

PAUSE AND REFLECT

SELAH, BAMBERGER RANCH PRESERVE

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Selah — a biblical term used in the Psalms that invites the reader to pause and reflect on the message. At Bamberger Ranch, often affectionately called “Selah,” visitors are invited to experience moments in which they can “pause and reflect” on their role with Mother Nature.

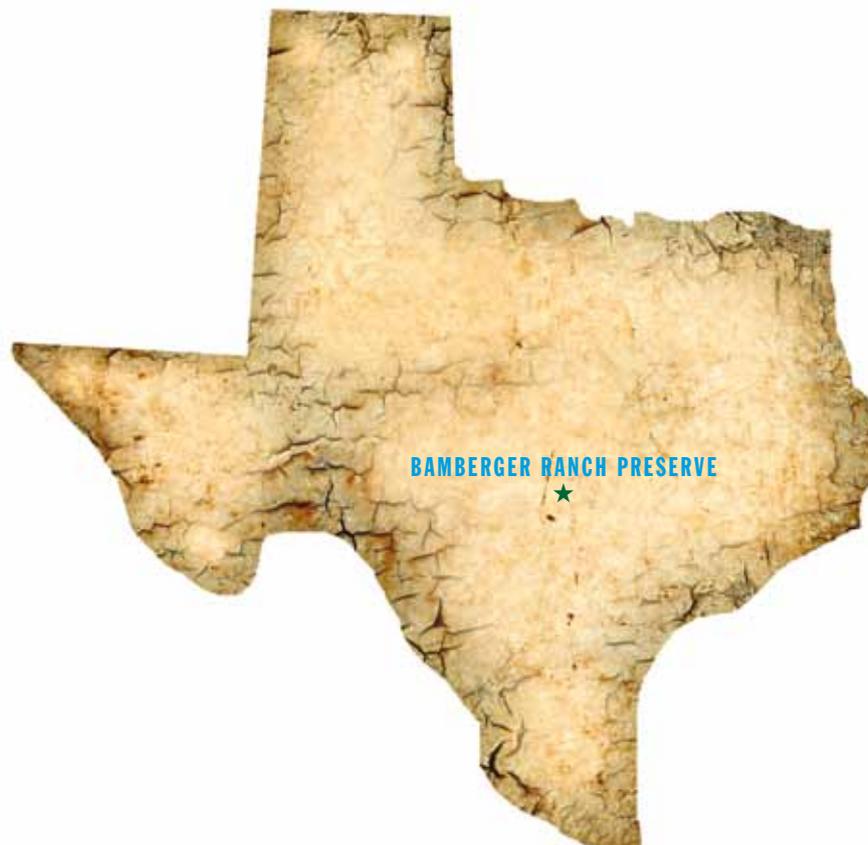
SELAH, BAMBERGER RANCH PRESERVE

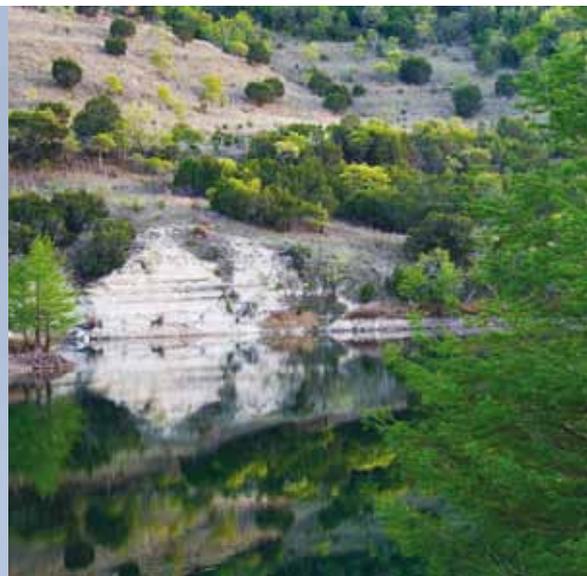
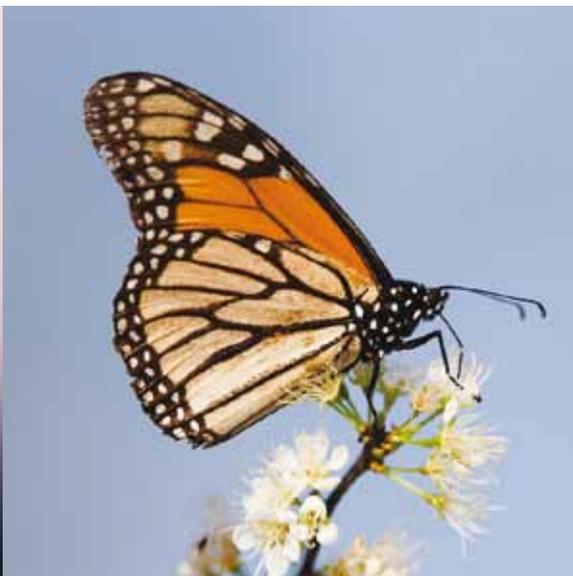
The land in the Texas Hill Country has long been admired for its fenced pastures with grazing livestock, creeks meandering through green valleys, and limestone hills jutting up against blue skies.

