



## **COME TO MONTANA IN JULY/AUGUST 2012!**

In the spring of 2010, Ben & Kathy Prince announced big news; they were going to spend half the year in Montana, living next to a guest ranch and lending a hand with ranch operations. Seeing an opportunity, I did an informal survey and determined many family members would be interested in a get-together in Montana in the summer of 2012, with details to follow. And now they do.

You're invited to join a passel of your family members at the Diamond Bar X Guest Ranch in Montana the week of Monday, July 30 to Sunday, August 5, 2012. Come for all or part of the week. Here's all the information you'll need to decide if you can join us next summer - map, travel information, the whole shebang.

**LODGING** – The ranch has nine guest cabins, all with their own bath. The cabins each sleep six to eight people. Kathy says the new ranch owners are rebuilding two of the cabins; they'll be done by the time we visit. The others will be, well, clean and rustic. There are numerous tent and RV sites, as well, with men's and women's shower and restroom facilities. Ben & Kathy also have two rooms available in their cabin, just over a creek from the ranch. At present, there are dibs on four cabins, for Tom & Candy Sanford, Ann Dey, Murray & Wendy Dey, and Jim and me. The remaining five are available on a first-come-first-served basis. Sharing is encouraged.

Dogs are welcome, though Kathy says you'll need to keep a close eye on your canine companion(s). There are lots of hungry critters about, and you wouldn't want your furry friend to end up as the catch of the day, so to speak.

**FOOD** – The lodge, 4,000 sf, has cooking facilities to feed us all, and Ben will ramrod the kitchen & cooking for the week (though I, for one, plan to lend a hand, and we'll all pitch in for clean-up, of course). We'll set up a schedule for cooking and clean-up later this year.

Those of us who drive can shop at Costco in Helena on the way, and I'm sure Augusta (20 mi. away) has grocery stores. We'll need to know meal preferences in advance, of course - vegetarian? Food allergies? Food hates? Etc. See below about **Costs**.

Our meals will accommodate omnivores and vegetarians. If you have serious dietary deviations from the omnivorous current human diet, you'll likely need to make special arrangements. Contact Ben this spring and do some planning.

For beverages beyond coffee, milk, lemonade and tea, plan for your own needs and preferences. If you need someone to shop for you (case or two of beer? Bottle of single malt? Gallon of apple juice?), we can arrange that.

Special treats would be welcome, if you do baking or canning or whatever. I'll probably bring some home-made marmalade, for example.

**TRAVEL** – There are several options to reach the ranch. Ultimately, you'll arrive by car. One can drive, come by bus to Helena and then to Wolf Creek, or fly to Helena & rent a car. Airlines flying to Helena include United Express, Delta Connection, and Horizon Air (Alaskan Air). As our gathering gets closer, we can coordinate pick-up points, and perhaps carpool options.

**ACTIVITIES** – There will be LOTS to do!

- Fishing
- Swimming
- Reading
- Wandering about
- Photography
- Floating down the river – Kathy says the winter precip determines the nature of a float ... it can run from very slow to, well, more exciting .... (BYO tubes or floats)
- Kayaking (BYO kayaks and PFDs)
- Hiking
- Napping
- Volleyball
- Badminton
- Mountain biking (BYO bike & helmet)
- Horseshoes
- Touch football
- Possible side trips to, say, Glacier National Park or Yellowstone
- ... And more!

I suspect we'll be able to share bikes, floats, tubes & kayaks and such. We can figure out who's bringing what later this year.

Also, Kathy says the nights are amazing ... stargazing is big on the lodge deck, and bear stories are another big thing. We'll even have a full moon on Thursday, August 2nd. We'll probably have campfires. ***I encourage everyone to bring his or her musical instrument(s) and singing voices.*** (There will be no compulsion to play or sing, however.) Oh, and those family stories ....

And there will be surprises! Let me know if you think of a good one and want to coordinate; your secret will be safe with me.

**COSTS** – The ranch rental for the week is being covered by several of us family members. Unless you've been contacted about this already, your cost will be travel to and from Montana and some of the food costs, to be determined down the road. I'm hoping we'll also be able to do some riding, and that would be extra. We want this to be as affordable as possible, so lots of us can attend!

**RANCH WEBSITE** – [www.diamondbarxranh.com/index.html](http://www.diamondbarxranh.com/index.html)

**FURTHER TRAVEL INFORMATION** – Here are some examples of travel costs, as of 1/5/12. Check for updates.

**By bus** – 1 adult from Portland, OR to Helena, MT, round-trip - \$308. Bus fare round-trip from Helena to Wolf Creek, MT (about 40 mi. from Augusta) - \$27.50.

