- CONTRIBUTORS -

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The Mountain Ability Center at Hinckley Ranch is a non-profit organization devoted to enhancing life through adventure, nature, and service. Located on 280 acres in Eden, Utah, this ranch presents an opportunity for conservation, wildlife corridors, and a favorable environment for personal growth and healing.

Located in Ogden Valley, Utah, the ranch was originally home to horse breeding and farming. Ogden Valley is currently in a wave of population growth, and in need of a gathering place to bring the community together. Hinckley Ranch has the facilities and space available to pursue a number of goals, including the creation of an equine therapy program, horse riding arena, community center, nature trails, conservation easement, outdoor activity center, and the preservation of a historical ranch.

The Hinckley Ranch proposal embraces the identity of Ogden Valley through ranching and farming styles common to the area, while providing a connection between all of the budding communities in the valley. As the population grows, Hinckley Ranch can also expand as a community and as an outdoor activity center.
- HISTORY OF PLACE -

Heber McBride and his wife, Elizabeth Burns, homesteaded 160 acres in the Middle Fork River area of Eden in 1884. The family lived in a covered wagon until they built the little “Red House.” The Red House was built of adobe bricks that were made on the property and then covered with wood siding.

A.L. Pritchett purchased the property in 1904 and owned it until 1920. He tried to homestead 50 acres in Geertsen Canyon where the bunkhouse was built, but did not obtain the property, so he settled here in Eden.

In 1920, George Staples family bought the property and owned it until 1951. This is when electricity and running water were added to the Red House.

Robert and Norma Kiesel owned the land from 1951-1957. Norma undertook some remodeling of the Red House including the pine paneling inside and the wood detailing to the porches.

In 1957, Robert and Abrelia Hinckley bought the property. Additional land was purchased and added to the ranch. Robert was retired from business and politics and the property eventually became a horse and pony ranch. Today, Kristin Hinckley Whitaker owns 80 acres of Hinckley Ranch while her three brothers own the remaining 200 acres. Kristin would like this ranch to help as many people as possible through equine therapy and by promoting the experiences of nature. Kristin Hinckley Whitaker
Kristin, the Little Girl: A Valley of Freedom, Discovery, and Adventure (1957-mid 1970s)

“The Hinckley’s wanted to get a few ponies for their grandchildren.” They decided on the Welsh Pony Breed for their beauty and good nature. Their first ponies were purchased in 1957 from the Farnley Farms, in White Post, Virginia. All the ponies born at the ranch would carry the prefix “Eden,” while other Welsh Ponies and Arabians were later purchased. Several qualities were sought in the breeding program: 1) a good disposition for kids riding them, 2) stamina for long trail riding, and 3) their ability to survive long cold winters.” Kristin Hinckley Whitaker.

Kristin started to ride at the age of three. She, her three older brothers, and parents, would spend their summers in the Garden of Eden.

Kristin: “You have a different viewpoint when riding a pony, it is distinctly different than walking or hiking. You see the world the way the horse leads you.”

Kristin, the Rancher: Breeding, Training, Selling Ponies and Hosting in the “Garden of Eden” (1989-2014)

‘Grampy’ as Kristin called her granddad, died in the late 1980s. Her father and Uncle John were the caregivers during the last years of his life. Grampy divided the land, which will now be developed as the Ability Center and Conservation Property. The great wish of Robert Hinckley was to keep the ranch in the family, and to not develop it.

This had been his and Abrelia’s dream home - a place for family and visitors to grow in nature and among the animals. Grampy was clear to his son: “This land should always remain a ranch or an open space.” Kristin’s dad, Robert Hinckley Jr., carried Grampy’s wish to conserve the land as a ranch.

After Kristin’s Grampy passed away, she moved her permanent residence to the “Garden of Eden” in 1989 to tend to the animals until 2014.