In recent years, however, the farms and ranches in this serene landscape have increasingly been cut up and sold off for RV parks, vacation cottages, and country estates.

But one ranch — Bamberger Ranch Preserve in Blanco County — has defied the trend. Its 5,500 acres stand apart, preserving the Hill Country heritage and teaching us all how to reconnect with the land.

Though privately established and supported for most of its 40-year history, the ranch is now a nonprofit organization. The challenge — and the opportunity — is to build an endowment to preserve this unique piece of the Hill Country.





**“IN THE DECADES TO COME, IT WILL NOT BE ONLY THE BUFFALO AND THE TRUMPETER SWAN
WHO NEED SANCTUARIES.
OUR OWN SPECIES IS GOING TO NEED THEM TOO. IT NEEDS THEM NOW.”**

WALLACE STEGNER, AMERICAN HISTORIAN

WHY IS LAND IMPORTANT?

Ordinarily we think of *land* as the ground on which we build our homes and offices, or where we lay out towns and highways. But actually the land plays a dynamic role in producing our food, channeling our water, and sustaining the air we breathe.

In a broader sense, land is not merely soil. To paraphrase the American ecologist Aldo Leopold, land is the *community of living things*: It includes the plants that grow in the soil, the animals that feed on the plants, and the decayed matter that returns to the soil and makes it fertile again. Clearly, we belong to that community.

As *Homo sapiens*, we have Nature imbedded in our DNA. Communion with the land brings us closer to our life force, which for many of us is the heart of God. From that perspective, in the words of American historian William Cronon, “If we lose touch with that essential part of ourselves, we risk losing our souls.”





**YOU HAVE TO SET CLEAR, ACHIEVABLE
GOALS, HAVE A VISION, AND STICK TO IT.**

J. DAVID BAMBERGER



Margaret Bamberger

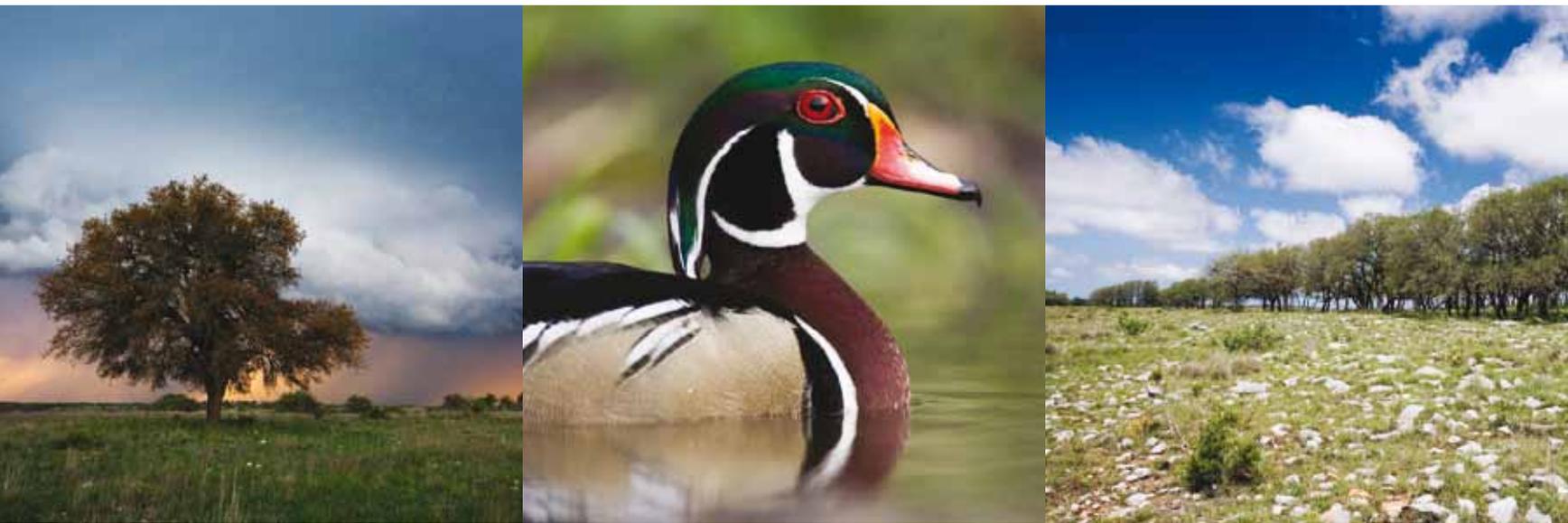
WHY THE BAMBERGER RANCH PRESERVE?

