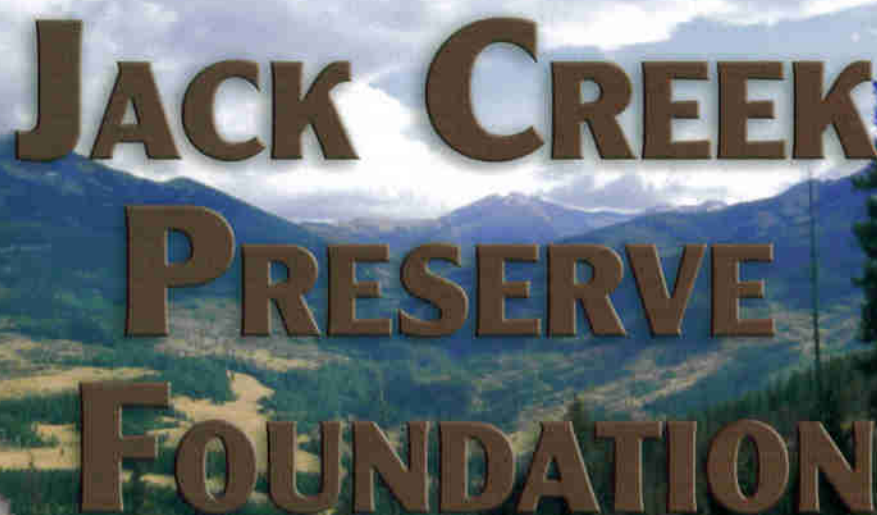


S P R I N G S C O N S E R V A T I O N P R O J E C T



JACK CREEK PRESERVE FOUNDATION

In this day and age hunting access to private property is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain in many areas.

In the west it is not uncommon for large ranches that previously provided public hunting to be bought up with locked gates happening immediately thereafter. It is indeed refreshing when a large landowner has a vision that specifically includes the welfare of the wildlife habitat, furthering conservation education and providing public hunting, especially when it involves youngsters. Such is the case with the 5,000 acre ranch located east of Ennis, Montana that is owned by Jon and Dottie Fossil.

Rich in wildlife resources, the landscape contains a significant number of elk, mule deer and black bears. In addition, a number of moose, mountain lions and whitetails inhabit the property that provides a wildlife corridor connecting the northern and southern portions of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness. Occasionally grizzly bears and wolves are seen as they move through the area. There are several small creeks and high mountain lakes, many of which have extensive trout populations.

The Jack Creek Preserve Foundation was established earlier this year when the Fossil's set aside their ranch as a haven for wildlife, hunting and outdoor learning. The JCPF is especially concerned about the long-term effects of well-practiced conservation management particularly for the betterment of wildlife and wildlife habitat to enable future generations to enjoy outdoor recreation opportunities. Hunting ethics and the

role of the hunter as a conservationist are major principles that the Foundation embraces.

The JCPF's mission statement is to conserve and protect wildlife and its habitat in the preserve and the surrounding area.

To provide educational opportunities that give young people a deeper understanding of and involvement with:

- Habitat ecology and conservation
- Wildlife management
- Hunter conservationists
- Ethical hunting
- Bowhunting

The Jack Creek Preserve will develop as a "Youth Conservation Center" to be used for bowhunting, fishing, camping, hiking, educational field trips, cross country skiing, and other outdoor recreation, as well as year-round conservation activities. It is overseen by a volunteer board of directors consisting of five members of the Fossil family, two representatives of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, one representative each from the Boone and Crockett Club, Pope and Young Club (Stan Rauch) and Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and two students and a teacher from Ennis High School.



The Club provided a \$5,000 conservation grant to the Jack Creek Preserve Foundation in direct support of its archery programs and the funds were used to construct a cabin on the archery range. The building is designed for hanging and/or working on bows, includes a storage area for archery equipment, plus it has a lounging area where archers can socialize. Overall, it serves as an excellent complement to the archery range that opened in July and is available for use by the public by prior arrangement.

Lead by the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, a collaborative effort with the Boone and Crockett Club and the Pope and Young Club saw the realization of the first Jack Creek Preserve Youth Camp on July 23 & 24. P&Y Club member Jerry Karsky was a valuable member of the camp

"We look on the preserve as a joint venture between our family and three of America's most outstanding conservation organizations, all of which share our passion about educating future generations about the importance of protecting wildlife and their habitat", said the Fossels.

A dedicated bowhunter and P&Y Club member, Jon Fossel generously donated two youth bow elk hunts for the live auction at the Springfield, Missouri biennial convention in support of the Club's conservation program. These are certain to be high quality bowhunting experiences on the vast mountain ranch that commonly has 800 -1,000 elk on it during the fall months.



P&Y Club member Jerry Karsky assisting a camper, with Jon Fossel observing on the right

staff in helping the 25 young campers experience the fun of shooting the bow and arrow. Other learning and skill activities included GPS and compass navigation, elk bugling, noxious weed identification, and outdoor survival skills.

Later in the summer the first women's archery training class was held.

"It's our sincere wish to ensure there always will be an opportunity for America's youth to gain first hand knowledge of wildlife conservation, habitat protection, ethical hunting, sustainable use of natural resources, and an understanding of how hunters, ranchers, loggers and developers can work together to benefit people and wildlife" said Jon Fossel.

With the youth conservation education activities at the Jack Creek Preserve just getting under way this past summer, no doubt many more great things are yet to come. The Pope and Young Club is pleased to be directly involved with this outstanding endeavor.