Kristin, the Giver: Sharing a Legacy-Ability and Conservation in the “Garden of Eden” (2014-today)

Kristin: “I want to share all of what this land can provide. I want to enable people to have the same experience I had. I want to share this beauty. People can get better just by being in a nice environment like this - peaceful, beautiful, and quiet. It is important for people to access and experience such a place in order to heal. Ability and conservation go hand and hand. We want to use this plan to save other watersheds and precious landscapes for future generations to enjoy. For this to happen, community involvement and building a sense of community are very important.”

Now, we must use this project to serve as a model for the valley and surrounding communities.
The first time we visited Hinckley Ranch winter was in full swing. Winter has a way of simplifying things - leaves fall, animals hide away, and colors fade. As we shivered our way through a quick tour we couldn’t help but notice the simplicity that was revealed through the grips of winter. Only the bones of the site were left - bare trees, the red-clad buildings, and the curves of the land. The ranch was showing its true colors in a very unassuming way.

The landscape revealed itself a little at a time, showing full personality upon multiple visits. As a way of recording our emotional and physical impressions, we pulled out our sketchbooks and jotted down some notes and sketches. “Snow began to fall on the drawings and as it melted, the paper absorbed the water and it smeared my ink. We quickly realized it was the environment impressing itself on our drawing records.” Skyler Smith, LAEP Student

Later, some of the class had the opportunity to go on a self-guided snowshoe tour of the 280 acre ranch. A huge winter storm had just blown through a couple of days earlier, leaving behind several feet of snow and revealing a blank canvas.
As we traipsed through the vast landscape, everything was still, seemingly frozen in time and waiting for spring. The simpleness offered up tiny details to us - the footprints of animals, marking a point in time in a physical way. A striking example was the imprinted stripes of a bird’s wings. It was such a beautiful and subtle reminder of the passage of time, and how we each leave behind an imprint on this earth.

Near Hinckley Ranch is a stand of arched and bowed cottonwood trees. Within their twisted branches lie the nests of a rookery, where blue herons raise their chicks. The birds rely on one another and the landscape around them to raise their young. The lesson here is simple. Hinckley Ranch has the opportunity to educate, heal, and change lives through nature, teamwork and service. As the future of the ranch and surrounding area come into question, this conservation opportunity is not only important, but essential. Each person that passes through those red barn doors has the chance to learn and teach others through service. Just as the landscape left its impression, both physically and emotionally, the new Hinckley Ranch will leave an impression of stewardship, healing and love on the community and environment.
- SKETCHES OF HINCKLEY RANCH -
Through drawing, our group was able to develop a deeper understanding of the characteristics that make the Hinckley Ranch a special place, its setting on the land, and in its overall context in the Ogden Valley. Several visual qualities and scales of understanding emerged after each of our site visits.

**RANCH COMPLEX AND SETTING**

During the two visits in January, the students captured the ranch in their sketches - the swing hanging from an old cottonwood tree, the red house and several beautiful details. These traces of the Victorian era, provided such a colorful contrast in the winter landscape. Other structures of the historical core were captured by the drawings: the main barn, the hay barn in the more distant part of the property. The red house anchors the historic core of the property; its placement frames the entrance corridor with mature trees (see page 6).
A visit in February captured the importance of the setting of the ranch in its overall context. The views from the Red House orients out to the fields and wetlands, and the horizontal fence lines that stitch to the mouth of the canyon and to the silhouette of the mountains. The winter accentuated the importance of the fences, horse runs and the topography of the out wash plain (pages 7 and 8). The sound and presence of water moving through the site was immense.
WATERSHEDS AND DISTANT VIEWS

The drawings also capture the horizontality of the place, its beautiful backdrop mountain. Sketches also reveal the threat of the encroachment of new housing if nothing is done to preserve the natural and cultural character of the area (see pages 9, 10 and 11).

