



Press Release August 10, 2021

### **IN THE AREA OF MISSOURI HEIGHTS - The Heart of the Horse Country.**

*BLM's Sutey Equestrian Parking Lot is accessed from Highway 82 onto County Road 103, then left on Crystal Springs Road. Drive past Crystal Springs Ranch (on the left) and go down the hill and the parking lot will be on the left. BLM's Sutey Equestrian Parking Lot accommodates trucks and horse trailers. Hikers and mountain bikers have a separate parking area*

**EVENT:** Summer RFVHC/RMYC/BLM Barbed Wire Removal Project on Sutey Ranch

Back in the day when Missouri Heights and the historic Sutey Ranch were homesteaded, the ranchers and farmers thought *“Good fences make good neighbors.”* —Robert Frost, from a poem titled *Mending Walls*

Today, it’s difficult to imagine neighborhoods, farms, industry and ranches without fences. They define property, confine pets and livestock, and protect that which is dear to us, joining or separating the public and private. For humans, fences make space into place. **For wildlife, fences limit travel and access to critical habitat.**

With a 2021 trail grant from the Roundup Riders of the Rockies and the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, the RFVHC Board of Directors decided to use this labor with our partners to work at Sutey Ranch removing old homestead barbed wire and creating safer travel for wildlife, horses and hikers enjoying the Sutey trails. This immense task was assigned 3 days of work.

During the week of July 26<sup>th</sup>, the RMYC crew removed approximately 1 mile of barbed wire fence totaling approximately 1,000lbs. The wire and about 2/3rds of the t-posts were recycled at Green Zone in Silt.



**Alan Czepinski from BLM**, the Sutey Land Manager, **and RFVHC Trail Chair Susan Cuseo** met the RMYC crew Monday July 26, at their campsite. **RMYC crew leaders Bobby Haben and Nicole Naylet** assembled the very young crew members (ages 14-15) to learn the Sutey Ranch history from homesteaded ranch to BLM managed recreation area for wildlife, hikers, hunters, birders and horseback riders. The project was explained and safety details including where the removed barbed wire and T-posts should be piled for later removal. Wood fence posts would be left to decompose in place.

Susan Cuseo explained, “We thanked the crew in advance for their efforts then collected tools and proceeded to the start point. We wished them farewell and the crew went to work. Alan visited again on Friday, July 30 and reported that the

RMYC crew finished that morning. Our RFVHC members and all users will be proud that we organized and funded this project to remove the ‘scourge of the West’ from our lovely Sutey Ranch! “

Allan added, “Thanks again for all your work in getting the crew and coordinating with the BLM. Much appreciated.”



*RMYC Crew Leaders Bobby and Nicole, removed wire being loaded for transport.*

The Sutey Ranch August 2021 update is newsworthy. The community together with all the local community and recreationalists, over a years-long land exchange process, brought the Sutey Ranch into the public domain with BLM’s management.

Sutey Ranch is managed for Wildlife Habitat year-round and is open to hikers and equestrians from April 15 through November 30<sup>th</sup>. The Red Hill Bike Access Trail - called the Northside Access Trail to Red Hill SRMA - is open from June 1 – September 30<sup>th</sup>. No other routes on Sutey Ranch are open to Mountain Bikes.

RFVHC advises equestrians to stay off the Northside Access Trail to Red Hill SRMA.

This description of their trail describes the fragility of their hard work. “Most of the trail is narrow hand built singletrack on gentle sideslopes. Some rocky areas

are present but are generally not challenging for most riders. Some of the turns are bermed to allow for slightly higher speeds on the descents.” See the poster below that shows the soft red dirt.



A comment found in the results of the 2021 RFVHC Trail Survey Monkey for Hikers and Equestrians, says “I bike here, again, fully support separate trails for safety. Mountain bikers are mostly great - I think if a campaign drums up support for hiker/equestrian only trails (ie keep hikers and horses off the bike trails) there could be some good mountain bike manpower for trail building days!” RFVHC responds and says YES let’s do more work!

Another Survey Monkey Questionnaire respondent said: “I'm really excited to visit Sutey Ranch now that the parking lot was expanded. I've been wondering if maybe we should have a trailhead and path that is more separated from the other users, just to help keep us all a healthy distance apart, and to help reduce the risk of startling our prey animals.” The RFVHC responds and says YES – this is being planned!



