

### **Sunday Aug 11<sup>th</sup>:**

Guests arrived in camp around 10:00am and we had lots of new people this week, so am really looking forward to the experience and the jocularities that come along with it. The clouds were building in the west and it looked like we could expect some afternoon showers again. We had pretty much been getting showers about every other day, for the last several weeks. Our White bag winner wrapped up the nomination immediately upon arrival. Les Wloch from England managed to lose his luggage from the time he unloaded it off the bus, to getting it to his tent. That's all in a span of about 30 seconds. It's no wonder the English were some of the later arrivals to America. After lunch Chris started the horsemanship clinic. As the clouds blew in and started to spit some rain we had to stop and let people slicker up in order to continue. This group settled right into it and had a very smooth horsemanship clinic.

### **Monday Aug 12<sup>th</sup>:**

The horses were jingled slightly after daylight, as we had a big day ahead of us with lots of miles to cover. Trent took one group and was going to go ride the Bear Trap country. About 5 riders went with him. We had warned people that they had the long circle and if you couldn't sit a trot for two hours, then maybe you should help with another part of the gather. When Trent's group arrived back at camp that evening, Jens was having lot's of hip pain. I suspect it was a slight irritation in the muscle from all the trotting. However, they had found about a dozen head of cattle so had a very successful circle. The rest of us split into 3 different groups and headed 3 different directions with the idea of throwing all the cattle we found into Dayton Gulch where we would work out the cattle that were headed to the Dry Fork the following day. Once the herd was gathered we cut out about 85 cows and 3 bulls and the plan was to trail them to Garland Gulch, where we would sit on the herd until dark before returning to camp. As we trailed the cattle up through the timber out of Lick Creek, it became very apparent the cattle were very happy in the Dayton Gulch pasture and had no desire to leave. When we broke out on top into the horse pasture we discovered we were missing 2 of the 3 bulls. This wasn't good as 85 cows is way more than one bull can service. However, we were also missing a couple cowboys. Someone said the lead had gotten away from them, on what we call the bad corner and had dived off to the left. All we could do was sit and wait. I sent several riders back to find them and help them with whatever they had. This delay was really complicating the day's plans. After about 20 minutes Taylor showed up with a few cows and one of the bulls. With only one bull I was having to give consideration as to how were we going to get the needed additional bull power into the Dry Fork, if not this week, but how next week. Now that we had 2 bulls, while not ideal, it was good enough to go! We dropped off the hill, east of the Lake Creek camp, to the bottom of Kane Creek. The original plan was that we would be here by 1:00 in the afternoon, sit and eat lunch, let the cattle rest, then push them to the top of Kane Creek and then down to the spring in Garland Gulch where a few people would then sit on them till dark. However, instead of being 1:00 it was closer to 4:00. The cattle and horses were tired as well as the guests. I really didn't want the horses played out and really didn't care if the guests were tired or not, they signed on for the real thing. Exhaustion is just part of it! You have to remember that even those that ride, very seldom do the kind of riding we do. Most of them were exhausted, tired and desperately wanted a cold brew. We decided to drop the herd there for the night. This of course meant

we had added about 2 miles to the following day's trip. Again, this is the reality of what we do. When we arrived at the bottom of Kane Creek it was discovered that the bull that Taylor had fought out of the bottom of Lick Creek, had once again ditched us coming through one of the timber patches and we were back to one bull. Well by now it was obvious that that problem was one for another day. That night around the fire, Les Wloch managed to win the White Bags again. There is absolutely no such thing as level ground on the mountain. There is always a slope to it, it just depends on the amount of slope. Even though we try and get the tents set up in as level as possible it doesn't always work. Seems when Les woke up Monday morning, he and his cot had managed to slide out under the tent during the night. Fortunately, it hadn't rained after he had gone to bed. When he awoke in the morning he still had his head in the tent, but the rest of him was outside the tent.

