

explore

SUMMER 2023

G R A N D

A BOUNTY OF LAKES

Exploring the many natural lakes and reservoirs of Grand County

DAY TRIPS

Fun activities for everyone

DUDE RANCHES

Unplug from modern life

SUMMER CONCERTS

Festivals and more





A tractor pulls a wagon on a dirt road.

DUDE RANCH ROUNDUP

By Meg Soyars, Explore Grand

The dude ranches of Grand County are keeping the heritage and history of the West alive.

“Dude ranching is a unique way to keep the heritage and history of the West alive in the hearts of those who come as tourists,” stated Hannah George, head wrangler of Latigo Ranch, one of the many guest ranches in Grand County. “People who visit these precious mountains have a chance to ride the trails in the tall pines, herd cattle through the sage, dance to the old songs, unplug from the trials of modern life and test their mettle against challenges of the hills,” George said.

C LAZY U RANCH - GRANBY

C Lazy U has welcomed guests since 1919. Nestled beside Willow Creek Reservoir and beneath Mount Baldy, C Lazy U runs a herd of nearly 250 horses — plus two Sicilian donkeys.

Two of C Lazy U’s greatest assets are their hardworking staff and beautiful landscape. This year, C

Lazy U was blessed with two additions to these assets — the return of Mackenzie Brenneman as children’s program manager, and the granting of 550 acres into a conservation easement.

Anyone who has visited C Lazy U remembers how Brenneman made their vacation a little brighter. Now, she helps make memories for a new generation.

Kids ride horses on miles of trails, tackle the ropes course, participate in cattle drives, take whitewater rafting excursions and more. At the end of their program, kids participate in the “Shodeo,” where they show off their rodeo skills to their family, guests and employees.

C Lazy U also keeps ranching traditions alive through land stewardship. The ranch has partnered with The Nature Conservancy to conserve nearly 3,000 acres on their property. This March, they granted 550 acres to the conservation easement, preserving more open spaces of the American West. Guests on trail

rides enjoy views to an endless horizon between the ears of their horse – just as wranglers did centuries ago.

DROWSY WATER RANCH - GRANBY

“We invite people from all over the world to experience the western lifestyle,” said Gretta Fosha, who helps run Drowsy Water with her husband Justin Fosha. “While they’re here, they are simply cowboys and cowgirls for the week. This atmosphere creates great memories and new friendships with like-minded families.”

Drowsy Water opened to guests in the 1940s. Ken and Randy Sue Fosha, Drowsy Water’s current owners, have been sharing their love of Colorado’s beauty with guests since the 1970s.

Their sons, Justin and Ryan Fosha, were raised on the ranch, learning how to bring western traditions to the next generation of guests.

The ranch owns around 120 horses and a herd of cows, plus chickens, ducks and goats that kids visit at the petting zoo. The ranch is nestled on about 600 acres that adjoins national forest land.

“While horseback riding is the main activity we

offer, we include rafting, hiking, yoga, zip lining, team cattle penning and kids programs,” Gretta said. “Families find they get to spend plenty of time together, but also have the opportunity to make new friends amongst peers.”

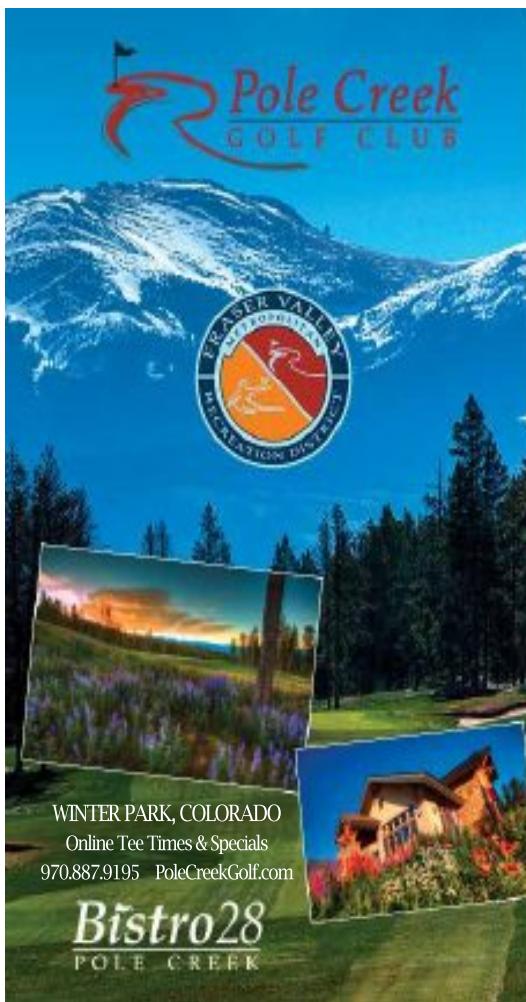
Their horseback riding program accommodates everyone, from expert riders to guests who have never climbed in a saddle before. Since guests are paired with their horse for the week, they can build a bond together.

