

WILLIAM C. FAWCETT

RESEARCH ON CRYSTALLINE

AT ROCK MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

A Plan for The McGraw Ranch

LOCATED IN A SCENIC AND TRANQUIL VALLEY NORTH OF ESTES PARK, THE MCGRAW RANCH HISTORIC DISTRICT WILL BECOME A CENTER FOR NATURAL SCIENCE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE RESEARCH IN ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK.

GRADUATE STUDENTS, UNIVERSITY FACULTY, TEACHERS AND VISITING PROFESSIONALS WILL BE HOUSED IN REHABILITATED RANCH BUILDINGS AND WILL USE THE PARK AS THEIR "OUTDOOR LABORATORY." SCHOLARS IN RESIDENCE AT THE MCGRAW RANCH WILL EXPLORE RESOURCE ISSUES CRITICAL TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE PARK .

THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION WILL LEAD THE PRIVATE CAMPAIGN TO REHABILITATE THE HISTORIC RANCH BUILDINGS. ONCE IN OPERATION, THE MCGRAW RANCH RESEARCH CENTER WILL BE MANAGED BY ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK IN COOPERATION WITH COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY, THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AND THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO.

A Pioneer Homestead and Dude Ranch

The establishment of the McGraw Ranch Research Center opens a new chapter in the history of a ranch that dates back more than a century. In 1884, a parcel of well-watered land north of the tiny village of Estes Park was homesteaded by Henry "Buckskin" Farrar, a guide who worked for the famed Earl of Dunraven. Soon after claiming the land, Farrar sold it to Peter Pauley, who transformed the property into a headquarters for his cattle business. Using logs harvested from the site, he built an elegant ranch house, barn, ice house and several other structures.

In 1907, John and Irene McGraw visited the ranch while on a honeymoon from their Philadelphia home. The natural beauty of the Estes Park area and the secluded yet accessible location of the ranch captivated the couple, and two years later they purchased the entire property. The McGraws continued the ranching business until the Great Depression prompted them to change their operation to a "dude ranch." In 1935-36, the McGraws built several new guest cabins and converted most of the older structures to accommodate overnight visitors.

"Once at the ranch you feel as though you are thousands of miles away from any settlement. A telephone and a winding mountain road are the only connections with the outside world."

DENVER POST, JUNE, 1936



A Tradition of Stewardship and Hospitality



The McGraw family operated their guest ranch for more than four decades, introducing generations of visitors to a world of natural beauty, spectacular views and traditional western hospitality.

The first guests at the McGraw Ranch were Kansas Governor Alf Landon and his family (shown at left). Landon made McGraw his summer campaign headquarters during his bid for the Presidency in 1936. "I want to lead a flannel shirt life," Landon said, as his wife, their three children and several Secret Service agents took over the ranch for the summer. While Landon's bid for the Presidency was unsuccessful (he was defeated by Franklin Roosevelt), his family enjoyed the experience and came back to the McGraw Ranch several times in later years.

"The guests' days were filled with riding, swimming, fishing, hiking, steak fries, breakfast rides and square dancing. There was always good food and sociable evenings in the ranch house."

FROM *ROUGH IT WITH EASE: THE STORY OF THE MCGRAW RANCH* BY HENRY F. PEDERSEN, JR.



McGran Ranch

Adapting a Historic Site for New Needs

For a time, the future of the McGraw Ranch was uncertain. The McGraw family retired from the ranch in 1979 and in 1988 the property was added to Rocky Mountain National Park. After considering a variety of alternatives for the site, the park developed an innovative plan with the support of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and other partners. Under this plan, the McGraw Ranch will become a center for research to help manage and protect the park's natural and cultural resources.

The historic structures at McGraw Ranch will be rehabilitated to create a campus for visiting scientists and educators, drawn from Colorado universities as well as leading research institutions around the nation. Seven cabins will be renovated for researcher housing, each with bathrooms, heat, electricity and phone/internet connections. The main house will become a place for seminars and meetings as well as preparing and sharing meals. Other historic buildings will house a small library, office and research laboratory.

