

POLICY MANUAL
of
THE DUDE RANCHERS' ASSOCIATION

I. MISSION STATEMENT

The Dude Ranchers' Association is the governing body of the West's dude ranch industry. The Association was created to provide an organized structure for its members, in which they are able to exchange ideas and experiences in an effort to uphold the highest quality of services within the industry. The Association promotes the western ranch vacation, while continuing to build a stronger working relationship with Federal and State land agencies in order to preserve and protect parks, forests and wildlife. The Association makes every effort to assure the successful continuation of the traditional Western dude ranch experience.

II. CODE OF ETHICS

All members of the Dude Ranchers' Association must maintain a high quality of accommodations and services in a clean, friendly, safe, professional manner. Members must practice open and honest marketing and advertising when interacting with potential clientele. Members must adhere to all regulations, and provide information to clientele, concerning the responsible and sustainable use of resources. Members and **the Association will work in cooperation with Federal and State land agencies to ensure the preservation of resources and habitat. Members must work together in an ethical manner in an effort to promote professional** growth within the dude ranching industry.

III. ADMINISTRATION

The office of the Dude Ranchers' Association is the central location for information and representation for all active and associated members. Responsibilities of the office are:

- Advertising and promotion
- Answering mail and phone calls
- Processing membership applications
- Handling fiduciary responsibility, with approval of treasurer, for funds from dues, employment/business ads, etc.
- Preparing and filing the annual Income Tax Return
- Preparing agenda for board meetings and annual conventions
- Serving as secretary to the board and convention recording minutes for a permanent file
- Editing the annual directory
- Sending an informal, in-house newsletter to all active members at least six times a year
- Maintaining names of inquirers.
- Contacting corporate members with information on convention.
- Special projects requested by the governing board
- Support alliances

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

- Press releases are sent regularly and posted on the website.
- Requests for information, from travel writers and publications, are answered promptly.
- Advertisements are placed in various publications for travel agents, general public and specific markets.
- Notice of special promotional events is to be passed on for the interest of active members.
- No one ranch is to receive more promotion from the Association than any others.

- No one area is to receive special promotion unless it is of benefit to all.
- The executive director may act as an agency for ads, incurring expense of ad preparation.
- Manage website and all social media accounts.

ANSWERING MAIL AND PHONE

- Office will be staffed during normal business hours.
- Direct requests for brochure and information should be answered in a timely manner.
- Ensure all contact forms to ranches are reaching ranch emails and provide a list of inquiries to each ranch when asked for specifically.

APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

- Packets of information should be made available to any ranch requesting them.
- The application form, by-law requirements, policies for processing applications and the brief history of the Association will be included.
- A Dude Ranch Foundation membership will be suggested, with an invitation to the annual convention, during processing.

DUDE RANCH FOUNDATION MEMBERS

- Foundation members will receive a dual membership in the Dude Ranchers' Association and the Dude Ranch Foundation.
- Members will receive all newsletters.
- An invitation to the convention is sent in the fall when the information is available.
- Foundation Members that are dude ranches may not use the DRA's logos or make reference to the DRA in their advertising or promotion.

SPECIAL FRIENDS OF DUDE RANCHING

- Special designation for individuals who have contributed greatly to the dude ranch industry.
- Individuals recommended for this designation will be voted on by the board of directors.
- Recipients will enjoy all the same benefits as Corporate Members.
- Each recipient will be presented with a letter and certificate.

FEES AND DUES

Member Dues

Active members' dues shall be assessed prior to the beginning of the fiscal year, which shall be September 1 to August 31. Dues are based on a ranch's capacity and you need to contact the office for current amounts.

- All membership dues of this Association shall be paid by August 15th.
- Dues notices will be mailed July 1 with a due date of July 15. August 1 a certified late notice with a \$50 late fee will be sent. A board member will then call the ranches in their district that have not paid their dues by August 1.
- A Ranch shall be dropped from both the website & membership if their dues are not paid by September 1st.

Application Fee (Active Member Dude Ranches)

- Two phase fee for application for active membership in the Dude Ranchers' Association.
- \$500 is due with the written application.
- Once an applicant ranch has been accepted for continuation of the application process, the second part of the application fee (\$500) is due.