A last visit in April, to the Middle Fork Canyon, offers a viewpoint of the overall property. The drawing on page 43, emphasizes the uniqueness of the place as the premiere canyon in the valley to move water to the Pineview Reservoir. A rich environment for birds and wildlife habitat corridor for deer and other species, this rich collection of soils, plants, and the majesty of the “Cottonwood Gallery” (page 9) are what makes Ogden Valley such a special respite along the Wasatch Front. Drawing helped us understand the forms of this beautiful visual and physical environment. It is a dynamic and changing landscape, season to season.
With a rapidly growing Wasatch Front, Ogden Valley is at risk of sporadic development leaking through some of the valley’s major canyons from the west. In the heart of the valley sits Pineview Reservoir, the center of the flourishing valley environment.

In the east, there are multiple canyons that are natural connectors between the wild uplands and the valley floor. These canyons form and nourish the valley that the locals and visitors love so much. Hinckley Ranch has the opportunity to preserve the watershed to link the community with nature and the valley floor with the ridge top.
SITE ORIENTATION

Ogden Valley is located in Northern Utah, about an hour north of Salt Lake City.

Hinckley Ranch lays at the bottom of Middle Fork Canyon. This ranch offers an incredible opportunity to create a legacy conservation standard for the valley.
Hinckley Ranch has the potential to foster and preserve the wildlife habitat through the installation of the conservation easement.

This easement will ensure specific commitments that restrict future development and to qualify for tax credits and special tax status.

The Mountain Ability Center offers a gathering place that brings together the surrounding communities - Eden, Huntsville, and Liberty - the greater Ogden Valley and beyond.

By promoting responsible development and the improvement of human abilities, Hinckley Ranch provides a model for other properties and owners of the greater valley to do the same.
Hinckley Ranch is 280 acres, 10 of which is developed, surrounded by other residential properties in all directions.

Middle Fork Canyon is northeast of the ranch. Middle Fork Creek runs through the ranch and leads in two southwesterly directions to Pineview Reservoir.

Highway 166 to the west and 1900 North to the north bounds this property. The Middle Fork defines the southern portion of the property.
- SITE INVENTORY -

1. Slope

Middle Fork Canyon is steep and down cuts through the bedrock. The slope then flattens in an outwash plain, through the Hinckley Property.

2. Watershed

Because the Hinckley Property has a shallow slope, it acts as a biofiltration zone for water moving out of the canyon toward Pineview Reservoir.

3. Soil

Soil is moved by swift waters and is deposited in the riparian zones across Hinckley Ranch. The fertile soil and moisture are important for the health of the Cottonwood gallery.

4. Vegetation

Mountain Sagebrush and grasses of the alluvial plain give way to water-loving plants, and to the dominant riparian habitat provided by the Cottonwood gallery.

5. Land

Slope, watershed, soils, and vegetation provide habitats, and create a variety of sites optimal for expanding ranch operations.

6. Development

Future development at the ranch, and expansion of the programs to accommodate the abilities center, must respect the integrity and functions of the land.
Due to the location of buildable soils, the existing and proposed structures should be concentrated. The conservation easement should be a minimum of 100 feet from the creek creating a wildlife corridor void of buildings and trails. This easement will be for foot traffic only as to not disturb the wildlife traveling through Hinckley Ranch.
**EXISTING SITE INVENTORY**

Hinckley Ranch is located between Highway 166 to the west and 1900 North to the north. There is a formal vehicular entrance into the property on the west side.

Currently on site, there is a 1960s home with a front and backyard and vehicular access from Highway 166 into the garage. This is one of the latest structures built. Moving to the east there are two older homes (The Red House) built in the late 1800s.

Further east, a large corral for the horse training is the central focal point of the Historic Ranch. Just south of the corral is a structure used for storage. South of the storage structure is a tack room and office. East of the tack room is a large barn with open pastures surrounding the structure. North of the barn is a newer structure and is also used for storage.