Texans enjoy thousands of acres of land set aside as parks and nature preserves. Open space allows us to rest, refresh, and reconnect with the community of living things and the ongoing creation of Nature.

What's outstanding about the Bamberger Ranch is first its significant size. When compared to more than 90 Texas state parks and natural areas, the ranch is the 12th largest in acreage. It's also the only one within an hour's drive of two major cities, Austin and San Antonio.

Open space must be of significant size if native plants and wildlife are to thrive. When urban settlement encroaches upon open space, wildlife flee into fragmented habitat less likely to sustain them. In addition, open space of significant size benefits the larger region by keeping the air clean and the water abundant for the people who live there.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the Bamberger Ranch is its wholehearted mission of education. The ranch teaches us firsthand how to preserve and protect the community of living things. That mission, combined with a strong ranching heritage, makes the ranch unique among nature preserves anywhere.



**“WE ABUSE LAND BECAUSE WE REGARD IT AS A COMMODITY BELONGING TO US.
WHEN WE SEE LAND AS A COMMUNITY TO WHICH WE BELONG, WE MAY BEGIN TO USE IT
WITH LOVE AND RESPECT.”**

ALDO LEOPOLD, A SAND COUNTY ALMANAC



LAND STEWARDSHIP

Bamberger Ranch is a working ranch. When the first 3,000-acre parcel was purchased in 1969, the land was so overtaken by Ashe Juniper (cedar) and depleted by overgrazing that it would have taken 41 acres to support one cow. Land restoration practices, largely the removal of cedar and the planting of native grasses, has improved that ratio to 20 acres per cow.

Today the ranch maintains a herd smaller than the maximum capacity to keep native grasses healthy. Eleven natural springs have reappeared. Except during droughts, the major spring produces an average of three gallons a minute, or 4,320 gallons a day, and furnishes all the water used by the ranch, including the needs of three households, visitors, and agriculture.

Private landowners come from far and wide to learn how to restore and maintain their land following the ranch's example. They learn about cedar clearing, grassland recovery, tree planting, farm pond maintenance, springs renewal, and game habitat. In addition, county extension agents, agricultural science faculty, horticulturists, and others from universities and government agencies come to see and learn about the land transformation and, in turn, pass on the principles to others.