Once targeted for demolition, this 115-year-old pioneer homestead will be given new life as a first-class research center for Rocky Mountain National Park.



The Need to Monitor Environmental Changes that Affect Us All



Our national parks provide an ecological baseline for the nation and the world. Rocky Mountain National Park is a designated International Biosphere Reserve, one of a global collection of protected lands representing the world's major ecosystem types. Changes observed in places such

as Rocky Mountain National Park provide clues to larger climatic and ecological trends that affect us all.

Monitoring these changes is a challenge, especially in Rocky Mountain National Park, where more than three million annual visitors keep park staff busy providing basic services. Recently, a Cornell University research scientist visited Rocky Mountain National Park and identified a backlog of more than \$12 million in natural and cultural research needs. Park managers lack sufficient study and analysis of issues such as the effects of acid rain on the park ecosystem, options for managing the growing elk population and the impacts of introducing rare species such as wolverine and lynx into the park.

The park service has identified science and research as top priorities to guide the management and protection of national treasures like Rocky Mountain National Park.



Working in Partnership



The park's research needs are complex and changing. Rather than hiring staff to address every problem, the park is identifying an extensive research agenda and inviting outside specialists to work in the park. Based at the McGraw Ranch, researchers will be able to spend extended periods within the park, using it

as their "outdoor laboratory." As many as 20 scientists and scholars will stay at the McGraw Ranch Research Center at one time, creating opportunities for exchange among departments and across disciplines.

This is a true partnership project, involving three of the major Colorado research universities: Colorado State University, the University of Colorado and the University of Northern Colorado. Graduate students and faculty with expertise in a range of disciplines will focus their research on park issues. Staff from Rocky Mountain National Park will coordinate their research agenda and manage the facility.

"I believe that the McGraw Ranch Research Center will foster close working relationships among faculty and students from the University of Northern Colorado, Colorado State University and the University of Colorado."

HANK BROWN, PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO



A National Model

Many of our largest national parks face two significant problems. The first is that these parks lack sound data and current research on which to base resource management decisions. Second, many large parks contain a long list of vacant and deteriorating historic structures. The preservation and re-use of the McGraw Ranch creatively addresses both of these problems, converting a collection of empty buildings into a vital center for research.

Through the McGraw Ranch project, Rocky Mountain National Park and the National Trust for Historic Preservation are also demonstrating that it is possible to conserve the natural environment while at the same time preserving our heritage. In fact, the environmental impacts of rehabilitating the McGraw Ranch are significantly less than would be incurred if a comparable new group of buildings were constructed in the park. No new ground will be disturbed and no new structures will be built to create this major facility.

"The rehabilitation of the McGraw Ranch shows how historic structures can serve important park needs -- in this case, providing a base for critically needed research. It will be a model for parks around the nation."

ROBERT STANTON, DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



An Investment in the Future

The creation of the McGraw Ranch Research Center is an investment in the future of Rocky Mountain National Park. This project will greatly expand the research capacity of the park, insuring that critical management decisions are based on accurate data and careful analysis.

The total cost of converting the McGraw Ranch Historic District to a park research center is \$2 million. This includes the rehabilitation of 15 structures, installation of new, environmentally

compatible water and sewer systems, the removal of overhead power lines and trail and access improvements. Approximately half of this amount will be provided by Rocky Mountain National Park.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is leading the private campaign to raise funds to match the park's commitment. In addition, the National Trust will coordinate volunteer activities for those who wish to offer their time and skills to help with the rehabilitation.

"The understandings -- of both nature and the behavior of human beings in nature -- that will emerge from research conducted in Rocky Mountain National Park could well lead to a major increase in the wisdom of our society's management of public lands."

PATRICIA NELSON LIMERICK, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND CHAIR OF THE
CENTER OF THE AMERICAN WEST, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO



Schedule and Operations



Roof replacement at the McGraw Ranch is under way and will be completed by Winter, 2000. Infrastructure work, stabilization of the barn, and rehabilitation of the historic structures will begin in the Spring, 2000. It is expected that the rehabilitation will be largely complete by the Summer, 2002 and the first visiting scholars will begin their research that fall.

