

SUMMER LIFE

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Your complete 2008 travel and
vacation guide for Southwest Montana

MONTANA WORKING RANCHES

By Bill Brewster

Photos courtesy of Montana Bunkhouses - Working Ranch Vacations LLC



A TRUE WESTERN WAY OF LIFE

A working ranch vacation is the highlight each summer for hundreds of visitors to Montana.

The interest in vacationing at a working cattle ranches continues to grow in popularity because more Americans – and people from foreign countries as well – want to experience this traditional western way of life.

The true working ranch vacation goes well beyond a normal guest ranch experience. On a working ranch vacation, the guests participate with the ranch family with all of the every-day projects that are part of ranch life.

“One of the greatest things about our way of life is the interconnectedness of the ranching community—the way neighboring places help each other during a branding or cattle roundups and then come together to celebrate at the rodeo and other special events,” said Karen Searle, the manager of Montana Bunkhouses Working Ranch Vacations. “We look forward to introducing you to our friends and neighbors. We’re more than a guest ranch, more than horseback riding; we are families working cooperatively, inviting you to join us for a vacation you’ll not soon forget.”

Searle said “participants can do as much or as little as you choose while living the Old West Montana ranch ex-

perience. Ranch activities vary by the season and include everything from cattle drives with the cowboys to riding the ditches with the irrigator.

“There is calving and lambing in the spring, and horse back riding, fishing, bird watching, hiking and photography in every season.

“Those seeking adventure may sign up for an authentic cattle drive, trail rides or a pack trip. Others may choose to ride in the pickup and visit with the rancher on daily rounds to feed and care for livestock, and do ranch chores.

“While ranchers do not always take the time to go fishing, we know where the best fishing streams are and if you enjoy world class trout fishing let us point you to some of the finest trout waters in Montana located right out our back door.

“You always have the option of reading a book in the shade of the tree next to a babbling brook, going on a nature hike, or having another cup of coffee at the ranch house.

“In addition to agriculture and ranching, outstanding river and stream fly fishing, the Lewis and Clark Trail and the legacy of Yellowstone National Park and Glacier National Park, you will find that our ranches are located in an area rich in cultural resources--the arts, western history,