

Developing  
**TRAILS & TOURISM**  
on **PRIVATE LANDS** in Texas



Texas Agricultural Extension Service  
THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM





Project Collaborators: Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences, Texas A&M University; Texas Agricultural Extension Service, The Texas A&M University System; and Institute of Renewable Natural Resources, The Texas A&M University System

### **Acknowledgements**

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The demand for outdoor recreational opportunities is growing rapidly, and among the most popular are trail-based activities such as walking/hiking, running, bicycling and horseback riding. In a 1998 survey, Texans ranked trail-based activities among the three most popular types of outdoor recreation. As Figure 1 shows, significant numbers of people engage in these activities, some fairly often (Fig. 2). Figure 3 shows the distances Texans say they travel to participate in various activities. They often travel more than 50 miles from home for some activities.

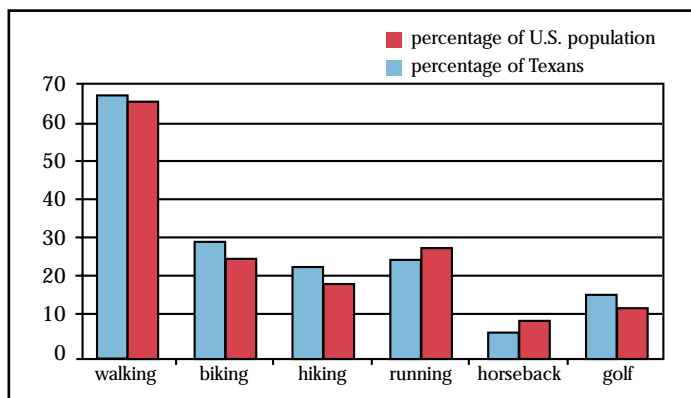


Figure 1. Percentages of people engaged in trail-related activities (golf included for comparison.)

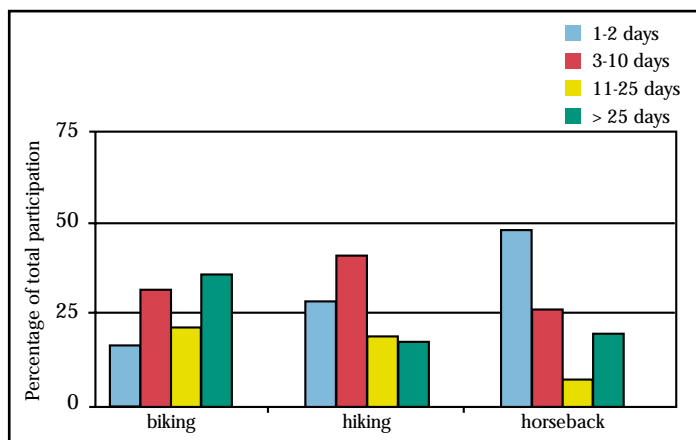


Figure 2. Number of days per year that people participated in three different trail recreation activities (National Survey of Recreation and the Environment, 1994).

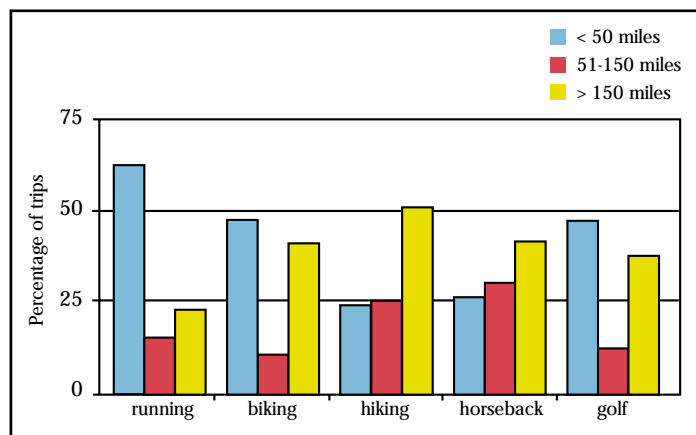


Figure 3. How far and how often Texans traveled different distances (in miles) from home to participate in an activity (Texas A&M University, 1998).

Many landowners are considering how they might add recreational tourism to their traditional farming or ranching operations to generate additional income. Opening one's land to trail users may be profitable with the right location and, more important, with proper planning and marketing.

Beginning on page 8 are descriptions of seven successful trail-based tourism enterprises in Texas (Fig. 4). They represent different types of businesses and different geographic areas of the state. Some of the landowners featured have operated their trail tourism businesses for several years; others are new to the venture. Six of the seven owner/operators developed their trail-based tourism activities as a way of diversifying traditional agricultural products. All six work livestock, and some also grow hay or other crops. Several of them "zone" their property for these different uses. For example, they might close a trail near a deer blind during hunting season, or keep cattle on one part of the property while developing trails on another. The experiences of these landowners should be valuable to others who want to start similar businesses.





Figure 4. Locations of the ranch enterprises described in this publication.

There are several “Ps” involved in marketing a successful business. They include:

- **Product** – the specific recreational opportunity offered
- **Programming** – special events associated with the product
- **Price** – the price charged to customers
- **Promotion** – how a business promotes itself
- **Partnerships** – organizations that may assist the business in some way
- **People** – those who run the day-to-day operation

## Product and Programming

Developing a successful product requires knowing what customers want. For example, there is a high demand for mountain bike trails, so four of the seven landowners focus on this specific product. One offers only horseback riding, while the other two offer a mixture of activities, including bed and breakfast accommodations.

Customer needs may differ. Some biking trails have been developed for

beginners and others for more advanced riders. Bluff Creek provides a small shop with basic repair supplies and facilities where riders can wash their bikes before the trip home. These extras add to the customer's enjoyment.

Most of the ranches hold at least one major event annually, such as bike races, group trail rides, and skill development camps. Incorporating such programming into the product increases the opportunities for promotion and advertising.

## Price

Pricing depends on the experiences and services offered. Several of the enterprises featured here offer the basics—a trail system, restroom facilities and “primitive” camping. Their fees for day use range from \$4 to \$6 per person per day, with reduced rates or no charge for children. (For comparison, state park access costs from \$1 to \$5 per person per day.) Camping is priced at \$2 to \$6 per person in addition to the day use fee. This yields a price range of \$16 to \$24 for four adults to use trails for the day, with an additional \$8 to \$24 to camp overnight.

The 33 Ranch offers only organized weekend (two days and two nights) trail rides priced at \$25 per person or \$50 maximum per family. This includes trail access, camping and a Saturday evening meal. The 33 Ranch also sells family memberships, much like hunting leases, to a limited number of families who can use the ranch at their convenience rather than just during organized rides.

Other enterprises have bed and breakfast facilities and more extensive food service, for which they charge more.

## Promotion

Without exception, the promotion and advertising these ranches have found most useful is word of mouth, and hosting special events is a valuable way to boost awareness of their existence. Rocky Hill, Bluff Creek, The Breaks and Kelly Creek all rely on race events to keep large







groups of riders coming to their land. Riders return home and tell others about their experience, so the word spreads.

Having an information booth at a local festival or other special event is a good way to publicize a tourism business. Some landowners have also staged an event the weekend of a local festival, thus helping to bring in, and profit from, additional visitors.

The Internet is an important advertising tool also. About half of the enterprises have their own Web pages, while others have gotten themselves listed on pages that promote regional attractions.

Staying in touch with past customers pays off, too. Some businesses maintain customer databases to make it easier to send out fliers and other promotional material. Some also work with area businesses (for example, large bike shops in nearby cities) to keep their brochures on hand.

Finally, a few of these enterprises have been mentioned or featured in national or regional magazines. The owners credit word of mouth as the key to this kind of publicity, as they had done little advertising other than direct mail.

## Partnerships

Partnerships can be very important in helping to design a business, develop a customer base, and program special events. Five of the landowners rely heavily on regional clubs to help them understand what customers want, aid in trail design, and promote their businesses. The owners of the 33 Ranch developed a relationship with the Texas Equestrian Trail Riders Association, which has helped organize and promote trail rides on the ranch. The Houston Area Mountain Bike Riders Association helped the owners of Bluff Creek develop their first trails and stage their first bike race.

Partnerships can also reduce the investment required to get the business started. Regional trail user clubs often help with trail design and construction. One of the national mountain biking organizations has a points program that supports volunteer trail development. Volunteers who log work hours are awarded



points in racing competitions. Often user groups will help a landowner build trails simply to make the area available to them. These kinds of partnerships give the volunteers, who are future customers, a sense of pride in the trails they have created, which of course encourages word of mouth advertising. They are also more likely to help maintain the quality of the resource they helped to create.

## People

Successful operators of tourism enterprises enjoy interacting with people and

serving the needs of their customers. They are pleased to be able to open their land to others, and view dealing with the paying public as an opportunity, not a burden. Most of them also have at least a moderate interest in the recreational activity they offer, and participate in the activity themselves at least occasionally. These qualities may be called a predisposition for the role of tourism operator, and they are very important.

## Other Concerns

### *Liability*

The owners of the featured enterprises all have some type of insurance coverage to help limit their liability. However, after starting their businesses and beginning to interact with customers, their concerns about liability decreased. Their costs for insurance coverage range from \$650 to \$3,000 per year, depending on the services they offer. Several pay a premium added to their regular farm/ranch policy. The Farm Bureau is currently determining how best to underwrite policies to cover landowners who start tourism enterprises.

Sometimes event sponsors or promoters (a bike riding or trail riding group, for example) provide the insurance coverage for events. Many bicycle races are covered by insurance offered through a national cycling organization that sanctions such events.





Most enterprises use waiver forms and brief their customers about what is expected of them. (Appendix 3 covers the basic legal issues that would normally apply to landowners who offer tourism opportunities.) These measures significantly reduce landowners' concerns. In fact, in most cases landowners are at far less risk of legal liability than they may perceive.

### ***Investment Costs***

The initial investment is a major concern with any new business. The owners in this study had initial investments ranging from \$4,000 to \$30,000. About \$4,000 to \$8,000 was normally enough to get several miles of trail built. Facilities such as new restrooms with septic systems required larger investments. Those who had volunteer help in designing and building their trails estimated they saved as much as 50 to 60 percent.

Table 1 summarizes and compares several characteristics of the seven ranches in this survey.

### **Featured Tourism Enterprises**

The seven ranches featured here represent just a few of the nature tourism enterprises on private lands in Texas. However, they represent several different ways of being involved in nature tourism, and trail-based activities in particular. These landowners have started tourism enterprises as a way to supplement more traditional ranch activity. They do not operate "dude" ranches, which are more dependent on visitors for income.

The ranches are presented according to the products they offer. Information in each category was not available for every ranch.





Table 1. A comparison of important ranch characteristics.