All of these structures ultimately make up the “historic core.” This core will be preserved and all structures will remain in their current locations, allowing the historic charm to welcome visitors.
The conservation easement will range from Middle Fork Canyon through Hinckley Ranch, across the highway, and reach to Pineview Reservoir. This is to preserve the existing habitat and wildlife.

Respect should be paid to the watershed by restricting the trampling of vegetation at or near erodible areas. These include:

- Permanent streams
- Intermittent streams
- Erodible slopes

Continuity of the easement from the ridge top to the valley to Pineview Reservoir is essential to maximizing its environmental benefit.

Registration of the Hinckley Ranch as conservation easement should be accomplished according to protocols of the Ogden Valley Land Trust or Utah Open Lands.
Hinckley Ranch has the opportunity to HEAL the individual, ENGAGE the community, and help PRESERVE the nature of the Ogden Valley area.

Individuals visit Hinckley Ranch ultimately to HEAL from the stress of their daily lives. Equine therapy benefits all types of users including those with autism, addiction, ADHD, substance abuse, trauma and others. Visitors can interact with nature to escape the big city life and HEAL before returning back to the chaos.

PRESERVATION is a key element of Hinckley Ranch. The current structures make up the heart of the domesticated site and must be preserved to sustain the character of the ranch. Hinckley Ranch is centered between Middle Fork Canyon and Pineview Reservoir making it a key stretch of land to preserve and enhance.

Although the Ranch is located in Eden, the surrounding communities will benefit from this equine facility, community center, and outdoor activities. This will ENGAGE the communities and allow them the opportunity to interact with wildlife and nature alike.

The convergence of these three forces will set a standard for citizens of the valley to follow.
- PROGRAM APPROACH AND ELEMENTS -

PROGRAM APPROACH

**Heal** (Equine Facilities & Community Center)

The inspiration behind the Mountain Ability Center is the desire to help individuals heal. To do so, equine facilities have been proposed as a way to cope with difficulties, and learn how to manage stress. The proposed community center also provides opportunities for families to heal together as they participate in activities such as art classes, indoor rock climbing, and other outdoor recreation. We all heal by learning compassion for others and growing in our ability to help everyone realize their fullest potential.

**Engage** (Trails and Gathering Space)

Providing opportunities for community members to gather and experience the outdoors together is a main goal of the Mountain Ability Center. This goal is accomplished not only by the proposed community center, but by the many outdoor trails for hiking, biking, riding and exploring wildlife. The trails throughout Hinckley Ranch will connect the community to the nearby Middle Fork Canyon and Wildlife Refuge Management Area. Engaging the landscape and nature promotes the healing of all spirits.

**Preserve** (Conservation Easement)

To best preserve the 280 acres of Hinckley Ranch, the proposed Mountain Ability Center has been designed in a condensed manner to allow the majority of the land to remain in its original, agrarian state. The proposed buildings have been arranged to frame and preserve the best views of the surrounding landscape.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

The Mountain Ability Center at Hinckley Ranch has the potential and opportunity to HEAL the individual, ENGAGE the community and PRESERVE the natural context of Ogden Valley. Each proposed program element below stems from these values.

**Equine Facilities**
- Indoor Riding Arena (20,000 sf)
- Tack, Wash, Feed Areas (10,000 sf)
- Offices, Meeting, Waiting Areas (2,000 sf)

**Community Center**
- Multi Purpose Rooms (4,500 sf)
- Gear Storage (3,000 sf)
- Indoor Gathering Space (1,000 sf)
- Outdoor Gathering Space (1,000 sf)
- Reception Area (200 sf)
- Restrooms, Elevator, Stairs, etc. (1,500 sf)
- Art Studio (1,500 sf)
- Administration (3,000 sf)
- Kitchen (800 sf)
- Indoor Climbing Wall (800 sf)

**On-Site Lodging**
- 15 (200 sf) cabins (3,000 sf)
- Common Bathroom/Shower House (600 sf)
- Gathering Area(s) (800 sf)
- EQUINE THERAPY -

WHAT IS EQUINE THERAPY?