**By air** –

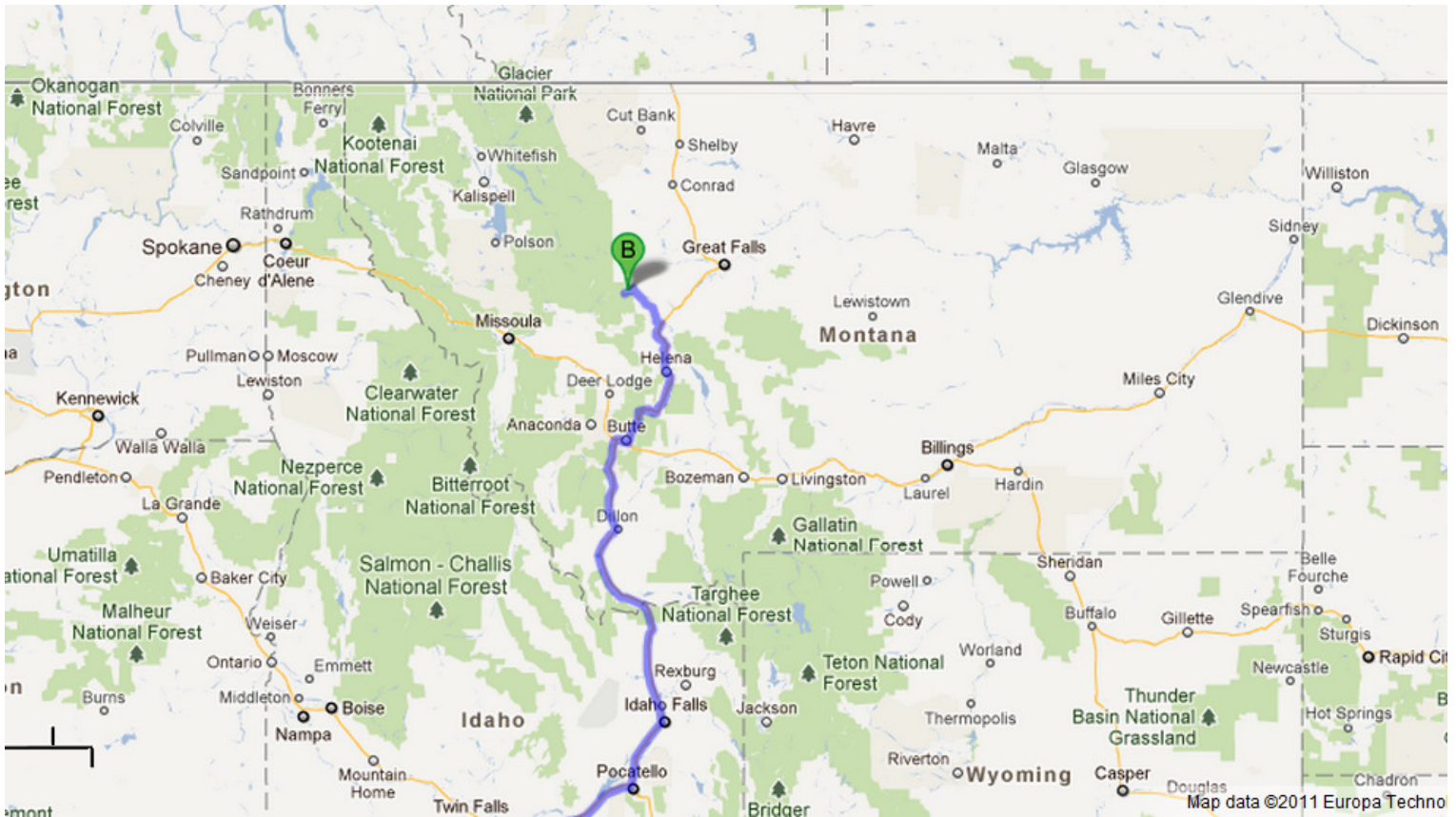
- Round-trip, adult, economy, from SF to Helena, MT - \$461
- Round-trip, adult, economy, from NYC to Helena, MT - \$453
- Round-trip, adult, economy, from Ontario, CA to Helena, MT - \$372
- Round-trip, adult, economy, from Portland, OR to Helena, MT - \$419

**Car rental in Helena** – Costs range from \$45 - \$80 per day.

**Driving** – It's 1,023 miles from our place in Dutch Flat to 4519 Dearborn Canyon Road in Augusta, MT, Kathy's and Ben's address, right next to the Diamond Bar X Guest Ranch. Your mileage will vary. Gas prices now are around \$3.56 for us,

giving a rough driving cost for our Ford Escape (24 MPG +/-) of \$304 round trip. Include camping and/or motel expenses and food to calculate your travel costs. Google Maps will help you determine mileage & a route.

**COMMUNICATION** – I've set up a Facebook event, for those of you who use FB – <http://www.facebook.com/events/193989247279427/> . The event is by invitation, so if you can't reach it, contact me by email or on FB and I'll invite you. Addresses and phone #s are below.



Orientation map of Montana showing location of Diamond Bar X Guest Ranch

**WHO'S INVITED** – This is the tentative list of those who plan to attend:

- Ben & Kathy, our hosts
- Jim and me
- George, Dee, and (we hope), Hannah and Nick
- Charles, Arlene, and (we hope) Steven and Mik
- Emily & Shaun and new Princeling

- Morgan Cosby & Rusty Howson
- Ann Dey
- Katherine Dey Furtado
- Murray & Wendy Dey
- Lauren Dey
- Tom & Candy Sanford
- Rick Sanford
- Evelyn & Guild Fetridge & son Guild
- Trev & Robin Pierson & son Jake
- Chuck & Julia Bell

**Beyond the tentative attendees, those invited include:**

- Tom Sanford & Alex Lloyd, and daughter Cecily
- Laura & Billy Sanford
- Brook Cosby
- Nancy & David Pierson
- Tia & Tim Collins and 2 daughters Madison and Allison
- Heather and Robert Otwell and three daughters
- David Bell and wife
- Bill and Louise Miller (Dee Prince's parents)
- Barbara Prince

... For a grand total of 56. As you see, I didn't extend the invitation list to its extremes. Selfish me, I would like to have a group which isn't too huge, so we all get to spend time together. If there's someone I overlooked, let me know.

That's about all I can think of now. Please let us know as soon as you can if you can join us. We can work out details later.

**THIS WILL BE TONS OF FUN, AS MUMSEE WOULD SAY!**

Love,

Susan Prince & Jim Ricker  
 530-389-8344  
 P.O. Box 536  
 Alta, CA 95701  
 sdprince@alumni.stanford.edu

Kathy & Ben Prince  
 530-389-8658  
 P.O. Box 839  
 Alta, CA  
 bprince930@aol.com