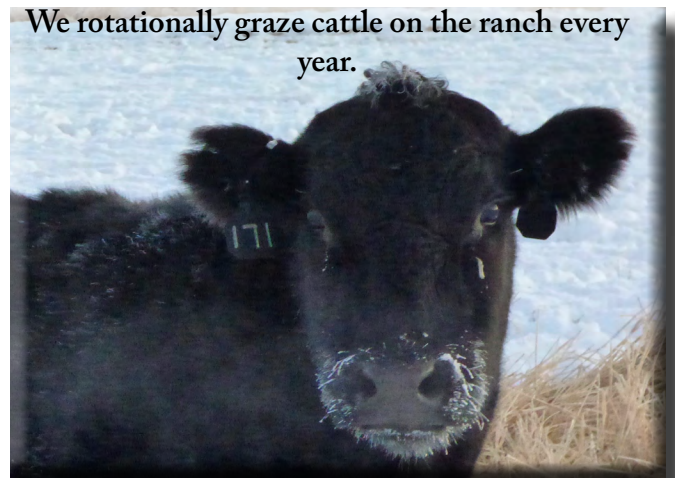


We had two nesting pairs of great horned owls on the ranch in 2019.

During 2019's Kids' River Resource Day, young kids learned about raptors among many other things.



We rotationally graze cattle on the ranch every year.



Our mission involves a mix of hard work, fun, and learning.  
By providing managed public access, we invite people to recreate and learn along with us!



## 2019 RHF SUPPORTERS

Our thanks to all who have supported our efforts financially and otherwise over the past year.

Quite simply, we could not do this alone.

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Deshong, Lee	Hardy, Paulette & Frank	Foundation	Riggs, Thomas
Dietrich, Gary	Hart, Douglas	McIvor, William	Roberts, Tom
Dimick, Darrell & Simmons, C Diane	Hefner, Patty & Thomas	McKeever, Christine & Frank	Rodney Strong Vineyards
Ditchfield, Michael	Hendrix, Mary & Robert	McKown, Tobie	Rozell, John
Dixon, John & Julie	Higgins, Gretchen & Cory	McLean, Annette & Bob	Rubin, Judith & Robert
Dobkin Family Foundation	Hill, Ben	McMahon, James	Ruby Valley Lodge
Donahue, Ann & Christopher	Hilles, Lillian & Richard	McNamara, Conor	Rumberger, Edward
Donnelley Foundation	Hoffman, Henry	McNeill, M C & Co., LLC	Saltchuk
	Holland, Yvonne & Noel	Meizel, Debra & Michael	Sandy, LeAnna



## 2019 RHF SUPPORTERS

*(Continued)*

Sasser, Phillip  
 Sato, Morio  
 Sawczuk, Stephen  
 Sayer, Dr. Thomas  
 Schroeder, Michele & Thomas  
 Scranton, Eric  
 Seale, Nancy & John  
 Shopay, David  
 Shore, Renata & Steve  
 Shore, Virginia & Stephen  
 Shuttleworth, Estelle  
 Siegel, Nancy & L. Pendleton  
 Smith, Philip  
 Smith, Susan & Ben  
 Smrcka, Nancy & Kramer, James  
 Snyder, Jana & Donald  
 Spradlin, D. Michael, DDS  
 SRI River Holdings LLC  
 Sterbis, Sharon & Michael  
 Stevens, Kathy  
 Stewart, Frank  
 Strazza, Kent  
 Sugisaka, Kenji  
 Tanaka, Hidekazu  
 Taylor Family  
 Thomas, Judy  
 Thompson, Wayne  
 Thorp, Jeffrey  
 Toalson, Deena & Patrick  
 Tremblay, Catherine & Normand  
 Tribble, Susan & Waring  
 Trimboth, William  
 Troshynski, Todd  
 Upper Canyon Outfitters, Inc.  
 Vana, Jordan  
 Van Beek, Ed  
 Voigt, John  
 Wallace, James  
 Warren, Thomas  
 Wayt, Jason  
 Wellington, Julie & James  
 Wenrich, Carolyn & Tom  
 Willey, Elizabeth & Larry  
 Wilson, R. D.  
 Winston Rod Co., LLC  
 Wintzer, Mary & Charles  
 Wiseman, Gail & Greg  
 Witt, Julie  
 Wolcott, Catherine & James  
 Wood, Twink & Jim  
 Wood, Jenny & Steve  
 Wood, Sam  
 Woodson, Martha  
 WWC Engineering  
 Young, Annie & Rex  
 Zimmerman, Allen  
 Zovickian, Stephen

It is always heartwarming to read the letters of support for our efforts, as well as to take stock of the donations we receive toward outreach and specific projects. If we missed your name, we apologize sincerely and invite you to correct the error of our ways.

Simmering on the burners are *funding needs for ongoing and future projects*:

- The engineering work for our Clear Creek project water management structure is \$80,000 to \$100,000 with \$30,000 already raised;
- The mowers we use for landscaping and for the mowing of paths along the river are now approaching 25 years old. To replace with comparable equipment, we need about \$21,000;
- Our Wildlife Speaker Series is outgrowing its space and we are considering a permanent structure that may then be available for public use. Such a “pavilion”, if you will, is estimated to cost over \$100,000. If you are interested in signing up as a keystone donor (recognized on a plaque in the building) for this project, contact Dave;
- Part of our mission includes education, and our Summer Intern program exemplifies our “deep dive” with one individual. The cost, which includes the intern’s salary and lodging is about \$9,000.

