

RESTORATION

In 1991, the Forest Service started the preservation and restoration process to stabilize the Main Boulder Ranger Station, paying close attention to historic detail. Because of its historic and architectural significance, the Station itself, having served for more than 100 years, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It is widely recognized as a historic remnant, representative of the early era of the American conservation movement.

Today, a visit to the site allows visitors to look back into the past and experience what it was like to live and work in the Boulder area in the early days.



Driving directions to the Station:

From Big Timber, Montana, take State Route 298 south for 27.5 miles, then watch for signs on your right.

**For more information,
call the Yellowstone Ranger District at
406-222-1892**

WELCOME TO THE HISTORIC MAIN BOULDER RANGER STATION



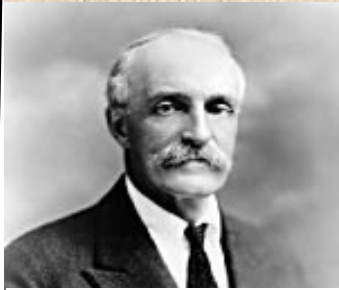
Located 30 miles south of Big Timber, Montana, the Main Boulder Ranger Station reflects the early years of the Forest Service and the commitment of the United States to the conservation movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The historic Ranger Station represents perhaps the oldest facility in the Forest Service System and has been painstakingly restored to represent its original character. The Station served as both district headquarters and home to Ranger Harry S. Kaufman and family for almost forty years.

The Station, managed by the Custer Gallatin National Forest, is now open to the public as a house museum which depicts the living and working conditions at what was once a remote ranger station. Interpretive staff is on hand most summer weekends from July through Labor Day to assist you in your visit of the Station. From the parking area, a short, easy paved path, with grades no steeper than 8% leads up to and around the Station. Along the path, interpretive panels share some of the story that the Station has to tell.

FOUNDATION OF THE FOREST

In 1891, the United States Congress passed the Forest Reserve Act, which allowed President Benjamin Harrison to set aside (“reserve”) portions of the public domain for the protection of the natural resources. On March 30 of that year, the President established the nation’s first Forest Reserve, the “Yellowstone Park Timberland Reserve”. This first Reserve was created, in part, to secure a protective buffer around Yellowstone National Park. Ultimately, the Main Boulder area became part of the Absaroka Division of the Yellowstone Forest Reserve.



GIFFORD PINCHOT

In 1905, the Forest Service was created under the leadership of President Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the agency. It was under this guidance that the Forest Service creed was established by Pinchot, to manage these public lands, “for the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run.” In that same year, Ranger Harry Kaufman constructed his headquarters overlooking the Main Boulder River.

Forest Reserves were the forerunners of today’s National Forests which were created in 1907. At that time, the Absaroka Division of the Yellowstone Forest Reserve became the Yellowstone National Forest. That name was later changed to the Absaroka National Forest to avoid confusion with Yellowstone Park. The Main Boulder Ranger Station served as the Boulder District Headquarters and community hub for the Main Boulder area until 1945, when the Absaroka National Forest was consolidated into part of the Gallatin and Custer National Forests, and the Ranger Headquarters moved to Big Timber, Montana.

KAUFMAN LEGACY

Harry Kaufman signed on as a Guard Ranger and was assigned to the Absaroka Division of the Yellowstone Forest Reserve in 1903. As a pre-requisite to the job, Kaufman had to provide two horses, riding and pack outfits, camp equipment and his services twenty-four hours per day in exchange for \$60.00 a month.

In those early days, the concept of conservation, livestock and forest management had not taken root on the public lands in the west and it was pretty tough going for Ranger Kaufman. Kaufman was involved in gun play with trespass stock owners, went after cattle thieves and wildlife poachers, dealt with tough loggers and fought forest fires. Not the least element in public relations those days was the Colt six shooter on Kaufman’s hip.

In 1905, Ranger Kaufman constructed a permanent one room Ranger Station at the mouth of the Main Boulder River Canyon some thirty-four miles north of Yellowstone National Park. From this headquarters and residence, Kaufman administered the activities for about 300,000 acres of National Forest lands.

At first, the one room Station provided adequate space for Ranger Kaufman, but as the work load increased and Kaufman married and began raising a family, the original one room station was not large enough. Over time, two additions were added to the Ranger Station where Harry and Coral Kaufman raised two children, Harry, Jr. and Betty.

