

Community Vision for Bowerman Ranch

(Jan 23, 2014)

Background

The Bowerman Ranch (155 acres) was acquired by the U.S. Forest Service in 1974. The Ranch is located near Covington Mill, within the Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area (NRA) unit of the Shasta- Trinity National Forest. One key feature of the Bowerman Ranch is the Bowerman Barn, built in 1878 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places (see attached USFS and National Park Service documents).

The main stage road between Weaverville and Trinity Center passed through the Ranch. In the late 1800's the Ranch served as an inn/stage stop and raised cattle for beef and dairy products. Since that time, the main house burned down and the pasture infrastructure has fallen into disrepair. Efforts to restore the barn have continued intermittently since 1975. Other visible remnants of the Ranch include a cemetery, house foundation, fruit trees, fencing, and irrigation ditches.

Over the past few years, the USFS staff and community members have discussed their visions for restoration and use of the Bowerman Ranch. This document summarizes these ideas and is presented for the purpose of encouraging further discussion and consensus.

Community Vision

The north Trinity Lake community is inspired to preserve and promote the Bowerman Ranch as a part of our history and as a tourism asset. We recognize that the Barn is an outstanding example of late 19th century craftsmanship and want to facilitate its restoration and visitation. We believe that the Ranch should be managed in a way that allows residents and visitors to envision life in the 1800's in Trinity County. We acknowledge the pre-European use of the Ranch by the Wintu and seek to protect those features used by Native Americans.

To implement this vision, the following tasks should be undertaken:

1. Continue restoration of the Bowerman Barn
 - a. Develop a long term plan for stabilization & restoration of the structure
 - i. Obtain a copy of the 1993 USFS structural analysis report
 - ii. The USFS should perform additional engineering/structural analysis to identify activities to stabilize and restore the Barn
 - iii. Prioritize and obtain costs for needed improvements

- iv. Conduct any needed environmental or historical analysis to implement improvements
 - b. Obtain funding for stabilization & restoration of the structure
 - i. The USFS should pursue funding for further stabilization of the structure
 - ii. The community should develop a mechanism to apply for grants to provide additional funding
 - 1. Initially use Trinity Lake Revitalization Alliance (TLRA) as umbrella organization
 - 2. Consider development of a Friends of Bowerman nonprofit
 - 3. Investigate whether the Community Service District could serve as grant applicant for certain types of grants, using their recreation authority
 - iii. The community should conduct local fundraising projects to accumulate matching funds for grants or to implement small projects
 - c. USFS should define and provide guidance to community resources that can assist in restoration
 - i. Trinity River Conservation Camp (Department of Corrections)?
 - ii. California Conservation Corps?
 - iii. Community volunteers? Other community groups?
2. Promote visitation of the Bowerman Ranch and Barn
 - a. USFS should provide guidelines, training requirements and any other necessary assistance for establishment of a docent program
 - b. Community should assist in promoting visitation
 - i. Develop and distribute printed and online media – brochures and video at North Lake welcome station, website info, resorts, etc. Create cell phone app tour.
 - ii. Sponsor community events (photography contest, Annual Bowerman Days with historical re-enactments?)
 - iii. Check with E. Clampus Vitus & USFS about historical monument.
 - c. Develop and implement a plan for parking for Barn and Ranch visitors
 - d. Install a picnic table/area to facilitate visitation. Landscape with native plants?
 - e. Develop and install signage (kiosk) on the west side of Guy Covington Drive to educate public about pastures & pre-European settler use by Native Americans (work with Nor-el-Muk tribe). Install signage to explain workings of the Barn. Add caution sign about rattlesnakes.
 - f. Provide access (signage, path, gates) for visitors arriving from the lake.
 - g. USFS should provide information to facilitate activities above (special use permits?, training?)

3. Restore pastures for use by grazing animals
 - a. USFS and NRCS should develop grazing, irrigation and watering plan
 - b. Restore/replace fencing system to allow use of pastures by USFS and BackCountry Horsemen pack animals and potentially cattle
 - c. Evaluate potential use of stalls in lower barn for use by USFS pack animals
 - d. Recreate livestock facilities (watering trough, corral, chute) using historical materials/methods
 - e. Consider addition of pole barn structure (demonstration of roundwood/biomass?) for shelter for livestock
 - f. Remove invasive plants from pasture (roses, blackberries). Leave blackberries along fences and in certain riparian areas for gleaning.
4. Restore as much of the homestead area, as feasible, to original conditions
 - a. Develop and implement interpretative trail on east side of Guy Covington Drive
 - i. Obtain or develop a survey of historic features. Work with Trinity County Historical Society to obtain photographs and develop a brochure on Ranch. Develop an electronic data base that includes material from local residents
 - ii. Develop a trail layout that features these elements. Conduct any needed environmental or historical analysis in order to implement the interpretative trail
 - iii. Build trail and install signs to describe layout of ranch house, cemetery, etc
 - iv. Recreate smaller features (historically accurate) if feasible. Vegetable garden?
 - b. Remove conifers that have grown up to overshadow fruit trees. Replant orchard with heirloom varieties (check 1880 Agricultural Survey)
5. Consider long-term, expanded use of the Bowerman Ranch and Barn. Potential uses include:
 - a. A heritage or living history center to demonstrate restoration techniques
 - b. Periodic use as a community center for meetings, picnics, historical society events, etc
 - c. Consider the addition of restrooms in long-term plans