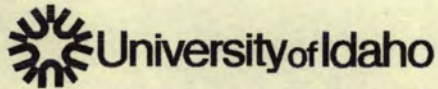


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Wilderness Research Center

College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences

University of Idaho

Moscow, ID 83844-1144 U.S.A.

Telephone (208) 885-5779 / Telefax (208) 885-2268

Date: February 15, 1996
To: John Hendee
From: Jeff Yeo
Subject: sale of field station horses

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Yeo", is written over the "From:" line of the header.

Prior to 1990, management of the field station involved sustaining 9 head of riding and pack stock year round which resulted in the need for extensive irrigation and haying during most of the summer. This required almost the full-time efforts of the ranch managers and student interns. It also required intensive grazing (overgrazing in some years) of the field station and grazing of adjacent Forest Service wilderness lands. Because the primary purpose of Taylor Ranch is not to support horses year round but to support research and education, when I took over management of Taylor Ranch in 1990, I sold or put down its horses and mules. All were very old and no longer capable or safe. One was blind and had too few teeth to maintain her weight.

Because there was a need for riding and pack stock for hauling firewood and packing research gear and scientists across rugged terrain, in spring 1991, I purchased four horses for Taylor Ranch for \$5,000 with Jim Bennetts acting as agent. In subsequent years I traded (at no cost) two of the horses for others to get animals more suitable for the needs of the field station. Last fall I sold the four horses to Jim Bennetts for \$5,000 with the understanding that these same four horses or others of equal quality would be available for field station use as needed. The need for pack and riding stock remains but I've discovered that that need is intermittent at best with long periods in which significant amounts of my efforts and interns' efforts are spent caring for horses that are seldom used. By owning horses, we have considerable costs year round, including maintaining them through the winter (about 15% of the annual operating funds for the field station).

As noted in my 1992 memo (attached), options other than owning horses or donation of horses from Jim Bennetts also exist for having pack and riding stock at the field station for our use. For the past few years, Dr. Wayne Minshall has been handling much of the heavy work around the field station in exchange for lodging for his research team. He brings in his three draft horses each year, mows the airstrip, hauls firewood, and does any other heavy chores I can line up. Wayne has been conducting research in the area for almost twenty years and he'll continue for many more years. He loves working with his horses and I'm sure would be happy continuing this arrangement for many years into the future. One outfitter has offered free use of pack and riding stock in exchange for pasture at the field station. Outfitters need summer pasture but have little use for their stock then. The university would be under no obligation other than normal care while at Taylor Ranch. Also, the university could lease horses just for the 1-2 month period typically needed for a few hundred dollars total.

Field station budgets entered this fiscal year with a \$1900 deficit. This is the first time under my management that there has been a deficit. The deficit was due to expenditures you authorized for your office furniture, your phone bills, and travel for you and your students -- not field station operations. I was able to transfer over \$5,000 of those costs to appropriate budgets but I was still left with a deficit. I entered last fall knowing that there wouldn't be enough money to maintain horses through the winter as well as keep the field station operating with a winter caretaker. So my decision was basic common sense, pay the costs of maintaining horses that are used little or pay the costs of a winter caretaker who is adding significantly to the geologic knowledge of the area surrounding the field station as well as performing the usual caretaking chores.

The original bill of sale was written in the standard legal format offering a small sum of money (\$10.00) plus other considerations (i.e., the remainder of the \$5,000). The bill of sale was reviewed by Dick Bottger, Gerry Reynolds, and the university counsel's office. They had no legal problems with the original bill of sale but suggested that it be changed to read simply an amount of \$5,000. I deposited that amount in GD-Y077. Half was used to contribute to the winter caretaker's salary, the other half

was used to purchase a portable fire pump with foaming capability for the field station.

The forests of lower Big Creek have experienced extensive bug kill over the past 10 years and Taylor Ranch faces a significant threat from wildfire. In two of the last three years the Forest Service, which is legally responsible for protecting inholdings, has been unable to respond to wildfire threats to other inholdings in FCRNRW. These inholdings were abandoned with resultant loss of buildings and other property. We can't depend on the Forest Service to protect Taylor Ranch so we need the ability to protect the field station ourselves. The portable fire pump gives us that capability.

