

## JO Ranch NPLD Project

Work for the summer of 2005 focused on erecting fences around the buildings, removing trash that is not historical, and posting signs around the buildings.

Long term goals for the ranch buildings include stabilization efforts to remove hazards to human safety and allow for recreational opportunities, as well as development of an interpretive program.

An interpretive program would encompass all facets of the area including wildlife habitat, a context on historic ranching, historic migration corridors and settlement in Southern Wyoming. A working ranch coexisting with important historical values, crucial winter range for big game and sensitive species habitat provides interpretive and educational opportunities for BLM to showcase multiple use in Southern Wyoming.



BLM employees Mike Jensen and Frank Blomquist carry galvanized fence. Fencing off old buildings was an important first step to the long-term vision for the historic property.

## JO Ranch History

The JO Ranch —1236 acres—was recently acquired by BLM through a Land Exchange. In addition to the outstanding wildlife values, the land is host to livestock grazing operations, historic freight roads, an historic irrigation system, and an historic ranch with associated buildings. The ranch buildings are a unique

example of continuous ranching operations for over 100 years in the Washakie Basin. It is the only property of its kind under BLM jurisdiction in Wyoming.

However, multiple hazards exist at the site for visitors. The threat of hanta virus exists in all of the buildings, and many of the buildings are near collapse. In the past two years alone, the eastern most portion of the barn has been severely damaged by wind.

The land was patented to Joseph P. Rankin in 1885, more famously known for his grueling 28-hour ride from Milk Creek to warn troops at Fort Steele that Major Thornburgh had been killed and the remaining troops were under siege. Joseph's brother James patented land northeast of the buildings, where the present north pasture sits today.

According to records at the Carbon County Courthouse, John and Eliza Doty as well as Stella Dow turned the property that the buildings sit on today over to the Carbon County Sheep and Cattle Company in 1915 in a Quit Claim Deed. Carbon County Sheep and Cattle Company had the lands until 1934 according to Carbon County Records, the next entry is for George Salisbury in 1957.

According to various sources, construction of portions of the barn began in the 1880's, much of that is still present today. One of the sandstone buildings has a block that says 'Erected 1919' and graffiti inside of the barn dates from the 1930's.



Graffiti inside sheep shearing buildings dates to the 1930's.

