



“Barn Raising” to Celebrate New Crail Ranch Museum Support Center

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“It’s about Time we had us an old-fashioned Barn Raising”

A “barn raising” is a community effort to build a barn for a community member’s farm or ranch. Barn raisings were common in the 18th and 19th century. After the barn was built, the community would celebrate with a pot-luck meal.

We don’t know for sure if the Crails ever held a traditional barn raising for any of the many structures that they built on the Crail Ranch. And, truth is, we really don’t need help banging nails and raising timbers.

But we do need help celebrating the arrival of the first new building on the Crail property in more than 70 years. We’ll have good food, brief-but-boring speeches, and old-fashioned barn-raising music. Bring the whole family and your friends to Crail Ranch on Spotted Elk Road, Sunday, August 3, 2014, noon to 3PM. And bring your favorite pot-luck dish.



New Crail Ranch Museum Project Center in place late July 2014

The Backstory

Back in the early 1900s, the Crails had a space problem -- a family of five lived in a 255 square foot cabin.

Over 100 years later, Crail Ranch still had a space and storage problem! One of the oldest buildings in Big Sky, the historic small cabin has been a repository for museum support materials including chairs, tables, gardening equipment, canopies, etc. As early as 2007, Conservators explored places to store all of the non-historic materials so that the small cabin could be used for historic displays, and in 2008 they built it into their master plan. Early proposals included a plan

by Conservator Barbara Gillispie for a smaller storage bin. Next a subcommittee of Bob Donovan, Kristin Downer, and Carol Collins submitted several plans that pointed the Conservators to the eventual solution.

A Plan for Action

During the summer of 2013, after years of thinking and serious discussion about the space crunch, the Crail Ranch Homestead Museum Conservators, set a goal to erect a structure by fall of 2015.

After the Conservators considered preliminary plans and cost estimates from various sources, Janet Storey of Storey Architects volunteered to draw up formal architectural plans for a "Museum Support Center," providing ample storage for non-historic items plus space for project development and a visible porch where ranch hosts can greet visitors to the Ranch.

Storey's architectural drawings enabled the Conservators to move the project forward to the Big Sky Community Corporation and the BSOA's Architectural Committee, where they received enthusiastic endorsements.

The building is being constructed primarily by Frontier Rustic Design of Ennis. Two local Big Sky companies are doing key contract work on the project: Lone Peak Electric, LLC and Big Sky Landscaping (providing foundation preparation).

Funding & Community Support

Funding appeared at first to be a major issue. Crail Ranch Conservator Chair Anne Marie Mistretta says, "Each of the Conservators - Sue Lindley, Trish Loomis, Karen Strickler, Mary Wheeler, and Linda Meade canvassed businesses and organizations to support the cause. As word of our needs went out to the Big Sky Community, help wasn't long in coming." First the Rotary Club of Big Sky stepped forward to give the Conservators a big boost toward their goal. According to Rotarian Dr. Jeff Strickler, "For 2014 we were looking for a project, and helping another non-profit accomplish its goals. The new structure at Crail Ranch seemed a perfect fit." Rotary donated \$12,000 from its annual Gold Auction.

Other organizations that enabled the Conservators' work were the Buck and Helen Knight Foundation and the Big Sky Owners' Association. Among the local companies who volunteered outstanding in-kind professional support are E L Painting and Lone Pine Builders.

"The comprehensive cost of the building is approximately \$30,000" says Mistretta. "HCRC is paying less than 1/3 of those costs because of the generosity of community businesses and our conscientious annual donors."

