

Transcribed by Roger Butterbaugh, December 2016.

What follows is the transcript from the Ribbon/Rope Cutting Ceremony on August 30, 2016 at White Grass Ranch, Grand Teton National Park, Moose, WY. This ceremony marked the ending of the rehabilitation at the Ranch and signified that the Ranch is now officially open as a training center teaching historic preservation skills and techniques.

Speakers included:

David Vela, Superintendent, Grand Teton National Park, Moose, WY

Sue Massica, Director of the Intermountain Region, National Park Service

Barb Pahl, Vice President for the Western Field Services for the National Trust
for Historic Preservation

Cindy Galey Peck, daughter of Frank Galey. He was the last owner/operator of
White Grass Ranch

Katherine Wonson, Director of the Western Center for Historic Preservation,
National Park, Moose WY

The Ceremony begins with introductory comments by David Vela. Due to technical difficulties, the transcript begins one to two minutes into his talk.

David Vela

. . . You will be hearing some of those thoughts today. In fact, I am reminded of a couple of quotes that were shared with us about how this place changed the lives of not only the workers but some of the folks that came to enjoy the White Grass Ranch experience.

Here are a couple of them:

A former cabin girl, a recent college graduate, said for those of us who were here a few summers or many, it was the place of many 'firsts' for us. A former dude and wrangler who later worked to protect the wilderness areas in the north east said if I had not gone to White Grass and kept going back and back again, I probably would have been a doctor or city lawyer like my brother. That kind of life I would have hated. Instead, I drive a 25 year old beat up car which I try to repair and run a small arts studio in Maine.

It is amazing how the White Grass Ranch experience has affected lives today. And, it continues.

Partnerships have continued and to be a very important and have been instrumental in making this day a reality. And, we greatly appreciate and value the support from Washington and the regional office, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, White Grassers like you, volunteers, my staff and many others. So, it is my pleasure, my friends, to introduce to you the National Park Service Intermountain Regional Director, Sue Massica. Sue oversees the Western Center for Historic Preservation out of our regional office in Denver.

Sue Massica

Good afternoon. What a great opportunity to come together to celebrate the preservation of this historic property and the incredible handiwork to restore these structures. I was telling somebody earlier, on my first visit here, not a stitch of work had been done. It has been an amazing transformation we are getting to celebrate today.

Just as with the establishment of the National Park Service (NPS) 100 years ago, this effort took the combined work of so many to get us to where we are today. When Harold Hammond and Tucker Bispham hosted their first handful of paying dudes in 1919, I'm sure they never imagined a crowd quite like this assembling here at the Ranch.

White Grass is the second oldest standing dude ranch in the valley founded in 1913. This Ranch was one of the few dude ranches that weathered the many changes in social and economic trends of the 20th Century by adapting to changing times.

By the time the Ranch closed its doors in the 1980s, it was the longest running dude ranch in the valley. Unfortunately, as can often times happen with the National Park Service though we wanted to preserve the history, we did not have the means to do so. With time, tenacity, creativity and the support of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a new future was developed for the White Grass Ranch. Today, we are here at White Grass to witness the evolution from a homestead to a thriving dude ranch, to an abandoned landscape, to a preservation training center.

These buildings will host the National Park's Vanishing Treasures' Training Program which preserves the traditional architecture, perpetuates traditional skills and promotes connections between people and places of their heritage. It is a unique Center within the Park Service. It is our only Center dedicated to the preservation of traditional skills. Its official title is the Western Center for Historic Preservation (WCHP). But its history as the White Grass Ranch lives on. As one former instructor said, it makes me proud to know that the Park Service has a place like this.

White Grass symbolizes our commitment to preserving human history. The courses hosted here will train NPS staff and others in proper stewardship of our vanishing treasures. And, I know we have folks here from other regions of the Park Service from Alaska and the Pacific Northwest as well whose staff will be coming here to partake in these training efforts.

Since 2014, we have already trained over 500 people from the Park Service, other federal agencies and the private sector. Skilled craftsmen have come here from places as far away America Samoa and the Virgin Islands. Native craftsman from Alaska, Hawaii and the greater Southwest have also honed their skills here.