ADVERTISING FEES IN RANCH RAMBLINGS

- Individual Employment Ad - 75 words \$10/issue
- Individual Classified Ad - 75 words \$15/issue

- Business Ad – Member
- 1/4 pg. (3.5” w x 4.75”) \$100/issue - 1/2 pg. (7.5” w x 4.75”) \$125/issue
- 1/2 pg. (3.5” w x 9.8”) \$125/issue - Full pg. (7.5” w x 9.8”) \$300/issue

- Business Ad – Non -Member
- 1/4 pg. (3.5” w x 4.75”) \$200/issue - 1/2 pg. (7.5” w x 4.75”) \$250/issue
- 1/2 pg. (3.5” w x 9.8”) \$250/issue - Full pg. (7.5” w x 9.8”) \$600/issue

FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITY

- All records, both income and expense items, will be kept on computer and in printed form.
- The Association President and/or the Treasurer will approve choice of investments.
- Bills will be paid promptly.
- Relevant income tax return(s) must be filed on time.
- Annual budget and financial statements will be prepared for approval by the Association President and the Treasurer prior to the spring board meeting, and presented to the board at that meeting.
- The balance at the end of the fiscal year should show a carry forward of a minimum of 10% of the operating budget.

INTERNET POLICIES

Policies for Internet Links for the Dude Ranchers’ Association Website

1. Links will only be established to:
 - a) DRA member ranch individual web pages
 - b) Websites of paid advertisers.
 - c) Websites of state dude ranching organizations, governmental pages of such organizations as the U.S. Forest Service and other Western related organizations/associations.

2. Links to member ranch websites
 - d) Links for member ranches will only be to their individual ranch web page. Member ranches receiving a link from the DRA website must ensure a return link to the DRA website from their individual web page is established by their Internet Service Provider in a timely manner, within a month and in the format specified below.
 - e) Internet links from the DRA website are not allowed with a mirror site or a separate, unconnected directory within a site or other such situations that do not provide the general public direct access to the return link to the DRA site.
 - f) Members are required to have direct return link to the DRA site from their individual web page without an intermediate stop on another page within a commercial site.
 - g) Member ranches are expected to use the DRA logo and the words “Member of the Dude Ranchers’ Association” as the return link.
 - h) When a ranch has more than one website, it is preferred that the link be to an independent site/domain, if it has one, rather than to a page on a commercial site containing non-member ranch pages.
 - i) Links will only be established to member ranch pages that primarily focus on their dude ranch operation.
 - j) The DRA office may remove links to member ranch websites when a ranch fails to have a return link established or when it is in the best interest of the Association. Such actions

will be reviewed by the board of directors at the next meeting following such action.

3. Advertising on the DRA Internet Site and Links to paid Advertisers.
 - a) Advertising and links to advertisers are solely at the discretion of the Dude Ranchers' Association. The DRA reserves the right to refuse or remove any advertising for any reason. Advertising and links to advertisers will be from the appropriate pages on the DRA website.
 - b) Advertising for and links to ranches that are not members or to similar operations are not permitted.
 - c) Advertising for and links to commercial websites listing dude ranches that are not members of the DRA will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and decided on by the board.
 - d) Links to organizations requiring any formal agreement shall be reviewed by the board of directors at the next meeting following establishment of such a link. Such links shall be established with the understanding that they are temporary, pending approval of the board of directors.
 - e) A link on the Resources for Members page is included (for corporate members of the Dude Ranch Foundation)

MEETING AGENDA AND MINUTES

- The Executive Director submits a proposed agenda to the Association President prior to meetings and supplies the completed and approved agenda to all members.
- Proxies are mailed to board members prior to the meetings.
- Proposed by-law changes are sent to all members at least 30 days prior to convention.
- The Executive Director will take minutes of all board and convention meetings and submit those records of the proceedings to the presiding officer who will make any necessary corrections.
- The minutes of the annual convention/meetings are to be signed by both the presiding officer and the Executive Director and a summary is distributed to all active members upon request.