	The Breaks (1,100 acres)	Bluff Creek (200 acres)	Kelly Creek (1,200 acres)	The 33 (1,500 acres)	Rocky Hill (1,260 acres)	X Bar (7,100 acres)	Montgomery-Fulk (60,000 acres)
<b>Product/ Programming</b>	100 cattle hunting leases 10 miles of trail mountain biking camping	20 cattle (organic longhorns) 10 miles of trail mountain biking camping	25 cattle hunting leases 17 miles of trail (beginner to expert)	200-400 cattle hunting leases 24 miles of trail family trail rides	20 miles of trail RV facilities camping on-site festivals on-site cafe	1,400 sheep/cattle hunting leases 12 miles of trail lodge	500 sheep/cattle bed and breakfast ranch roads and trails
<b>Partnerships</b>	DOBRA local businesses	TMBRA Houston bikers City of Giddings	Kerville bike shop	TETRA local restaurants local festival	Houston race promoters Houston bikers Austin bikers	Texas Tourism Association TMBRA	referrals to and from other regional guest ranches
<b>Customers</b>	bike race spectators hunters from the Dallas, Ft. Worth and Denton areas	mountain bikers, campers and runners from the Houston, Austin and San Antonio areas	mountain bikers hunters from the Austin area	equestrian trail riders hunters	mountain bikers cafe patrons event visitors	ranch visitors mountain bikers (mostly for races) hunters	I-10 travelers West Texas tourists
<b>Price</b>	\$6/day/person + \$5/person to camp reduced rates for children	\$5.50/person + \$2/person to camp reduced rates for children	\$5/person + \$2/person to camp reduced rates for children	\$25/person for a weekend \$50 maximum/ family	\$6/person + \$4/person to camp	\$4/person + \$6/person to camp \$40-\$80 for lodging	\$75 double occupancy \$50/person for guide service
<b>Promotion</b>	own Web site links w/other sites DOBRA word of mouth fliers in bike shops	own Web site links w/other sites word of mouth fliers in shops magazine articles	links from other Web sites word of mouth fliers in shops	TETRA rides word of mouth own Web site fliers mailed	links from other Web sites word of mouth fliers in shops	own Web site promotion through Texas Tourism Association word of mouth bike races	Ft. Stockton Web site brochures
<b>Investment</b>	about \$30,000 for septic system and rest rooms partnered to cover most trail costs	about \$15,000 for trails riders provided much of the trail labor	about \$4,000 for trails riders provided trail labor				\$2,500 to upgrade bed and breakfast facility
<b>Risk Management</b>	helmets required waivers required insurance added to ranch policy	helmets required waivers required insurance added to ranch policy	helmets required NORBA insurance covers races	waivers required insurance added to ranch policy	helmets required waivers required insurance added to ranch policy	helmets required insurance added to ranch policy	insurance added to ranch policy
DOBRA = Dallas Off-Road Mountain Bike Association TMBRA = Texas Mountain Bike Riders Association TETRA = Texas Equestrian Trail Riders Association							







# The Breaks at Bar H Ranch

## Background

The Breaks at Bar H Ranch is an 1,100-acre ranch near the Oklahoma border outside St. Jo, Texas. The ranch has been in the Hutson family for more than 100 years, and is currently owned and operated by Billy Hutson and Tia Hutson-Walterscheid. There are about 100 head of cattle on the property, and the Hutsons also lease the land for hunting.

## Landscape

As you drive toward The Breaks from the east, the landscape is flat; but as you reach the ranch, the land drops away toward the Red River in a series of bluffs and hills that provide variety in the terrain. A patchwork of forested areas and pastures covers the hills. A 1½-mile-long creek runs through the ranch below the bluff. This is a floodplain that often holds water after a hard rain.

## Recreational Tourism Start-Up

In 1997 Mr. Hutson's nephew, Tony Boone, suggested mountain biking as a means of diversifying ranch activities and drawing more income. Tony, who lives in Colorado, is an avid mountain biker and owns a trail-building company called Arrowhead Trails, Inc. Not

tion. This visit allowed him to see how the concept was working in Texas. Although he was not sure about the idea, he agreed to try it. He became much more enthusiastic after their first race yielded positive results. On April 28, 1998, the ranch opened its gates to mountain bikers, and their first races were held in February 1999. Mr Hutson's daughter, Tia Hutson-Walterscheid, is now managing the mountain bike operation.

## Investment

Billy Hutson has spent more than \$30,000 on the septic system, bathhouse and well. Tony built the trails, which would have cost about \$30,000 otherwise. Tia works on the mountain bike enterprise full-time, but has not been drawing an income from the business. Tony has invested time and energy, and the publicity he receives as a trail designer has provided a good return

## Guests

Located approximately 80 miles northwest of Dallas-Fort Worth, The Breaks draws approximately 75 percent of its customers from the Metroplex area. It also attracts guests from Oklahoma, other parts of Texas, and recently a few riders from Switzerland rode the trails. They also receive visitors from Colorado because Tony refers people he knows. They get many families and would like to continue to attract this market.

They also attract racers and spectators periodically for race events. Racers often show up to ride the trails in the weeks before an event to get a feel for what they will encounter in a race.

## Product and Programming

### *Traditional*

Billy usually keeps about 100 head of cattle. He also sells hay.

Leases are used for deer and turkey hunting at The Breaks. They have three to five lessees, all of whom are close to the family. Hunting and mountain biking are allowed simultaneously, but to ensure safety they keep riders to a minimum

during hunting season and don't let them use trails near the blinds when hunters are on-site. Riders are advised that hunters are on the prop-



entirely convinced, Mr. Hutson went to the Bluff Creek Ranch in Warda, Texas to talk to the Nolans (see p. 12) before starting his own opera-





erty, and one trail near hunting areas is closed.

### ***Trail-Based Activities***

The Breaks is a mountain bike ranch; horseback riding and motorized vehicles are not allowed. There are currently 10 to 11 miles of mountain bike trails that cover almost 400 acres of the ranch. Trails range from beginner to expert, and were largely designed and built by Tony Boone. Tia worked with him on these trails to gain experience, and recently built a trail on her own that was approved by an International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) representative. Wooden signs mark trails, and riders are given maps of the trails when they arrive. There is a notice on the maps that IMBA rules are enforced. Visitors put their fees in envelopes printed with the liability waiver and drop them in a fee box.

The first race was held in February 1999 in conjunction with the Dallas Off Road Bike Association (DORBA) as the organizer and Subaru as the sponsor. UT-Arlington sponsored a collegiate race the weekend before. Tia noted that the race was a lot of work but worth the effort because of the additional income and publicity it provided. On race weekends food vendors, port-o-pots, massage therapists, and other support services were present to provide for visitor needs. DORBA arranged these details. Races are important events and bring in most of the recreational biking

income. This year's DORBA race grossed almost \$10,000. The Breaks hosted 700 racers and approximately 2,000 total guests that weekend.

The Breaks is open for riding from January 2 through Thanksgiving eve, and gets an average of 20 riders per weekend, with fewer in the hottest summer months. There is occasionally a temporary closure after heavy rain to prevent erosion and give the owners time to repair the trails if necessary.

Tia also brings local school children out to the ranch for nature hikes, an activity she enjoys. This promotes community goodwill and brings the kids closer to nature.

### **Facilities**

There are several primitive campsites with fire rings. Restroom facilities have men's and women's toilets and showers. A few RV sites are also available. The registration area is located at the building that contains the restrooms. Many of the ideas for the camping area, such as the automatic shut-off for the sinks, came from state park facilities. The campground area has a playground.

### **Price**

The land use fee is \$6 per person per day; children under 12 are free when accompanied by an adult. On race day the land use fee is \$5 for the regular race and \$4 for the collegiate race. Camping is an additional \$5 per person per night.

### **Promotion**

The Breaks has its own Web site (<http://www.mountain-bikes.com/pages/thebreaks.html>), which is linked to many other mountain biking Web sites such as International Mountain Bicycling Association (<http://www.greatoutdoors.com/imba/>) and American Trails (<http://www.outdoorlink.com/amtrails/>). Information about The Breaks also can be found on other Web pages, such as DORBA (<http://www.dorba.org/weblinks.html>) and TJ's MTB Adventures (<http://ftp.vvm.com/~nholmes/texasrides.htm>).

Tia distributes brochures to mountain bike shops, and Tony distributes them at conferences. Word of mouth, organized races and the Internet have provided the most exposure so far.





## Partnerships

The initial partnership was the one Billy Hutson formed with his nephew, Tony Boone. Tony received \$2,000 from Billy for start-up supplies. Tony now has a 5-year contract and receives 10 percent of the gross. The contract is not intended to be renewed at the end of the 5 years. At that time the business will belong entirely to the Hutsons.

The Hutsons and Tony both believe that it is very important to have connections with biking organizations for marketing and promotion purposes. Tia found that the key to the success of the first race was the meetings she held with the stakeholders (DORBA, Subaru) in advance of the race.

The local Fina gas station noted a great increase in business on race weekends, and they have commented to Tia that the mountain bikers are friendly customers.

Riders are important partners as well as customers. They help keep the trails and camping area neat, and participate in maintenance days, for which they get a free pass and/or race series points.

Richard Wharton from the University of North Texas uses the trails for his mountain biking classes. He will continue to use The Breaks as a training facility, although this is still being negotiated.

## People

Tia lives on the ranch with her husband and son and handles the day-to-day business, trail maintenance, organizing races, and anything else involving the mountain biking enterprise. She moved back to the ranch with her family in March 1998 for this purpose. She is really

enjoying the experience and enjoys meeting mountain bikers, who she describes as “the nicest people.”

Billy Hutson runs the cattle operation and also supports Tia’s efforts. He built much of the infrastructure, including the restroom building.

Tony Boone initiated the enterprise and built most of the trails. He continues to contribute in this manner, and is passionate about keeping the land intact and in the family.

## Risk Management

Helmets are required; intoxication and smoking are prohibited on the trails. The Breaks has an annual \$650 recreation insurance policy that holds a \$5 million insurance cap with a \$500 deductible. This policy covers biking, camping and all other recreational activities held on the ranch. All riders must also sign a waiver (see Appendix 4 for sample waiver).

## Future

Plans for the next 5 years include adding more campsites, planting vegetation around the camping area to attract wildlife for guests to view, adding a second toilet in the women’s restroom, and building a more challenging trail. Volunteers will be recruited to help with this project.

The owners plan additional promotions in *Texas Travel Magazine* and in mountain bike guides. They believe this will increase their exposure in Texas and other states. They also want to host more races and special event weekends. These programs are important for generating income.

DORBA is considering replacing the collegiate race with a children’s race next February. The Hutsons plan to build a 1-mile loop trail for this event.







## Q's

### Questions

The Hutsons have many questions about how to enhance the camping area, provide tent camping, and plant vegetation that will attract wildlife to the camping area.

### Advice

The Hutsons believe it is important to have a good plan when starting your business. Tia advises patience, as starting such an enterprise will consume lots of time. But she believes it is well worth the effort because of the great people you meet and the opportunity you have to learn more about the land.





# Bluff Creek Ranch



## Background

Bluff Creek Ranch is a 200-acre ranch near Warda in Central Texas. Paul Nolan, an M.D., and his wife Susan bought the ranch in June, 1990 to raise cattle and Arabian horses. They have 30 head of longhorns and also sell coastal bermudagrass hay. They added mountain biking and camping to their business in 1992, and have eliminated the Arabian horses from their business, although they kept some horses for personal enjoyment.

## Landscape

Bluff Creek Ranch is set among rolling hills, with forested areas surrounding open meadows. As the name suggests, there is a creek running through the ranch, bounded on one side by a bluff that provides interesting terrain for trail users.

