

The Ring Lake Carillon

Ring Lake Ranch • Dubois, Wyoming Spring 2011

An ecumenical retreat center • “renewal in a sacred wilderness”

“No synonym for God is so perfect as Beauty. Whether as seen carving the lines of the mountains with glaciers, or gathering matter into stars, or planning the movement of water, or gardening—still all is Beauty!”
• John Muir

Family Vacation, Unplugged

by Katherine Turpin

Recent commercials for the Disney theme parks show parents surprising their children with the news that they are going to Disney that very day. The children squeal with delight and anticipation; the parents bask in the glow of their children's excitement.

When I watch these commercials, I think about how we have spent our vacation time the past five years with our children, now 4, 6, and 9. We have not made the Disney pilgrimage, instead choosing to spend a week at the Ranch each summer. If we think of Disney as an arena-sized rock concert, Ring Lake Ranch is more like an acoustic concert in an intimate venue.

Rather than the frenetic stimulation of an amusement park, the Ranch offers vacation, unplugged. Instead of waiting in lines, patronizing gift shops, and meeting fantasy characters, we have spent time wading and canoeing in Trail Lake, going on “Pudding Rides” with the wranglers, searching for fossils, and being in community with thoughtful and engaging persons.

We have walked the labyrinth, explored the petroglyphs, chased chipmunks, climbed on rocks,

Soon Ring Lake Ranch will open for its 45th season. In all those years, families have blessed us with their energy and insights. Some years ago we realized though that families were having a harder time attending. Like many congregations, we were a “graying” community. The Board took a bold step by inviting parents to bring their children 12 and under for no charge. This has brought the blessings of younger families back to the Ranch.

One of these younger families was the Turpin-Blackmun family. Katherine, a professor at Iliff School of Theology, presented one of our sessions. Since then, Andy, Katherine, Elizabeth, Christian, and Ben have come back each summer. Katherine's reflections explain why.



and square danced in Dubois. For us as a family, these times have been a unique opportunity for renewal and reconnection with each other, with the land, and with special new friends from around the country.

When families explore

coming to the Ranch, especially with young children, they sometimes ask if there is special programming available for children. Generally, the answer is no (though we have been considering what this might look like in the future). However,

this does not mean that children are an afterthought in the Ranch setting.

Quite the contrary, children are welcomed as an integral part of the experience of the week, invited to join into the times of sharing, exploring, and other activities in ways appropriate to their abilities and interest. They are not segregated off to be entertained, but rather embraced in an intergenerational space of shared food, conversation, work, and wilderness adventure. Our children especially love helping to take care of the horses and sweeping the dining hall. By the end of the week, they have often made strong connections with other Ranch guests over shared meals and adventures.

What the Ranch offers to families is not a pre-packaged entertainment extravaganza, but rather the kind of sacred space and time to breathe, to play, and to reconnect with what is most important. For our family, this has been precious time in the midst of a life that is often overly-scheduled, complicated, and hurried in so many ways. The soul space that the ranch offers has been magical time-out-of-time for us, an entirely different form of pilgrimage to a place of steady, authentic joy.



Our New Board Members

In December, Roger Stroud, Ken Fuller, Naomi Petersen, and Ann Mebane concluded their terms of service. Thank you for your wisdom, support, and generosity. We welcome and thank these new members:

William P. Brown teaches Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA. He and Gail, along with their two daughters, have been fans of Ring Lake Ranch for several years.

Judy Plows has long worked with nonprofits as an executive, consultant, and board member. Prior to that she worked in finance at JP Morgan and as a high school teacher. She lives in Manhattan.

Sean Roche owns Crazy Fish Design, a website design and development company based in Bucks County, PA. Sean first came to the Ranch many years ago as a boy when his grandparents – the MacNally's – helped Maggie Kahin operate the Ranch.

The Ring Lake Ranch Carillon

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Ring Lake Ranch

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Roderick Robertson

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Roderick Robertson, Dawn

Sample, Joyce Heil, Lida Hill, Carl

Koch, Carolyn Waters.

RLR Board of Directors

Terri Schulz, *President*

Gerry Balboni, *Vice-President*

Kathy Leithner, *Secretary*

David Cramp, *Treasurer*

Nathan Bachtell, Ed Everding,

Judith Plows, Bill Brown, Sean

Roche, Katherine Turpin



2011 Staff Update

by Carl Koch, Director

Karen Marshall returns for her third year of cooking at the Ranch. She will be joined by **Connie Wood** of Dubois. Connie operated her own café and is a well-known caterer in the area.