“Equine therapy is a form of therapy that involves interactions between patients and horses. Equine therapists will usually teach many lessons on ways horses learn, react, and follow instructions in comparison to the lives of youth themselves.

Currently there are 782 accredited therapeutic riding sessions in North America and 4,544 certified riding and driving instructors.”

http://infographicjournal.com

Equine Therapy Treats:

- Mood Disorders
- Addiction
- Autism
- Behavior Disorders
- Depression
- Communication
- Low Self Worth
- ADHD
- Substance Abuse
- Trauma

http://www.abu.edu
http://www.eyesofahorse.com
http://www.healingwithhorses.com.au
http://www.copperleafacres.com
http://www.sru.edu
The following sites were looked at as precedents for the riding arena at Hinckley Ranch including:

- National Ability Center - Park City, Utah
- Healing with Horses Ranch - Manor, Texas
- Uinta Academy - Wellsville, Utah
- Healing Reigns - Bend, Oregon

The centers vary in their offerings - some focus on specific users or therapies, while others offer a broad variety of services and users.

The most inspiring precedent came from the National Ability Center in Park City. Elements of the design include:

- The connection between the indoor and outdoor arena - the axis connects to the corral
- The parking embraces the site plan and is distributed throughout
- The horse trail access directly connects to the corral
- The ranch is organized along an axis that orients students and visitors to activities and lively public spaces and expands to the distant views
The preliminary concepts for the Mountain Ability Center began with the dream of equestrian therapy. It was important to preserve the connection with the existing barn, and historical housing. The concept has a strong axial frame, giving a sense of history, strength and permanence to the ranch. These buildings represent the historic core and will maintain the character of the place. These alternative allowed us to explore a variety of arrangements.

The original structures will have the same use except for the 1960s home is to be used for on-site employee housing.

The new arena is to be placed in proximity to the barns and pastures to retain the connection to the horses. The community center, just south of the arena, creates a new core. There is open plaza space and a welcome center. A vehicular drop-off loop and parking near the arena and community center allow for easy accessibility for all.

Visitor housing is to be located on the northwest side or the southeast ridge, which provides beautiful views of Middle Fork Canyon and the watershed that leads to Pineview Reservoir.

The conservation easement, south of the development, will run along the watershed through the property, across Highway 166, and end at Pineview Reservoir. This will ensure the safety and habitat of the wildlife.

Viewsheds from the road were taken into consideration, revealing the ranch gradually as visitors come into the site from Highway 166, without blocking the beauty of Middle Fork Canyon.
The “Historic Core” of the Mountain Ability Center will include employee housing, an outdoor pavilion, and clear pedestrian access through the site. Reinforcing these historic assets is critical to a successful design.

The 1960s house will transform into on-site housing for employees. This becomes a necessity of the property as families begin to stay on the property in the visitor lodging as well as to assist the horses.

The long storage shed will now be used as a pavilion. There will be picnic benches for the visitors to view the activities in the corral on warm summer days.

The corral will remain the central focus of the ranch and will continue to be used to train horses, there is also amphitheater style seating on the northwest side lightly shaded by surrounding trees for the comfort of the spectators.

To preserve the past as well as give the visitors an understanding of this history of this place, a main pedestrian promenade from the historic core to the new development creates a historic walk. There will now be direct pedestrian access from the “Historic Core” to the “Community Core” in two areas. One will be by the north storage barn that moves the visitors from the corral to the arena. The other will be just south and through the main barn.
The “Community Core” of Hinckley Ranch will include an indoor riding arena, a community center, parking with accessible drop-offs, visitor lodging and connections to trails.

Hinckley Ranch will have a new main entrance from 1900 North. This maintains the richness and character of the place by mimicking the original entrance. The original entrance will now be used mostly for pedestrian circulation and authorized vehicles.

