

# SMITH FORK RANCH

Smith Fork Ranch is a family owned guest ranch with a current capacity of 26-28 guests. This intimate, high-end guest ranch is located roughly midway between Aspen and Telluride, Colorado. Straddling three miles of the Smith Fork River Valley, its compound of historic buildings sits at 7100 feet altitude, surrounded by 1.2 million acres of the Gunnison National Forest and 10,000-12,000 ft peaks of the West Elk Range of the Rocky Mountains. The ranch is located about 7 miles East of the town of Crawford (pop 350) and 25 minutes from the north rim of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park; 2 hours from Aspen; 2 ½ hours from Telluride; 1 ¾ hours from Grand Junction, 4 ½ hours SW of Denver, Colorado.

While the ranch dates back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, its current life as a high-end guest ranch began in 2002, after an extensive three-year restoration by the Hodgson family. In addition to its stunningly beautiful location, primary characteristics are handsomely appointed accommodations in the rustic tradition; a wine cellar of over 250 outstanding wines; gourmet cuisine; and a wide variety of outdoor activities (featuring fly fishing on extensive private waters, horseback riding, sporting clays, long-bow archery, mountain biking and hiking) customized to the desires of the guests.

## POSITION: Head Wrangler

### JOB DESCRIPTION

This is not a job about horses; this is a job about people. First and foremost wranglers at SFR must be people persons who are outgoing, engaging, and who genuinely care about people and their western ranch experience. Secondly wranglers at SFR must be equestrians. Wrangler days are spent tacking, grooming, cleaning stalls, feeding, doctoring, pruning trails, guiding rides, assisting guests, aiding in overall communication between rider and their animal, and setting up and supervising arena activities. Days are long, physically and mentally taxing, and filled with interesting guest and animal experiences.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

- Manage all aspect of SFR horse program with supervision from the Ranch Foreman and General Manager.
- Supervise a wrangler staff of 3-5 persons
- Assist GM and other department heads in planning guest activities & guest stays
- Oversee scheduling of wrangling staff, trail rides, guest instruction and all horse related activities.
- Assess guest riding ability, discussing with guests their riding interest and horseback riding goals for their stay at the ranch and assign a suitable horse to each guest.
- Plan and maintain the safety of all guests and horses at all times. Follow ranch procedures for any horse related guest injuries or riding incidents
- With consultation with SFR owners and GM, direct the purchase of horses and development of horse herd.
- Supervise the gathering, feeding, grooming and saddling of horses daily
- Maintain careful horse records: ride reports, forest usage reports, records on horse bought, sold or leased, etc
- Direct the maintenance of riding trails, identifying and cutting new trails as needed.
- Oversee the gathering, feeding, grooming, and saddling horses daily
- Hands-on involvement in training of horses
- Help manage pastures including fence building and maintenance, pasture rotation
- Supervise staff in maintaining corrals, arena, barns and surrounding areas in a cleanly manner, removing manure in a timely basis
- Maintain and clean tack, assuring that all tack is safe and in good working order
- Maintain and supervise staff in clearing trails



- Operate a variety of ranch equipment as needed including skid steer, truck & horse trailer, etc.
- Maintain a rapport with guests and help assure a successful stay

#### REQUIREMENTS

- Must be experienced in teaching basic horsemanship skills, coaching riders and skilled in giving horsemanship clinics, orientations and/or one-on-one instruction as needed
- Must be comfortable in conversing with guests regarding trail-side flora and fauna, wildlife, basic information about the mountains and area geology and natural resources.
- Must be experienced in the health maintenance of horses and mules and the care of sick and injured equines.
- Excellent western horsemanship & riding skills
- Knowledgeable in natural horsemanship practices and horse training
- Minimum 5 years experience working with horses and people, both adults and children
- Must present good Western image in dress and behavior at all times
- Must have a genuine interest in guests and passing along western traditions in keeping with SFR philosophy
- Must wear SFR wrangler “uniform” – western shirt, cowboy hat and boots
- Must have trail riding experience in mountainous and forested areas
- Must be CPR and First aid certified and have a valid driver’s license
- Must be able to lift 75 pounds

#### As part of the SFR Supervisory team:

- Contribute to the overall guest experience by participating in some weekly guest events
- Help maintain a high level of morale, dedication and pride in good work among all staff members Genuinely enjoy helping people, enjoy creating and facilitating positive, uplifting experiences for SFR guests and fellow staff members.
- Patient, understanding and generous to co-workers.
- Radiate optimistic warmth and happiness (kind, thoughtful, with a sense that the glass is always at least half full).
- Strong work ethic and “excellence reflex”(a natural tendency to do something as well as can possibly be done).
- Open-minded, with a keen curiosity to learn

Smith Fork Ranch is a close-knit team oriented community. Everyone must be willing to pitch in and help on occasion, where ever needed, including wood cutting, lawn care, housekeeping, washing dishes, vehicles, etc.

The Head Wrangler reports to the General Manager of Smith Fork Ranch.

#### Compensation

Competitive salary based on ability and experience. Housing is available, meals during guest season and share of employee tip pool.

#### To Apply

Fill out our online application or Mail/Email application, cover letter, resume and photo to:

Smith Fork Ranch  
 Attn: General Manager  
 45362 Needle Rock Road  
 Crawford, CO 81415  
 Phone: 970-921-3454

Email: [employment@smithforkranch.com](mailto:employment@smithforkranch.com)

