



NEWS

For Immediate Release

Equestrian Center Re-Opens at Rock Springs Ranch

Fifty-Year-Old Tradition Revived in Tumalo after Dude Ranch Sold

BEND, OREGON, U.S.A. (June 23, 2010)— Nearly two years after the entire 80-head of horses were disbanded and sold off, ending perhaps the longest-standing international legacy in Central Oregon, Rock Springs Ranch will resume its Equestrian heritage this month at the site of the renowned dude ranch in Tumalo. Kevin & Therese Friedman, owners of FlySpur Ranch (also in Tumalo) have finalized a lease for the pastures, barns, equestrian facilities and trailheads that lead to miles of scenic trails on the BLM, USFS and Skyline Forest lands, and reinstated a herd of Western Pleasure and trail horses for the public to enjoy.

Rock Springs Guest Ranch (RSGR) was originally founded by Donna Gill in the late 60's. A horse woman native to Oregon, Gill had a long-standing history with ranches and riding programs. Prior to buying and managing RSGR, she founded Camp Tamarack in the late 40's. Camp Tamarack was a girls' riding and development camp to educate young metropolitan women in the ways of nature and stewardship. A few years after Camp Tamarack was successfully operating, Gill purchased Indian Ford Guest Ranch, which operated for many years but was later sold to purchase what is now Rock Springs.

At the time of purchase, RSGR had just one structure - the old ranch house that is still in use today. Donna Gill had unusual vision and drive, building RSGR literally from the ground up. She continued as the acting manager until she passed away in 1984. Her nephew, John Gill, was appointed the acting managing partner at that time, a position that he then held for nearly 25 yrs. RSGR went through many changes over the years, but always made a lasting impression on the thousands of adults, parents and children ever to ride or rest there.

Rock Springs Ranch was purchased in 2008 by the Howard S. Wright Companies and currently operates as HSW Rock Springs, LLC, utilizing the lodging, conference center and other facilities for corporate conferences and special events.

Rock Springs Guest Ranch closed its gates on September 15, 2008, and the decades-long legacy of the Gill family as one of the most pre-eminent Dude Ranch Association members in the country thus came to an end. The community rallied and showed its appreciation and support in the closing days as horses found new homes and ranch assets were auctioned off.

Now, only one full summer season later, Rock Springs Ranch has re-opened its gates, supporting a new string of horses and starting new memories. The Friedmans' worked to round up and reunite several of the horses from the past herd. Cisco, George, Opie, Velvet, Honey, Rebel and Cody all worked together at RSGR taking rides and giving lessons to the guests. They were also able to find and reinstate the former RSGR Head Wrangler, Heather Barklow, who spent eight seasons as a part of the ranch's tradition.

The Friedmans plan an extension to their existing equine business model at FlySpur Ranch, just 2 miles away. Offering a unique riding program called EquiShare, riders are able to blend the concepts of horse ownership, horse leasing, and horse rental by paying a monthly fee for their riding hours. The focus is to keep western heritage and hospitality alive, while offering a quality and authentic riding experience at an affordable rate. This partnership will also provide customized trail rides and guided fishing and back country adventures all departing from a facility that was put into operation five decades ago.

Another remaining RSGR employee is Jamie Hildebrandt. A long-time resident of Bend, Hildebrandt invested nearly 25 years at the ranch. He is now the Ranch Manager of HSW Rock Springs. In the mid-1990's, Jamie played an instrumental part in the dedication of a piece of the Deschutes National Forest that wraps around Tumalo Reservoir and continues to spend time involved in the management of public lands in the Tumalo area. Hildebrandt has also been a guiding light and liaison between HSW and FlySpur Ranch in bringing this revival to fruition. At the present time, FlySpur and HSW Rock Springs are the only permit holders licensed by the Oregon State Marine Board to take public guided trips in the Tumalo area.

EquiShare at HSW Rock Springs, operated by FlySpur Ranch, is the ultimate environment for a scenic and memorable riding experience. These rides provide stunning mountain views, endless miles of trails, deep water crossings, wildlife viewing opportunities, lessons in stewardship of public lands, and so much more.

Additional Information:

Rock Springs Ranch is located at 64201 Tyler Road, Bend, OR 97701

Heather Barklow, Head Wrangler & EquiShare Ambassador can be reached at heatherbarklow@gmail.com, 541-771-4244; Jamie Hildebrandt, HSW Rock Springs Ranch Manager - jamie@hswrocksprings.com, 541-408-1804

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Therese and Kevin Friedman open their arms and creative vision to the horse lovers of Central OR.

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