



MARBLE MOUNTAIN GUEST RANCH

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Ecotourism at California's Dude Ranch

Jan 6, 2015

Ecotourism is becoming an increasingly visible part of the travel industry. In some regards I consider the term to be an oxymoron, since tourism is driven by capitalism and the profit motive, while the thesis of ecotourism is based on altruistic recycling, energy efficiency, water conservation and preserving and benefiting local communities / cultures.

Can you make a profit in the Dude Ranch business, while focusing on ecological and cultural altruism? Actually, I think you can, and this is the point of what we try to do at Marble Mountain Ranch.

To begin with, Marble Mountain Ranch is entirely off the power grid. We generate 100% of our power from a zero carbon footprint small hydro facility. We provide housekeeping cabins with weekly maid service, rather than daily service in an effort to reduce levels of cleaning solutions and soaps that are placed into the groundwater. We recycle all of our plastic and aluminum. We compost our food waste. The list goes on.



Entirely off the grid, Marble Mountain Ranch generates electricity with the small hydroelectric plant

The 150 year roots of Marble Mountain Ranch are based in resource consumption, while our current business model is based in resource appreciation. We enable global travelers to access the local natural and cultural resources while [vacationing on horseback](#), on raft, kayak, drift boat, and on foot. Admittedly, we still have some level of impact, just by being here. However, we do our best to

minimize the damage of passing through.

I consider my roll as owner of Marble Mountain Ranch to be defined in the terms of stewardship. To that end, our largest and ongoing project of environmental conservation is an effort to reduce our water diversion demands from our local Stanshaw creek. We have been working on gaining grant funds, for a decade and a half, to rebuild our gold-rush era water transportation system and power plant. We walk forward in faith in the belief that we can be successful in improving efficiency of our infrastructure.

In the meantime, our conservation efforts have recently brought us some recognition from the Travel industry. We have been awarded a "green label" gold award from Tripadvisor, in recognition for our efforts.

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A final thought on the topic is the point of education. By bringing the general population into a resource area, they become familiar with it, they appreciate it, and the have a desire to protect it. By sharing the resource, we develop allies to the resource who feel equally motivated to protect, preserve, and enhance. I like to think that our ranch is also a medium for this broader based dissemination of awareness to our local resources.

We'll keep you posted as our efforts to rebuild the ranch hydroplant evolve. This has the potential to be a feather-in-the-cap for an awful lot of stakeholders in this small piece of the Klamath Forest, with win / win scenarios for all stakeholders.

Doug

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1 of 1 Specialty lodging in
Somes Bar

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Rating: A+



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