The Center is focused on building future capacity in the preservation field through training and project work with youth. So a special thank you today to the Rocky

Mountain Youth Corp which is here as part of the National Trust's Hands on Preservation Experience. This week the Corp is rehabbing the roof on cabin 1165 here at White Grass. Thank you all for your great work.

Today, the Ranch has 14 buildings and will house up to 26 trainees when fully operational. For the last nine years, the rehabilitation of the Ranch buildings has occupied the Center's main focus. Now this Center will look beyond and expand training and project initiative. The Ranch's rehab is a testament to the Park Service's dedication to cultural resources with a nearly \$2 million NPS contribution to the work you are observing here. And, as mentioned earlier, this completed work would not have been possible without the support of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which not only pushed this programmatically but contributed nearly \$1 million toward this work. So thanks to them.

Today is really a celebration of this next chapter in the Ranch history. White Grassers, those who were former Ranch dudes and wranglers, helped shape this chapter by joining the Park Service in its effort to rehabilitate the Ranch through Sharing Your Stories, donating and even participating in some of our trainings. We are so appreciative of your contributions and hope that this Ranch can, in its present configuration, continue the rich history begun by the dude ranching generation.

The Park Service celebrated its 100th anniversary Thursday. It has been a year full of excitement, reflection and challenge. Our centennial goal has been to connect with and create the next generation of Park visitors, supporters and advocates. This place is a great example of bringing that goal to life. It is a place where we honor the past and prepare for the future. So thank you for being here today. Thank you to the crews who worked to preserve the structures. Thank you to the Park Service Partners who had the vision and passion to make it happen.

And, so I do get to do one piece of business as well. We have a gift here for Barb. Barb, stand up. Barb Pahl is the regional director for the National Trust, the hero and the champion of all this. This is a little bit of a memento to thank you for the great work.

Barb Paul says thank you so much. (Barb Pahl is presented a sketch of the main cabin at White Grass.)

David Vela

Well, thank you Sue for your remarks. She mentioned that it is truly our pleasure to have Barb with us here today. Barb is the Vice President for the Western Field Services for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Barb was truly the engine behind this endeavor. She also helped to spearhead fund raising initiatives that achieved a number of outcomes. Throughout this entire process our friend was relentless, passionate and instrumental helping to achieve all the outcomes that we set out for this very special place. But most of all, she helped to bring you all here today to celebrate these very important accomplishments, milestones. So with that said, Barb, welcome.

Barb Pahl

Did we ever think we would make it to this point? There were times when I was not sure.

First of all, this day has been a long time coming and I am thrilled to be here to help celebrate with many of you. But, I thought I would fill in a little bit of the other part of the story about how this came to be. And, I thought I wouldn't necessarily tell the history of White Grass which so many of you know. Cynthia (Galey Peck) who is back here will have a whole lot more to say about that. But let me tell you just a little bit about how the preservation side of this story went.

On October 4, 2003, that is 13 years ago, at the closing plenary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation conference in Denver, Colorado, Richard Moe, our president for the National Trust Historic Preservation, and Secretary of the Interior, Gail Norton, stood on the stage at Red Rock—standing on the stage at Red Rock is a pretty big thing—and signed an agreement to work together to create the Western Center for Historic Preservation at the historic White Grass Dude Ranch in the Grand Teton National Park. And, today really does mark the beginning of this commitment started at 13 years ago.

Standing here today, I can hardly believe this dream, we all have had, has finally come true.

The first time I saw this place it was quite different from the way it looks today. White Grass along with many other historic structures in the Park had suffered from years of deferred maintenance and was severely deteriorating. In fact, many of you remember, it was probably felt by many that it was too far gone to rehabilitate and to be brought back to this wonderful condition.

In August 2002, Dick Moe joined Karen Wade, who was then the Director of the intermountain region and Grand Teton Park Superintendent, Steve Martin, for a tour of the Park's historic buildings. Pam Holtman, who is here, was on that tour and I was on that tour also. Pam arranged the buildings we were going to see. So we went to Lucas Fabian, Mormon Row, Bar BC, the very famous historic structures in the Park. But at our last stop (White Grass), Karen Wade proposed that White Grass be rehabilitated and used as a preservation training center. The idea was that we would rehabilitate this complex of buildings, while developing a trained workforce that could help preserve historic buildings in Grand Teton and other parts in the intermountain region. Which is really exactly what Sue just shared with you today-- it is going on right now.