### **Tuesday Aug 13<sup>th</sup>:**

Since we had a really big day ahead of us it meant an early morning. We had breakfast in the dark, and as soon as the cowboys could see they jingled the horses. Trent, Taylor, Jesse, Robert and Lisa Bassett caught there horses and headed out to start gathering cattle and get them on the trail. I had told people anyone who wanted to go with them could, but they had to be ready to ride out when Trent was. Trent wasn't waiting and if they weren't ready, they would have to wait and come with Tianna and myself, which I figured to be about an hour behind them. At the crack of daylight just east of the horse pasture I could see about 5 animals and it appeared one of them was the bull that had ditched us twice yesterday. You know what they say about the third time is the charm. Well we would see, because we also know about Murphy's Law. When Tianna and I with all the guests, left the horse pasture we could look off to the east about 2 miles and see the herd trailing up Kane Creek. I sent Tianna and a bunch of her guests to go down the way we had gone down the day before with the herd and told her to pick up any cattle they found. I was going to swing over to Anvil Rock and pick up the bull and the few cattle that were with him and attempt to take them back to the bottom. It went as planned and when we met up with Tianna at the bottom of Kane Creek we had about a dozen head of cattle and one bull who was completely cooperative today. When Tianna's group rode up guest Dan was giving Kelly(his roommate) hell because he had lost his slicker for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time since leaving camp about 30 minutes earlier. Kelly said he was tired of tying it on to have it fall off again, so he figured he would just pick it back up on our way back to camp about 8 hours later. Which was fine as long as it didn't rain. We caught the other herd about 3 miles down the trail, where they had stopped to rest the cattle. We had mister bull, so we had two in the group which was acceptable. The cattle walked right along and we had a great trip to the Dry Fork. We arrived at the Dry Fork Cow camp about 2:30 in the afternoon. When we hit Mother Up Park about 1:00 that afternoon I gave the option to any that wanted to go back to camp, that Tianna would take them back. About half went back with her and the other half stayed with the herd. When arriving at the Dry Fork Cow Camp Kelly stepped off his horse and didn't see the 3 foot hole next to his horse that was covered over with tall grass. He stepped off and went clear to the bottom. Of course this made everyone laugh, especially his travelling partner Dan. At the time Kelly was unaware that between losing his slicker and stepping off in a hole he had cemented his nomination for the White Bags that evening, much to the relief of Les Wloch. The only other nomination for the White Bags that night was both John and Pat Kommsi. We hollered that morning for breakfast at 5:00 am and didn't realize

they slept right through it. They surfaced about 15 minutes before we were ready to ride out. They wolfed down a couple pieces of breakfast as they headed to the corrals to saddle their horses. They had come out on their Harley's which take less time in the morning to get ready to ride. They felt guilty for oversleeping and of course as the cow boss, it is my duty to make sure they feel real guilty! After dropping the herd we rode the 3 hours back to camp all the while watching the thunder heads getting bigger and bigger in the west. I wondered if Kelly was concerned. It sure looked like rain as the ceiling was getting lower and blacker by hour. Kelly is one lucky person. We rode up to his slicker 2 ½ hours later and were still dry. He stepped off his horse and put the slicker on just as it started to spit rain. We rode into camp about 30 minutes later, turned the horses out and then it went to raining. Little did we know that on the upcoming September trip we weren't going to have the luck to get into camp before it started raining.

### **Wednesday Aug 14<sup>th</sup>:**

We let people sleep in this morning since we had had a long day the day before. We didn't have breakfast until 7:30am. However, this morning the Kommsi's were up by 6:30. We all were chuckling. Today we had a big job ahead of us, the bright spot was that we wouldn't be more than 3 miles from camp at any point in time. It's always the 3 hour rides back to camp that make the days so long after spending all day pushing cattle. The goal was to gather all the cattle in the Dayton Gulch Lick Creek pasture and hold them against the fish enclosure. Once gathered up we would cut out the yearling heifers and leave them in the Dayton Gulch pasture and kick all the cows and calves on over the divide into the Lake Creek Pasture. We gathered the herd and then gave all the guests a lesson on cutting cattle out of a herd and gave each of them a chance to do so. The guests discovered there is much more to working cattle than just sitting on a horse. I explained that you had to work with the animals basic instincts to be successful at it. There are a lot of people who have handled cattle their entire lives and have never figured that out. The slower and quieter you are with them the better. As you start cutting an animal out, I explained that the animal will tell you every move they are going to make before they do it. The key is for you to watch their body language, interpret what they are telling you, then relay the message to your horse what they are going to do by using reins and leg pressure. This allows you to be ahead of the animal and quietly work them out of the herd. After we were done cutting, we kicked the yearling heifers over the hill and took off with the rest of the cow herd. I anticipated with this many young calves we were in for a real challenging couple of hours. Well, we got everything I anticipated. We had the cattle up the hill to the timber line and just as we entered the timber, many of the calves decided that mom wasn't there and so should go back and look for her. When calves decide to run back it's pretty hard to contain them. Especially in the timber. You can see what they are getting ready to do, but you can't be on both sides of a tree at the same time. We had about 75 calves go charging off the hill with cowboy's in hot pursuit. Now in the movies one of the cowboys would jerk down his rope and rope one, my question is, then what? If you rope a calf what do you do about the other 74 that went running back. You don't have 75 ropes to rope each one, yes Hollywood doesn't help our cause at all. We let the calves run back down the hill and held them against the pole fence of the fish enclosure. We sat and just held them until a bunch of momma cows showed up. This is where the communication becomes so difficult. Several of us were in the back holding the calves, waiting for more cows to come