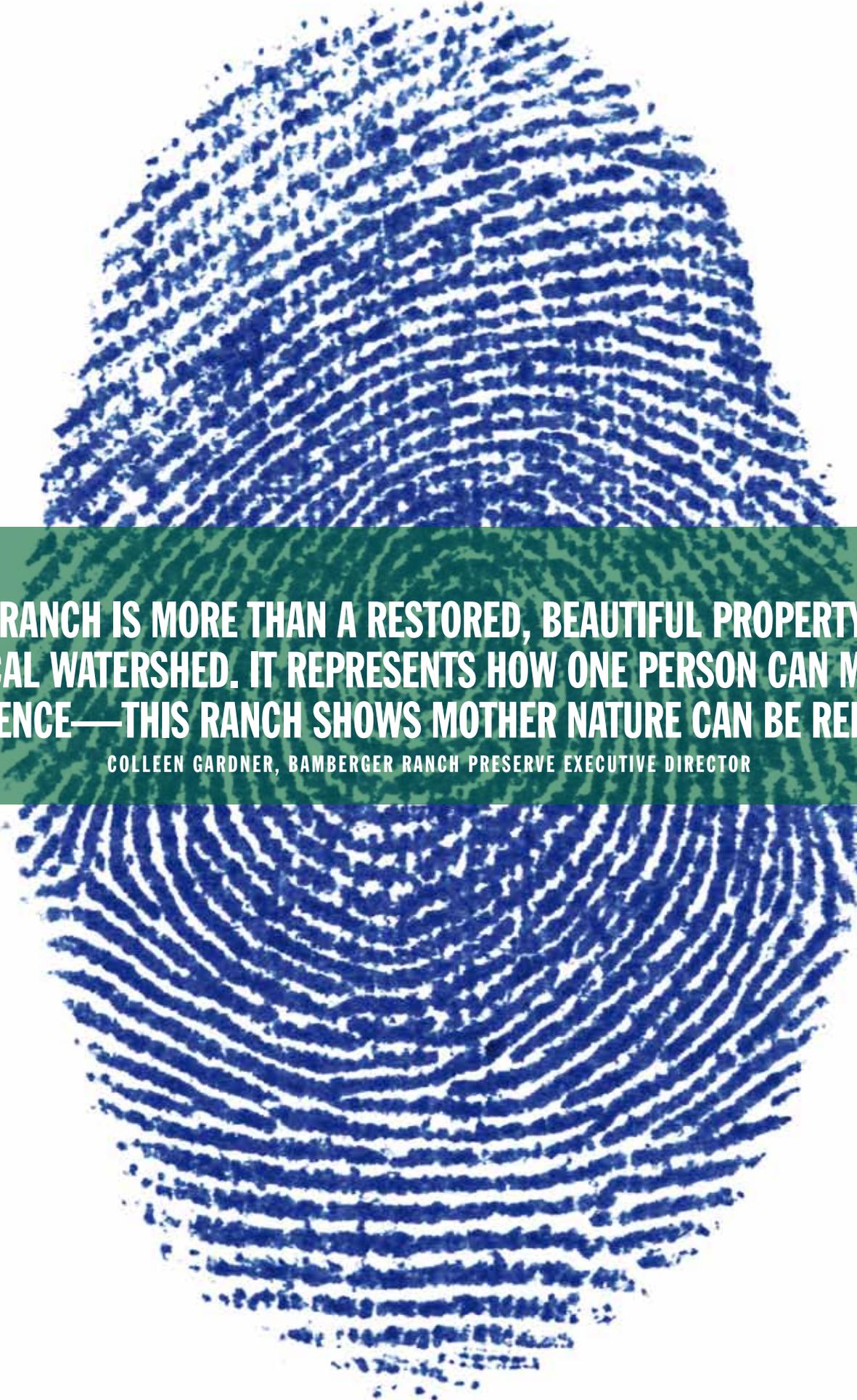
As a result, untold thousands of acres of land are being restored. In addition, we're learning how to capture and replenish the resource most critical to Texas today — water. How landowners manage their land will determine how long our aquifers can supply our towns and cities.

Broadleaf Woodoats
Chasmanthium latifolium



AWARDS — A PARTIAL LIST

- Leopold Conservation Award
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Lone Star Land Steward
- Garden Clubs of America
- U.S. Soil and Water Conservation Service
- Texas Forest Service
- National Arbor Day Foundation
- Nature Conservancy of Texas
- Texas Wildlife Association
- Texas Environmental Excellence Award in Education
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality



THIS RANCH IS MORE THAN A RESTORED, BEAUTIFUL PROPERTY IN A CRITICAL WATERSHED. IT REPRESENTS HOW ONE PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE—THIS RANCH SHOWS MOTHER NATURE CAN BE REPAIRED.

COLLEEN GARDNER, BAMBERGER RANCH PRESERVE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Bamberger Ranch is an outdoor research lab. Ongoing projects with many universities and researchers include collecting baseline data on endangered species and native plants and animals. With the Texas Agricultural Extension Service and Texas A&M University, ranch staff monitor native grasses as well as groundwater recharge and runoff.

In cooperation with zoologists, the ranch provides a habitat for the Scimitar-horned Oryx antelope, now extinct in its native Africa. Breeding practices and meticulous recordkeeping ensure a diversified genetic pool to strengthen survival chances when the Oryx is reintroduced into zoos or the wild.

In cooperation with Dr. Gary McCracken from the University of Tennessee and other bat scientists, the ranch built the first large-scale, man-made bat cave for the Mexican Free-tailed Bat. Researchers, including Dr. Tom Kunz of Boston University, used infrared cameras to count 134,000 bats in August 2009. Among recent and unexpected discoveries were the teeming life forms inside the cave.

