

August Beef Roundup 09 **"Reunion Ride"**

AUG 11th:

We had 12 guests on the Reunion Ride. It was great to see some of those we hadn't seen for a couple of years. I hadn't seen Myra for years and retirement was treating her very well. Stumpy of course hadn't changed any, nor had his sidekick. They both arrived laughing and joking just like they had left a couple years earlier. They always brighten the trip when they are around. Since we were sort of having an old timer's week, Patty had driven up from Casper to join the group and Craig had come from Omaha, so we really did have a couple of the "old timers". We also had Mary, Bobbie, and Lisa. When you have one of these weeks and people arrive it hits you, how much these old friends mean to you. It warms my heart to see them again. I often think that Alice and I would love to drive across country and see some of these people in a different setting. They all are very capable of taking care of themselves but I pay the insurance so I must worry. The new people on the trip always hold back a little the first couple of days, as they are in a setting they really can't grasp at first.

Chris walked the group through there paces and we were ready for the week. We took a trail ride after the horsemanship to make sure we had all the buckles, saddles, and so forth set correctly for the week. Since this was our 5th group of the summer the issue we were dealing with was horse flesh. I had several who were too sore to use that week. This didn't leave us with a lot of horse options during the week.

Aug 12th:

Since Patty was around you new that there would be some twists and turns to the week. Patty had brought her flock of plastic pink flamingos. They sort of kept turning up everywhere. Someone would leave their tent and come back and they would have a flock of pink birds in their tent. Were not saying Patty is a bird brain, she just like's pink flamingo's. Once we were saddled we headed to Sardine Lake to begin the weeks gather. We scattered about 4 different directions and picked up lost yearlings everywhere. We met on the suspension fence with the goal to get them kicked into the Lick Creek pasture for the day. We did doctor a couple yearlings while waiting for everyone to show up. The roping that day was one where maybe we should have just left our ropes back at the barn. There just wasn't anything going right. We did tease either Russ or Paul; I don't remember which, as he had his camera out taking pictures. We told him he was the reason we couldn't rope anything that day. He of course thought we were serious and was all apologetic for causing it. He sure felt relieved when we told him we were just joking. We just had a bad day roping! That evening after dinner George decided to take a shower and wash off two days of trail dust. With a repeat group there are no boundaries as to what they will do to each other. As George was in the shower, everyone took their chairs

and sat them in a semi circle around the shower door. When George stepped out of the shower here were 15 people sitting their. They snuck over very quietly and seated themselves in front of the door. Now, I know they had been drinking a little so am not so sure just how quiet they really were. They thought they were quiet so that's really the only thing that matters. As George stepped out they all started clapping and jeering. I'm sure George was damn glad we don't do video on the Beef Roundups.

Aug 13th:

Around breakfast time Ben Buckles and his daughter Lynn pulled in and helped us ride for the day. We had a bull of theirs and it was going to be the best time to get him. We gathered Dayton Gulch and held the herd by the fish enclosure and roped and doctored around 15 animals. The roping was much better today and we rolled through them pretty fast. I suppose we have roped and doctored close to 50 yearlings so far this summer. We trailed up through the timber patch coming out of Lick Creek and it was a snap. With all the repeat people the trip went very smooth. The knowledge they have gained over the years is truly amazing!! We had a late lunch at camp after dropping the yearlings into the Lake Creek pasture. After lunch we picked them back up and kicked them into the bottom of the Lake Creek pasture. We packed up one of the mules with 200 lbs of salt and scattered salt as we took the herd north. It was a great day, we got accomplished with the herd what we wanted and the weather had been beautiful. The only negative on the day was that we were short around 100-120 head of cattle. This always amazes the new people because they don't see how that is possible to miss that many cattle.

Aug 14th:

Earlier I had mentioned that Patty had a love affair with her Flamingos and they would show up anywhere. Well today she had one that sat on top of her head and strapped to her shoulders. This thing had about a 3 foot beak. Most people were up, but Paul was a little slow rising this morning so Patty figured she could help the situation. Paul was in one of the wall tents so Patty walked in with her bird strapped to her head and bent over and pecked Paul on the head with her beak. This of course startled Paul, who saw this pink think above him. In his reaction he swung wildly, while letting out a scream. His fist slammed into the big pink beak leaving everyone roaring. Jocularities, Jocularities!!!

