

STATE OF COLORADO
COUNTY OF ROUTT

Historic Preservation Board
Regular Meeting
March 15, 2022

Michael Olsen, Chair, called the meeting of the Routt County Historic Preservation Board (HPB) to order. Michelle Smoker, Rita Herold, and Candice Bannister were also present. Minutes prepared by Staff Assistant Samantha Pearce.

EN RE: ROLL CALL FOR QUORUM

EN RE: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Olsen presented and read the minutes. Ms. Herold requested one spelling error changed in the minutes.

MOTION

Ms. Herold moved to approve the minutes with one spelling correction.

Ms. Smoker seconded; the motion carried 4-0.

EN RE: HISTORIC PRESERVATION WEBPAGE

Ms. Pearce requested discussion and direction to update the Historic Preservation webpage on the Routt County website. Discussion included updating the current designations history summary, adding a GIS map, and researching other counties webpage including Gunnison County to model off of. It was also discussed to integrate other historical resources for convenience of readers.

EN RE: NOMINATION APPLICATIONS

FARWELL DITCH

Arianthe Stettner, Noland Farwell, and Rodney Farwell presented.

Ms. Stettner requested the Farwell Ditch be placed on the Routt County Register for Historic properties under statement of significance A. Its character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of Routt County, the State of Colorado, or the United States. C. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to

the culture and development of Routt County. & D. Its exemplification of the cultural, economic, social, or historic heritage of Routt County.

Constructed between 1876 -1878, the 18-mile Farwell Ditch was reportedly the first ditch in Routt County. While subsequent irrigation works in Routt County came to be primarily associated with agriculture, the Farwell Ditch was constructed to provide water for placer and hydraulic mining operations at Hahns Peak. Since the mid-1860s, mining and other resource extraction industries have played major roles in the economic, cultural, and social development of Routt County and the greater region of Northwest Colorado. From the 1870s – early 1900s, the region’s Euro-American population was centered in the “Hans Peak Mining District,” and Hahns Peak was the first seat of Routt County from 1877 – 1912. The construction of the Farwell Ditch represents the shift from simple, low-cost placer mining by individuals on their own claims, to the more consolidated, capital-intensive, and industrialized hydraulic mining of wage laborers paid by small corporations. The Farwell Ditch is also significant for its association with Chicagoans John V. Farwell and Robert McIntosh. In the few years he was active in the area, Farwell significantly aided in Hahns Peak’s early development. He is credited for founding the first wage paying, industrial enterprise in the County. In addition to funding the construction of the ditch, he freighted in and operated the region’s first sawmill, invested in construction and improvement of local roads, and the company town. He is credited for holding the first church service in the County. Hahns Peak historian Thelma Stevenson wrote, “We must credit John Farwell with giving Routt County a mighty big push back in the days when Colorado’s statehood was born.” We must also credit Robert McIntosh, who engineered and supervised construction of the Farwell Ditch. McIntosh came from Chicago to Northwest Colorado to work for Farwell, and he spent the rest of his life in the area. After Farwell moved on, McIntosh took ownership of the company and extended the Farwell Ditch an additional 1 mile to Poverty Bar. When he died at the age of 86, he was known as “one of the oldest and best known of Northwestern Colorado pioneers.”

Round Table:

The Board discussed that the Farwell Ditch did meet the criteria for designation based on the applicant's choice of using Statement and Significance A. Its character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of Routt County, the State of Colorado, or the United States. C. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of Routt County. & D. Its exemplification of the cultural, economic, social, or historic heritage of Routt County. They agreed to approve for reasons A., C., and D.

MOTION

Ms. Herold motioned to approve the Farwell Ditch to the Routt County Register of Historic Properties under statement of significance A., C., & D.

Ms. Bannister seconded; the motion carried 4-0.

Fair Acres Ranch

Ms. Stettner presented.

Ms. Stettner requested the Fair Acres Ranch be placed on the Routt County Register for Historical Properties under Statement of Significance A. Its character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of Routt County, the State of Colorado, or the United States., & D. Its exemplification of the cultural, economic, social, or historic heritage of Routt County.

The Fair Acres Ranch, as it is known in 2022, is significant and increasingly rare example of an early Routt County homestead and high country agricultural operation. The historic ranch house appears nearly unchanged from the county road, and the historic barn, corrals, tool shed and "dog house" that flank the driveway are typical ranch buildings. The house is sheltered by a collection of mature cottonwoods, ponderosa pine, blue spruce, aspen, willows and crabapple trees, planted decades ago by the Gaymon family. The surrounding landscape consists of vast open fields and low rolling hills in which new homes and an occasional ranch complex are scattered.

The period of significance for this property dates from when it was originally filed on as a homestead exemption in 1894, to when it was sold by Bill and Dorothy Thorne in 1984, and was no longer a working ranch. During those 90 years, the Routt County economy had changed from being primarily based in agriculture and mining, to one in which tourism, skiing, and development now predominate. The name Fair Acres Ranch reflects part of that change. "Fair Acres Ranch" was officially registered as the property's name in 2019. Until then, a property was named after its owners.

The fields are still in use for hay production, but they are no longer cultivated for grain and there is no longer any livestock in the barn or corrals. The current owners are proud to be the stewards of the ranch's history. The buildings are being restored and maintained, and the ranch complex still retains a high degree of integrity in its materials, workmanship, feeling, association, location, setting, and design.

Round Table:

The Board discussed that the Fair Acres Ranch did meet the criteria for designation based on the applicant's choice of using Statement of Significance A. Its character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of Routt County, the State of Colorado, or the United States., & D. Its exemplification of the cultural, economic, social, or historic heritage of Routt County.

It was also discussed of adding Statement of Significance Criterion J. Its unique location or singular physical characteristic representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, a community, or Routt County. This reasoning is because of the distinct house

and barn that are visible from the road and is often used as a land mark for locals giving directions.

They agreed to approve for reasons A., D., and J.

MOTION

Ms. Herold motioned to approve the Fair Acres Ranch to the Routt County Register of Historic Properties under statement of significance A., D., & J.

Ms. Smoker seconded; the motion carried 4-0.

The date for the next Board Meeting was set for June 14, 2022.

No further business coming before the Board, same adjourned sine die.

Samantha Pearce, Staff Assistant

Michael Olsen, Chair

Date