



## HASHKNIFE FOALS SYMBOLIZE A PROUD TRADITION

The Redlands Camp was alive with the spirit of cowboy country July 13 when Babbitts' annual horse sale and barbecue brought out horse people from all over the West.

Some 39 foals were available, with bloodlines tracing back to the early 1900s and the legendary Hashknife Ranch.

The top selling weanling, sired by the ranch's main stallion Cowboy Drift, had a price tag of \$4,300. The colt's mother is Katy Oak, who carries genes from Pocobueno and Driftwood. Driftwood is listed in the *Western Horsemen's* book, *Legends*.

The famous Hashknife Ranch once stretched across Arizona and New Mexico. The Babbitts sold it during The Great Depression, but kept the brand. Today, the Hashknife brand continues to stand for top quality in rodeo, riding and ranch

horses. All are Registered Quarterhorses with the American Quarterhorse Association.

"They are known for foundation breeding and being good sound-minded horses that have a lot of athletic ability," says Babbitt Ranches Manager Victor Howell. "They perform well in specialized events like calf roping, team roping and bulldogging, and they also have a lot of endurance. They can handle a full day of hard work on the ranch—

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## NAU GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTS BABBITT GIFT OF LAND AND RESEARCH

Saying it's impossible to overestimate its importance, Northern Arizona University President John Haeger says the Babbitt gift of land and research opportunities is the most exciting research and educational initiative he has seen in his 30 years in higher education.

"NAU's national reputation is built in no small part on the strength of its ecological/environmental research. This gift has far-reaching implications for strengthening that reputation and increasing scientific discovery for today's inhabitants and future generations of this planet," he says.

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## GIFT VIEWED AS CORNERSTONE FOR CONSERVATION MOVEMENT

Calling the Babbitt gift of Wild Bill lands and research opportunities to Northern Arizona University one of the greatest moments in the university's history, civil and environmental engineering professor Bill Auberle says the action provides a foundation for the further understanding of the ecology and environment of the Southwest.

"We view this initiative as the cornerstone of what we think will be a significant movement toward expanding conservation beyond what the Babbitts

have called the Coconino Plateau Natural Reserve Lands and beyond the Colorado Plateau."

Auberle says environmental research in science and the technologies represents well over 50 percent of the research conducted at NAU.

"Research is a big part of who we are. The Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Foundation (EMA) and the commitment from the Babbitt family to NAU to provide this land as an ecological laboratory is a very nice fit. Our role at NAU is research—understanding and presenting our understanding to landowners to use it how they choose to use it, whether that be for ranching, eco-tourism or forest ecology."

Auberle is the project director of the EMA Program. The EMA Foundation Board includes members of the Babbitt family, representatives from the Hopi and Navajo tribes and from NAU.

## GRAND CANYON FORESTS FESTIVAL HONORS BABBITTS

Acknowledging the Babbitt family's commitment to understanding, joining, respecting and just participating with the natural processes, the Grand Canyon Forests Festival honored the Babbitts with its *Conservationist of the Year* award during opening ceremonies in front of Flagstaff City Hall, Saturday, April 27.

"For more than a century, the Babbitts have demonstrated leadership in land stewardship," says Festival Steering Committee member Max Oeschlaeger, director of NAU's Program in Community, Culture and Environment. "The recent conservation easement agreement with the county continues to show

the Babbitts' interest in protecting land as open space for future generations."

Oeschlaeger says the committee applauds the Babbitts' formation of the Coconino Plateau Natural Reserve Lands and their efforts to obtain scientific information, assess human impacts, aid in policy making and decisions on the land, and work toward protective measures such as conservation easements.

The Festival celebrates northern Arizona communities' connection with their surrounding forests and provides a forum for individuals of varying backgrounds and interests to gather and engage in the discussion of issues affecting the health of forest ecosystems.

The Festival is made up of a number of organizations promoting forest health including the Coconino National Forest, the City of Flagstaff, the Ecological Restoration Institute at NAU, the Nature Conservancy, Coconino County, the Arboretum at Flagstaff, NAU's Program in Community, Culture and Environment, the School of Forestry and the Centennial Forest.