Finally, we’d be happy and honored to assist you with a legacy gift. We have staff available to help with your planned giving efforts, including any of the following: bequests, gift annuities, charitable trusts, life estate gifts, life insurance policies, beneficiary designations, or retirement assets. Did you know that charitable donations of appreciated stock are valued at the present value, not your cost basis? If you have unrealized gains you’d like to see go to work at their full value, a donation of such assets may make sense for you.

We plan to be here in the Ruby Valley in perpetuity, stewarding the land and resources in ways that inspire and educate, that conserve and respect. Your contribution can help RHF take this long view and ensure that your grandchildren, and their grandchildren can experience what we have only just begun to accomplish. Contact Dave Delisi or Les Gilman to learn more.

Feel free to designate how you’d like your donation spent, and regardless of how you chose to contribute, **THANK YOU** for your support!

*All of us at Ruby Habitat Foundation*



*The 2019 Wildlife Speaker Series topic was “Mountain Lions”-we hosted 230+ people!*



## Ruby Habitat Foundation 2019 Financials

### Foundation Operations:

Income	\$170,642
Expenses	<u>\$118,155</u>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$52,487</b>

General Fund Cash & Investments: \$261,262  
(Pays the day-to-day expenses that finance the operation of the foundation.)

Rural Heritage & Open Lands Fund: \$96,120  
(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: \$98,235  
(Income from this endowment finances conservation education and outreach  
to landowners and the general public. These funds come from designated gifts.)

Visitor Center Building & Donated Art \$44,423  
**Foundation Operations Assets as of 12-31-19** **\$500,040**

### Woodson Ranch Operations, Projects, & Endowment:

Income	\$402,809
Expenses	<u>\$212,092</u>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$190,717</b>

Fixed Assets

Improvements & Equipment	\$678,804
Land	\$7,273,175 <sup>1</sup>
Woodson Ranch Endowment	<u>\$7,823,931<sup>2</sup></u>
<b>Ranch &amp; Endowment Assets as of 12-31-19</b>	<b>\$15,775,910</b>

<sup>1</sup>Restricted land bequest, subject to life estate, plus land purchases and improvements

<sup>2</sup>The income from Woodson Ranch Endowment is used for the operation and maintenance of the Ranch, to ensure its protection and continued viability.

### Ruby Habitat Foundation Combined Total:

<b>Net Income 2019</b>	<b>\$243,204</b>
<b>Total Net Assets as of 12-31-19</b>	<b>\$16,275,950</b>

RHF 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. Audit copies are available upon request.





Left to right: Lisa Matthews, Martha Woodson, George Olsen, Leslie Vanderpool, Lois Delger-DeMars, Robin Mitts, Rock Ringling, Steve Wood, Neil Barnosky, and Bruce Peterson

## Ruby Habitat Foundation Board of Directors

### The Montana Land Reliance

**Lois Delger-DeMars**  
Managing Director, The Montana Land Reliance--*Helena, Montana*

**George Olsen**  
President, The Montana Land Reliance & Retired CPA--*Helena, Montana*

**Vice-Chairman, Rock Ringling**  
Retired, The Montana Land Reliance--*Helena, Montana*

### Woodson Family

**Lisa Matthews**  
*Jarrell, Texas*

**Treasurer, Robin Mitts**  
*The Woodlands, Texas*

**Leslie Vanderpool**  
*Stephenville, Texas*

**Secretary, Martha Woodson**  
*Sheridan, Montana & Fort Worth, Texas*

### Ruby Valley Community

**Chairman, Neil Barnosky**  
*Rancher--Sheridan, Montana*

**Bruce Peterson**  
*Rancher--Alder, Montana*

**Steve Wood**  
*Rancher--Sheridan, Montana*

### Executive Director

**Les Gilman**  
*Sheridan, Montana*

### Founder

Charles Craig Woodson (1933-2011)

## RUBY HABITAT FOUNDATION MISSION STATEMENT

The Ruby Habitat Foundation is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the natural resources, and social and economic makeup of the Ruby Valley and southwest Montana by, among other things:

- Supporting agriculture in the community and the diversification of agricultural operations to ensure the long-term viability of working ranches;
- Working with landowners, educational institutions, foundations, and other entities to protect and enhance open space and wildlife habitat;
- Encouraging education and training 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.





***Landowners and resource managers 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.***

**Charles Craig Woodson (1933-2011),  
Founder**

Ruby Habitat Foundation  
PO Box 638  
Sheridan, MT 59749  
P: 406-660-2709

[www.rubyhabitat.org](http://www.rubyhabitat.org)

Email:

Dave Delisi: [dave@rubyhabitat.org](mailto:dave@rubyhabitat.org)  
Les Gilman: [lgilman@ranchresources.net](mailto:lgilman@ranchresources.net)