

State Trust Lands: *Fiduciary Duty in the Changing West*



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Announcements



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Wyoming Educators Tour State-Managed Ranches

Now the key beneficiaries of Wyoming's state trust land management, public schools, will benefit from these lands in another way - as outdoor classrooms and laboratories. On June 16 and 17, teachers, professors, graduate students and research scientists will tour two state-managed ranches to learn about the educational opportunities they offer - typically, lessons in forest health, geology, soil morphology, vegetation enhancement and management of grazing, livestock, riparian areas, water/irrigation, weed and pest control and wildlife.

On June 16, the 11,973-acre X Bar Ranch located 15 miles west of the University of Wyoming in Laramie will host approximately 35 educators from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. A working ranch producing hay and cattle, it runs along Wyoming Highway 230, bordering the Medicine Bow National Forest Primitive Area and Wildlife Refuge, Sheep Mountain, to the west. It includes portions of Sodergreen Lake. At elevations reaching 7,700 feet, the X Bar is comprised of gravel uplands and productive sub-irrigated lowlands. A public access plan for the ranch being developed by Wyoming's Office of State Lands and Investments and Game and Fish Department likely will include a Hunter Management Area and trout fishing in the west. Ranch activities and dwellings make the eastern half off-limits to general recreation.

The historic Duncan Ranch, centrally located southeast of Glenrock near Casper College, will open its acres to some 35 educators on June 17 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The 6,439-acre ranch was the state land office's first acquisition of private property, and used seed money authorized by Wyoming legislators in 1999 for reinvesting in real estate assets (not to exceed a net gain of 10,000 acres). The Duncan family had operated the property as a working cattle ranch since the late 1800s. The state intends to restore the cattle operation over a two-year period to generate revenues for the trust.

The Wyoming Board of Land Commissioners created a "whole ranch" at the X Bar by approving a land exchange in December 2007 that involved 41 state trust land parcels around Laramie totaling 21,276 acres. The lessees of those parcels bought into the X Bar in proportion to the appraised value of their leased land. Then the state traded patents with the lessees for their leased holdings in exchange for ownership of the consolidated X Bar lands.

Lynne Boomgaarden, Director of the Office of State Lands and Investments, said that consolidating Wyoming's "blue rash" of scattered 640's is an intentional policy that helps her office to meet its legislated mandate of working with educators. "These scattered parcels are not only hard to manage, but their revenue returns are low," she explained. "Whole units are more attractive for grazing leases and the education of our beneficiaries, and they also preserve open space, protect habitat and provide recreational opportunities."

Nestled between two mountain valleys, Duncan Ranch borders Box Elder Canyon and Converse County Park, increasing its recreational value to the public. After purchasing the ranch in 2006, the Office of State Lands and Investments worked with local stakeholders to produce a Coordinated Resource Management Plan approved by the Board of Land Commissioners a year later. The CRM explores managing the ranch for activities such as hiking, bird and wildlife watching, even camping, and calls on the state land office to work with other agencies, including Game and Fish and the Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources.

"We can leverage our oversight of these lands when we combine our resources with other state agencies," said Assistant Director Jim Arnold, who directs real estate and farm loans for the state land office. "It allows us to increase our on-the-ground management."

For more information or to sign up for a ranch tour, contact Public Information Officer Cathy Lujan at clujan2@state.wy.us or 307-777-8510. **Deadline to RSVP is May 20, 2009.** (Main Photo: Duncan Ranch, Inset Photo: X Bar Ranch. Courtesy Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments.)



Westwide

Dr. Jim Holway is the new director of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy-Sonoran Institute Joint Venture. A leading authority on water in the West, [Holway](#) will direct the partnership in promoting regional scale planning, improving management of state and federal public lands, and integrating energy, transportation, water and conservation infrastructure at a regional level within the urban West. Focus areas are Arizona's Sun Corridor, the West Slope of Colorado and the Northern Rockies. Read the [news release](#).

Utah

[The Great Hunt Panel](#), one of Utah's most visited ancient rock art specimens, is being protected thanks to a partnership between the [Trust Lands Administration](#) and several stakeholders. Increasing traffic to the site, located in [Nine Mile Canyon](#) on TLA property northeast of Price, threatened to damage the panel. The TLA provided construction materials and equipment. Volunteers installed rustic fences, an interpretive kiosk, a graveled walkway from the parking lot and a seating bench for public enjoyment.



Montana

[Construction of up to 15 wind turbines](#) on 3,080 acres of school-trust land northeast of Martinsdale has been approved by the [Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation](#). Work on the 406-foot-tall wind towers, part of a 300-megawatt wind farm, is slated to start in 2010. Houston-based Horizon Wind Energy is the developer. The Martinsdale wind farm is Montana's second involving school-trust land; the first is the [Judith Gap wind farm](#) east of Great Falls. Read the [news release](#). (Photo Rendering: Courtesy Montana DNRC)

NEWS FROM THE FIELD: If your office has trust land management information and tools in asset management, collaborative planning, real estate development, and/or conservation use which you would like to share, please send us an [email](#). Attach a news release, documents and photos.

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