## Recreational Tourism Start-Up

The mountain biking idea originated with a friend, Myron Brown, who wanted to ride his mountain bike on the Nolan's horse trails. The Nolans thought this would be a good way to diversify their income while

doing something that they enjoy. Dr. Nolan, along with Myron and another friend, began building trails specifically for

mountain bike riders. Friends in the Giddings Area Bicycle Association helped with the trails. One friend suggested that the Nolans host a race, and over the ensuing three weekends the Houston Area Mountain Bike Riders Association (HAMBRA) helped build the additional trails that would be needed. The first race was held in April 1992. HAMBRA helped build more trails in the summer, and the second race was held in October 1992—with 333 racers. The second race, the "Birthday Gallup," coincided with the nearby town of Giddings' birthday. The Nolans officially

opened the mountain biking business in 1993. The groups mentioned above, along with the Texas Trailriders, have been adding 1 to 2 miles of trail every year since then.

## Investment

Paul Nolan estimates that he has invested about \$15,000 in the trails; a suspension bridge that he built in 1998 cost an additional \$5,000.

## Guests

Visitors come from around the world, but most guests are from Texas. Many come from Houston, San Antonio, Austin and other surrounding areas. Bluff Creek is within a 2-hour drive of Houston, which makes it a good day-trip destination. They get many families, and numerous repeat guests.

## Product and Programming

### *Traditional*

The Nolans raise organic beef and sell it directly to the public. Dr. Nolan often gives free samples to interested guests, and now many of their cus-

tomers for this product are the health-conscious mountain bikers.

### *Trail-Based Activities*

There are approximately 10 miles of single-track trails on Bluff Creek Ranch, including Peter's Bridge, a 120-foot suspension bridge that was added in February

1998. There are beginner to intermediate trails for riders of all abilities. There are cutoffs around difficult areas so less experienced riders can skip these trail sections. This is ideal for families whose members have a variety of skill levels. The Nolans use 18-inch cattle guards to keep the animals in certain areas, but they can get on the trails. Riders like to see them, but are warned that they will chase dogs. Guests who arrive when the Nolans are home are given a brief orientation and a map of the trails.





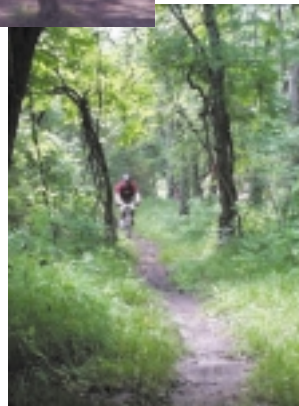


Alcohol is allowed in the camping areas, but moderate use is the rule.

Trail runners have been allowed to use the trails, but must run in the opposite direction of the mountain bike riders for safety purposes. There is less likely to be an accident if they can see each other coming. Bikers have the right-of-way. The Nolans, however, usually discourage non-mountain bike use.

Bluff Creek hosts two Texas Mountain Bike Rider Association (TMBRA) races per year; they draw 700 to 900 racers each, with about 200 campers per event. The spring race, known as the Warda race, is part of the Texas Championship series. The fall race, the Geburtstag Gallup, is held in November. These two races generate most of their mountain biking income and also provide a great deal of publicity. On Sundays of race weekends there are nearly 1,000 people at Bluff Creek Ranch.

The Nolans held a bike camp for boys in July 1999. The camp was promoted and run by one of their race promoters, who used one of his vacation weeks to manage the camp. Eleven boys 11 to 15 years old attended this camp, which was a great success. Campers were housed in an apartment in the barn, where they had access to a washer and dryer for cleaning their biking clothes. Susan Nolan cooked several of the meals, and the promoter took the boys out for dinner a couple of nights. The promoter also took the boys on two day-trips to other ranches for biking. Dr. Nolan and the promoter held several seminars on subjects such as mechanics and dehydration. Campers also learned about and performed trail maintenance at Bluff Creek. On the final day they participated in a criterium race.



## Facilities

There is a bicycle shop for bike rentals with an emergency room for repairs. There is also a human emergency room courtesy of Dr. Nolan. There are also bike washing facilities. Other facilities include two bathrooms (with toilet and shower) and three outdoor showers.

There is a 50-site camping area around the pond. The Nolans take reservations for sites and many repeat visitors have favorite campsites. On race weekends, they have provided up to 120 campsites. Swimming and fishing are allowed, but visitors are advised that no lifeguard is available.

## Price

The day-use fee is \$5.50 per person per day, and an additional \$2 per person for camping. Children 12 and under are free. Guests leave their money in an "honor box" when the Nolans are not home. The land access fee on race weekends is \$4 per day.

The promoter of the week-long summer camp for boys charged campers \$200 each for the week. This covered activities, meals, transportation, and mountain bike fees at the other ranches that they visited. The Nolans charged the promoter \$7.50 per night per camper.

## Promotion

The Nolans are building their own Web page (<http://bfwwweb.com/bluffcreek/>). They are also mentioned on many other web sites such as TJ's MTB Adventures (<http://ftp.vvm.com/~nholmes/texasrides.htm>), BV MBA (<http://bvmba.txcyber.com/trails/>), TMBRA (<http://www.tmbra.org/information/>), and Giddings Area Bicycle Association (<http://www.bfwwweb.com/gaba/>).

Bluff Creek Ranch has been mentioned in several publications such as the *Falcon Guide*, *Texas Highways*, *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine, and *Mountain Bike Magazine*. They also received a recent note in *Bicycling Magazine*. This is where word of mouth

pays off—the Nolans did not solicit this publicity, but rather the publishers/writers came to them. The Nolans believe that word of mouth is their best source of publicity. It paid off again recently when they were included in a book entitled, Day Trips from Houston.

Twice a year the Nolans distribute fliers to bike shops to promote their races. They also give fliers to riders who visit the ranch. They advertise with the





local Chamber of Commerce, and although this has yielded little or no return, they continue to purchase this ad as a gesture of goodwill.

## Partnerships

Their relationship with area mountain biking associations is crucial, as the club members help with trail maintenance, building new trails, providing advertising by word of



mouth, linking the ranch to their Web pages, and drawing guests to the ranch.

Club members trade maintenance hours for riding passes and for championship series points. They periodically hold workdays, during which the trails are closed to riders. Post-storm repairs require the most time and effort. After a light or moderate rain, the Nolans may ask riders to report any problems they find on the trails if they have not been able to check the trails themselves. Their guests have always been happy to help.

Last year the hotel and motel association in the community gave Bluff Creek a \$5000 grant for the race because it fills the area hotels on race weekend. The local sheriff and EMS provide security and services.

Another community connection is the Warda store, which opens early on race weekends. The store and a local bicycle shop are promoted in Bluff Creek's flyer.

Dr. Nolan networks with mountain biking associations, and has been a guest speaker at various mountain bike clubs. He has also written medical-related editorials for biking magazines.

## People

Both Paul and Susan Nolan handle the day-to-day operations, with Susan handling many of the bookkeeping chores such as keeping track of waiver forms and tracking income for tax purposes. A ranch hand was hired to help with non-biking chores such as mending fences. He moved into the barn apartment after the bike camp ended.

Friends and volunteers from area bike clubs help with trail maintenance and cutting new trails. Dr. Nolan is very involved in the process of diversifying ranches to mountain bike riding, and often advises ranchers interested in starting such operations.

## Risk Management

The Nolans say that liability is not an issue. First-time visitors must sign a full waiver form; Susan carefully reviews the form, riding rules, and a ranch map with them. Waivers are kept on file for 3 years. On subsequent visits, riders sign a clipboard



with the following abbreviated waiver: "I have previously signed a waiver of liability at Bluff Creek Ranch and agree to abide by its conditions. I further agree to abide by the rules of Bluff Creek Ranch." The Nolans consulted a lawyer about using this method. They use a waiver form issued by NORBA. Helmets are required for all riders.

In addition to their ranch insurance policy, they have an umbrella policy that costs \$450 per year, and a separate camping policy that costs \$950 per year. The policies cover lawsuits only, and have a \$500 deductible.







## Future

The Nolans plan to continue adding trails at Bluff Creek Ranch, and to offer swimming in the pond (swimming now is in the tanks). They would like to host more camps, for girls as well as boys. If the ranch

hand continues to live in the barn, they will have to consider outdoor camping for this event. They are concentrating much of their effort on the mountain biking aspect of their ranch, and would like to expand these activities as well as other ranching activities.

## Q's

### Questions

The Nolans often provide answers to other ranchers who have begun similar enterprises and seek their advice. They are interested in seeing what is happening on other ranches that offer mountain biking.

### Advice

To succeed at this sort of enterprise it is important to get involved with a mountain biking association for contacts, trail assistance and publicity. The Nolans also believe it is crucial to have mountain bikers design the trails.





# Kelly Creek Ranch



## Background

Kelly Creek Ranch is a 1,200-acre ranch located about 20 minutes west of Kerrville in the heart of the Hill Country. The ranch has been in the Dominigue family for more than 100 years. They started raising Herefords in the 1950s, and currently keep about 20 head of cattle. They also sell hay and hunting leases.

There is a lot of history associated with the ranch. One neighbor's father used to tell stories about watching Indians on the Kelly Creek property around the turn of the century. The property contains several Indian mounds.

Dean Dominigue and his brother Charles currently run the ranch, with Charles handling the hay sales and Dean the mountain bike operation. Charles' full-time job is surveying, and he lives on the ranch with his family. Dean works full-time as a systems analyst and programmer for a catering business, and lives in town with his family. Another brother is an engineer and lives in Houston. The ranch is set up as a partnership with each brother having one-third interest. Taxes and some other expenses are paid from hunting leases.

## Landscape

Kelly Creek ranch has typical Hill Country terrain—rolling limestone hills—with one of the highest hills in the region. There is a meadow at the entrance of the ranch from which the trails depart. Much of the rest of the property consists of rocky hills covered with a variety of oak and cedar trees, with streams and valleys winding among them.

## Recreational Tourism Start-Up

Dean started mountain bike riding on the ranch as a hobby and as a way to keep in shape.

His friends who would go to the ranch to ride with him encouraged him to build mountain bike trails. Dean rode at a few other places to see what they meant by mountain bike trails, and fell in love with the technical side of the sport. So he started building highly technical trails on his property. He built many of the trails by himself, but also got help from local riders and

from Hill Country Bicycle Works in nearby Fredricksburg. This operation is still a hobby for Dean, and a way to stay in shape. While the brothers do not want to lose money on the mountain biking enterprise, making money is not paramount.

## Investment

Dean estimates that he has invested approximately \$4,000 in the mountain biking operation, part of which was for the bathrooms that are also used by hunters. Trail building would have been a great expense if not for the volunteers who helped.

## Guests

Excluding races, Kelly Creek Ranch gets about 50 riders per month during the spring, mostly on the weekends. During the summer months there are perhaps 15 to 20 riders per month. The biking trails are closed from October to mid-January for hunting season. Most of the riders come from the greater Austin area (where the largest concentration of NORBA members in the state lives) and from the San Antonio area. There are many repeat visitors, but most of these are riders who provide maintenance labor in exchange for free passes.

They attract mostly expert riders, although there are some families with a mix of skill levels.

It is rare for visitors to come to the ranch for a single day. Most come for the weekend. On race weekends, about 20 percent of the racers arrive on Friday, 30 to 40 percent on Saturday, and the remainder on Sunday.

## Product and Programming

### *Traditional*

The Dominigues currently have 20 cows on the land, 10 of which are theirs and 10 of which belong to their cattle manager who cares for their cattle in exchange for keeping his own cattle on the property. They sell the calves, but have not been replacing cows.