Ben Verheul, Facilities Manager, has been busy all winter building and repairing. He may just have a new story or two this summer about antler collecting or search and rescue too.

Amanda Verheul will ease into the role as Business Manager. She comes well prepared with a bachelor's degree in communications and business marketing from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, executive experience at Target Corporation and as the Grants and Financial Administrator for Dubois Youth Activities.

Leah Vader joins us as hike leader/housekeeper. She raised her four children in Gillette, WY, and has worked with Arizona Game and Fish on a bald eagle study in the Sonoran Desert. She is a Certified Interpretative Guide.

Our wranglers are **Toni Finley** and **Gary Ransom** both from Dubois. Toni most recently trained horses for long-time Ranch friend Sylvia Crouter. Toni and her husband have two sons. **Ty**, 17, will be helping on trail rides too. **Gary** returns from last summer. With a background in wildlife biology, Gary has been an outfitter, independent contractor and house builder.

Joyce Heil, associate director, will continue to run the Gift Shop, coordinate housekeeping and the kitchen, lead morning prayer, facilitate volunteers and transportation, practice reiki, and do the many other tasks that come up.

I will be directing, working with staff and presenters, filling in to help everyone, and in particular this summer helping Amanda settle in as Business Manager and working with the new Director who will be coming later in the season.

The Next Director: A search committee of the Board solicited and reviewed a robust number of qualified candidates. Then they conducted phone interviews with five people and personal interviews with two. The new director was selected at the January Board Meeting. An official announcement will come soon. Needless to say, we all have great confidence in and enthusiasm about the new Director.

Ring of Friends

Simply put, the Ranch would not be entering its 45th year without the generous support of many, many people. Some volunteer, others spread the word; some pray for us, others make financial contributions. Many people do all of these. We thank you all. In the spring Carillon, we specifically recognize and thank our financial donors for 2010:

•HEF indicates a gift in honor of Henry Everding to the Henry Everding Memorial Fund, which supports the horse program.

•The Jeff Lowrance, Don Miller, & Tom Sebbins Fund was begun by the Faith, Fellowship, & Fly-fishing group to

provide scholarships.

•In the fall Carillon, we thanked the many donors remembering Emmie Mears-Webb. Again, we thank them for their generosity.

•The late Rev. Dr. Wesley Henry, longtime friend of Ring Lake Ranch, is remembered here too. His family invited friends to make a contribution to the Ranch. They did so generously. Thank you.

Please let us know of any mistakes or omissions – for which we apologize. May all of our donors be richly blessed!

Ross Lake Donors (>\$5000)

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Lake Louise Donors (\$1001-\$5000)

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Gerry & CeCe Balboni
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Joyce Heil & Carl Koch
Priscilla Marsh HEF to honor all who have been or are staff members at RLR
Mark & Julie Moore
Gene & Charky Tucker to honor Carl & Joyce

Ring Lake Donors (\$501-\$1000)

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Special thanks also for the generous gifts of Sean Roche, our web developer, and Roderick Robertson, Carillon designer.

What Does the Ranch Mean to You?

by Sean Roche, RLR Board

I've been to the Ranch three periods in my life -- as a child, as a young adult and now as middle-aged. The Ranch has meant different things to me in each stage, and I hold each one precious.

As a child, it was the first time I had been out west, ridden a real horse and seen it rain 80 miles away. I was with my grandparents, and it was a magical time. As a young adult, the petroglyphs garnered my attention as well as exploration of timeless landscape. These days the lack of outside diversions and intrusions, the time to sit and relax and a good conversation with a truly diverse group of individuals draws me back.

I tell you these stories because everyone I've ever met at the Ranch had one similar. The Ranch is a special place that should be preserved. We need your help to sustain this place of renewal and rest.

There are many ways to help support the Ranch – coming to a session, volunteering, praying for it, and giving a donation. Here's another way.

For one minute, reflect on the time you have spent here and why it became a special memory to you. When you are done smiling, email Carl at carl@ringlake.org and contribute the story about this special time at the Ranch.

Be creative. Tell us a memory you would like to preserve for the next generation, and how that memory can be sustained.

We'd love to hear your stories about the Ranch and about how you and others might help ensure that the resources needed to keep the Ranch thriving are always available. Thank you.