back and find their babies. Trent is up in the lead in the timber, so he can't even see what is happening and then with a young crew and people who have never done this before there is no way to communicate with them what you need them to do to salvage the situation. We needed lots of cows to come back and we would start over. If you get enough cows back, some of them will find their babies and then you can start them back the direction you want to go and hopefully you can keep those that haven't yet found mom following the cows that came back, back into the rest of the herd where their moms are. It is very confusing and difficult to communicate with everyone during this type of situation. There is nothing like experience to know how to deal with this. After a short while, it became obvious to everyone in the group and they let a large bunch of cows back and we started all over. This time we were successful, however several time's we were the width of a gnat's behind from blowing it all again. This is reality and things like this with cows and calves happen all the time. It took us a couple hours to get to the top and into the horse pasture but we did it, thanks to everyone's best effort we were successful. We then sat on the herd for a while to let cattle get mothered up, doctored and tagged some calves before kicking them on into the Lake Creek Pasture. The great thing about today's circle is that once we dropped the cattle we were only 10 minutes from camp. Boy you people did a good job today!

#### **Thursday Aug 15<sup>th</sup>:**

After breakfast Taylor took a pack load of salt and about half the guests down to the key area in Lake Creek, where they gathered the cattle and pushed them down country about 2 miles, where he then dropped the 4 blocks of salt. Each pasture generally has 3 key areas in it and that is what you base your decision as to when you move your cattle to the next pasture in the rotation. The concerning thing is that many times your key areas don't represent more than 10% of the size of the pasture. Not exactly fair but what is fair when dealing with the federal government. When you ask the Forest Service for a reason that particular area is classified as key, they won't give you one, especially if you ask for a scientific reason. The actual reason is that is where the public camps and they are trying to minimize the conflict. It has always bothered me that they don't have the backbone to tell you such, they would rather try and make you think there is some scientific back ground to the answer. I get so tired of being treated like we are stupid by the federal government. Those that I deal with are only doing what they are directed to do from above.

Salt will help hold cattle to a certain degree in certain areas. Consequently we never salt where the cattle have a tendency to over graze or where the public likes to camp. We try very hard to minimize our contact with the recreationist as much as possible.

Trent and I took the rest of the guests and headed back to where we had ridden the previous day to pick up cattle that had gone back or cattle we had missed the day before. We picked up about 30 head which wasn't bad considering the previous days endeavor. We trailed them up to the horse pasture and decided to tag all of the untagged calves before kicking them on into Lake Creek. I started roping calves and Dan and Kelly wanted to learn how to wrestle and hold a calf. Trent gave them hands on instruction. From my vantage point, sitting on my horse it was very obvious the calves were winning if we were keeping score. Dan and Kelly did a great job hanging on but you are supposed to be on top of

the calf, not under the calf hanging on. However, I can say the grins stayed the same regardless if they were on top or the bottom. The thought went through my mind that it looked more like Ohio voters at the polls than calf wrestlers! However, by the time we finished they were starting to get the hang of it and they were on top more than on the bottom. They could have gotten really good if we only had another 1,000 to do. When we finished tagging we shoved the cattle off over the edge at Thompson Springs and headed back to camp where the horses would be finished for the week. Of course there were several who decided since it was the very last minute they should have a horse race back to camp once inside the horse pasture. Jay gave Thunder his head and off they went. One slight problem ensued but Jay did stay in the saddle. Thunder gave a juke one way going wide open then came back the other. Jay didn't catch the return juke very well and had about 18 inches between his butt and the saddle. His arms were slightly longer than when he started from pulling himself back into the saddle, but he did stay in the saddle. Upon seeing me he rode up and said "Gee I was hoping you hadn't seen that". We turned the horses out and headed to Bear Lodge for a shower and the final nights send off. 11 year old Thomas won the white bags for the day and Les Wloch won the White Bag drawing and got to take them back across the pond to England. It was especially fitting seeing Les got nominated more than anyone else the whole week. I gave a Double Rafter scarf to Thomas for being the youngest, Dick Shiloh for being the oldest and symbolizing what is right with America and to Dan and Kelly for being the most improved. They went from complete beginner's at the start of the week, to being good help by the end of the week. Thanks to all and hope to see you down the trail again sometime. There were several who stayed up late that evening and shut the bar down. I can promise you I was not one of them. I am no longer that tough!

The Trail Boss.