Charles handles the deer and hog hunting operations, which include 15 to 20 annual leases. There are several species of deer on the ranch; the most abundant are white-tailed, fallow and axis. Most of their income comes from hunting leases.







## Trail-Based Activities

Kelly Creek Ranch has 17 miles of single-track expert trails, and 10 miles of beginner trails. The expert trail begins in the meadow and makes an 8.5-mile loop back to the meadow; then there is another 8.5-mile loop.

This allows riders to take a break between sections. The beginner trails are largely old jeep roads; they meet the expert trails in several places. The expert trails are highly technical and difficult. Kelly Creek has one of the few downhill courses in the state and has been the site of recent Texas State Downhill Championships.

They host the Kelly Creek Classic every spring, which is part of the Norwest Texas State Championship Series. This is a 2-day event, with the cross-country race held on Sunday for beginner, sport and expert riders. The Texas Downhill Championship is held on Saturday on the highest hill at Kelly Creek Ranch. For this race Dean built a starter's box with a ramp at the top of the hill. There is a great deal of work involved in setting up a race, and Dean believes that one per year is sufficient for his purposes.

On race weekends Dean has a concessionaire manage a food tent. He also invites bike shops and other interested parties to set up booths. There were about 8 acres of "expo" area at the 1999 race. Dean believes exhibitors bring an added element of excitement on race weekend, and does not charge them a fee.

Dean also organizes and hosts training races to help riders prepare for the fall circuit. He charges \$12 total for the land-use and race fees. He expects 100 racers for the final training race the third weekend of August.

## Facilities

There are four toilets and four showers (with cold water from the spring-fed creek) in the meadow camping area near the entrance to the ranch. Primitive campsites are allowed in and around the meadow. There is enough space to accommodate at least 700 campers; they had 600 to 700 campers one race weekend in April 1999. For race weekends they bring in additional port-o-pots. There are two RV hook-ups with water and electricity, but there has not been much demand for them. The few times people have brought RVs they have run them as self-contained units. Most visitors either camp or stay at one of the hotels in town.

Dean uses coreplast, a hard plastic material, to make signs that denote different levels of difficulty in

the trail system and indicate direction of travel. The signs are red, yellow and orange. Coreplast costs approximately \$8 per 4- x 8-foot sheet; Dean makes about 120 arrows from one sheet for trail signs. These signs are easy to spot, can be cut in directional shapes, and are very durable.

## Price

Day-use is \$5 per person per day for mountain bike riding. Camping is \$2 per person per night, but will probably increase to cover the cost of additional facilities. On race days they reduce the access fee to a flat \$3 for racers and spectators. Kelly Creek has been grossing between \$6,000 and \$7,000 per year from the mountain biking business, most of which comes from the races.

Riders can purchase an access pass for Kelly Creek at Mountain Sports, a bike shop in Hunt; at Hill Country Bicycle Works in Kerrville; or at the ranch. Most visitors pay at the bike shop in Kerrville; only six riders have purchased passes at Mountain Sports this year. Either Charles or his son is usually home, and riders often pay them the land-use fee "at the gate." They have not set up an "honor box" to allow visitors to pay in their absence.

## Promotion

Kelly Creek Ranch is featured on the Outpost Wilderness Adventure Web site (<http://www.owa.com/kellycrk/>), where their race results are posted. They are also on TJ's MTB Adventures Web site (<http://ftp.vvm.com/~nholmes/texasrides.htm>). They do not have a Web site of their own. Most of their promotion is done in connection with the annual race, for which they distribute fliers to mountain bike shops. They also rely on word of mouth.

## Partnerships

With their cattle manager, the Dominigues have a barter system of exchanging labor for land use, and it has worked well.

Dean has a close association with Lisa Nye and Adam Saladin, the owners of Hill Country Bicycle Works in Kerrville. Kelly Creek Ranch advertises at the bike shop. Lisa and Adam help with maintenance on the ranch. Fliers for the ranch are at this and other bike shops.

Dean also has a partnership with Heart of the Hills, a girl's camp nearby. For \$8 per night, riders who visit Kelly Creek can stay in the camp's cabins, with shower and bath facilities. This works well for the riders and





the camp, although hotel owners in Kerrville would rather the riders stayed at their establishments.

## People

Dean does most of the maintenance on the trails, with the help of volunteers. He spends about 60 hours per year on maintenance, with volunteers contributing another 150 or more hours. Much of this work is done during the spring cleanup, as it is necessary to clear the trails from winter storm damage such as fallen trees, cut the grass, and rake all the trails clear of leaves. Volunteers who contribute 10 or more hours of labor receive a free pass for the year. If they belong to the Pay Dirt Program they will also receive points.

Dean has found mountain bikers to be a neat and considerate group—more so than hunters. He believes this is because most of the riders at Kelly Creek are more frequent visitors than the hunters.

## Risk Management

Helmets are required and riders are cautioned to ride in pairs. The Dominigues use waivers for races but have stopped requiring them for daily recreational use. Dean designs, manages and maintains trails to be challenging but safe.

Kelly Creek has a \$5 million umbrella policy to cover races. This policy is provided through the National Off Road Bike Association, and covers \$25,000 in medical with a \$1,000 deductible. It also provides a maximum coverage of \$2 million in the event that they are sued. The brothers have discussed liability insurance for non-race-day riding, and Dean has spoken to insurance companies about a general liability policy for recreation, but he believes that the cost is too high for his operation.

## Future

Other than additional facilities for next year's race, Dean does not plan any major additions at this time. He is happy with the business as it is, and since he did not get into the mountain biking business to make money and does not want to spend more time on it, he does not plan to build it up in the future. However, he is considering the addition of an honor box for collecting fees at the ranch.

He is also considering a plan to offer a \$4 discount to riders who participate in the Pay Dirt Program<sup>1</sup>, even if they did not earn their points at Kelly Creek Ranch.

<sup>1</sup>The Pay Dirt Program is sponsored by NORBA and allows racers to accrue points for maintenance work at trail sites as well as for races.





## O's

### Questions

One challenge Dean faces is that riders from San Antonio, Houston and Austin, the closest cities, have other choices of places to ride. Kelly Creek Ranch is too far from the parts of the state where riding trails are lacking.

### Advice

The two biggest lessons Dean has learned involve trail construction. The first is to not make your trails too difficult for the target market. Dean and his friends cut the trails in a very technical and challenging manner, which they prefer but most riders do not. The second lesson is not to cut trails up the fall line, as this creates a constant erosion problem. He suggests that in hilly areas you follow a game trail, if possible, because the game will have picked the simplest route up the hill.

A



# Rocky Hill Ranch

## Background

Rocky Hill Ranch is a 1,260-acre ranch located outside Smithville in Central Texas. Gray Hill inherited the land in a deal that gave him a larger piece of property than his co-beneficiaries received because he took the portion that was not good for traditional agricultural production. Rick Phouts leased the land and managed the mountain biking operation for a year; Diane Uhl is the current manager.

## Landscape

As the name implies, the area is rocky and hilly, with meadows and forested areas that provide variety to suit all levels of mountain bike riders. There are some very steep climbs built into the trail system for expert riders.

## Recreational Tourism Start-Up

Nine years ago Mr. Hill began to allow mountain bikers to ride on portions of his land for a fee, and worked with the Austin Ridge Riders to cut several of the initial trails. Mr. Phouts built a cafe/saloon on the property.

## Guests

The ranch has about fifty riders per day on the weekends, two to ten per day on Thursday and Friday, and two to forty total from Monday through Wednesday. Many guests are families. Races attract 100 to 600 participants, plus spectators. The TMBRA race, for example, drew between 1,500 and 2,000 people, 600 of whom were riders. Riders have come from as far away as Greece, with approximately 10 percent of customers from out of state (mostly Arkansas,



Colorado, Oklahoma, Louisiana and New Mexico). Most are from Texas, primarily Austin, Houston and San Antonio.

The ranch caters primarily to mountain bikers, but allows some other activities while taking care that there is no conflict among users.

## Product and Programming

### Trail-Based Activities

There are 20 to 25 miles of ranch roads and fence line to ride, as well as 18 to 20 miles of single-track bike trails. There are three water stations along the trails that are refilled daily.

The ranch is open year-round, but officially closed Monday through Wednesday.

However, the gate is not locked, and regular guests are aware that they can ride on these days by using an honorary pay system. Spring and fall are the busiest seasons; July and August are the slowest months.

Trails are marked beginner/intermediate (green), advanced (blue) and expert (black)—the same system ski resorts use. Guests receive a map that clearly shows the respective trail types.

Rocky Hill hosts a TMBRA/NORBA race, as well as other mountain bike races such as the Texas Challenge, which combines mountain biking, canoeing and running.

Rocky Hill also hosts the Excalibur Fantasy Faire every year. For this event concessionaires, bands and other entertainers gather on-site for a variety of activities. Visitors are charged access fees and a percentage of the proceeds comes back to the ranch.

A river, lake and abundant spring wildflowers make the ranch attractive to locals who visit to paint landscapes. A land-use fee is not normally charged for this activity.

### Facilities

The Rocky Hill Cafe and Saloon is where riders park and sign in. The sign-in sheet includes a waiver form. The cafe has restrooms and showers, with entertainment on Saturday nights. There are 18 RV hookup sites, and room for many primitive campsites. There is a horseshoe pit and a sand







volleyball court outside the cafe, and a big screen TV inside.

## Price

Bike fees are \$6 per person per day, and camping fees are an additional \$4 per person per night. (The same fees apply on race days.) Group rates are negotiated on an individual basis. Fees are paid at the Cafe and Saloon during normal business hours. An honor box is in place for early morning and Monday through Wednesday arrivals.

There is no cover charge for the Saturday night band at the cafe. Food prices are comparable to similar restaurants, with beverage prices ranging from free (coffee) to \$3 imported beer. Sandwiches cost \$3.40 to \$4.75, and appetizers \$1.50 to \$4.25.

## Promotion

Rocky Hill Ranch has a Web page, [www.rockyhill-ranch.com](http://www.rockyhill-ranch.com), and also links from other Web pages such as TJ's MTB Adventures (<http://ftp.vvm.com/~nholmes/texasrides.htm>), The Austin Ridge Riders (<http://www.io.com/austinridgeriders/99rh.htm>), Great Outdoors.com (<http://www.greatoutdoors.com/mtb/destinations/usa/texas/rocky2.html>), and BV MBA (<http://bvmba.txcyber.com/trails/smithville.htm>) to name a few.

They distribute fliers to local bike shops, but rely heavily on word-of-mouth, which has given the best results. The bike races and festivals they hold also provide a great deal of publicity.

## Partnerships

Originally, Rick Phouts leased the land from Gray Hill to use for the mountain bike and cafe businesses. Diane and Paul Uhl were his partners in cutting and maintaining the trails. Now, as manager, Diane handles rules and regulations, networking with race organizers and mountain bikers, and is the main promoter of the ranch.

A Houston bicycle group worked with Rocky Hill Ranch to host the Texas Challenge race. Race promoters must supply their own insurance (in addition to the ranch's insurance), port-o-pots, and also clean up afterwards.

There is a "Visit Smithville" sign at the ranch entrance with general advertising for antique stores, B&B's, hardware stores and gas.