BROCHURE

- The annual brochure is the responsibility of the Association office.
- Within the allowed budget, he/she provides the material, receives the brochure copy for publication, and secures photos for publication.
- No ranch is to be specifically mentioned in articles unless in a general sense and of benefit to all members.
- No ad that competes with active member ranches will be accepted.
- General information inquiries will receive a copy of the brochure.
- All ranches receive as many copies of the brochure as desired.
- The office is to keep one copy of every issue.
- Information for Ranch Listing forms will be sent in once a year. If new information for listings is not received by the deadline, the past years information will be used in the brochure.

NEWSLETTER

- The newsletter goes to all active members six times a year and includes any information that may be of interest: legislation, promotion, personal (about the Association members), employment ads and other ads.
- Job applicants pay a fee for being listed.

IV. APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

CATEGORIES

Existing Members - Ranch Ownership Change

- When a ranch changes ownership, it shall be allowed to continue its membership for one year upon the request of the new owner(s) and if the new owner(s) agree in writing to abide by the constitution, by-laws and policies of the Dude Ranchers' Association.
- The membership is contingent upon re-application, compliance with all requirements, payment of all appropriate fees and dues and passing the ranch inspection, which will be done within the first season of operation following the sale.
- Application Fee of \$250 is due with the application and the remaining \$250.00 is due before the inspection.

Existing Members – Change of Ranch Management

- If a ranch has more than 3 ranch management changes in a period of 5 years, the ranch will automatically be put on review and may be visited by a board member or someone from the DRA office. The review will be done in the interest of stability to assure the guest a quality and consistent ranch experience.
- A dude ranch must keep on record with the association office a statement of current owner and manager. (ARTICLE II - #5 DRA CONSTITUTION AND BY- LAWS)

New Ranch Applicant

- Applications from new ranches shall be accepted throughout the year.
- New and complete applications will be reviewed either via email or at the next scheduled board meeting after applying.
- These applications must be accompanied by \$500.
- Following the Board's review and acceptance of the application, the Director or a Board Member will do the ranch inspection at the earliest time possible.
- The remaining \$500 (of the \$1,000 application fee) is due before the inspection. If the ranch is not accepted that \$500 will be returned.
- If accepted the applicant will then receive a copy of the constitution and by-laws, which will be utilized for the guidelines of ranch operations.
- New applicant ranch should have TWO YEARS previous operating history as a dude ranch immediately prior to application into the DRA. However, if a ranch is a fit in every other facet of membership, the Board of Directors can vote to accept this deviation and move the ranch forward in the membership process.
- The applicant ranch will operate the first guest season following application under the exact guidelines set by the DRA, i.e. have a paying guest clientele, acceptable horse program, etc.
- Applicant ranches accepted for probationary membership (defined below) will receive all benefits of full membership including listing in the DRA directory and website. During the next season (second season) of operation after application, the inspection process will be repeated, should the board feel it is appropriate. (A visit during the second season is typical.)
 - Probationary membership is defined as:
 - Ranch representative is not eligible to sit in a board member position until the ranch has been a member for 2 years and is at full membership status.
 - Ranch is not eligible to vote until full membership status is attained.
 - Ranch must attend the convention following approval of probationary membership.
- At the board meeting following the second season of operation, the applicant ranch will be accepted to full membership, continued on probation for an additional year or completely rejected for membership.

- If a ranch is continued on probation for a second year, it will receive a third visit and either be approved or rejected.
- A ranch must meet and follow the standards set in section VI, Summary of Dude Ranching's Core Principles.

Prior Member Ranch - Re-Application

- A prior member ranch, which was in good standing, will be given special consideration for their re-application if the application is within two years of termination.
- The ranch must be under the same ownership and generally have the same programs and facilities.
- All of the criteria relevant to a "New Ranch Applicant" will apply. However, if accepted at the next board of directors meeting or via email vote, the ranch will be accepted as a full member without the probationary period.
- This "Prior Member Ranch - Re-Application" process can only be exercised one time.

ACCEPTANCE

- Applicant ranch will be accepted as a FIRST-YEAR member in probationary status.
- The probationary member will receive all benefits of full membership access to inquiries from the website and member marketing opportunities.
- During the second guest season of operation, the inspection process will be repeated, as it was the first season if the board feels another on-site inspection is required.
- At the next board meeting, the FIRST-YEAR ranch will be voted on, by the board, in order to gain full membership or to remain on probationary status or be rejected.
- At the next board meeting (the ranch has operated a third season) if the ranch is not voted to a full membership status, the applicant ranch will either be completely rejected or maintained on probationary status for additional review.

