



Sun Ranch Institute Announces Ecological and Community Outreach Programs

Montana nonprofit promotes healthy local communities, sustainable ranching and conservation

Cameron, Montana – July 9, 2007 – Sun Ranch Institute (SRI), a Montana-based nonprofit organization supporting viable local communities, sustainable ranching, and the conservation of Western lands will pursue several new ecological monitoring and community outreach projects this summer, announced Roger Lang, chairman of SRI's board and owner of the Sun Ranch near Cameron.

"We're taking a win-win approach to preserving the American West – advancing ways that traditional Western lifestyles and conservation can reinforce each other and promote healthy communities and habitat," says Lang. "SRI's first partnerships with Sun Ranch and Papoose Creek Lodge are helping us understand how communities and science-driven conservation can build stronger, more sustainable rural economies."

The appointments of SRI Executive Director Joshua Spitzer and a seasonal staff of six have allowed the nonprofit to ramp up its efforts this spring and summer. Institute Program Associate Amy Robinson will be studying public opinions in the Greater-Yellowstone Ecosystem to identify community priorities. Stanford University Postdoctoral Fellow Karen Levy will pilot a travelers' philanthropy program that will connect Papoose Creek Lodge guests to local Madison Valley causes and organizations. Sun Ranch's sister property Papoose Creek Lodge (www.papoosecreek.com) is an award-winning eco-lodge that offers its guests luxurious seclusion, outdoor adventure and personalized learning for a meaningful connection to nature.

On the Sun Ranch, SRI's Science Program Manager Jeremy Roberts is beginning a multi-year assessment of the effects of holistic ranch management on native plants and animals, and the Institute is inventorying Montana Species of Concern on the ranch to develop conservation methods compatible with profitable cattle raising. The Sun Ranch holistically manages over 25,000 acres of rangeland in the Madison Valley; its efforts have increased grass production and livestock performance while improving river ecosystems and preserving habitat for game and other species. Finally, SRI will be coordinating studies of the ecologically important Squaw Creek, measuring the impact of ranch road improvements on water quality, invasive weeds, and bear habitat and behavior.

SRI's ongoing partnerships also include an innovative program that allows cattle and native predators to coexist on the ranch, and the Sun Ranch Westslope Cutthroat Trout Recovery Initiative, which works to restore this native species in and around Yellowstone National Park.

The nonprofit Sun Ranch Institute collaborates with residents, ranchers, conservation groups, and economic-development organizations throughout the Greater-Yellowstone Ecosystem to maximize environmental, social, and economic value in the American West. For more information, contact Joshua Spitzer, 406.600.0634.

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