## NAU GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTS *...continued from page 1*

In an unprecedented move to promote the scientific understanding of the Colorado Plateau and ensure sound resource management into the future, Babbitt Shareholders have donated a 30-acre forested parcel near Wild Bill Hill, north of Bellemont, to the NAU Foundation.

NAU plans to build a facility on the property to complement the university's developing network of field research stations, including the Centennial Forest.

The donation, which also includes the Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Foundation (EMA) and access to lands across the Colorado Plateau, is intended for the advancement of research and education in diverse ecological sciences and relevant social sciences.

"I am amazed at what the potential could be," says EMA board member Karan English. "In a time when we are experiencing fires, drought and flash floods, there's no better time than now to explore the possibilities with this Babbitt gift, not only because of the vision of the donors, but because of the landscape-size opportunities."

The Babbitt family supported the establishment of the Northern Arizona Normal School in 1899 and has continued to support and be partners with NAU for more than a hundred years.



*In a Wednesday, April 24 ceremony in front of NAU's Old Main, Babbitt Shareholder Paul Babbitt shared a little history about Wild Bill, for whom the land is named. He also expressed the shareholders' intentions that the gift will ensure the same research opportunities and access to natural resources that exist today.*

"I am particularly pleased that our latest partnership will involve significant scientific research opportunities for the university to aid in private land stewardship," says Babbitt Shareholder Jim Babbitt.

This marks the third major move by the Babbitt family to conserve large tracts of land and establish science and research opportunities.

"I am so pleased that the Babbitts and EMA have the ability to be the facilitator that brings this project on line at this time," says Babbitt Shareholder Susan Babbitt.

## CATARACT RANCH FEATURED IN SUNSET MAGAZINE

*Sunset* magazine calls Cataract Ranch "Arizona's conservation coup."

In the September 2001 *travel guide* section, *Sunset* reminds hikers that they have long been able to drive through the ranch to gain access to the popular trail to the Havasupai Falls because of a casual agreement with landowners.

But now, "future access is ensured thanks to a 34,480 acre conservation easement agreement between The Nature Conservancy and Cataract Ranch," states the magazine.

The article points out that the agreement protects key wildlife habitat and grasslands from future development.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT

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## FORMER BABBITT RANCHES MANAGER HONORED FOR LOVE OF RANCHING

Revered by cowmen of the West as a tough manager, rough stock rider and key fiber in the fabric of Arizona's ranching history, retired Babbitt Ranch Manager Bill Howell was honored at the 2001 Cowpuncher Rodeo.

Howell began his 23-year relationship with the Babbitt Ranches when he was a 29-year-old cowboy looking for work. He came to Flagstaff in 1963 with his wife and two young children and landed a job on the Cataract Ranch based on his skills as a bronc rider.

Soon he headed up the Redlands Camp, which became training ground for his next appointment as CO Bar Ranch manager.

The famed snowstorm of '67 hit under Howell's watch. Desperate to save the snowbound cattle, ranch hands worked from before dawn to after dark for days. Because of Howell's determination, the grueling battle with the relentless snowstorm resulted in a loss of only 5 percent of the herd.

In 1969, Howell became manager of Babbitt Ranches. He is credited with the decision to use 26 Bar Herefords, which increased yearling weights from 700 to 800 pounds.

"Bill is a very big part of the ranch history," says Babbitt Ranches President Billy Cordasco. "He expected a lot from his men, but they were willing to work hard because he had their respect."

Since Bill's retirement, his son, Vic, has headed up the ranching operations. He says his dad



*Bill Howell, (shown here standing in the foreground) a living legend in Arizona ranching history, was honored in the 2001 Cowpuncher Rodeo.*

was the most well-rounded ranch manager he's ever experienced. "He can ride a green colt, cut a herd of cows or design a ranch headquarters."

The 2001 Cowpuncher Rodeo was dedicated to Howell because of his dedication and love for Arizona ranching.

## COCONINO COUNTY AND BABBITTS TAKE BOLD NEW ACTION

In a monumental move, Coconino County and Babbitt Ranches have worked together to create the new Conservation Easement Commission, which allows the county to accept the rights of private land. In doing so, the county has accepted some 6,400 acres of the Cataract Ranch north of Williams and west of Highway 64.

