



Wilderness Research Center

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DATE: March 6, 1996

**TO: Jeff Yeo, Scientist/Manager
Taylor Ranch Wilderness Field Station**

FROM: John C. Hendee, WRC Director

**SUBJECT: Meeting, Wednesday February 27 to Plan
Transition Activity**

I was pleased with our meeting to clarify our respective actions towards a positive transition in your Taylor Ranch scientist/manager position. This situation evolved through a series of meetings and communications in which you have made clear your intention to not continue in your current position when your contract runs out in June. The most recent meeting was with Vice Provost Shreeve and me in her office, February 22.

I appreciate your hard work as Taylor Ranch scientist/manager for the past several years and I look forward to working with you to effect a smooth transition. We will need to work closely between now and June 30 to see that the initiatives and direction you started can be continued, and to get your input on alternatives for the future.

My philosophical view of the situation re: Taylor Ranch is that we are at a point of clarification, with a strategic plan drafted but not finalized for the WRC and its Taylor Ranch Wilderness Field Station. I want to keep options open for discussion by the WRC Campus Advisory Committee this spring and summer, with the plan and its policy direction finalized during the summer/fall period.

Following up on our meeting with Jean'ne Shreeve, and our discussion Tuesday, February 27, the following are specific things to focus on before your leave June 30.

Our highest priority will be regular meetings to communicate progress, respond to changing priorities and take advantage of opportunities and new information. Our next meeting will be Thursday, March 7 at 10:15 a.m. We can further discuss any of the following items at our next meeting if necessary, and include new items until the agenda is complete.

1. Potential Duties for Your Replacement: I do not want to proceed immediately to recruit your replacement until we complete the Strategic Plan. There is about \$26,500 of hard money in your position. One short term strategy I like is to temporarily fill the position with a caretaker until the direction in the Strategic Plan is clear. This would create some salary savings with which to address immediate needs, such as completing the landing strip irrigation system, deferred maintenance, possible replacement of the horses, etc. To help us in these deliberations, would you provide your thoughts on:
 - a. Priority duties needing coverage by a position assigned to Taylor Ranch, with a percentage estimate and season of activity.
 - b. Capitol projects, deferred maintenance and improvement/enhancement projects for the Taylor Ranch Field Station. Please suggest in priority with estimates of cost.
2. NSF Field Station Improvement Proposal: We have not discussed this in detail, but should at our next meeting since it is so related to #1 above. This sounds like a good initiative to pursue.
3. Internships: In response to your presentations and advertisements, you have 15 applications in hand for the two positions closing February 28. It seems we are in good shape. You will screen and rank these candidates and recommend selections to me for concurrence. You will consult with Art Rourke and Harley Johansen as a subcommittee from the Campus Advisory Committee on the process and criteria. Since we have several studies on-going at the ranch during the summer, I presume you will be considering requirements for those studies as well as other selection criteria. We have really had some good TAYLOR RANCH interns, Jeff, and I am looking forward to seeing this year's proposed selections.

4. The REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) Proposal: This seems to be on the shelf until your successor or someone else is available to take it over. We will need all of the files for that proposal and your written suggestions. I am thinking that perhaps there is a faculty member who would like to make a commitment to this proposal and I will be presenting that notion to the Advisory Committee at our Retreat. Perhaps our advisors know of such a faculty member.
5. Your Field Course "Field Studies in Wilderness Ecology": I am disappointed that this course was not advertised, but I understand that you are too busy this year even if we could pay you. I hope you will make a proposal to teach the class under contract next year and thereafter, and hope we can afford it. The possibility of offering the course that way indefinitely would allow you to continue a good education effort and continue to collect monitoring data such with the class. We will need to know your decision on this by fall, so we can recruit a new instructor if not want to pursue this. I have also talked to Steve Bunting about the Fire Ecology course with Penny Morgan. We need to find a way to fund both of these courses.
6. Brochure: I do not want to work any more on the brochure until the policy retreat with the Campus Advisory Committee is completed. I appreciate the inexpensive proto-type you have developed and, if you will provide all the files for this, we will proceed in a timely fashion. The brochure will represent Taylor Ranch in its adjunct relationship to the UI Wilderness Research Center, and include basic policies for Taylor Ranch and mission of WRC.
7. Horses: Please prepare for my approval a draft cooperative agreement with Jim Bennett to provide UI four suitable horses for the summer session, which allegedly was a premise for your sale of the horses to him. You will need to consult with cooperative agreement experts in our college or elsewhere. We need an enforceable, business-like document that will work routinely for whoever replaces you at Taylor Ranch.

Please also suggest other alternatives for providing horses and their estimated annual cost, including leasing from an outfitter; replacing the horses that were sold; there may be others.

8. Budget: As of February 26, there was \$2058 in the Taylor Ranch account and \$578 in the TAYLOR RANCH income account. Please provide a detailed, proposed budget from now to the end of the year at this level. If there is a shortfall, we will have to deficit spend or get money somewhere else.

I will personally approve any expenditures from these accounts until June 30. I can do this by E-Mail or with my signature, in response to a note. This need not be a hindrance to do what needs to be done to implement the proposed budget mentioned above, once it is approved.

Please also provide an accounting of income and expenditures by category for these two accounts so we can have that as a basis for future planning.

9. Proposed Research: We desperately need to land a research grant for wilderness ecosystems research and monitoring at Taylor Ranch. I will continue to pursue organization of the cooperative we have proposed to the Forest Service and others. The information on the RFP from EPA and NSF is attractive and I would appreciate your analysis of it in light of on-going discussions with the UI faculty and others. I have also sent it to Roy Mink.
10. Interim Caretaker Options: I wrote to our current caretaker, Dr. Reed Lewis, to explore his interest in continuing at Taylor Ranch and to get his advice on caretaking the ranch. But I concur with you that he may require too much money, considering his qualifications. Please provide a position description for taking care of the ranch, list of past applicants and your advice. I think an interim caretaker through the summer and next academic year would be attractive, but we need to consider all options.

CONCLUSION: There is a lot to do here and we have not addressed all the items on your list or mine, but this is a start. We can review these at our meeting March 7.

Jeff, you have contributed a lot to the WRC program at Taylor Ranch. We need a smooth transition that protects those contributions and creates the opportunity for your further participation at Taylor Ranch in teaching and research as funding permits. That door is open. See you March 7 and I look forward to connecting on E-Mail.