Rick also used trade and bartering (mostly free rides and/or food) to obtain additional help with trail maintenance.

The day care center across the road is allowed to use the ranch for nature hikes free of charge.

## People

When Rick Phouts was the manager, a caretaker who lived on the ranch helped him handle the day-to-day business. There was also a bartender, and Rick hired extra help for minimum wage on race weekends and for special events. The staff was able to eat free and drink at cost. Trade and bartering were the general methods for reimbursing staff, and he often had friends help out. Diane Uhl is now the manager, and she is hiring staff.

## Risk Management

All riders must sign a waiver upon arrival. This form is kept at the cafe and saloon. Helmets are required for all riders. Rick's lease with Mr. Hill required that he have an insurance policy as well. The insurance policy has a \$5,000 waiver, which means that the insurance policy covers 100 percent of a claim up to \$5,000. It is a \$300,000 policy with a \$1 million cap. The cost is \$700 down and \$360 per month. As mentioned above, race organizers must have separate insurance. Of the few injuries that have occurred at Rocky Hill, almost all have occurred on race days.

## Future

Mr. Hill plans to build a lake and recreation area on another 400 acres of the ranch. This will be a separate entity from the mountain biking business. However, it may attract more mountain bikers to the ranch and provide more publicity for the mountain biking enterprise.

## Advice

Mr. Phouts believes that good partnerships are a must in this business, especially for ranchers who are not familiar with mountain bike racing, or whatever trail activity they will offer. He also suggests that owners try to barter for help as much as possible to save out-of-pocket expenditures.



# 33 Ranch

## Background

The 33 Ranch is a 1,500-acre ranch located outside Kenedy, Texas. It is owned and operated by Matt and Stacia Jauer. Originally called the 33 Ranch, Stacia's great-grandfather changed the name to the Handy Ranch, which was the family name. Matt and Stacia changed the name back to the 33 Ranch when they took over the property. Stacia Jauer is the third generation of her family to live on the 33 Ranch, which has been in the family since 1936. The ranch averages about 200 head of cattle (Herefords) and approximately 200 yearlings annually. The Jauers have leases on several other ranches where they also keep cattle.

## Landscape

The 33 Ranch has a variety of terrain that includes the San Antonio River and its associated floodplain. There are steep embankments and gullies around the river; hills, meadows, and Mesquite thickets give the land a typical south Texas flavor. Ten miles of the 33's trails are in the shade provided by hardwood forests in the river bottom.

## Recreational Tourism Start-Up

The Jauers got involved with Texas Equestrian Trail Riders Association (TETRA) a few years ago and met Craig Brubaker. Craig suggested that they offer horseback riding on their property. Matt and Stacia wanted to find a way to maintain their ranching lifestyle in a manner that could also be passed on to their children, and trail riding seemed to be a way to help. In February 1999 the Jauers began preparing trails for horseback riding and had 24 miles of trail as of June 1999. Some of these trails are old roads on the property, while other trails were cut specifically for riding. In April 1999 they had their first trail ride with 20 guests, followed by a trail ride with more than 40 guests in May 1999.

## Guests

The Jauers attract people mostly from Houston and San Antonio (but they have had visitors from as far away as Uvalde), and these two groups prefer different types of trails. The Houston riders seem to prefer easier trails, while riders from San Antonio seem to prefer rough trails. The Jauers are beginning to attract some customers from out of state because of their promotion through TETRA. Their customers appear to be very committed to their sport. Despite very heavy rain and flash flooding the day before their June 1999 event, 45 of the 80 scheduled guests showed up and wanted to ride.

## Product and Programming

### *Traditional*

Matt runs the cattle operation. The Jauers have also started breeding horses and hope to sell most of their offspring. They have also begun advertising pasture boarding for horses.

The ranch offers dove hunting during both seasons, September through October and December through January. The Jauers have sponsored hog hunts, but not on a regular basis. They will offer trail rides during the hunting season. Matt schedules both the hunting and riding activities so they will not conflict. They have deer on the property, but do not feel there is a large enough base for hunting.

### *Trail-Based Activities*

The 33 Ranch offers guided horseback riding on 24 miles of trails. Unguided rides are occasionally allowed at the owner's discretion. Guests must supply their own horses for all rides. At first the Jauers hosted only trail riding weekends; guests could have four 2- to 3-hour rides (Friday night, Saturday morning, Saturday evening, and Sunday morning). They now open some on a daily basis as well.

Some trails are old double-track ranch roads. Matt and volunteers have also built single track trails. Their goal was to build trails that would be







interesting for horse riders in particular, such as trails through gullies and over steep embankments. They built bypasses in these areas for less experienced riders. Approximately 80 percent of the 33's trails are easy, and any rider should be able to handle them. Trails are marked with surveyor tape, and yellow tags are used to mark fence gaps that riders are allowed to pass through.

One meal is included in the weekend package, and it is served on Saturday either at noon or in the evening as fits the riding schedule. The Jauers have this meal catered from various restaurants in town. They normally serve food with a south Texas theme. The Jauers have found that meals served to a large group receive mixed reviews because it is hard to please everyone with a limited menu. However, they plan to continue offering a meal as most customers believe it adds to the experience.

Weekend guests are also given a wagon ride. This appears to be popular, and helps convey a feel for life in the early days of Texas.

The Jauers promote the natural habitat of the ranch as part of the product. When interviewed, they planned to have a wildlife specialist visit the ranch to determine what species are on the property. Matt had some concern that if an endangered species were discovered it might restrict the use of his land, but knew that such a species could also be attractive to guests. There are also cultural and historical sights on the ranch, including an old homestead and schoolhouse that date to the 1870s.

The image they promote is that of a working ranch with trail riding opportunities. Most of their guests are families and they promote a family atmosphere. They do allow alcohol in the campsites, but strictly forbid it on the rides.

## Facilities

The only lodging facility is a primitive camping area with a grill and picnic tables. If an evening meal is not being served, Matt lights the grill and guests are welcome to use it. The camping area is grassy and has many trees that provide shade and protection from wind. Port-o-pots and water are placed at the camp-

sites on riding weekends, and a fire ring has been built for guests to gather around at night. Some guests choose to stay at one of the motels in town.

The Jauers have set up an answering system on their phone that allows callers to select "1" for trail riding information and "2" for hunting information. There is a prerecorded message, and/or callers may leave a message. Before an event, a third option is added to provide specific event information.

## Price

Weekend rides cost \$25 per person with a \$50 cap per family. This includes camping and the Saturday meal. Riders who come just for a day are charged \$15, including the meal. Matt states that having 50 guests per weekend is the goal to make a reasonable profit, but even on weekends with only 20 participants he has not lost money. He plans to offer an annual family membership for \$250 to \$300. This membership will be much like a hunting lease, allowing riders to have access as they wish on a year-around basis.

## Promotion

Word of mouth is the primary means of advertising, but the Jauers have also distributed fliers using TETRA's mailing list. They mail fliers to guests after every ride, and have passed out flyers at other rides. They create a new flier for each ride. They also have a Web site ([33ranch.com](http://33ranch.com)) and an email address ([33ranch@fnichols.com](mailto:33ranch@fnichols.com)).

The 33 Ranch also set up a booth at the Lonesome Dove Fest, which is held opening weekend of dove season near Karnes City. This event provides good exposure to potential regional customers.

## Partnerships

Their partnership with Craig Brubaker has been very helpful. Craig was in marketing for twenty years before moving to Texas and helped establish a marketing plan for the 33 Ranch. He also helped the Jauers link up with TETRA.

Don Knight, the neighbor who provides wagons for the wagon rides, is another partner.

The Jauers network in the surrounding communities and belong to the Rotary Club in Karnes City. They have developed a relationship with local restaurants that provide food for ranch guests. They also advertise





through the Chamber of Commerce, and have been listed with other area ranches in the promotional material for the county's main fair (the Lonesome Dove Fest) that takes place at the end of September.

The Jauers focus on customer service and customer relationships for building clientele. They distribute customer feedback forms for guests to complete at the end of their riding experience, so that guests become partners in building the business.

## People

Matt and Stacia Jauer are responsible for the day-to-day operations, with Matt taking care of trail building and trail maintenance and Stacia in charge of riding lessons. Matt manages hunters to ensure there is no conflict with horseback riders. Some of his ranch employees also help with cooking on special occasions that feature theme meals.

## Risk Management

The Jauers have a sign posted at the entrance to the ranch that warns guests that Chapter 87 of the Texas legal code is in effect. Chapter 87 states, "An equine professional is not liable for any injury or death of a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent risks of equine activities."

They have a Texas farm and ranch homeowners' policy, and for an additional \$176 per year were able to acquire \$1 million dollars in liability coverage for the equine activities. The deductible is no more than \$500. The policy they have does not cover food and lodging. An addition to the policy that would cover guests riding the Jauer's horses at the 33 Ranch is currently too expensive. The Farm Bureau is in the

process of adding coverage options for ranchers who give trail rides on their properties. The Jauers' agent was also told that the Farm Bureau would not cover boating on or swimming in the San Antonio River. This is a new area for insurance companies, and the details are still being negotiated so that more activities are included. Texas Cattle Raisers is also considering adding similar policy options.

The Jauers have riders sign a waiver, and rules are distributed and reviewed before the first ride of the weekend. Matt believes that customer service is also a good way to manage risk.

## Future

The Jauers have decided to narrow their focus and concentrate more on horseback trail rides. They will let their other leases expire and move all the cattle from those ranches to the 33 Ranch.

Matt wants to further their relationship with Don Knight, and hopes to add wagon train rides as a permanent part of the programming on organized weekend rides.

A reservation system, a Web site, and permanent lodging, such as a cabin, are also in the plans for the future. The old homestead will be repaired and used as a shelter or guest cabin, and the adjacent barns will be restored to house horses. More expert trails and additional campsites are slated for future development as well. Facilities and services will be added as the trail riding enterprise grows because Matt does not want to take income from the cattle and hunting businesses to support the trail riding enterprise.

Once pasture boarding starts, the Jauers plan to charge \$125 to \$150 per year, per horse, and will add facilities as demand warrants.





O's

### Questions

Matt would like more information on marketing, including how to target certain people, how to maximize their advertising investment, and how to attract the sort of customer they desire.

### Advice

According to the Jauers, the most important thing is to be yourself. Part of the reason that people go on trail rides is to experience the old West, and ranches are part of that tradition. People want to experience the real thing, and a rancher will have more fun in this business if he is true to himself.

The other important advice is to be patient. A business does not become successful overnight, so give it time to grow.

A



# X Bar Ranch

## Background

The X Bar Ranch is a 7,100-acre ranch near Eldorado, Texas. Eldorado is about 3 hours west of San Antonio at the edge of the Texas Hill Country. The ranch has been in the Meador family for five generations dating back to 1903, and there are currently three generations of Meadors working on the X Bar. Co-owners are brothers Ed and Jack, and sister Edith. Ed and his family have been operating the ranch for more than 50 years. His son Lynn works both with the traditional ranching operation and with the guest operations; grandson Stan handles the guest operations, which includes hunting, lodging and mountain biking; grandson Chris is in charge of other aspects of the ranch. The family also owns the Meador Land Co., which handles oil and gas leases.

## Landscape

There is a variety of terrain within the boundaries of the X Bar Ranch. Live Oak Lodge and the cabins are located on a bluff looking over much of the ranch. The trails begin here, winding down the bluff through the brush and mesquite. Portions of the trails are rocky, while other sections are in meadows.