Today we were going to do a major reride of the whole allotment. This included a circle into the Little Horn. We rode to Sardine Lake and off the Kerns Joslyn trail. It is a breath taking ride and there wasn't a lot of talking as we rode off of it. That trail should be renamed the "The Quiet Trail". For some reason people just sort of forget to talk when they are on it. It's probably just because you are single file going up or down it. We came out in Rock Cabin Park and sat around the fire ring and had lunch. It was very discouraging though to ride in and see the big mess tent down on the ground with some major rips in it. I knew

Trent and I had a big job ahead of us to put it back up for the Sept trip. We rode the Little Horn parks and found 4 animals. That only left us short 96-116 head. Once we were above the woven wire fence, we split up and one group rode West Burn and picked up 7 more yearlings out of Chucks cattle. Now we are only short 89-109 head. We met up at the fence in the bottom of Dayton Gulch where we dropped the cattle and headed onto camp. We could see some major thunder clouds starting to build in the west. It looked like it could get a little wet. A little wet it did. About 3:00pm it dumped and it rained cows and horses! Getting rained on really isn't that big of a deal if you have the correct wet weather gear to deal with it. Everyone did. We fired up the barrel stove in the mess tent and soon had it warmed up so we could get items like chaps dried out and stay warm. It poured so hard the water couldn't even soak in. It just ran every direction that was down hill. We discovered that we had a few spots in the big mess tent that were down hill. One nice thing is it was settling the dust in the mess tent. Little things like a barrel stove are never considered a necessity until you are in one of those down pours.

Aug 15:

We awoke to a beautiful blue sky and clear crisp weather even though there were puddles everywhere. There was a light dusting of snow around the edges of the timber. There was so much rain that the snow was a very wet heavy snow. On things like the vehicles there were about 2 inches of the white stuff. The bright blue skies lasted all of 20 minutes before the fog and mist settled back in. We took our time eating breakfast, hoping that the storm would pass and we would go make our circle. The fog just kept getting thicker and the mist slightly more intense. I asked how many people still wanted to go make a circle for the day. About 85% said lets do it. Trent and Daniel saddled up to go find the horses. With the heavy fog Trent and Daniel had visibility for about 20 yards at a time. It was one of those days you could gather a Moose if you weren't careful. With the thick heavy dense fog it took about 40 minutes to find all the horses. As soon as the horses were all in the fog started to lift and the mist stopped. It looked like maybe the storm was lifting. At that elevation the weather changes in an instant. It sure did today. The storm lifted just until we had all the horses caught and people were starting to saddle. Then the storm rolled back in, the fog collapsed down on us and it started to drizzle. By the time we were saddle we were down to about 50% of the people choosing to stay in camp. We headed out with the hardy brave souls who couldn't help themselves, they just wanted more torture. We damn sure got more torture. Once we were away from camp it went back to a steady rain, except the wind came up so the rain was coming in cold and hard.

We split up several different directions with the idea of meeting on the Suspension fence. One group of riders found 2 yearlings in Bear Trap on the new water tank we had put in. We kicked the two yearlings into Dayton Gulch and found more cattle there. We picked up the 11 we had dropped the day before and found 20 some more in a clear cut south of Dayton Gulch. We kept gathering with the idea of meeting on the pole fence on Lick Creek. By the time

we got to Lick Creek the weather had stopped and the low ceiling of clouds began to lift. The temperature started to go up. This was really a good thing because most of us were soaked and chilled. When it rains that hard, with that much wind you can't stay warm or dry. If someone had commented about global warming I do believe we would have hung them from the nearest tree! We had gathered up around 70 head of cattle that we had missed two days earlier. Now were only short 19-29 head. I was feeling pretty good about the gather. We were to find out much later that the cattle we were still short, were all in the Bear Trap pasture and 6 of them would never be recovered. After getting back to camp we turned everything loose and headed to Bear Lodge for the nights activities. A hot shower in a civilized setting sure made everyone smile. When we had ridden back to camp the cooks had taken those who had stayed in camp on to Bear Lodge. I new that was going to be a mistake and it was. The cooks had all bellied up to the bar and were pretty well enjoying their time out of the kitchen. It was a very successful week even with some of the nasty weather. It was an amazing week with an amazing group of people.