Well, we were thrilled with that but some members of the conservation community and Jackson were not. There were numerous articles and opinion pieces that were run in the Jackson Hole News and Guide that said the proposal was not in harmony with the area's irreplaceable wildlife and natural resources. Another local group criticized the plans stating, in their view, historic preservation is about preserving history just for interpretation, not to create compatible uses like a training center or employee housing.

They could have not been more wrong.

As you just heard Sue say, this year is the 100th birthday of the National Park Service, just celebrated a few weeks ago. And, it is also the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act. So I can tell you with great authority that historic preservation is all about saving historic buildings by using them. Where there is continued old use, new use, reuse, it doesn't matter -- you have to use them. Otherwise, when you take people out of the building, it's like what happens when you remove the bees from hives, it immediately starts to disintegrate. Well, that's what happens to buildings. Vacant buildings don't survive. Used buildings really keep them vibrant and gives them a reason to be maintained. Historic buildings that get used live longer than those that are vacant.

Well, today officially begins the next chapter and story of White Grass. Cabins, that for over 60 years provided housing for families wanting an authentic Western experience, are now being used by Park employees and volunteers who come here to learn how to preserve and use historic log buildings as part of the celebrated Vanishing Treasures Program.

The history and legacy of White Grass continues, not as a museum to the past but as a living part of the present and the future.

The National Trust was proud to partner with the National Park Service to make this dream a reality. But we could not have done it without the Dollenbacks and the Hofleys and the Quasts and so many other people who aren't here. The White Grassers were so generous in their contributions. We went back to the well over and over again and these folks came forward to help raise money for individual cabins, coming together to really make this dream become a reality. So, I have to applaud many of you sitting here today who never said no when I kept bugging you to make those contributions. Thank you.

It has been fun for me as we were walking today to listen to people like Al (Williams) talking -- like it was their project. And, at the end of the day, it was all of our projects and without all of those folks, everyone who is here, everyone who worked, everyone who volunteered their time, their information about the history, their funding we would not be here today.

But, I also need to thank Sue Massica. Because shortly after she was appointed director of the intermountain region, I went to see her and I told her that I was holding back some money that had come from contributions from some of you folks. And, I told her that I needed to hear from her about her willingness to commit federal dollars, which you just heard -- the Trust raised a third and two thirds came from the federal government. And, these days, Park Service maintenance dollars are very tight and there is a lot of competition for them. I needed to hear from her that the commitment from the National Park Service would continue to honor the commitment I made to many of you that we would have this place done in time for the anniversary this year 2016. She said that I had her word and I gave her the money. And here we are. So thank you Sue.

David Vela

Well, thank you Barb. It is now my pleasure to introduce to you Cindy Galey Peck, who is the daughter of Frank and Inge Galey, the last owners of the White Grass Ranch.

Cindy Galey Peck

I was raised here. This is the only home I knew as a child. I was very interested in the whole area. At the Ranch itself, I played in the barn, I climbed up the horse stalls, the incline up into the upper stanchions. I played in the fox pens as they were still here up at the far end of the meadow as a child. I probably knew the Ranch as a lot of you folks would know the inside of your house. The horses were always the hub of the Ranch activity.

I can't imagine the Ranch, there wouldn't have been a Ranch without the horses. I was given my first horse to ride when I was probably about four. When I started out running faster than my nanny, she quit. So dad gave me a new horse. Her name was Eva. She was at Palomino with great big brown eyes. And, I just loved her. I was not given a saddle because you can fall off and get hung up in the stirrups. So I rode bareback well up into my teens.

I rode the country around the Ranch, Phelps Lake, Winchester draw, Huckleberry Ridge, own the Hamilton Trail to Beaver Creek and up Static Peak. I had a really cool hiding hole up Stewart Creek. Even today I don't think anybody really knows about it.

The horses – the dudes generally selected their horses. The wranglers would give suggestions and sometimes it worked but most of the time they would say, try this horse instead. I still remember Kurt Windsor rode Seal, Mr. Dunn rode Captain, Carol's favorite horse was Eagle. And, every year the dudes came back and got that same horse.