## Recreational Tourism Start-Up

Stan had been living in Europe, and thought that his home would be a place Europeans and Americans from the East would find unique and

enjoy visiting. He also thought Texans would like it as a place to get away from city life and relax. He began to lay the groundwork for the tourism operation in May 1996. As he researched the extent of overcrowding in state and national parks, he saw a demand that he could try to meet.

In September 1996, the X Bar's first paying guests arrived from Germany. Those were the only guests that year. The guest numbers have not been consistent, and vary from 10 to 60 overnight visitors per month.

## Guests

Because Stan Meador has many connections in Europe, many of the ranch's guests come from there. Stan speaks Spanish and Dutch.

The X Bar is geared toward the casual traveler rather than the upscale dude ranch visitor. They also target corporate groups who may use the ranch for retreats.

## Product and Programming

### *Traditional*

As a working ranch, the X Bar normally has about 1,200 sheep, excluding lambs, and about 200 head of cattle. Chris is responsible for this portion of the business, but receives help from Ed, Lynn and Stan when needed.

Turkey and deer hunting leases are a part of the business.

### *Trail-Based Activities*

The X Bar Ranch has trails that may be used for mountain biking, hiking and horseback riding, and offers guided trail rides. There are about 12 miles of trails, most of which are single-track. There are trails for all levels of experience, and they are marked by colored ribbons with red on the right side of the trail and yellow on the left side. Trail riders can also use the ranch roads. There have been no conflicts between bikers and trail riders, because mountain bikers have come only on race weekends. Hikers enjoy viewing the abundant wildlife on the ranch.



The ranch hosted a mountain bike race called the X Bar Shootout, and another as part of the TMBA Fall series.

Since the X Bar is a working ranch and not a dude ranch, guests are not offered a set schedule of daily activities. Instead, activities are planned around the guests' requests and the availability of family members to accommodate their requests. Lynn Meador hosts most of the trail rides and ensures that guests get to experience daily life on the ranch.

## Facilities

There are guestrooms at headquarters, a lodge (Live Oak Lodge) and six cabins on the west side of the ranch, and two stone cabins (the Round House about 1½ miles from Live Oak Lodge, and Buckhorn Lodge). There are also primitive campsites near Live Oak Lodge. The houses have been on the ranch for several generations, while Live Oak Lodge and the cabins were built just a few years ago by a hunting leaseholder. When the lease was cancelled 2 years ago the X Bar bought the cabins and lodges from the former leaseholder.

Live Oak Lodge has a full kitchen, couches, tables, chairs, satellite TV, board games, magazines, restroom, and a back porch with a view of the ranch. There is also a photo album of family and past guests,

and a scrapbook for guests to sign. Rules for the trails, rattlesnake treatment and avoidance information, and brochures for other mountain bike ranches and area attractions are also in the lodge. Many guests use the scrapbook to write thank-you notes to the Meadors.

The cabins offer a variety of accommodations, ranging from a double bed to a double bed/bunk bed combination. Each holds up to four people, and has private bathroom facilities and heating and air conditioning.

The Round House is a two-story circular stone structure with a full kitchen, two bedrooms, bathroom with

shower, living room, dining area, heating and air conditioning, and a fireplace. The Round House accommodates up to six guests.

Buckhorn Lodge, also made of stone, accommodates 6 to 14 visitors. There are two large rooms—a living area with a central fireplace open on all sides and a bedroom. There are three bathrooms, a kitchen, and heating and air conditioning.

In all facilities guests are provided with cooking utensils, flatware, plates and other items necessary for cooking and eating. Guests are requested to clean up after themselves. This system has worked well thus far.



Continental breakfast is served in Live Oak Lodge if there are enough guests who would like this service. Occasionally the Meadors also host Bar-B-Que dinners with live entertainment, and other group dinners, at an additional charge. These meals are usually planned for times when there are a large number of people staying at the ranch. It is not economically feasible to serve just a few people. When they do have these meals, the Meador family treats them as family cookouts and eats with the guests. These functions are usually held at Live Oak Lodge.

There is a swimming tank, and pits for horseshoe and washer pitching.

## Price

Room rates are \$50 to \$90 single occupancy and \$40 to \$80 double occupancy, with a two-night minimum recommended. Children or extra persons are \$20 to \$50 per night. Weekly rates are \$345 to \$555 single occu-







pancy and \$300 to \$480 double occupancy. Children or extra persons are \$135 to \$215. Rates do not include tax, and they are per person. This includes breakfast and all guest activities except horseback riding.

Single day access is \$4.00 per person per day plus tax, \$3.00 plus tax for children 12 and under. Camping is an additional \$6 per person, \$4.25 for children 12 and under. There is a per visit mountain bike fee of \$2.00 plus tax; the fee is included in the lodging fee if the guest is staying overnight. For example, a family of four with both children under 12 would pay \$22 plus tax for one day of mountain biking (\$6 per adult and \$5 per child). If the same family stayed two days and one night, the total fee would be \$36 plus tax (\$10 per adult and \$8 per child).

Guided horseback rides are \$14.00 per person for an open ride, and \$20.00 per person for a trail ride. Open rides occur when the visitor is allowed to help round up cattle or ride freely on the land. The Meadors use their judgement to determine if a guest has the ability and skill level necessary for this activity. A guided ride using the visitor's horse is \$8.00.

## Promotion

The X Bar Ranch has its own Web site ([www.xbarranch.com](http://www.xbarranch.com)) and has also been mentioned on or linked to from many other Web sites, including Texas Trails (<http://www.tourtexas.com/@txtrailhill.html>) and Texas Forts Trail (<http://www.xbarranch.com/fortpage.htm>). The Internet is their biggest marketing tool, along with word-of-mouth. They have been mentioned in the *Texas Travel Guide*, *Texas Accommodation Guide*, *San Angelo Visitor's Guide*, and materials from the Sonora Chamber of Commerce.

Stan has found that getting mentioned in local and regional newspapers is a matter of networking with the local press, and costs little but your time. The X Bar is often written up in Hill

Country publications. Stan is working on getting into *Texas Parks and Wildlife* and similar publications. An article on the ranch appeared in *Texas Monthly*. *Southern Living* has also visited the ranch.

X-bar has a glossy color brochure to send out on request. They also trade these brochures with other ranchers, and have put fliers in their lodge

for other ranches such as Bluff Creek Ranch. Their brochure can also be found in such places as the nearby Sonora Caverns, and they will be distributing their brochures to other locations along the Texas Forts Trail. The Meadors are planning a more targeted direct mail campaign and are compiling a database for that purpose.

## Partnerships

One partnership is with an outfitter who rents an old house on a section of the land near the lodge. He fixed up the house in exchange for several months' rent, and handles the turkey and deer hunting operation, which allows Stan and the rest of the family to concentrate on other activities. There is an adjoining cabin that the outfitter can rent to hunters, and he also leases the guest-house next to the main ranch house during hunting season in order to provide more lodging. Profits from the hunting leases are shared with the X Bar Ranch.

The administrative work is partially handled by the Meador Land Co.'s secretary. She answers the phones for reservation and information requests, and also helps out at the lodges on occasion by cleaning cabins.

Partnerships within the family are also important.

The Meadors are members of the Texas Nature Tourism Association, a subdivision of The Texas Travel Industry Association. They are also members of the Texas Guest Ranch Association, Texas Hotel & Motel Association, and the Texas Longhorn Breeders Association of America. Stan believes that these memberships are worthwhile if you invest the time to network with other members. Another advantage is that they link your business to their Web pages. The membership fee is dependent on the size and income level of your business.

## People

This is an extended family business, with Lynn Meador acting as "swing man," Stan Meador handling the tourism enterprise, and Chris Meador running the traditional ranch functions. Ed Meador lends a hand wherever needed by his son and grandsons. Chris and Stan also help each other out as needed. Stan and Lynn are the two people guests deal with; however, other members of the family have also visited with guests and helped out with cooking, trail rides, etc. Stan han-



dles all management and event planning, as well as socializing with the guests and helping Lynn ensure that they enjoy their visit.

## Risk Management

A family member, usually Lynn or Stan, always accompanies guests on horseback rides.

IMBA rules are posted and helmets are required for all mountain bike riders.

There is a regular farm and ranch liability policy, as well as a separate liability policy for the guest ranch operation that costs about \$2,300 per year. This covers horseback riding, camping and other recreational activities. The policy has a \$500 deductible.

## Future

The Audubon Society visited the ranch to catalog birds and the Meadors will be expanding the wildlife viewing area around one gully that attracts birds.

They will be improving the cabins as income allows, increasing the number of campsites near the lodge, adding picnic tables to the campsites, and also adding RV hookups.

They want to increase the mountain biking and hiking business, and are looking for clubs that would be good partners in this venture. Their remote location, three hours west of San Antonio, makes this difficult.

Within the next 10 years, Stan would like to be able to turn over the day-to-day guest ranch operations to someone else. The key is finding the proper person to manage the enterprise. Part of the solution may lie in an internship program with the local high school and/or Texas Tech University. Stan plans for the X Bar to participate in these programs to help train students in guest operations and management. Ideally, one of the local students will enter the program and see this as a great way to continue to live and work in Eldorado. It is also another way to obtain publicity for the ranch.

## Q's

### Questions

Stan is curious about the longevity of recreational tourism on private lands. His concern is that ranchers will not be financially able to stay in it long enough to get the industry well established.

### Advice

Stan's advice is to do your research and make sure you will be committed to the business for the long term, as it will take 5 years or more to earn a dependable income from this type of enterprise. Make sure you are prepared to offer constant care and service to your guests.





# Montgomery-Fulk Ranch



## Background

The Montgomery-Fulk-Walker Ranch is located 26 miles south of Fort Stockton, Texas enroute to Big Bend National Park. Homesteaded in the early 1900s, the 60,000-acre ranch has been in the family for almost 100 years. Joe Montgomery, the original owner, left the land to his four daughters, resulting in a variety of names for different sections of the ranch. The family also owns a ranch in the Guadalupe Mountains, and another north of Fort Stockton. Scott Furman has been running the ranch since 1989, leasing the Montgomery-Fulk portion of the land from that side of the family. He and his wife Kenda live on the Walker Ranch portion of the property. These two properties (Montgomery-Fulk and Walker) total 30,000 acres. The Furmans raise cattle and goats, offer hunting leases, and hold gas company leases, which Scott manages. Royalties go to the older generation.

## Landscape

The Montgomery-Fulk ranch, as it is commonly known, is more than 4,000 feet above sea level in the Glass Mountains between Fort Stockton and Marathon. The land is covered with mesquite and cedar, and the many hills make it easy to lose sight of familiar landmarks. Wildlife on the ranch includes mountain lions, javelina, mule deer and turkey.

## Recreational Tourism Start-Up

Kenda attended the Texas Nature Tourism Workshop in Austin several years ago, and decided that tourism was a viable option for diversifying their income. It would also allow her to stay at home with the Furmans' children.



Subsequently, Kenda participated in a pilot program that offered specific tour packages through Texas Parks and Wildlife. Kenda received several calls in response to this program, and found that most people simply wanted a place to stay rather than organized activities. So, she decided to focus on a bed and breakfast enterprise. Scott's great-grandfather's first house is located about 2 miles from the ranch entrance, and it was renovated for the bed and breakfast. The Furmans named it Glass Mountain Manor and opened in 1995.