The December action, believed to be the first ever by an Arizona county to step up to administer a conservation easement, has been touted by county supervisors as one of their top achievements for the year.

"It's a very cutting edge move," says Coconino County District 4 Supervisor Deb Hill. "This is the



first step toward what we hope will be a domino effect, meaning other surrounding ranches may be encouraged to take similar action."

Hill says the intent of the easement is to preserve the land, which is prime antelope habitat with its gentle hills and grassy meadows, as open space in perpetuity. Prior to the agreement with the Babbitts, the county had no legal method of accepting land rights.

In a similar move, the Babbitt shareholders set aside Arizona's largest conservation easement with The Nature Conservancy in January 2001 to protect some 35,000 acres between Williams and the Grand Canyon as open space.

## ARIZONA TRAIL BLAZES CLOSER TO COMPLETION

A line has been drawn on the map and Forest Service officials are working through the process to complete one of the last segments of the Arizona Trail. The 16-and-a-half-mile portion, called the San Francisco Peaks Passage, will take recreationists over the Peaks and link up with the CO Bar Ranch to the north.

Mormon Lake and Peaks Ranger District Trails and Wilderness Coordinator Brian Poturalski says the segment will offer spectacular scenic views and a trek through cool aspen stands.

"There's not a lot of opportunity on the 800-mile trail to experience this vegetation type," says Poturalski. "It will be a very special part of the system, especially in the fall with the changing colors of the aspen leaves and the awesome views."

The Arizona Trail was the idea of Flagstaff teacher Dale Shewalter back in the '80s. While hiking across Arizona from Nogales to Fredonia, he envisioned a non-motorized trail that would stretch across the state from the Mexico to the Utah borders. Since then, Shewalter has gained the support of federal and state agencies, along with private landowners.

"Part of the remarkable experience of the Arizona Trail is to be able to cross private ranches with vistas and landscapes as significant as anything else along the way," says Mormon Lake and Peaks Ranger District Recreation Staff Officer John Nelson. "The ranchers' partnership on the project has made the whole thing doable. Without the active participation of people like the Babbitts, this project probably wouldn't happen."

Meantime, a single-track trail has been planned for the Babbitt Ranch Passage.

The trail has also received strong support from the Arizona Trail Association, a group that has provided volunteer trail builders, trail stewards, tools and meals to keep the project moving forward.

## WUPATKI AND CO BAR SHARE CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE KNOWLEDGE

Whether it be archaeological sites, golden eagles or encroaching juniper trees, representatives from the Flagstaff Area National Monuments say the whole picture of our cultural and natural resources doesn't stop at park boundaries.

"We are comparing the differences of what we see at Wupatki and on the CO Bar Ranch," says Flagstaff Area Monuments Chief Ranger Kim Watson.

Of particular interest is the golden eagle. The huge bird is considered to be a species of special management by the Park Service and there is a concern

that the eagle is disappearing throughout the Four Corners Region.

"We've identified three nest sites for adult pairs that overlap Wupatki and adjacent lands," says Natural Resource Specialist Paul Whitefield. "Of those three, the only one that is active is on the CO Bar. One breeding pair has returned there every year for the last three years, laid eggs and raised young."

Preliminary surveys also indicate high site densities of prehistoric people on the CO Bar. "People were living there at the same time

that they were living at Wupatki. It's part of the same story archaeologically," says Watson.

Currently an official agreement is being considered at the regional level of the National Park Service authorizing Wupatki employees to assist the CO Bar Ranch with the preservation of cultural and natural resources.

"We can't separate cultural and natural resources in this area," says Watson. "We can't look at the Wupatki landscape and talk about why people lived here without talking about geology and wildlife. It all ties together."



### HASHKNIFE FOALS

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they're known for their natural cow instinct and smooth traveling over rocks—and still be able to bring you in that evening."

Of the 39 weanlings, 36 were sold. They will stay on the Cataract Ranch until March when they'll be turned over to their new owners.