A recent grant for digital mapping equipment enables ranch staff to monitor habitat for endangered species as well as cattle grazing and burn sites. Other data is shared with Texas A&M University researchers studying springs and with University of Texas scientists at the Center for Space Research.

As a result of these projects, scientists are pushing forward the frontiers of knowledge, accumulating information that could better preserve and enrich life on the planet.

TEXAS SNOWBELL RECOVERY

In the 1980s, biologists feared the Texas snowbell, a small tree (*Styrax texana*), was headed for extinction. But ranch founder J. David Bamberger, as a personal quest, persuaded landowners in the tree's native habitat of Edwards, Real, and Val Verde counties to allow him to collect seeds. Careful plantings at the ranch, aided by grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Landowner Incentive Program, have resulted in new trees and more seeds.

Ranch staff have returned more than 680 snowbell seedlings to their original habitat — with fencing to prevent devastation by livestock — and contributed seeds to other research institutions such as the San Antonio Botanical Center and the UT Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Research Center.

Ranch biologist Steven Fulton has moved the project to a higher level by investigating the species as part of a postgraduate degree. His research is revealing critical data about how this flowering tree is pollinated and propagated.

Although much recovery work and research remain to be done, the ranch has succeeded in halting the extinction and looks forward to the day when the species goes off the endangered list.



“AFTER TWO YEARS OF GOING TO BAMBERGER RANCH, STUDENT SCIENCE SCORES IMPROVED BY 30 PERCENTAGE POINTS, FROM AROUND 52 TO 81. I’M NOT SAYING IT WAS ONLY THE RANCH TOURS, BUT I DO BELIEVE THE HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES AT THE RANCH WERE AN IMPORTANT REASON FOR THE IMPROVEMENT IN SCORES. JUST BEING ABLE TO BE IN THE OUTDOORS FOR STUDENTS WHO NORMALLY LIVE IN THE CITY AND DON’T HAVE THOSE EXPERIENCES, SEEING LAND FORMATIONS AND BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS, IT’S JUST AWESOME.”

JOEL DE LA GARZA, PRINCIPAL PICKLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, AUSTIN



SCHOOL SCIENCE CLASSES

Bamberger Ranch is a hands-on science classroom. Typically in a given year, 1,500 students from area schools participate in week-long nature camps, three-day science classes, and one-day geology and paleontology field trips. The majority of these students are from low-income families who have never been outside their own urban neighborhoods. In addition to school classes, the ranch provides hands-on learning for 4-H, FFA, and other youth groups.

Every summer the ranch offers workshops for teachers on such topics as dinosaurs, ecology, and field biology. The result is improved quality of science education in the schools.

These classes have implications for closing the achievement gap, reducing dropouts and alleviating other problems associated with poor academic performance, and better preparing young people for future jobs and citizenship.



Fifth grade student field journals



**WE MUST TAKE CARE OF THE EARTH,
AND ANYONE CAN HELP.**

J. DAVID BAMBERGER



CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

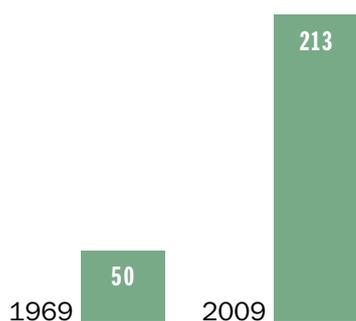
Bamberger Ranch Preserve is a nature preserve. The ranch is a springtime home for two endangered songbirds, the Golden-cheeked Warbler and the Black-capped Vireo. Birdwatchers come to the ranch for workshops where they learn how to identify birds by sight and by song.

Public tours and workshops provide opportunities for hiking a variety of nature trails. Visitors learn how to identify native grasses and trees, catch glimpses of birds and wildlife, examine dinosaur tracks and fossils, and learn about geological formations. For many visitors, a hike or overnight stay offers quiet time to simply contemplate Nature — to “pause and reflect.”

As a preserve, the ranch is open only for scheduled workshops and tours or by appointment. Unlike public parks, the ranch will never have gift shops, vending machines, cell phone towers, restaurants, or paved parking lots.

The impact of nature activities on visitors has often been profound. Many visitors are inspired to change consumption habits, better conserve natural resources, and volunteer with environmental organizations. Having experienced the ranch firsthand, visitors leave with a vision of harmony with the land. They realize that at its essence, Bamberger Ranch tells a story of hope: Given the chance, Nature can heal itself. Nature can heal us.