## Guests

Most of their guests come from Texas, although they have had two groups from out of the country (England and Australia) and others from New Mexico and Illinois. Most of their Texas visitors come from Houston, Austin, Midland, and the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. They have attracted a number of I-10 travelers

## Product and Programming

### *Traditional*

The Furmans have about 400 cattle, 100 Spanish goats, and 50 Boer goats. Scott also keeps about 15 horses. He manages the ranching activities with the help of Jaime, their one full-time ranch hand, and other help hired as needed.

### *Trail Based Activities*

Kenda envisioned Glass Mountain Manor as a bed and breakfast, with additional activities as

requested. Most guests come simply to get away from the city, or to use the ranch as a base for touring the surrounding areas, including Big Bend, Fort Stockton and Fort Davis. Guests often hike, and some bring mountain bikes. There are no formal trails on the property; guests use the





ranch roads or cut through the bush. Some guests like to tag along with Scott as he performs his ranch duties.

Kenda arranges excursions for guests at their request, including trips to the winery outside Fort Stockton. Scott and Jaime also escort guests on tours of the ranch and area, but this service is not often requested as most people entertain themselves.

The Furmans' home is 10 miles from Glass Mountain Manor on another section of the ranch, so Kenda does not prepare breakfast in the typical bed and breakfast fashion. Instead, when people call for a reservation Kenda asks them what they would like for breakfast. She then stocks the refrigerator accordingly and guests prepare their own breakfast.

## Facilities

Glass Mountain Manor is a four bedroom, one bath ranch house. There is a full kitchen and dining area, and a living room. They have cable TV, but no phone. The yard is surrounded by a three-foot high wall, with a Bar-B-Que, table and chairs available for guests to use. There is a watering hole near the house, and guests can watch wildlife drinking there in the evening.

Because there is only one bathroom, they rent the house as a whole, and not by the room. Each room in the house is decorated in a different theme, for example, the cowboy room. This room has Scott's great-grandfather's chaps hanging on the wall. All rooms are decorated with family mementos, and each bedroom has a printed and framed ranch story hanging on the wall.

The kitchen and pantry are fully stocked with dishes, pots, utensils, etc., and there are also standard supplies such as coffee, tea, sugar and other condiments provided. Kenda tells guests to help themselves, and they do not need to clean when they leave. Most do, but

Kenda does not want people to feel that they have to clean up after themselves.

## Investment

They spent a few thousand dollars renovating the ranch house into Glass Mountain Manor, but other than that have not invested any money in their tourism operation.

## Price

The Furmans charge \$75 per night for up to two adults, plus \$10 per additional adult, and \$5 per additional child under six. This price includes lodging and breakfast, as well as hiking and mountain biking. They charge an additional \$50 per person for guided excursions.

They have a toll-free number for reservations and information, and also have an e-mail address that people can use for reservations. Most of their inquiries come from the Internet.

## Promotion

Texas Parks and Wildlife wrote a story on private places in Texas, one of which was Glass Mountain Manor. They are also listed in the *Texas Travel Guide*, *Texas Travel Passport*, *Texas Cooperative*, and the Big Bend area travel guide. They get calls from all of these sources, but have found newspaper ads to be useless.

They do not have their own Web site, but have a page linked to the Fort Stockton tourist Web site (<http://www.tourtexas.com/fortstockton/ftstockmotels.html>).

They have a brochure/rack card that they distribute to travel centers around Texas. They have found the Internet and word-of-mouth to be their biggest sources of publicity.

## Partnerships

The family runs the ranch and all associated activities. Kenda refers people who want to horseback ride to Prude Ranch, but there is not a formal partnership.

## People

Kenda Furman was the tourist director in Fort Stockton years ago, so she has good knowledge of and contacts with the other surrounding attractions. She is also an experienced marketer in this regard, and is familiar with the tourist industry.

Scott Furman handles the ranching activities (live-stock, gas and hunting), as well as assisting Kenda with the tourism branch of their business. He has an





endless supply of family and ranch stories with which to entertain visitors.

Jaime assists Scott with the livestock, and has also helped with visitors by giving tours of the ranch.

### **Risk Management**

They have a \$1 million umbrella policy that covers recreation. The policy is piggybacked onto the Walker ranch policy. They formed a Limited Liability Corporation, Round Mountain Enterprises, which includes hunting leases, the Bed & Breakfast, gas leases, and all traditional

ranching activities. This corporation setup requires them to pay corporate taxes, but it limits their liability.

### **Future**

If and when the ranch house is booked often enough for them to consider more facilities, there is a cabin located near the ranch house that could be fixed up for additional lodging. However, the cabin is in need of extensive repairs that would total well over \$10,000, so they will not take on this task unless the demand is sufficient to make it worthwhile.

### **Advice**

Do not expect to make a lot of money quickly, so be careful about your initial investment. You must also be people oriented, and be flexible.

A





## References

Cordell, K. (1995). *Outdoor Recreation in American Life: A National Assessment of Demand and Supply Trends*. Sagamore Publishing.

National Survey on Recreation and the Environment. (1995). See: Emerging Markets for Outdoor Recreation in the United States. Cordell, et al. Available: [www.outdoorlink.com/infosource/nsre/index.htm](http://www.outdoorlink.com/infosource/nsre/index.htm)

Texas A&M University. (1998). See: Texas Outdoors: A Vision for the Future. Witt & Brown, et al. Available: [www.rpts.tamu.edu/tpwd/contrib.htm](http://www.rpts.tamu.edu/tpwd/contrib.htm)

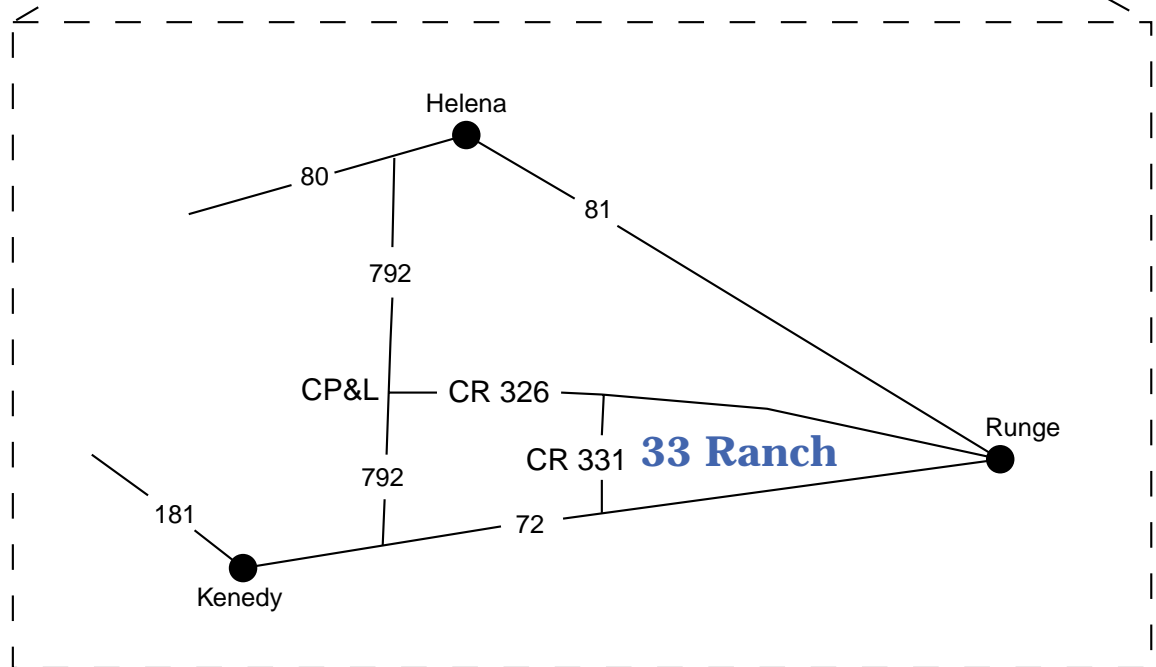
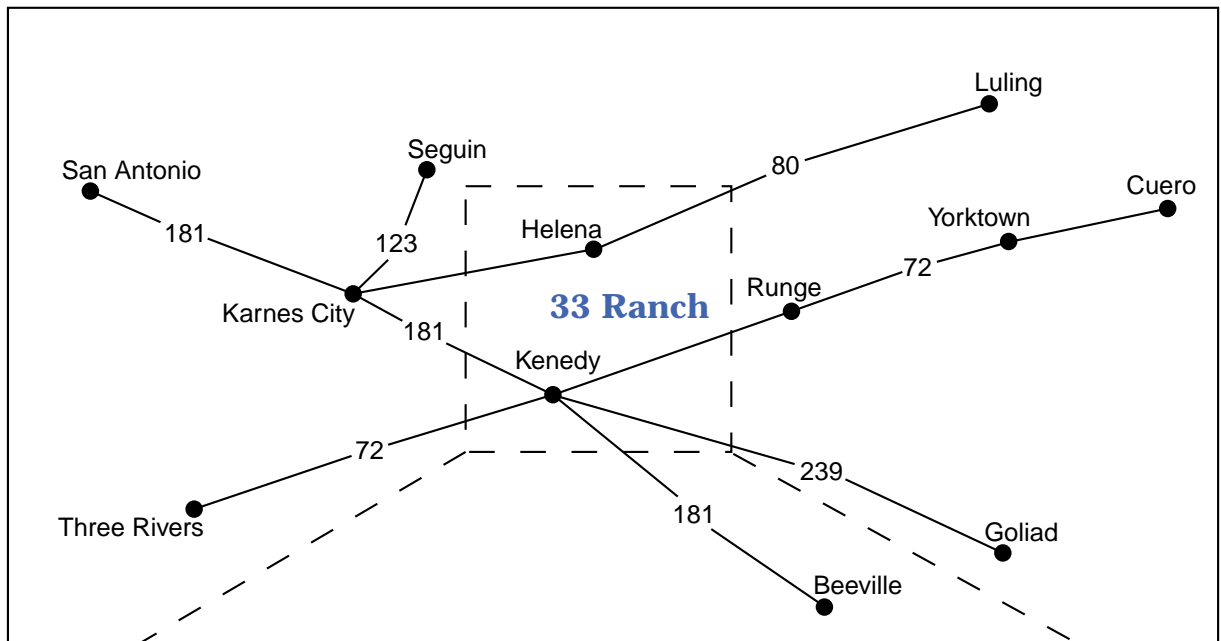