Once in operation, the McGraw Ranch Research Center will generate maintenance funds in part

through fees collected from researchers who use the facility. Live-in volunteer caretakers will supervise the daily operations of the center. The research itself will be supported through a combination of park service funding and grants obtained by university departments from various federal and private sources. As many as 200 university scholars and scientists will use the McGraw Ranch Research Center each year.

During and after the rehabilitation of the McGraw Ranch, the site will remain accessible to the public. Parking will be limited, however, and traffic minimized to maintain a quiet, retreat atmosphere at the ranch.

"This is the largest and most ambitious historic preservation project ever undertaken at Rocky Mountain National Park. We are deeply committed to its successful completion and long-term sustainability."

A. DURAND JONES, SUPERINTENDENT, ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK



How You Can Participate

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is working closely with Rocky Mountain National Park to carry out this innovative project. Chartered by Congress in 1949, the National Trust for Historic Preservation is America's largest historic preservation organization, with over 230,000 members across the country. The Mountains/Plains Office, located in Denver, is leading the McGraw Ranch project for the National Trust.

Several years ago, National Trust members and area residents helped convince the park to preserve the

McGraw Ranch. Now this same kind of support and interest is needed to convert the ranch to its new use as a research center. Private contributions to the project will help stretch scarce park dollars.

There will also be opportunities for interested volunteers to contribute their time and skills to the rehabilitation of the McGraw Ranch. Activities will include refinishing historic windows and doors, exterior painting and staining, and other tasks. Educational workshops on topics such as log restoration are planned as well.

For more information about how you can participate in the McGraw Ranch rehabilitation project, contact the Mountains/Plains Office of the National Trust at 303-623-1504.

*The McGraw Ranch Historic District
Rocky Mountain National Park*



A Chronology of the McGraw Ranch

- 1884 A 160-acre parcel along Cow Creek is homesteaded by Henry "Buckskin" Farrar, then sold later that year to Peter Pauley. The main ranch house, barn, spring house, outhouse and two small cabins are built.
- 1897 The original 160 acres are deeded to Hugo Miller.
- 1909 The ranch, now totaling over 1,200 acres, is sold to John and Irene McGraw, a Philadelphia couple who visited Estes Park on their honeymoon.
- 1913 Frank McGraw is born at the ranch.
- 1918 John McGraw dies. His widow Irene and their four children begin living at the ranch full-time and managing the small ranching business. In the late 1920s, they begin serving dinner occasionally to guests on summer weekends.
- 1935 Four new cabins are built for guests.
- 1936 The first visitors at the new "guest ranch" are Kansas Governor Alf Landon, his wife and their three children, and several Secret Service agents. Governor Landon fishes for trout in Cow Creek, plans his fall presidential bid and writes speeches in the enclosed front porch of the main house.
- 1946 Frank McGraw marries Ruth Hodson and builds a new home at the ranch. They raise five daughters at the ranch in the coming decades.
- 1966 484 acres along Cow Creek are sold to the National Park Service. From then on, McGraw is operated strictly as a guest ranch.
- 1973 McGraw Ranch is sold and temporarily renamed the "Indian Head Ranch" after a prominent nearby rock formation. Frank and Ruth McGraw continue operating the guest ranch until 1979.
- 1988 Congress approves acquisition of the ranch property, which becomes part of Rocky Mountain National Park.
- 1993 The park announces a plan to demolish the McGraw Ranch and restore it as wildlife habitat. Opposition to the plan by National Trust members and others convinces the park to seek preservation alternatives.
- 1998 The McGraw Ranch Historic District is placed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- 1999 Rehabilitation work begins to convert the McGraw Ranch to a research center for Rocky Mountain National Park.





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HISTORIC PLACES AND REVITALIZE OUR COMMUNITIES.

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