One of the biggest changes I see is the vegetation (here at the Ranch). From here (the front porch of the main cabin) you could not see the cabins. There was lots of brush and a big old douglas fur tree between here and the girls cabin with a bench around it. And, as a very young teenager, I would sit there and tool leather to sell because for all the work I did on the Ranch, I was not paid. I had no salary, no allowance. And, that tree has been gone, it was dead and gone by the time I got married.

One of my first jobs was in the morning. All the dudes would come and sit on the front porch for coffee and throw their cigarette butts on the lawn and, as a four-year-old, my first job was picking up those butts. And then, as I got a little older, mother decided that I was not going to break glasses when I was washing them so my next job was washing ashtrays and the glasses, cleaning out the cigarette butts with left over alcohol. That didn't start my day really well during those years. And, by the age 15, I was the kid wrangler with Judy (Allyn now Schmitt). That meant we were responsible for children

basically out of diapers to age 18 or older. But, Judy had to leave because of family illness in the middle of the summer and at 15 that became my responsibility. I still don't know why they gave me that responsibility.

The first time I visited several years after dad died, I was walking here. The cabins were disintegrating, there were trees falling across some of them and my emotions just overtook me. And, I started bawling hysterically. I didn't want anybody seeing me so I just started walking and running as fast as I could up to the north pasture to hide out until I got control of myself.

But, a few years later when I came up in the winter, it was peaceful and serene and it always was in winter. We kept a few animals here. We had Porky and Bess, two pigs that were fed out the window of the kitchen of the Hammond Cabin and we always kept a few horses at the Ranch. We would go to Moose by horse and sleigh. Sometimes the sleigh stayed on the tracks that were packed by the horse hooves and sometimes it didn't and then there was a lot of trouble.

There is something about this place that has occupied peoples hearts and spirits. And, that is why I feel there're still White Grassers that are a community that are still here for the place for over 70 years. And we are still here. And, it is not because I am the lead on this at all.

Tell me how do I feel about this place now – I don't know about this opening (pointing toward the meadow in front of the main cabin). It was not created by homesteading, it was a natural opening. There was a Clovis point found in Jackson Hole, perhaps the Clovis people were using this space.

Animals have always roamed here. Before World War II there was an antelope herd that lived in this opening. One of my cousins roped a moose. He and the horse were found but never the saddle. Another time a bear was roped. That was not a good experience either. Bears would get in the kitchen. Dad would put up metal bed springs across the windows to keep them in out. Martins were in the kitchen. I was attacked by an Osprey. There are eagles in the area. There have always been animals here including all the domestic animals including the dogs that dad always had. So, it's a lot of changes.

There is an Indian myth that White Grass was named because it's opening was all sagebrush. And, of course, my family and the Hammons changed all that. But along the road in the valley, you can look up here and see this open area here at the Ranch. And, the myth is that the Indians named it White Grass as a meeting place.

Dad found a Mexican knife in the field when he was plowing once. And, as Sue said (previous speaker Sue Massica), Harold Hammond and Tucker Bishpam started homesteading in 1913 and improved up in '23. After Harold Hammond passed, Marion Hammond Galey ran the Ranch, then my parents, then my dad and second wife Nona, ran the Ranch – it was always changing.

We don't really remember a time in the womb. And through our lives things have changed. And, we do not really know where the future is or where we are going. I feel like White Grass is a lot the same. We don't know all of the past and we certainly don't know its future. We hope it will be continued to be used. Each era is different. Nothing remains the same.

I am so glad that it has been rehabbed and that all these people have helped build it and preserve the history of it. I am happy it has a new life and I hope it continues. I hope it continues to serve people to come and enjoy this beautiful, beautiful area, it's peace and serenity, and that the wild animals continue to roam and graze, and that the plants continue their natural success. Thank you.

David Vela

Thank you so much Cindy for those remarks. It is now my pleasure to welcome my colleague, the director of the Western Center for Historic Preservation, Katherine Wonson.

Katherine Wonson

Hello and Wow!! This is wonderful to see. I am mostly up here as a cruise ship director to let you know what is going on next and officiate the ribbon-cutting. But first, I wanted to just share a few thoughts because this is such big day for me personally. It is very special and I want to acknowledge some people.