My decision to sell was prompted by two factors, one long standing as noted in my 1992 memo to you, and the other due to simple fiscal responsibility. During the five years that I've managed the field station the horses have never been used for more than a couple weeks total. And that use has been intermittent, a couple hours here, a couple days there. This is unhealthy for the horses and unhealthy for those using the horses. Horses need regular use to maintain muscle tone and to maintain tractability. Intermittent use results in horses hurting themselves from strain and increased likelihood of handlers being hurt. So to avoid this, much time is spent either creating uses for the horses or just exercising them regularly which demands my time and that of the interns that is better spent on field station maintenance and research. The labor and expense of owning horses is not merited by their utility to the field station -- particularly when horses are available at no cost. The field station needs the use of horses periodically but does not need the unnecessary expense of owning horses.

cc: Jean'ne Shreeve
Chuck Hatch

MEMORANDUM

**JEFFREY J. YEO
WILDERNESS RESEARCH CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO
MOSCOW, ID 83843
(208) 885-5779**

October 8, 1992

TO: John Hendee, Director, WRC

SUBJECT: strategies for Taylor Ranch budget cut

The loss of the Taylor Ranch maintenance budget (U01-X007) results in a \$15,000 cut in operations and maintenance funds for the field station. I'm left with about \$15,000 to cover annual costs (caretakers, irregular help, airplane rental, propane, radio, phones, mail, livestock, facility maintenance, etc.). Our basic annual expenses average \$25,000 so obviously some things have to go. Following are approaches and suggestions for dealing with this drastic loss of funds.

1. seasonal caretakers: Originally, I thought that Jim Peek's sabbatical leave at Taylor Ranch would eliminate the need for caretakers during winter 1992-93. However, Jim's commitments to national committees and advising of students means that he will be coming out from the field station several times this winter, totalling about 2 months. I am currently attempting to recruit volunteers to cover the periods when Jim won't be at the field station. I would cover their food and travel but no salary. We need someone at the field station daily to continue the decade-old weather record as well as for our commitment to USFS for water quality monitoring and meteorology. Also, protection of the facilities and maintenance of the air strip in winter can be a daily task. So my intent is to provide continual caretaker presence but at a cost of about \$1000-\$1500 for the entire winter. However, it depends on my luck getting volunteers.

2. livestock: We currently are supporting 4 horses for riding and packing at an annual cost of about \$2800 (ignoring the 25-50% of my time spent working with the stock) and an initial outlay of \$5000. Our use over the past 2 years has been too little even for the health of the horses. Although I foresee an increase in subsequent years, there are good options other than owning our own stock. I've talked with Steve Zettel, the local outfitter, about various approaches to our needs and he will be sending me some options and costs that could be advantageous to both parties:

✓ a. He would exchange packing services needed for our classes and research for winter storage of his tents and stoves at the field station. We have the space and that way I wouldn't have the daily requirement of horse care, the safety concerns of unexpected landings with stock on the airstrip, and would free up time for me to pursue research and teaching responsibilities. I also wouldn't have to trail horses in and out each year which takes more time and is dangerous. Right now, I'm mostly a prisoner of the ranch as long as there are horses pastured there. In

addition, we would have the advantage of experienced packers who know the country. Zettel is insured and the risk if we do the packing ourselves with inadequately trained interns is large.

b. We sell our stock and pasture the number of Zettel's horses that we needed during the summer. We would have free use of the stock during the period when we most needed them and then no costs during the rest of the year. However, as long as there's horses pastured at the field station, much of my time will be taken with handling them, repairing fences, training, etc.

c. We sell 2 of our horses which reduces our annual cost by about \$1400. We would make better use of each horse (which means they'd be healthier) and my time taken by horse care would be reduced. Field station pastures also would be in better shape. We could lease additional horses during those times when we needed them. Selway Lodge typically pays \$150/horse/season.

Currently, the airstrip is maintained with a combination of grazing and some cutting with a weedeater. An excellent shrub/grass cutter for rough areas can be bought for \$700-\$800. This machine would maintain the airstrip in much better condition than currently and would eliminate shrubs on the airstrip which can't be done now. About 3 hours/month in the early summer would be needed to maintain the airstrip. The downside is that we would be using a gas-powered machine but still there would be much less use overall than in years past (e.g. generator).

3. internships: During the past 2 years, I've allocated \$3000 for wilderness research internships. This year I will apply for funds to support interns from the Bleak and DeVlieg endowments. However, I think if we are to attract high quality interns, we will need to provide larger awards (~\$2000-\$2500/intern/summer). This might be accomplished with funds from cooperative courses with San Francisco St. Univ. Wildand Studies Program.