

PMR becomes a center for creativity

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Located on the outskirts of Sisters, out Three Creek Road, is a hidden gem: a working ranch with just about the best view of the Cascades you could wish for. This parcel of ground has a storied history reaching back into the 1800s when some of the first farming in the area was done right there.

Today, this 260-acre working ranch serves as a place of beauty, historical significance, and creativity. In 2017, the ranch was purchased by the Roundhouse Foundation as its new headquarters and the home of Pine Meadow Ranch Center for Arts and Agriculture (PMRCAA). The Foundation’s trustees had been dreaming of establishing a campus-type arts center where artists could create in a state-of-the-art studio space with access to all the proper tools. (See story on page 3.)

The Ranch provides all of that and more. It has allowed the Roundhouse Foundation to establish its flagship program, offering residencies not only for artists but also for conservationists, scholars, and ecological scientists to come together to share space and ideas while working in an inspirational setting.

Pine Meadow Ranch serves as a model for inter-connected work and the basis for collaborative economies and creative problem-solving in rural communities. Intersecting at the Ranch are connections with nature, land conservation, historic preservation, sustainable agriculture, and community-building projects, and how they all relate to traditional and contemporary crafts and skills integral to ranching life. Those crafts and skills include metal, glass, wood, and leather work, ceramics, fibers and textiles, writing, painting, photography, film, and music.

“The Ranch provides an open laboratory for all types of people and endeavors,” according to Roundhouse Foundation Executive Director Erin Borla. “Here we see the intersection of all four of our program areas. We are able to bring our partners here, provide demonstrations, and ‘walk the walk’ we are encouraging with our funding. At the same time, we are able to conserve our green space and the Ranch history.”

Residencies are available from mid-March to mid-November. They offer a space where cultural practitioners, ecological scientists, and creative thinkers can immerse themselves in their work and/

or research through access to studios, open space, and beautiful scenery, working alongside PMRCAA staff, volunteers, and community members to preserve the natural environment and historic buildings of the Ranch for years to come.

Generally, two residents at a time are hosted at the Ranch for two or four weeks. They are provided studio space in one of the Ranch buildings and a private room with a shared bathroom, kitchen, dining, and laundry area. As more buildings are remodeled, more residencies will become available.

The theme for the 2022 residency program is “On Coexistence and Regeneration.” Applications are currently available on the website at <https://roundhousefoundation.org>.

While at the Ranch, residents are given time and space for their own artistic practice. At the same time, they are asked to contribute either to the Ranch by helping with chores and/or in the local community by presenting a workshop or artist’s talk. Besides the residency program, the Ranch offers classes and events for the local community as well.

The natural beauty and resource of Pine Meadow



PHOTO PROVIDED

Pine Meadow Ranch has become a location for Roundhouse Foundation’s flagship programs promoting art and ecology.

Ranch includes not only the unsurpassed view, but Whychus Creek meanders through on its way into town. The open agricultural fields are surrounded by Deschutes National Forest.

In the 20th century, this haven belonged to a successful contractor from Portland who farmed it and built many of the buildings still standing. Those structures include a bunkhouse, caretaker’s cabin, woodworking shop, sheds, tack rooms, and the round barn. Renowned Oregon architect Ellis F. Lawrence designed the large Ranch house for contractor Ross Hammond, for whom the house is now named. Lawrence was known for many of his historic buildings around the state as well as cofounding the University of Oregon School of Architecture and Allied Arts in 1914, and

then serving as its first dean until his death in 1946.

After Hammond, the Ranch was owned very briefly by a Portland hotelier. For many years, Sisters aviatrix and public figure Dorro Sokol owned, lived, and worked on the Ranch, which she called Pine Meadow. In the early 2000s, Sokol and her daughter Cris Converse partnered with the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council in efforts to restore Whychus Creek to its original natural state, removing a dam and improving the riparian areas along the creek where it runs through the Ranch.

A portion of the Ranch was used to create the current Pine Meadow Village housing area developed by Dorro’s son, Doug Sokol. The fields of the Ranch still grow crops and provide grazing for cattle.

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