What does this mean? It is a ribbon cutting? And, we have been using the training cabins for three years now. We have trained over 500 people through the Vanishing Treasures program and we have had 19 trainings this year. But only a third of those, we were able to do here at White Grass because this is still a construction site or I should say was a construction site. And, what this means to me is the transition, a very important transition, from a construction site to a living breathing training facility. And, that is why I am so excited to be up here and I am so excited for tomorrow because it will be the first day to celebrate our living breathing training facility as we move into the future.

The other question I contemplated is why are we all here? I know many of you and that many of you have a history of memories that go back 50 years, and some of you have memories that date to when the Park took ownership 20 years ago. And, some of you just showed up two weeks ago. But I think what we all have in common is a love for this place. And, when I thought about it, why I love this place is because it inspires. And, I have seen it in all the stories from the Heritage Project, and the oral histories that I have heard. For some, it has been a source of inspiration over a lifetime of involvement here. For others, inspiration came having been here for only a summer or two when they were in their teens.

And, it has been an aspiration for the instructors who come here. The quote given earlier by one of the instructors is good example. It has also been an inspiration for the trainees

and actually that has been the greatest part of my job, i.e., watching the light bulbs go off and blow up over peoples heads as they are in these historic preservation trainings - whether it is a hands on class like historic wood windows or historic masonry, or it is a management training such as the guidelines and standards training or the accessibility in historic structures. Something is really clicking for them.

I'm going to read a quote from one of our guest books from one of the trainees who speaks to that. But, I think through listening to all of your stories from the White Grassers, one of the things that always struck me was that there were a lot of life lessons learned here and that this was a formative experience. And, I want to assure you from one steward to last steward, we are continuing that tradition of formative experiences. It is just in a different context.

And, this is what Elizabeth Wessel wrote after her training. "After completing my third day of oral history training here at White Grass -- a stunning experience. The training staff opened my eyes to the ways oral history can make history, archives and cultural resource management so much richer and more comprehensive. Further, the people at White Grass with me did so much to rekindle the excitement I have for preserving the stories of the past and passing them on. Though I never met Frank Gailey, the last owner of the ranch, or came to White Grass as a dude or wrangler, I know/feel that I am part of this story now. I want carry my memories away from this place and hope to return to make more."

"We were asked again and again why did people keep coming back? Why did they come for a week and stay at a decade? What is it about this Ranch that's so magnetic? After three days at White Grass, I can't explain it, but I understand it." Elizabeth Wessel, July 14, 2016."

So, I would like to do some specific acknowledgments in addition to all the thank you's that have already been said.

So, one is Pam Holtman. Pam was known as Mrs. White Grass by the WCHP staff. My first week working for Grand Teton National Park, I had not heard of White Grass before and I wanted to meet this Mrs. White Grass character. And, then I eventually I did meet Pam Holtman. She was a new role model for me. She held the (cultural resource specialist) job before me with the Grand Teton National Park. And, she is one of the main reasons why we are here today. She jumped a lot of hurdles. Thank you Pam.

The next person is Bob Williams. He retired from the Western Center. He designed and created the shop in Moose where all of the millwork you are looking at was created. And, I think he made something like 31 windows and doors there. Thank you, Bob.

Craig Struble is somewhere photographing. He was the first Center director and he juggled all the demands to get this off the ground and Barbara (Pahl) knows of many stories about that. His touch is on every cabin out here. My job (as director) is the easy part.

And, the NPS crew, let's give them around of applause. Having a ribbon cutting celebration is like learning your mother-in-law is coming to town because you really have to clean up. And, these guys and ladies really cleaned house and just rose to the occasion and in fact surpassed my expectations. I had a to-do list, a punch list that was about half a page long. I sat down with members of the crew and I had things like patch the hole in the roof. Their punch list was much longer and more specific had things like a nail on cabin 1159 needed to be removed -- we were on such different pages, but the crew got all those things done with amazing energy and worked together as a team in a way that I cannot believe. It was serendipitous to have this crew here it this summer to get all this work done. So thank you guys.