Ring Lake Ranch



June 5-11

Scott Copeland Photographing Wyoming's Wild Life

Nestled in the Wind River Mountains, the Ranch offers you the chance to photograph sorrel horses and petroglyphs, big-horn rams and stunning alpine landscapes. Come explore the surrounding area through your camera's lens by day, and explore basic digital image workflow in the evening. Participants need their own camera equipment and a rudimentary knowledge of basic photographic concepts. The emphasis will be on digital photography, but film photographers are welcome. Join us to see the world in new ways.

Scott Copeland has been photographing for almost 25 years. He specializes in nature and wildlife photography, especially in Wyoming. Scott's award-winning photos have appeared in numerous publications. His work can be seen on his website (www.threedoglight.com) and at two galleries in Lander, WY.



June 19-25

Dori Baker & Joyce Mercer Spa for the Girlfriend Soul: A Gathering for Mothers, Daughters, and Women- Friends of All Ages

Dori and Joyce want to create a space—a kind of “spa”—where mothers, daughters, and women-friends can discover their deep spiritual connections, where mind and spirit can be renewed, and where they're challenged to ask: Who is God calling me to be? What are my gifts and how am I to use them? How do I support other girls and women as they become their best selves?

Joyce Ann Mercer lives in Alexandria, VA, with daughter Sarah, sons Andrew and Micah, and husband Larry Golemon. She is ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA), teaches at Virginia Theological Seminary, and writes on many topics including the spiritual lives of women and girls. **Dori Baker** lives in rural Virginia with daughters Erin (15) and Olivia (11), and husband Lincoln Baker. Ordained in the United Methodist Church, Dori writes and teaches about spiritual practices that are reviving the church and frequently leads retreats based on her book *Doing Girlfriend Theology: God-Talk with Young Women*.



July 17-23

Diana Butler Bass Being Spiritual & Religious: From Cultural Mantra to Lived Reality

Every recent survey shows that conventional religion is in serious decline; at the same time, people express high levels of enthusiasm for spirituality. What do these trends really mean? Can we learn from the spiritual longings in our culture? Over the week, we'll explore the big picture of how religion is changing and the dimensions of emerging spirituality as well as what those changes might mean to our own journeys, faith communities, and politics. **Diana Butler Bass** specializes in American religion and culture and is author of seven books including *A People's History of Christianity: the Other Side of the Story*. Her best-selling *Christianity for the Rest of Us* was named as one of the best religion books of the year by *Publishers Weekly* and *Christian Century* and won the Book of the Year Award from the Academy of Parish Clergy. She regularly comments on religion and culture in the media including *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post*, CNN, FOX, and PBS. She and her family live in Alexandria, Virginia.



July 24-30

Don Saliers Praying and Singing the Psalms: Humanity at Full Stretch

The psalms have been sung and prayed for well over 2000 years. We will explore, by singing and commentary, the range of human emotions before God found in the Psalter. The ecstatic and the lamentable, the hope and the sorrow, the awe and the instructional, the anger and the contemplative—all these are there and waiting on us once again. **Don Saliers** was William R. Cannon Distinguished Professor of Theology and Worship at Candler School of Theology at Emory University. Having retired, he continues to lecture widely and conduct workshops internationally. Don has authored many books, including *A Song to Sing, A Life to Live: Reflections on Music as Spiritual Practice* – co-authored with daughter Emily Saliers, *Worship and Spirituality*, and *Music and Theology*.



July 31-August 6

Terri Schulz & Wayne Shepperd Exploring God's Land of Fire & Ice

The Wind River Range in Wyoming is a diverse environment, from badlands, through sagebrush shrub-lands into forests and up to alpine. This type of landscape has called to people for thousands of years. We will explore and learn about this region by examining the vegetation and the natural disturbance processes such as fire, insect outbreaks, and human influences that have shaped this ecosystem over time. Participants will gain an understanding of how all of these factors influence what we see on this landscape today and what our responsibilities are to be good stewards of the land for the future. **Terri Schulz** is an ecologist with The Nature Conservancy of Colorado as well as president of the Ring Lake Ranch Board of Directors. **Wayne D. Shepperd, Ph.D.** is a retired Forest Service Research Scientist and currently an instructor in the Department of Forest and Rangeland Stewardship at Colorado State University.

2011 Schedule of Programs



August 7-13
William Brown
Wisdom's Wonder:
The Biblical Theatre of Awe

We have often lost wonder when we should be lost in wonder. The wisdom literature of the Bible is devoted to nurturing our sense of wonder -- awe over God's glorious presence in creation. We will journey through Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes to find new ways to exercise our God-given capacity to wonder. **Bill Brown** is a professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA. His specialties include wisdom literature, the prophets, and creation theology. He is author of among other books *The Seven Pillars of Creation*—his latest work, *Seeing the Psalms, The Ethos of the Cosmos, and Ecclesiastes*. We welcome Bill back to the Ranch as a presenter after a couple of years' absence.

