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News Release

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National Forest Permittee Earns Prestigious Range Management Award

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



Figure 1: Southworth Brother's Ranch is a respected employer of a knowledgeable and capable crew to whom they also credit highly for the success of their ranch.

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

The Southworth Ranch started with a 160-acre homestead established by Jack's great-grandfather, William Sawyer Southworth, in 1885. It was the first fenced homestead in Bear Valley and was originally settled as a place to provide hay for the oxen he used for his sawmill near Fall Mountain. Jack's great-grandmother, Minnie, was the first post mistress for the original Seneca Post Office in 1895 located at the present day ranch headquarters and shop. The Southworth's also ran a store and did some freighting, which allowed them to purchase additional homesteads that became available later. Jack's grandfather, Ed, and his brother Webster "Tepty" Southworth partnered in the original Southworth Brothers Ranch. Jack's parents, Bill and Jo, took over in 1948, and Jack and Teresa took over management of the operation in 1978.



Figure 2: Employee Lucas Moore accepts the award from Malheur NF Supervisor, Steve Beverlin, on Behalf of Southworth Brother's Ranch.

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

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

His father wasn't at all pleased. "My dad was a tough old World War II Marine and he was pretty well set in his ways," says Jack.



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“Maybe it was a generational thing. Dad tried to control the land. My approach is to go with what nature gives you.”

The allotment pastures containing streams are managed to promote healthy willows along the stream banks. Ideas to maintain and increase healthy willows and good stream condition are most often initiated by Jack, his livestock managers, and riders on the Forest. Jack may be most proud of his willows. Healthy, dense stands line both sides of Silvies’ River, which meanders across the ranch. It didn’t look like this when Jack was growing up. In fact, he remembers using a tractor to pull the very last willow clump out of the ground, under orders from his father, when he was twelve.

Jack and his wife wrote out a three-part goal statement for their ranch. The first two parts focus on community and livestock well-being. The third reads:

“To bring about the quality of life and products we desire we need a dense stand of perennial grasses with some shrubs. We want the ground between plants to be covered with decaying plant litter. We want the streams to be lined with willows, home to beaver and good habitat for trout. We want the precipitation we receive to stay on the ranch as long as possible and to leave here as late season stream flows or plant growth.”



Figure 3: Long term trend monitoring by the District Range Specialists documents changes including ecological status, bank stability, and stream width over time.



Figure 4: Lucas Moore shows monitoring that documented perennial grasses remaining in the channel of the flow pattern after grazing.

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

Jack and his ranch hands regularly participate in formal trainings with Forest Consultants and Range Managers on their allotments about measuring livestock use and stream health. Short term annual livestock use monitoring documents short term use levels from herding and pasture rotation strategies.

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

Ranch hands frequently move the cattle in collected herds to portions of the large pastures with adequate feed and water. Natural boundaries such as rim rock, ridges,

and stretches of partially fenced streams are often used strategically to hold cattle for short periods until they are moved again. Specific areas within a large pasture are often grazed in a different order each growing season through herd control to promote good plant community diversity, health and resilience.

As a benefit of their land ethic, wildlife abounds throughout their property, which provides year-round habitat for elk, deer, antelope, small mammals, fish, raptors and other birds, as well as seasonal habitat for migratory birds that visit their flooded meadows in the spring.

Learning the needs of healthy natural resources on National Forest, the behavior and responses of livestock in the Forest



Figure 5: Downed poles and small logs are left along trailing routes to minimize any erosion and improve their appearance – while still allowing for livestock to be herded effectively to the next scheduled grazing area.

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

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

Current Harney County Restoration Collaborative Leader, Jack can now add this accomplishment to his growing list. The 2010 Grant County Stockgrower of the year Award is one of several awards the Southworth's have received in recognition from their contributions to agriculture. The ranch was a recipient of the Conservation Farm Award from Grant County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and in 2009. Jack was also inducted into the Oregon State University Agricultural Hall of Fame.



Figure 6: Daily herding and summer allotment work has evolved and adapted with Forest Standards by individually developing and currently using successful herding and pasture rotation methods.