

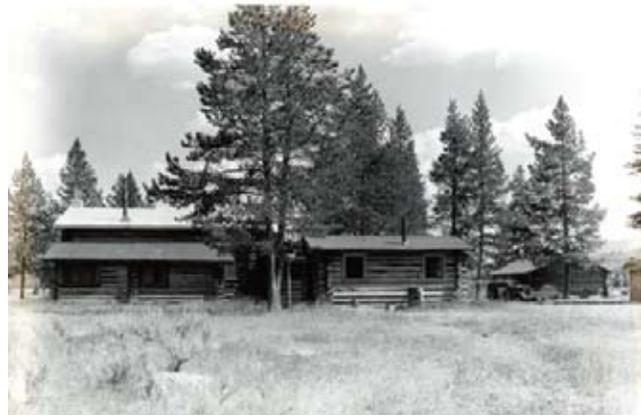


Snake River Land Company

RESOURCE BRIEF

Importance

Local citizens concerned about the unregulated development of Jackson Hole, in July 1923, joined with the Superintendent of Yellowstone, Horace Albright, to find a way to protect this exceptional area. Much of the land had already been opened to settlement and they decided that a private backer would be needed to buy out current owners. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. was solicited to support the cause. He established the Snake River Land Company to quietly purchase privately held lands in the valley. Working closely with government advisors, the company purchased properties with the expectation of donating them to the federal government for preservation. The company purchased the Hogan ranch in 1930 and used the buildings as its primary local headquarters and residence. John Hogan, a retired eastern politician, built the residence in 1927 in the vernacular style of notched logs and chinking with a stone chimney. Hogan operated a fox farm and small guest ranch on the property before selling it. Harold Fabian, Snake River Land Company Vice President, and his wife lived in and worked from the home until 1945. Board meetings, negotiations, and administration of the purchased lands took place at the site. With broader powers necessary to conserve and manage the acquired land, Rockefeller's Jackson Hole Preserve, Inc. took over operations from the Snake River Land Company in 1945. Though considerable local opposition due to fears of lost taxes, closed hunting areas, lost grazing privileges, and increased federal regulation stalled the Rockefeller donation until 1949, President Truman finally accepted the donated Rockefeller holdings of 32,117 acres and in 1950, Congress incorporated the lands into the expansion of Grand Teton National Park.



Hogan Ranch prior to 1930.

Status

After the residence and out buildings became park property, the park used the main building as a residence, the Buffalo Fork Ranger Station, and the Buffalo Dorm for seasonal park rangers in succession until 1992. While the main residence is no longer occupied the two remaining outbuildings, a garage and blacksmith shop, are still in use and remain in good condition. Because the property is significant not only for its architecture but also its conservation history as the base of operations for the Snake River Land Company, it was officially recognized and included in the National Register of Historic Places in July 2006. The park commissioned a Historic Structures Report in 2009 to identify and detail specific preservation treatments needed to maintain the structure.

Discussion

While the main building is generally in good condition, it needs structural repairs and upkeep such as a new roof, chimney repair, and site grading to address moisture damage. The internal heating and plumbing systems are in poor condition and need replacement. These types of problems are common to historic buildings. The best solution for a historical structure is often found in adaptive reuse, because buildings that remain in use tend to receive more of the preventive maintenance needed to ensure their longevity. Substantial funding is necessary to prepare this building for reuse. Currently the park is working to develop a Historic Structures Plan to help prioritize and direct their preservation efforts and continued care for this significant property and the numerous other historical structures within Grand Teton National Park.



John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and his wife Abigail cookout with Superintendent Sam Woodring, Grand Teton NP, Oct. 1931.