# Appendix One: Sample Local Map

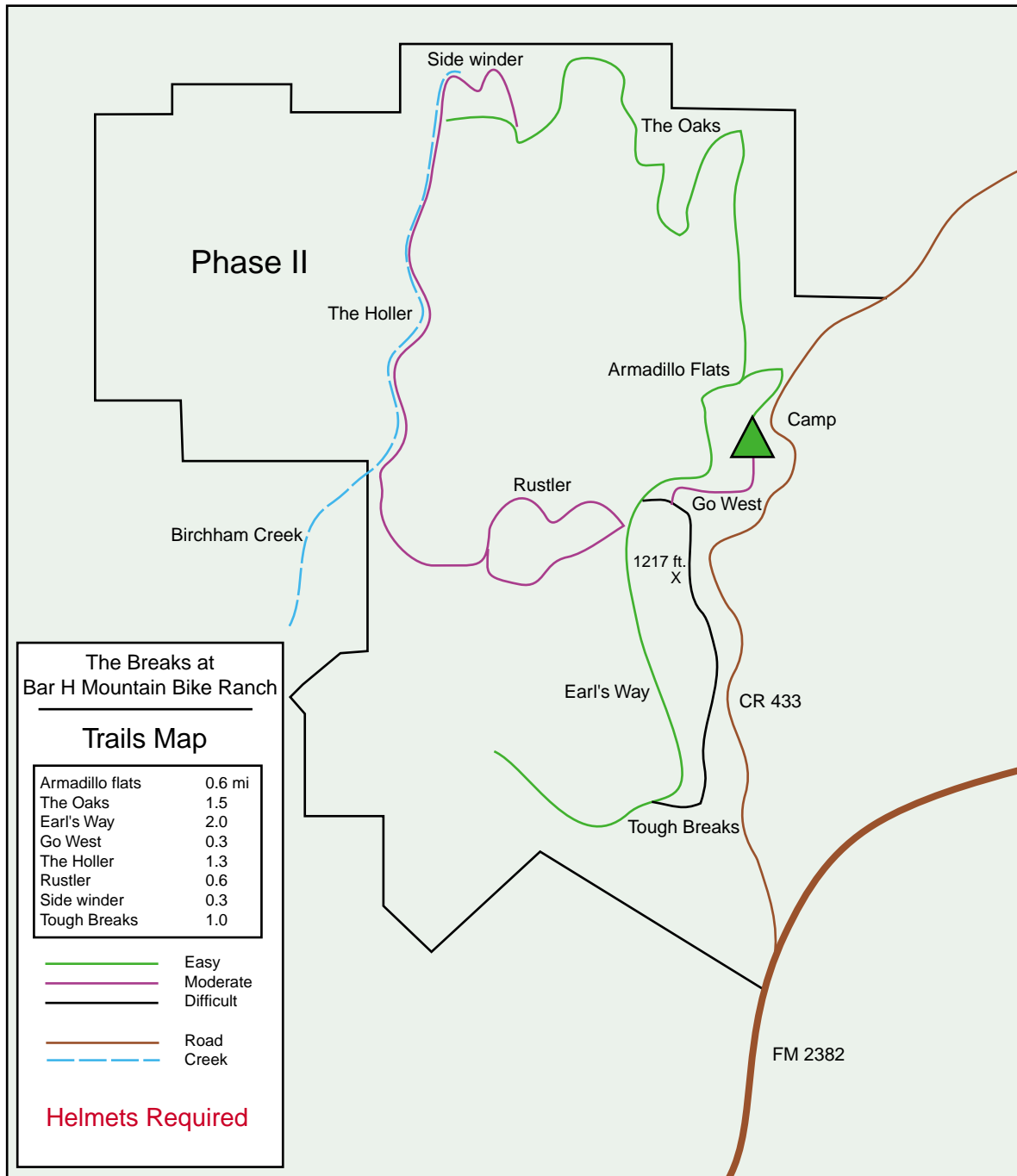
## 33 Ranch Map



- From Kenedy** go east on 72 for approximately 1 mile to 792–go north on 792 for 1 mile to CR 326–go right on CR 326 for 4 miles to CR 331–go right on CR 331  $\frac{1}{10}$  mile to gates on left.
- From Helena** go south on 80 to 792–go left on 792 to CR 326–go left on CR 326 for 4 miles to CR 331–go right on CR 331 for  $\frac{1}{10}$  mile to gates on left.
- From Runge** go south on 72 to CR 331–go right on CR 331 approximately 4 miles to gates on right.



# Appendix Two: Sample Trails Map





## Appendix Three: Basic Information on a Landowner's Liability When Offering Recreational Activities on Private Agricultural Land

These are guidelines and are intended only to provide basic information about what landowners can expect in terms of their liability. Anyone considering adding recreational use to his or her enterprise should seek specific legal advice.

Liability depends on classification at the time of injury: The following are basic common-law classifications for people who might be on your land.

- 7) Invitees—This is the classification that fee-paying trail users would normally fall under.
- 8) Licensees—These people are social guests such as friends and family (permitted to enter without paying).
- 9) Trespassers—These people do not have permission to enter your land. However, if you meet certain requirements (see below) the law places invitee recreational trail riders into the trespassers category. This acts to reduce the level of care owed by the landowner.
- 10) Children—Unaccompanied by an adult, they have less ability to make their own sound judgements and therefore require a higher level of care (Attractive Nuisance Doctrine).

### Statutory Classification

If certain requirements are met, Chapter 75 of the Texas Civil Practices and Remedies Code says that recreational guests fall into the same category as trespassers in terms of what you, the landowner, owe them in reasonable care. If your land is agricultural land (as defined by statute of Chapter 75, and it's a broad definition), and if guests are on the land for recreational purposes and you're bringing in less than four times last year's ad valorem taxes in fees, then in the eyes of the law you owe recreational guests no more than what you'd owe a trespasser.

If you are bringing in more than four times your ad valorem taxes in fees, then you can still meet these Chapter 75 requirements by carrying minimum liability insurance.

Minimum liability insurance coverage on agricultural land used for recreation is:

- \$500,000 for each person
- \$100,000 single occurrence for each injury or death
- \$1,000,000 single occurrence for property damage

So, if a landowner is providing recreation for a fee on agricultural lands and carries minimum coverage liability insurance (as indicated above), the law equates the level of care owed those recreational users with that of a trespasser no matter how much money the activity generates for the owner.

Keys to limiting liability regarding recreational visitors

1. Meet your common-law duty. If a person is classified by law as an "invitee" or "licensee," you must give adequate and timely notice of concealed or latent perils. If a person is classified by law as a "trespasser," the landowner owes them no legal duty. The law basically says that a landowner may not willfully harm a trespasser except in self-defense or to protect property.
2. Comply with Chapter 75 charging limits. This means that you must know how much you are bringing in relative to how much tax you pay. If you bring in less than four times the amount of the tax on your land annually you may be less concerned about having the minimum liability coverage. If you bring in more than four times the tax annually you should have minimum liability coverage.





3. Carry minimum liability coverage as specified above no matter what you are earning.
4. Get waivers (developed with legal advice) from all recreational users.

Have a statement in the waiver that releases the landowner from any acts arising “from the landowner’s or sponsor’s negligence.”

In the waiver, make the release provision conspicuous. For example, use bold face print and/or place the negligence statement on a separate page and ask participants to sign it separately.

5. Though not required when dealing with those classified as “trespasser,” inspect your land on a regular basis to see if problem areas exist and either warn people or make the conditions safe.





# Appendix Four: Sample Waiver Form

(Sample only. Any waiver should be developed with the assistance of a legal consultant.)

## Ranch Name Warning

UNDER TEXAS LAW (CHAPTER 87, CIVIL PRACTICE AND REMEDIES CODE). AN EQUINE PROFESSIONAL IS NOT LIABLE FOR AN INJURY TO OR THE DEATH OF A PARTICIPANT IN EQUINE ACTIVITIES RESULTING FROM INHERENT RISKS OF EQUINE ACTIVITIES.

I, the undersigned, am aware the **Ranch Name** is a working cattle ranch, and that barbed wire fences, windmills, stock ponds, farm equipment, etc., may be dangerous. I am also aware that horses and cattle can by nature be unpredictable, and even the most outwardly tame animal may be dangerous under certain conditions. Horses and cattle may bite, strike, step on, push down, rear up, buck, run over, etc., which may cause injury or in extreme cases even death.

I, in consideration for participation in this trail ride/equine activity, release **Ranch Name, owners names**, all owners of the land on which this trail ride/equine activity and its associated events take place, and all other persons connected with this trail ride/equine activity and its associated events, and the representatives, officers, employees, agents, and assigns of all the above, from any claims and/or liability of any kind, whether arising from personal injury, death, property damage or otherwise, that may result from participation of me or any member of my family, no matter what the nature or cause. I further agree to indemnify and hold harmless all of the above from any and all damages, costs, charges, expenses and legal fees incurred by the above resulting from any accident, injury, damage or loss incurred by any third party in any way resulting from any acts or omissions on my part or by anyone in my charge, whether such acts or omissions were intentional, accidental, or negligent. I certify that I fully understand the risks involved with equine activities, including but not limited to obvious or hidden dangers on property on which the trail ride/equine activity is held, and freely assume the risk that I or any member of my family may suffer, including but not limited to personal injury, death, or property damage, by participation in this event. I certify that I have read this release and agree to same and further agree to abide by all of the rules and regulations of the trail ride/equine activity.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

In case of emergency, contact:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) and D.O.B. of child(ren) if release is for minor

Name

D.O.B.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent/guardian providing release

Name (please print)



## Appendix Five: Trail Related Resources

### Potential Partners: Trail Construction and/or Activity Programming

Austin Ridge Riders Mountain Bike Club  
<http://www.io.com/austinridgeriders/index.html>

Houston Area Mountain Bike Association  
<http://www.freeweb.pdq.net/fletch/hambra.htm>

Texas Equestrian Trail Riders Association  
<http://www.texasailriding.com/index3.htm>

### Consultants: Trail and Campsite Design and Construction

Tony Boone  
Arrowhead Trails, Inc.  
P.O. Box 533  
Nederland, CO 80466-0533  
E-mail: [ati@mountain-bikes.com](mailto:ati@mountain-bikes.com)  
Web: <http://www.mountain-bikes.com>

Ken Johnson  
Tejas Tierra Services  
P.O. Box 11077  
College Station, TX 77842  
(979) 873-2552

### Agency Support

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
Land Conservation Program  
4200 Smith School Road  
Austin, TX 78744-3292

Kathryn Nichols  
[kathryn.nichols@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:kathryn.nichols@tpwd.state.tx.us)  
(512) 389-4735

Andy Goldbloom  
[andy.goldbloom@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:andy.goldbloom@tpwd.state.tx.us)  
(512) 389-4737

### Trail Construction Guides

*A Guide to Trail Building on Public and Private Lands in Texas*

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
Comprehensive Planning Branch  
4200 Smith School Road  
Austin, TX 78744  
(512) 479-4900

### *Trail Construction and Maintenance*

Order free from:  
USDA Forest Service  
Bldg. 1, Fort Missoula  
Missoula, MT 59804-7294  
(406) 329-3900

### Liability Information

Judon Fambrough  
Attorney-at-Law  
The Real Estate Center  
313 Wehner  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, TX 77843-2115

### Study Participants

The Bluff Creek Ranch, Warda, Texas  
Paul and Susan Nolan, Owners/Operators

The Breaks at Bar H Ranch, St. Jo, Texas  
Billy Hutson and Tia Hutson-Waltersheid, Owners/Operators

Kelly Creek Ranch, Kerrville, Texas  
Dean Dominigue, Owner/Operator

Montgomery-Fulk Ranch, Ft. Stockton, Texas  
Scott and Kenda Furman, Owners/Operators

Rocky Hill Ranch, Smithville, Texas  
Rick Phouts, Operator

The 33 Ranch, Kenedy, Texas  
Matt and Stacia Jauer, Owners/Operators

X Bar Ranch, Eldorado, Texas  
Stan Meador, Owner/Operator







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