*BLM's Alan Czepinski , Outdoor Recreational Planner directing the RMYC crew.*

For photo credit: compliments of BLM/RFVHC and additional details  
Contact Karin at [rfvhc.colorado@gmail.com](mailto:rfvhc.colorado@gmail.com)

Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council  
P.O. Box 127, Snowmass, Colorado 81654

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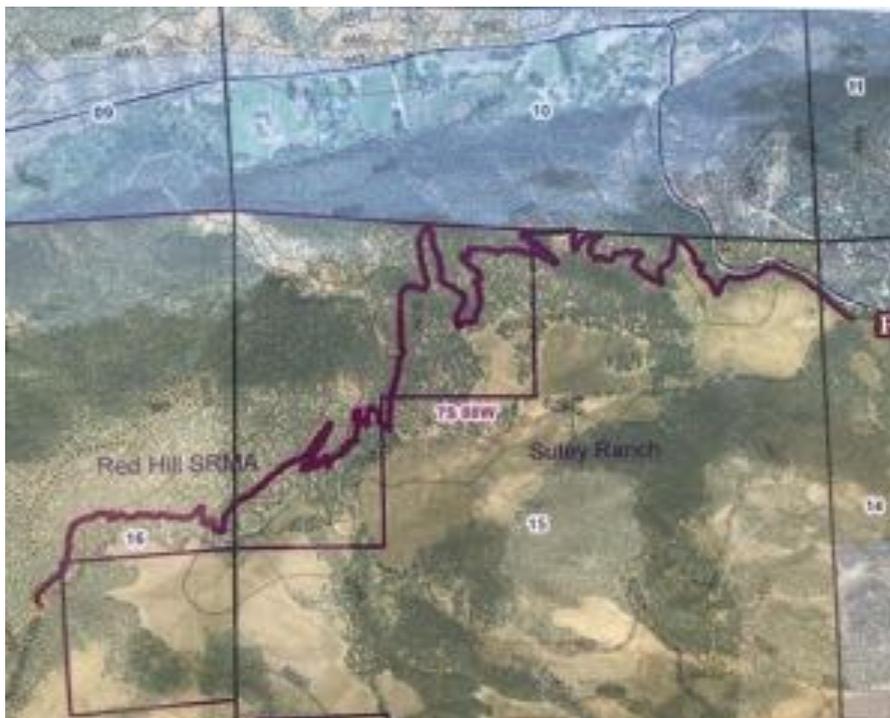
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**For more photos and a MAP – see below**

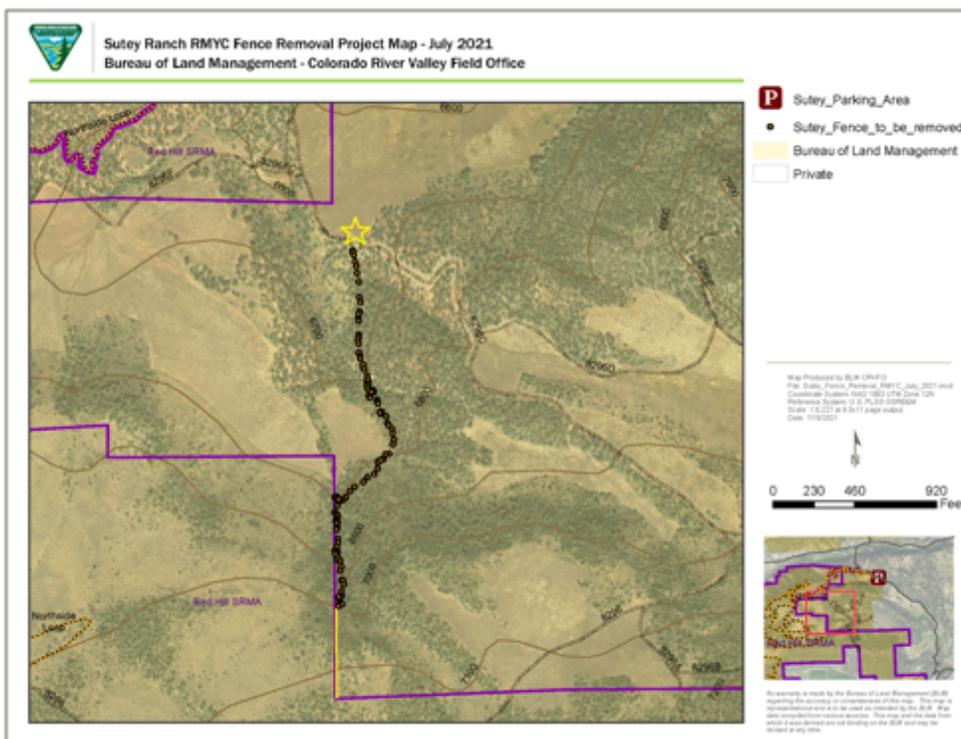
The Northside Access Bike Trail is not recommended for equestrians



### The Northside Access Trail to Red Hill SRMA



### The Barbed Wire fence removal area



Footnotes:

<https://www.backcountrychronicles.com/how-bad-are-fences-for-wildlife/>

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44266/mending-wall>

A study by Harrington & Conover concluded that fawns were eight times more likely to die in a fence than adults, and that mortality peaked in August about the time that fawns are weaned. In short, elk, deer, and other ungulates often die if their legs tangle in wire fences. Woven wire topped with barbed wire was found to be the most lethal type of fence, especially for young wild ungulates.