

# Southworth Brothers Ranch receives national range management award

Blue Mountain Eagle

Jack and Teresa Southworth, owners and operators of Southworth Brothers Ranch of Seneca and permittees on the Emigrant Creek Ranger District, recently received the prestigious Forest Service National External Range Management Award.

Nominated by the Malheur National Forest for their continued commitment to sound management, their passion for public rangelands and their involvement in the numerous different public projects, the Southworth's summer grazing allotments total over 25,000 acres. Heavily timbered uplands and mountain meadows make up a majority of their allotments on the national forest, according to a Forest Service press release.

The Southworth Ranch started with a 160-acre homestead established by Jack's great-grandfather, William Sawyer Southworth, in 1885. It was the first fenced homestead in Bear Valley and was originally settled as a place to provide hay for the oxen he used for his sawmill near Fall Mountain.

Jack's great-grandmother, Minnie, was the first post mistress for the original Seneca Post Office in 1895, located at the present-day ranch headquarters and shop.

The Southworths also ran a store and did some freighting, which allowed them to purchase additional homesteads that became available later. Jack's grandfather, Ed, and his brother Webster "Tepty" Southworth partnered in the original Southworth Brothers Ranch. Jack's parents, Bill and Jo, took over in 1948, and Jack and Teresa took over management of the operation in 1978.

"My father wanted grass right to the edge of the water and nothing else," Jack recalls. "The trouble was, that's not what the river wanted. Soon we had a big problem."

Without adequate vegetative protection, the river banks began to erode. Alarmed, his father began to deposit old cars in the water in a desperate attempt to stem the erosion. It didn't work. When Jack took over the ranch right out of college, he tried a different strategy. He decided to plant willows and fence the cows out.

His father wasn't at all pleased.

"My dad was a tough old World War II Marine and he was pretty well set in his ways," said Jack. "Maybe it was a generational thing. Dad tried to control the land. My approach is to go with what nature gives you."

The allotment pastures containing streams are managed to promote healthy willows along the stream banks. Ideas to maintain and increase healthy willows and good stream condition are most often initiated by Jack, his livestock managers and riders on the forest. Jack may be most proud of his willows. Healthy,



Contributed photo

**Southworth Brothers Ranch employees are credited for their knowledge and willingness to learn best land management practices.**



Contributed photo

**Downed poles and small logs are left along trailing routes to minimize any erosion and improve their appearance – while still allowing for livestock to be herded effectively to the next scheduled grazing area.**

dense stands line both sides of the Silvies River, which meanders across the ranch. It didn't look like this when Jack was growing up. In fact, he remembers using a tractor to pull the very last willow clump out of the ground, under orders from his father, when he was 12.

Jack and his wife wrote out a three-part goal statement for their ranch. The first two parts focus on community and livestock well-being. The third reads: "To bring about the quality of life and products we desire we need a dense stand of perennial grasses with some shrubs. We want the ground between plants to be covered with decaying plant litter. We want the streams to be lined with willows, home to beaver and good habitat for trout. We want the precipitation we receive to stay on the ranch as long as possible and to leave here as late season stream flows or plant growth."

Ranch hands keep themselves up-to-date with recent natural resource objectives and goals on the forest. Consistently showing a willingness and open-minded attitude, their daily herding and summer allotment work has evolved and adapted with forest standards by individually developing and currently using successful herding and pasture rotation methods.

Jack and his ranch hands regularly participate in formal trainings with forest consultants and range managers on their allotments about measuring livestock use and stream health.

Annual livestock use monitoring documents short-term use levels from herding and pasture rotation strategies.

Trend results are later compared with annual levels of livestock use to observe successful levels of use and opportunities for new ideas. Increases of young willows, beaver activity, abundant native trout and narrow streams are welcomed and frequent occurrences in Southworth Brothers allotments where cattle still graze.

Ranch hands frequently move the cattle in collected herds to portions of the large pastures with adequate feed and water. Natural boundaries such as rim rock, ridges and stretches of partially fenced streams are often used strategically to hold cattle for short periods until they are moved again. Specific areas within a large pasture are often grazed in a different order each growing season through herd control to promote good plant community diversity, health and resilience.

As a benefit of their land ethic, wildlife abounds throughout their property, which provides year-round

habitat for elk, deer, antelope, small mammals, fish, raptors and other birds, as well as seasonal habitat for migratory birds that visit their flooded meadows in the spring.

Learning the needs of healthy natural resources on national forest, the behavior and responses of livestock in the forest environment and constructively putting them together takes time. Jack has allowed time for his riders to observe livestock behavior and appreciate the forest. A variety of skills in Jack's crew also allows for other members to help with the ranch's management needs other than herding livestock and monitoring livestock use on forest allotments.

Most recent experiences, as described by rangeland management specialists on the Malheur National Forest, include frequent interaction in the field on his permitted grazing allotments to continuously share ideas for even further improvements toward managing the resource. Successful ideas to improve are most often initiated by Jack's knowledgeable and experienced livestock managers after communication about grazing standards and goals with the forest rangeland managers.

The current Harney County Restoration Collaborative Leader, Jack can now add this accomplishment to his growing list.

The 2010 Grant County Stockgrower of the Year award is one of several awards the Southworths have received in recognition of their contributions to agriculture. The ranch was a recipient of the Conservation Farm Award from Grant County Soil and Water Conservation District in 2009. Jack has also been inducted into the Oregon State University Agricultural Hall of Fame.

# Ferrioli wins national 'Guardian of Small Business' award

Blue Mountain Eagle

State Sen. Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day) was recently presented with the Guardian of Small Business award by the National Federation of Independent Business, the nation's largest small-business association.

"I am honored to receive the Guardian award from NFIB," Ferrioli said in a written statement. "Small businesses are the backbone of our communities, and provide countless Oregonians with jobs to provide for their families."

Rural communities in particular rely on their small businesses to create jobs, provide goods and services for their families and keep rural economies strong.

I will continue my work in the Legislature to protect Oregon's small businesses, and provide more opportunities for growth."

Ferrioli supported the largest tax cut for small businesses in Oregon history, consistently opposed efforts to increase taxes, fees, and regulations and championed efforts to give rural commu-



State Sen. Ted Ferrioli

nities land use flexibility to attract new business.

"Where would small business in Oregon be today without Senator Ted Ferrioli's leadership? I wouldn't even want to speculate," said Anthony K. Smith, Oregon state director for the National Federation of Independent Business, in a statement. "Sen. Ferrioli clearly understands the issues that are on the minds of Oregon small business owners, and he's always willing to stand up for them in Salem. NFIB's member-businesses are extremely grateful for his consistent and passionate support for those Oregonians who make up the economic engine of our economy."

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