

# The Art of Ranching: Routt County

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## PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The Art of Ranching project is a multigenerational history project that works with 4-H youth and historical families and ranches. This project works to give credit to the significant families in each county that have helped to shape the agricultural aspect of Colorado into what it is today. By using the CSU Interns as a community liaison and the 4-H youth as researchers, the information learned throughout the project is then able to be made public and shared with the participants.

The Art of Ranching Project supports the CSU Extension mission by sharing knowledge and skill sets within the community. This then allows us to share these stories with the general public and academics to further education.



## INTERNSHIP GOALS

The goal of this internship was to engage youth with the researching, interviewing, and storytelling of the historical ranches around them. Along with this, we wanted to give the ranches an outlet to share their story and what they feel are the most unique parts of their ranches.

My personal goals through this internship were to:

- Encourage youth to connect with the older generations who helped shape Routt County into what it is today.
- Gain historical research skills while gaining a new sense of appreciation for the county I grew up in.
- Educate youth on how to take a story they have heard and turn it into a professional piece of writing to honor that person and their family.

## HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR EDUCATION

- This internship allowed me to gain the interpersonal skills needed to work with a diverse group of individuals.
- Educate youth on how to conduct an oral history interview and phrase questions to better understand the life of an individual.
- Encourage youth to find a sense of passion in what they are doing and follow through with the work that it takes to stick with the project even when it gets difficult.

## WHAT YOU DID

- Trained the 4-H youth on oral histories and what kind of questions to ask in order to gain the most information.
- Taught the 4-H youth how to conduct research on the ranches and how to keep track of their sources.
- Conducted community outreach to set up interviews with the ranchers and 4-H youth.
- Trained the 4-H youth on how to write a historical narrative and edited the narratives that they wrote.
- Oversaw the 4-H youth and participated in honoring centennial ranches at the Colorado State Fair.

## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Although the Art of Ranching project started as a research project that was led by graduate level students, this year we made the switch to allow the 4-H youth to have more control over the project. The youth were responsible for conducting research, preparing interview questions, conducting the oral history interview, and writing the narratives. Along with this, they were tasked with creating a poster board to showcase all the work they did and all the things that they learned.

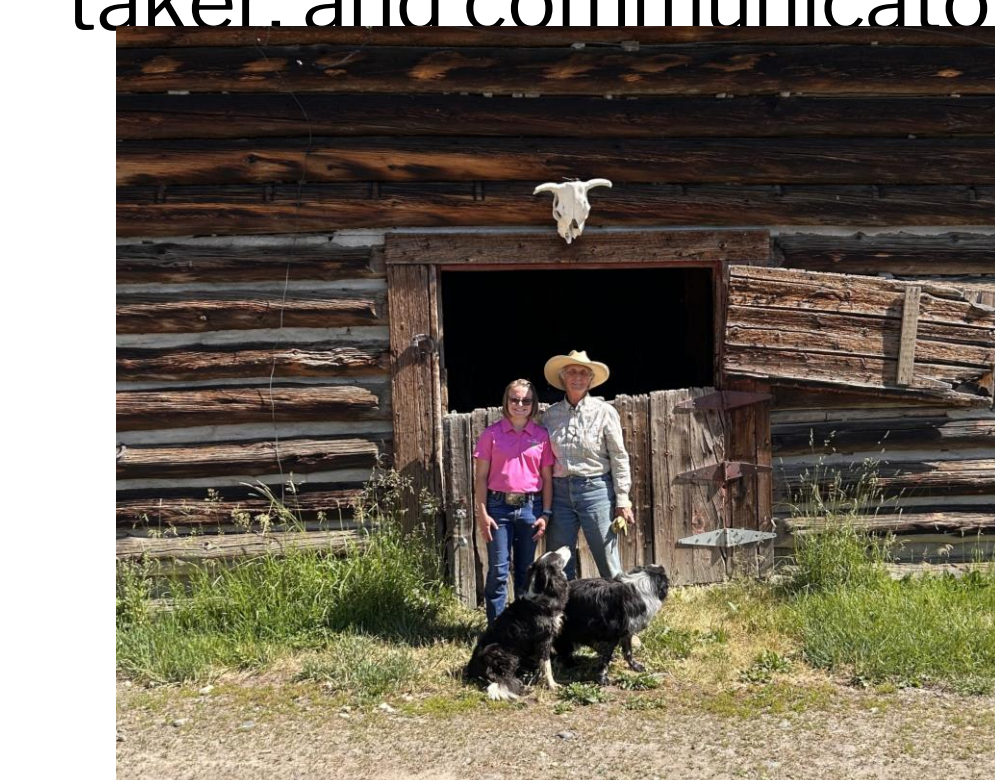
My position allowed me to work alongside the youth and educate them on how to conduct each step of this project successfully. I contacted the ranches and worked as the communication between the youth and the ranches in addition to mentoring the youth to help them complete the project as independently as possible.



Jessica Bedell and Trena Sanford at The Semotan Ranch



Trevor Hagenbuch with his Grandmother and Aunt at the Gay Ranch.



Alley Kvols and Judy Green at The Green Ranch



A historic barn at The Perry Ranch



Olivia and David Joe Zehner with Alyvia Cox and Leona Thurston at The Zehner Ranch



Tim Bedell with Chuck Perry at The Perry Ranch.

## NEXT STEPS

Throughout this summer we were able to make multiple community connections that have allowed us to further the connection that the Art of Ranching Project has to Routt County. These connections included:

- Partnering with The Friends of the Yampa to give ranches a platform to share the impact that Routt County water ways have had on their ranch and family.
- Assisting the Routt County Courthouse with their 100th year anniversary and sharing the impact that the ranchers have had on the Courthouse and county as a whole.
- Adding a record book to the Art of Ranching 4-H Project to help integrate it into other counties as a project.

## WHAT YOU LEARNED

Going into this internship, I knew very little about historical research. I am a Psychology major and was drawn to this project because of the ability to work with the youth and learn more about the county that I grew up in.

This internship taught me not only how to conduct this research, but how to teach youth about historical research and grow their passion for the place they call home. Being able to see the youth grow and learn throughout this project was incredibly powerful. I was able to see 4-H kids who are reserved and nervous break out of their shell and thrive in this experience.

A major part of this project is being able to make many moving pieces work in harmony with each other. I learned many of the skills needed to multitask, collaborate, and organize with the youth and the ranchers of the community. Being able to keep track of each ranch, each youth, and the progress being made on all sides was the most challenging part of this internship. Through this process, I was able to become a much better note taker, and communicator.