



**White Grass Ranch**

**RESOURCE BRIEF**

**Importance**

After starting as a cattle ranch in 1913, the 320-acre White Grass Ranch helped set the standards for dude ranches in the growing western tourism industry. Through the 1930s, the facilities were expanded in a style referred to as “dude ranch vernacular.” The property was purchased by the National Park Service in 1956, but it continued to operate as a dude ranch through 1985, when ownership transferred to Grand Teton National Park. In 1990, the White Grass Dude Ranch Historic District (30 acres and 13 log buildings) was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



**Status**

Although it is regarded as the most intact historical dude ranch in Jackson Hole, the structures at White Grass had deteriorated and become unsafe during more than 20 years of disuse. By 2005, the utilities (electricity, telephone, water catchment, and a rudimentary sewage system) were no longer functional. Roofs and porches were caving in due to neglect and heavy winter snow accumulation. Historical preservation crews began rehabilitation in 2006 by stabilizing the walls and roofs of the main lodge and Hammond cabin. Plans call for eventually rehabilitating all of the buildings for adaptive use.

**Discussion**

Many of the more than 320 historic structures in Grand Teton may become irreparable within a few years. To develop the skills required to reduce this need at Grand Teton and other national parks, the National Park Service is working with the National Trust for Historic Preservation to establish the Western Center for Historic Preservation (WCHP) at White Grass Ranch. By assisting the WCHP crew in rehabilitation of the White Grass buildings, park employees, volunteers, students, contractors, and other federal agency personnel can learn how to restore historic rustic architecture that is characteristic of the northern Rocky Mountains and how to provide preservation and construction services for other historically significant buildings. Partnerships with university-based Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESUs) and the University of Wyoming-NPS Research Station at AMK Ranch can provide assistance in hands-on preservation work and with cultural resource studies, such as the completion of National Register nominations, historic structure reports, condition assessments, Historic American Building Survey (HABS) drawings, and archeological surveys.