REJECTION

- If at any point the applicant ranch is rejected, the applicant will lose that portion of the \$500 application fee that has already been paid.
- The Executive Director will inform the rejected applicant, via correspondence, with the details of the rejection.
- If the rejected ranch decides to re-apply, another application fee must accompany the application.

V. COMPLAINTS

When the Executive Director receives a written guest complaint about a member ranch the procedure will be as follows:

- The DRA will immediately send out a response (either email or written) indicating that the complaint has been received, is being taken seriously and will be followed up with the ranch in question.
- The complaint will then be referred to the president who will assign it to a board member for review.
- The board member will not be from the state where the ranch is located.
- The assigned board member will contact both the ranch and the complaining guest within a two-week time period in an attempt to successfully mediate the dispute, maintaining a written record of the facts and circumstances from both the perspective of the guest and the ranch.
- In the event the board member is successful, they will report back to the president outlining the resolution.
- In the event the board member is unable to successfully mediate the dispute, the complaint will be

- brought before the full board at the next meeting.
- The board will review the facts and circumstances and recommend to the ranch a course of action to resolve the complaint.
- If the complaint regards the written policies of the ranch, which have been furnished to the guest, the Association will not attempt to mediate but will support the member ranch. Example: Non-refund of a deposit when guest cancels under the time limits set by the ranch for a refund.
- If a ranch has two (2) complaints about different incidents in the same year, which it chooses to handle contrary to the board's recommendation, the ranch shall be placed on a probationary status for a period of one year.

VI. SUMMARY OF DUDE RANCHING'S CORE PRINCIPLES

Dude ranches are the original Western vacation. Our first ranchers introduced the unique beauty of the American West to “dudes” from all over. All this happened in the best way possible: from the back of a horse. This horseback adventure was surrounded by honest and real Western hospitality that these dude ranch pioneers considered a part of the code of the west.

The Dude Ranchers' Association was founded to preserve, protect and promote their unique vacation experience and its identity. Though guest expectations have changed and ranchers have had to change with them, the core principles of dude ranching remain the same.

The following six words beginning with H represent the ideas that summarize those principles. The notes clarify how these principles apply to any ranch that is a member or seeks to become a member of the DRA.

Horses

- Horses are central to any dude ranch experience.
- There must be adequate stock, tack, facilities and trails for the riding program. All will be well cared for.
- Attention will be paid to horse and rider safety.

Hats

- Hats symbolize the special emphasis on Western atmosphere and appearance.

Hospitality

- A genuine friendly Western welcome with staff, food, accommodations, facilities and activities to authenticate it.

Heritage

- Dude ranch vacations began as long stays where relationships developed and guests had an exclusive and complete ranch experience.
- Dude ranch guests will primarily be on an American plan.
- Even amidst today's pressures for quick visits and short vacations, ranches should encourage week-long stays (6 or 7 nights.)
- Regular multi-day dude ranch guests should not be significantly or adversely affected by any non-dude ranch business.

Honesty

- You are at least as good as you advertise, if not better.
- You operate your business with integrity.

Heart

- You have a heart for developing friendships with your guests and demonstrate it in your actions.

VII. QUALITY ASSURANCE

At least once every five years a ranch will be inspected by the Executive Director or a board member during its operating season.

VIII. NON-COMPLIANCE

When a complaint for non-compliance on a member ranch, excluding employee complaints has been received in writing with a signature and supporting documents, the President or his designated representative will take the following actions:

- A board member will contact the ranch in question and discuss the situation and possibly make a ranch inspection.
- If the board member finds the ranch to be in possible non-compliance, the office will send a letter along with all supporting documentation to the ranch, under the President's signature. The letter will request an explanation and any documents they might have to support their case.
- If the situation is not resolved at this level the matter will be brought to the board for a vote. Both parties will have an opportunity to present their case at this time.
- If the ranch is found in non-compliance, the President will assign a board member to assist in bringing the ranch up to compliance.
- If the ranch is unable to comply within one season, (year), they will be put on probation for a one-year period of time and may be fined an amount equal to their annual dues for that year. This fine is in addition to the ranch's dues.
- During the one-year probationary period, the ranch will again be inspected by an unannounced board member. The ranch will then either be taken off probation or dropped from membership.

