

Preservation

The ranch is a uniquely preserved complex of buildings that gives testimony to ranch life and living conditions “out back and beyond.” The Bureau of Land Management has restored and stabilized the structures over the past decade. Work on most of the buildings has been completed, but work remains on the root cellar and blacksmith shop. The repairs are not meant to change the quality or historic representation of the buildings. They are for structural support and preservation of deteriorating pieces so the buildings can exist for present and future generations to enjoy.

Know Before You Go

Access into Riddle Brothers Ranch is regulated by a locked gate during the summer season, which is usually mid-June through October. The gate is open to vehicular travel periodically throughout the week and as conditions allow. Travelers should call the Bureau of Land Management Burns District Office or check the sign on the access gate to find out when the road will be open. Access by foot, bicycle, or horseback is permitted anytime. The road into Riddle is rough, especially during wet conditions. High clearance, four-wheel drive vehicles are recommended.

Amenities at Riddle Brothers Ranch are few. A portable restroom is available for public use, but drinking water, overnight use areas, cell phone service, and other conveniences are not available. Camping at Riddle Brothers Ranch, in the structures or on the lawn, is prohibited. The closest camping facilities are at South Steens Campground, just two miles away. Visitors should avoid disturbing any historical sites or artifacts. Leave these remnants of the past for others to enjoy.

Recreation

Fishing, hiking, horseback riding, exploring, or relaxing along the Little Blitzen River among shady cottonwoods are some of the many activities awaiting you at Riddle Brothers Ranch. Many visitors enjoy discovering the historic structures scattered across the ranch meadows including the Fred Riddle house, Ben Riddle house, barn, bathhouse, and willow corral. Or, hike the Cold Spring Road north of Riddle Brothers Ranch to access portions of Steens Mountain Wilderness, or east cross-country to reach Little Blitzen Gorge. The outstanding scenery and cultural history of the area will make any recreational experience one to remember.

Directions to the Site

From Burns, Oregon, take State Highway 78 southeast for approximately 2 miles. Turn right onto State Highway 205 and travel south for 60 miles to Frenchglen, Oregon. Continue on State Highway 205 through the town of Frenchglen and up “P” Hill. Travel approximately 9 miles, then turn left on the Steens Mountain Loop Road south entrance. The turnoff to Riddle Brothers is approximately 18 miles from State Highway 205.

District Contact Information

Burns District

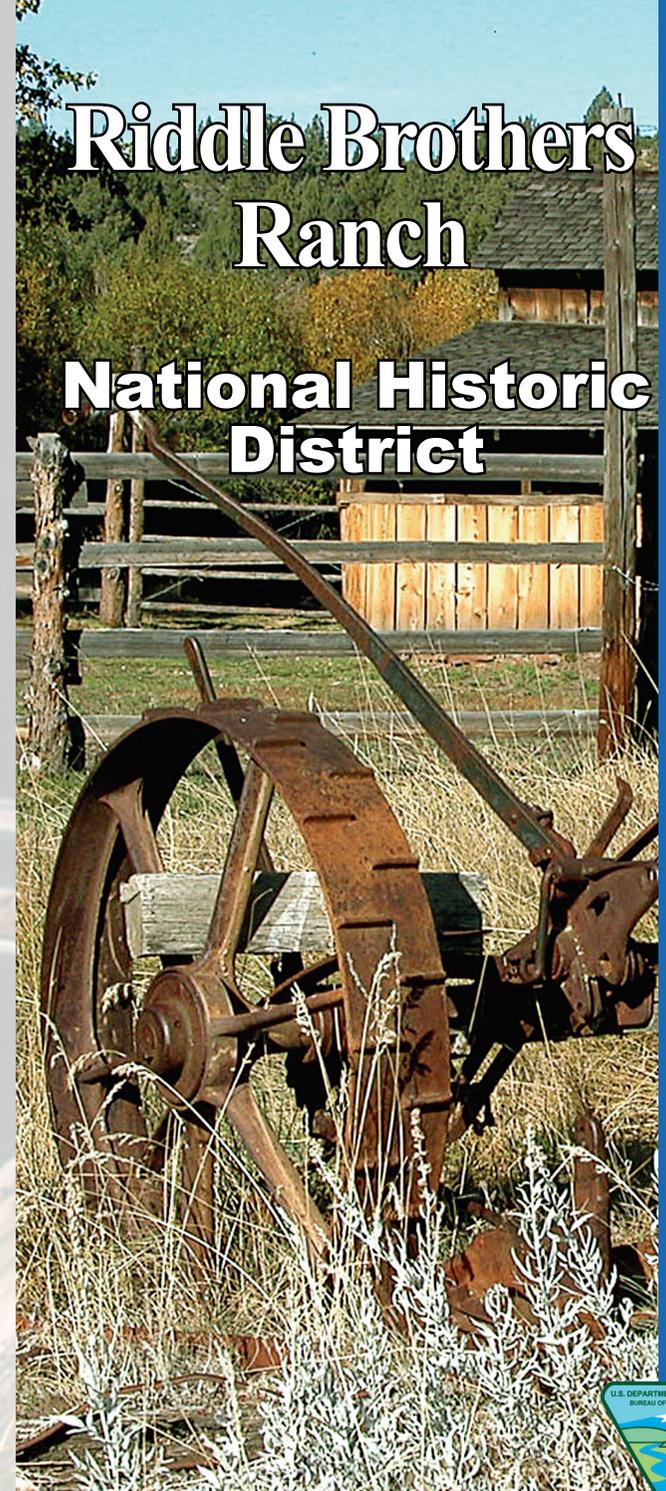
Bureau of Land Management
28910 Hwy 20 West,
Hines, Oregon 97738

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www.or.blm.gov/burns

Riddle Brothers Ranch

National Historic District



BLM

Burns District



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Welcome to Riddle Brothers Ranch National Historic District

Welcome to Riddle Brothers Ranch – a historic piece of Oregon's pioneer settlement and its contribution to the livestock industry in the American West. Walter, Frederick, and Benjamin Riddle were three bachelor brothers who secured home sites and raised livestock in and around the ranch. Migrating from western Oregon, they settled here in the early 1900s and built their ranch by gaining control of water in the area. In the late 1950s the Riddle brothers sold their ranch holdings to Rex Clemens. In 1986 the Bureau of Land Management purchased the property from Rex Clemens and has since managed the ranch for its historic values.

The structures remaining on this ranch and their setting conjure up images of simpler times...homemade housing, handcrafted furnishings, kerosene lights, candles, streams full of trout, and an area favorable to livestock production and the support of wildlife. The Riddle Brothers Ranch was part of Oregon's last frontier, the settlement of semi-arid lands that captured the interest of thousands of speculators and home-seekers in the northern Great Basin between 1900 and 1920.