A yoga instructor and massage therapist visit the ranch once a week so guests can stretch and relax after hitting the trails. A four-line zip line course offers one of the longest and highest lines in Grand County.

RUSTY SPURR RANCH - KREMMLING

Han and Connie Smith operate Rusty Spurr, providing daytime rides and cattle drives in wide open country. Guests who want more flexibility in their vacation schedule can pick from one or three-hour rides.

“Many of our guests comment on how excited they are to get a quality horseback riding experience without committing to a week-long stay,” Han said.



Rusty Spurr runs a herd of about 50 horses on 10,000 expansive acres. Since their operation is small, the Smiths can offer intimate rides where each person can interact with fellow guests, as well as the wrangler leading the ride.

During Rusty Spurr's rides, wranglers travel through the group to converse with each guest. Guests can also move more naturally with their horse, becoming more engaged while riding.

"We try to give our guests a taste of the freedom one feels when actually interacting with their horse," Smith said. "We help them connect with their horse and that causes them to feel connected with the entire experience."

Guests on the cattle drives participate in a real ranching tradition as they venture out with the wranglers. They move the cattle to new locations to ensure the grass is managed well.

The wranglers, guests and cattle dogs work together as a team to move the herd, each contributing to ensure the land is protected and the cattle are cared for.

LATIGO RANCH - KREMMLING

Latigo Ranch began operating in 1927 – Randy and Lisa George became the ranch's stewards in 1987.

"Randy and Lisa fell in love with each other and with the land of Grand County at about the same time," the couple's daughter Hannah said. "They couldn't do this without each other, and they wouldn't want to."

The couple met working at C Lazy U Ranch in 1982. After getting engaged, they purchased Latigo. Guests fall in love with Latigo the same way the Georges did – many establish a relationship with Randy and Lisa for years afterwards, returning each year for a vacation off the beaten path.

The entire George family offers guests an all-inclusive stay rooted in western hospitality. Hannah orchestrates the barn and agriculture program. The



Baby goats get lots of love at the ranch petting zoo.

family runs the kitchens and dining room, offering guests a fine dining experience after their day on the trails.

The George family runs Latigo in dedication to each other, their staff, guests and land.

"Everyone who visits their home has a chance to see how to live a different way, in harmony with the mountains, with courage in their decisions, trying to make each day better than the one preceding it," Hannah said. "How to live the Grand County way."

BAR LAZY J RANCH - PARSHALL

History runs deep at Bar Lazy J Ranch, just as the Colorado River runs through it. Since its founding in 1912, the ranch hasn't missed a season.

Owners Jerry and Cherri Helmicki felt inspired to offer outdoors adventures to guests because of their own love for exploring the outdoors.

"In 1995, the opportunity presented itself for us to make a change and follow our dream," Cherri said. "Sold everything, made the jump and purchased the Bar Lazy J. What a wonderful adventure!"

Cherri explained that the ranch's success is centered around their commitment to providing an experience, not just a vacation.

"We want to touch people's lives and give them special memories," Cherri said. "Our unique setting with the Colorado River running through our ranch, along with maintaining authenticity of the facilities that date back to 1904, sets the stage for their adventure."

The ranch has remained essentially the same for the past 110 years, preserving history in a tucked away valley. Guests can listen to the sounds of the rushing Colorado River outside their cabin windows, cast a line while fishing on the gold medal waters, or take a horseback ride through the aspens. •

Horses are social animals, creating their own friend groups. They enjoy running together as a herd.