IX. RANCH HORSE PROGRAM

- There should be enough good riding horses/mules for the guests who want to ride, plus horses for wranglers and guides.
- Additional horses need to be available to replace lame, sore or injured animals.
- It is preferable for ranches to own their own horses.
- Government permits must be in place and the permittee in good standing with public land officials in their area.
- Wranglers should know the trails, be familiar with the country and exemplify good manners and courtesy as well as leadership on the rides.
- They should know First Aid and supplies should be available at the barn area and carried on the rides.
- Saddles, pads and bridles need to be in good repair and fit the horses well.
- The type of riding offered and the type of riding trails available at the ranch should be advertised correctly.
- Basic riding techniques and safety instructions should be presented to all riders.
- Well-kept corrals are a necessity. All areas around horses/mules should be kept clean.
- Evidence needs to be clear that the ranch cares for their horses/mules. Clean water, good and sufficient feed, proper shoeing, first aid horse supplies, shelter when standing between rides and a variety of horses are needed in the total inventory at the barn.
- Available deeded and/or leased acreage must be of adequate size to accommodate a horse program that meets Association requirements.

X. HORSE SAFETY PROGRAM

- Each DRA Ranch is encouraged to participate in the program as administered by the Dude Ranch Foundation.

XI. AMENDMENTS TO POLICY MANUAL

- Any policy presented in this Manual may be amended by the Board of directors at any regular or specially called meeting of the board.
- The amendment must receive a two-thirds approval by the voting members of the board, and will then be reported immediately to the active members of the Association.

Note:

The DRA Policy Manual was created when Ken Neal was President 1985-1987.

A committee was asked to go back 10 to 15 years and create a list of procedures and decisions that the previous boards had made. There was not a current record of all the previous decisions made by the board concerning the administration and policies of the DRA. This policy manual was a written history of how boards had interpreted and put some “flesh” on the articles and by-laws. It is to be used as a guideline not the law. Future boards could amend and change policies and procedures without going to the membership. This document is to be used as a tool by the DRA board of directors.

Policy Manual Amended: (see minutes for details)

September 15, 2009 – Fall 2009 minutes

October 11, 2010 – Fall 2010 minutes - VI. SUMMARY OF DUDE RANCHING’S CORE PRINCIPLES

October 1, 2011 – X HORSE SAFETY DELETED THE FOLLOWING Each new member ranch must be Horse Safety Certified within the first year of their acceptance into the DRA; this is done at the yearly convention.

October 29, 2015 – UP-DATE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FEES

March 9, 2016 - Fixed errors in formatting, grammar, punctuation and capitalization

June 23, 2016 – Took a portion of the horse safety out and added Each DRA Ranch is encouraged to participate in the program as administered by the Educational Trust.

June 23, 2016 changed the wording about dues to reflect that dues are based on capacity.

January 26, 2019 - Changed the Associate Memberships to Foundation Memberships, each ranch should be inspected every 5 years instead of 7, Updated membership application fees, raised prices on newsletter ads, newsletter comes out only 6 times a year, membership votes can now be done at the next board meeting (instead of only fall meetings) and voting can also be done via email.

April 27, 2021 – Updated Answering Mail & Phone and Internet Policies Section 3 to be congruent with the current office procedures.

- Removed: “*The appearance of a ranch representative in front of the Board of Directors within the first year is also suggested, either at the spring, fall, or convention meetings.*” from multiple places in IV. APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP – CATEGORIES.

- Added in: “However, if a ranch is a fit in every other facet of membership, the Board of Directors can vote to accept this deviation and move the ranch forward in the membership process.” to New Applicant Ranch section under CATEGORIES.
- Added in definition for Probationary Membership.
- Added: “A ranch must meet and follow the standards set in section VI Summary of Dude Ranching’s Core Principles.” to New Applicant Ranch section under CATEGORIES.