The indoor riding arena will include a great deal of windows to capture the views of the canyon. The drop-off loop to the east allows access for visitors and employees to transport horses. There is a twenty-five foot promenade directly south of the arena that connects the users to and from the Historic and Community Cores.

The outdoor open plaza opens directly northwest of the community center and provides space for visitors to gather.

There is a continuation of an irrigation ditch that will flow through the site and irrigate the meadow northeast of the community center.

The final element is the visitor lodging, for users and their families to spend overnight at the Mountain Ability Center. This offers the best location because of the views and privacy this space offers.
View looking west into Historic Core from the Storage Barn.
- ARENA DROP-OFF -

Northeast corner of the arena where north drop-off is located.
The Arena would be open for riding with seating along the north and south sides as well as office space located within the building.
- INSIDE THE ARENA -
The Community Center is designed for individuals of all abilities. Inside the building there are art studios, classroom space, a climbing wall, gathering and viewing areas, and multipurpose rooms. Circulation and gathering link people of all abilities to inspire the community spaces.

A) The twenty-five foot entrance promenade between the community center and existing pastures that lead to a trailhead to experience Middle Fork River watershed.

B) The Great Lawn is bermed up and has seating for visitors to gather.

C) The rooftop garden keeps fresh vegetables and herbs out of reach from wildlife. The produce grown will be used in the cafe in the community center.

D) Three cisterns catch rain water from the roof and irrigate the detention meadow just south of the cisterns, thus mimicking the historic irrigation techniques of flood irrigation on the site.

D) Multiple patios and outdoor classrooms surrounding the south side of the community center.

E) A fire pit with seating takes advantage of distant views to the south as well as the views of the watershed.

G) The drop-off loop and half of the parking (25 stalls) located just west of the structure for easy access.
South side of the community center looking northeast.
View looking west into Historic Core from the Storage Barn.
The Riding Arena and Community Center are in close proximity to one another to allow for easy accessibility. The Great Lawn can be used to hold large events or have lunch in the sun.
South side of community center looking west towards visitor lodging.
**PROPOSED CIRCULATION**

The new main vehicular entrance from 1900 North allows visitors to oversee the past with a view of the corral and then around the arena. There is a visitor drop off located in the center of the parking lot between the community center and arena. This vehicular access continues south to the visitor housing where the road ultimately ends in a roundabout.

The original entrance from Highway 166 will now be for authorized vehicular use only. This access continues through to the roundabout for transportation of horses and equipment as needed.

The pedestrian circulation through the site encourages visitors to experience the Historic and Community Cores. Visitors will circulate from the old arena through the barn and directly to the community center. There is also access from the old corral to the arena. A pedestrian axis from the north storage unit heads south to a trailhead and to the visitor housing, and invites users to experience wildlife on foot.

The equestrian access allows for the horses to be taken from the pastures, corral and barn directly to the arena and to the trailhead, without interfering with vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
Between the arena and community center facing west toward the Historic Core.
- PHASING IMPLEMENTATION -

**Phase One** (0-2 years)
- Horse Arena
- Utility and Equestrian circulation established between Arena and Historic Barn
- Informal gathering space defined on south entry of horse arena
- Axis connecting Historic Corral to the East entry plaza looking up Middle Fork Canyon
- Parking Lot

**Phase Two** (2-7 years)
- Community Center
- North-South Axis defined on west side of the community center
- Trail hub created, with pedestrian trails through the conservation area, and equestrian trails connecting to Middle Fork
- Additional Parking to the South
- Additional gathering and outdoor spaces surrounding community center

**Phase Three** (7-10 years)
- Visitor lodging (12 units) overlooking the conservation area
- Pedestrian historic loop defined on south edge of historic corral
- Updating of 1960s residence to accommodate additional office space and living quarters for caretaker
- Additional trails and campgrounds established throughout site
“Now, we must use this project to serve as a model for the valley and surrounding communities,”
Kristin Hinckley Whitaker.