I want to thank Roger Butterbaugh. He is our volunteer caretaker who is film man extraordinaire and everybody knows him. He works more hours a week than any of us, I assure you. And he, in his spare time, has been running the White Grass Heritage Project which is quite an amazing archive of oral history, artifacts and photographs. He was in his former life a marriage and family therapist and now he has turned into an oral historian and has learned there is a lot in common between the two. He takes care of this place as if it were his own home. I really appreciate that. It was a major burden lifted off my shoulders to know that there is someone out here that cares so much.

And, I would like to thank the volunteers for today. We have volunteers from the veg crew, from law-enforcement, interpretation and cultural resources. I would like to thank the regional office. Tammy Whittington is here, formally of the regional office. Thank you, and, Lauren and Tom as well. We've make some ridiculous requests for funding and they (the regional staff) never gave me too many faces and they managed to dig up the money and I really appreciate that and they are a major reason why we are here today.

And, we have two people retiring. These are my last two to thank. I promise this is not the Emmys. We have Greg Dodson. Greg is known around the office as the chief morale officer. He watches after staff. He is the first to think of something that might concern everyone and brings it to me before they probably even know what's going on. So, he watches everyone's back and is why this team worked so well this summer and previous summers. So, thank you, Greg.

And, then Al Williams, what's to say about Al Williams? He has been here since the beginning of the White Grass project. He is also retiring this fall. He has been with the NPS, I believe for 32 years. If Pam were Mrs. White Grass then Al would be Mr. White Grass, no relation. He is the embodiment of this place. He was the project manager for White Grass before there was a project. He was a rogue preservationist. I know his former bosses maybe here today and I should not admit this but he came out and patched roofs in the cloak of darkness so we had what we had to start with largely because of Al.

He has so many talents. I could list them on and on but he is an amazing teacher. But, I think what strikes me most about Al is how humble he is considering how many talents

he has. In addition to that he has this curiosity to learn. He is the constant student. He never has the air of 'I already know that.'

Al goes all over the west for us teaching people and leading projects. I never have to worry about where he goes. He goes out and meets other people who know what they're doing. Because Al is this humble person, he believes he can learn from just about everyone he meets.

He comes back and I get these phone calls from the park, where he was working, raving about how good Al Williams is. It has been a pleasure to watch Al carry himself the way he does and just to be around him. I have known him for nine years and an intern for two or three of that. I will greatly miss that relationship. This place is really his crowning achievement as far as his professional life goes. Al, now you get to cut the ribbon.

But, before we actually do the cutting, I am going to let you know a little bit about what is going on after this. We will conclude our comments after the rope cutting. In the main cabin there are historic furnishings and photos provided by the Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum. There are architectural drawings, documents, photos of the rehabilitation and then there is a White Grass future wall posted asking what you would like to see out here – ideas or suggestions you have for this place as we move forward. Then in the bath house, and it's on the map, there'll be a Roger's history slideshow. Those will be at 3:30 and 4:15, about 30 minutes long.

Then in the Hammond Cabin, we have historic photos. We will be doing walking tours at 3:30 and 4:15 that start right around the corner. Betsy Engle, historical architect for the Park, we'll be giving the tour at 3:30. Al Williams will give the tour at 4:15. And, then we have traditional skills stations. We will have ax and log demos and a historic windows repair demo. And, you can wander through the demos coming and going as you wish. There'll be five cabins open and little signs saying 'Open Cabin, Come In.' And, then lastly, we are going to do an open house with the HOPE Crew from the Rocky Mountain Youth Corp. They are going to share a little bit about their project working here at White Grass.

I should not forget, you should go check out the registration book for putting your name on the email list if you are interested. You will also be able to pick up a rope memento to hang on your Christmas tree or as a paperweight. Whatever you choose to do with it. Those will be at the reception area.

The last shuttle back to Moose is at 5:15. There are also refreshments provided by the Grand Teton Association.

Let's get the speakers to stand on either side of the ribbon rope to be cut.

Al Williams

I have a lot of people to thank but Katherine has covered that for me. Obviously, I went up against a certain superintendent which is long before I knew you, David Vila. So, I wouldn't have done that. Jim understands that as well. Anyway, this (cutting of the rope – not a ribbon - with an ax) is for everybody. This is for all the donations. This is for all the hard work that everyone has done for us here. Thank you Sue for allowing us to do this. Hey, this is for WCHP. And, Al cuts the rope with the ax and hugs Katherine.