RESTORATION QUADRUPLES BIRD SPECIES



Birds species are an “indicator” of the land’s condition.

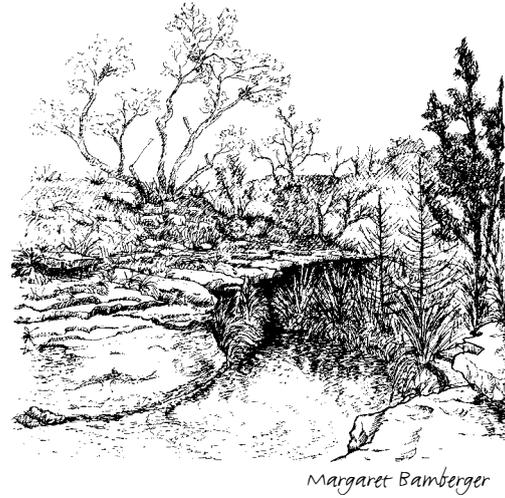
RECYCLING IN ACTION

- The ranch buys recycled equipment, like bulldozers and wood chippers, for all aspects of land management.
- One quaint cabin on the property is built entirely of materials found on the ranch, such as old fence posts, barn wood, light fixtures, and doors.
- A solar toilet, which uses no water, demonstrates significant water savings compared to a conventional toilet that uses 3 to 5 gallons per flush.



“I KNEW IN MY HEART THAT WE AS A NATION WERE ALREADY FARTHER ALONG THE PATH OF DESTRUCTION THAN MOST PEOPLE KNEW. WHAT WE NEEDED WAS A NEW KIND OF PIONEER, NOT THE SORT WHICH CUT DOWN THE FORESTS AND BURNED OFF THE PRAIRIES AND RAPED THE LAND, BUT PIONEERS WHO CREATED NEW FORESTS AND HEALED AND RESTORED THE RICHNESS OF THE COUNTRY GOD HAD GIVEN US....”

LOUIS BROMFIELD, PLEASANT VALLEY



HOW YOU CAN HELP

For much of its early history, the ranch was in rehabilitation. Millions of dollars were poured into restoring the land, acquiring additional acreage, and buying equipment. Decisions about repairing roads, constructing fences, creating a water supply system, and renovating buildings were governed by what was best suited to the land and tempered by solid business experience. Today the ranch produces income through livestock operations supplemented by hunting leases. If the ranch were simply a commercial enterprise, managers could make ends meet.

But Bamberger Ranch is a teaching preserve. It supports its educational programs through the use of volunteers, fees to landowners who request individual consultation, workshop fees, grants, and donations. In consideration of its mission, the ranch keeps fees affordable for everyone and often seeks grants to cover field trip expenses for low-income schools.

But educational programs have always cost more than the resources they bring in. In the past, shortfalls have come out of the pocket of ranch founder, J. David Bamberger. But he won't be around forever, and his pocket is no longer as deep as it once was.

He has already tried, without success, to find a worthy proprietor who would continue to operate the ranch with the same purpose and care. Nonprofit organizations cannot afford to add staff to do the work that Bamberger and his late wife provided without pay. Government agencies, already racked from long periods of inadequate funding, cannot be expected to manage the land properly and carry out the ranch's educational mission.

The only choice was to create a 501(c)3 foundation and invite public support. The goal is to fund a \$10 million endowment and use the earned interest to cover shortfalls.

Half the endowment is already pledged through Mr. Bamberger's estate. The remaining \$5 million will come from donors like you.

Join with like-minded people who passionately love the land. Act now to continue programs that have proven their ability to teach and inspire.

YOUR GIFT MATTERS

For information about specific giving opportunities, contact:

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**“HUMANKIND HAS NOT WOVEN THE WEB OF LIFE. WE ARE BUT ONE THREAD WITHIN IT.
WHATEVER WE DO TO THE WEB, WE DO TO OURSELVES.
ALL THINGS ARE BOUND TOGETHER. ALL THINGS CONNECT.”**

CHIEF SEATTLE, LEADER OF NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES IN WHAT IS NOW THE STATE OF WASHINGTON, 1855

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Bamberger Ranch Preserve is a 501(c)3 private operating foundation. All contributions are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

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Bamberger Ranch Preserve: Nature. Pure & Simple.

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