Scholarships Available

Partial scholarships are available to people needing assistance to attend programs at the Ranch. While we strive to keep the cost of attending the Ranch as affordable as possible, we do not want the cost to keep folks, especially new participants, from attending a session. Please direct your questions to or ask for our simple application from Carl Koch at carl@ringlake.org or phone 888.458.5253.



August 14-20
Amy Erickson
Creation & Creativity

How does our experience and perception of God's creativity inform our own sense of creativity? Surrounded by the radical, natural beauty of Ring Lake Ranch, we will engage poetic expressions of creation from the Hebrew Bible, the ancient Near East, Celtic traditions, and the contemporary world. We'll discuss together how the poetry we read enables us to re-imagine God's place, as well as our own, in the world. We'll also experiment with writing our own poetry inspired by our conversations and experiences in the Wind River Mountains. **Amy Erickson** is Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado. Her teaching and scholarship focuses on metaphor and poetry in the Hebrew Bible, particularly in the Psalms and the book of Job.



August 21-27
Kathy Leithner
& Suzanne Seaton
Walking on Holy Ground:
Pilgrimage and Discovery

What if we were to open our eyes to see and ears to hear "all things in God and God in all things"--concrete sidewalk and wooded trail, waiting room and windswept shore, prison cell and aisles of the grocery store--all holy ground? What if we were to sense purpose and providence in plenty and emptiness? We'll approach this exploration through deep listening, reflection, music, poetry, conversation, photography, contemplative hiking and riding. **Suzanne Seaton** is a United Methodist clergywoman, spiritual director and retreat leader for the past 20 years, on the faculty of the Pastoral Leadership Program at Seattle University and retreat leader for the Two Year Academy for Spiritual Formation sponsored by the Upper Room. She is co-author of *Pilgrimage of the Soul: Thresholds to the Mystery*. **Kathy Leithner** is a United Methodist pastor serving in Oklahoma, with experience in a diverse variety of settings as well as the superintendency, a retreat leader for the Oklahoma five-day Academies for Spiritual Formation, and author of the column *Running Streams*.



August 28-September 3
Marcus Borg
Speaking Christian:
Reclaiming Christian
Language

WAITING LIST ONLY!

Much of Christianity's basic vocabulary is poorly understood today, impoverished and often distorted. The richness and fullness of biblical and Christian language needs to be reclaimed -- what is at stake is what it means to be Christian. **Marcus Borg** is Canon Theologian at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Portland, OR. He was Hunderer Chair of Religion and Culture in the Philosophy Department at Oregon State University until his retirement in 2007. He is the author of eighteen books, including the best-sellers *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*; *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time*, and *The Heart of Christianity*. His newest books are *Jesus: Uncovering the Life, Teachings and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary* (2006), a *New York Times* Best-Seller; *Conversations with Scripture: Mark* (2009), and three books co-authored with John Dominic Crossan, *The Last Week* (2006), *The First Christmas* (2007), and *The First Paul* (2009). His latest book is a novel, *Putting Away Childish Things*, published in 2010.



September 3-9
Fred Webb
Faith-Fellowship --
Flyfishing

Though not a regular seminar session, guests are welcome to register with **Fred Webb** for the 13th year of this program at Ring Lake Ranch. (540) 962-1300

For more details
check our website:
www.ringlake.org





Trusting by Kathy Leithner

Kathy has been a long-time guest at the Ranch and now serves on the Board. She is pastor of First United Methodist Church in Miami, OK.

The ridge curves behind Ring Lake Ranch, sweeping up from Torrey Creek and reaching high until it joins Arrow Mountain. Its edge is like the backbone of a slumbering behemoth, bony, rocky, and wild, but quiet except for the wind. Peppered with dark cedars and pines, fragrant with the scent of sage, from the top, one's senses are inundated by wilderness beauty. To the north, the Wind River Valley stretches wide. Many-hued layers of earth stripe the badland cliffs, and the Absaroka Mountains purple the horizon. To the south, far below us, our little cabins dot the hill this side of the lake, while across, cliffs tower, and to the left, the creek winds in oxbows up the valley under the gaze of glacier-shouldered peaks.

A horse whinnies. We'd climbed the ridge on horseback. Half the altitude we'd ascended was up a series of steep switchbacks cut into an almost vertical slope. Riding up, I was impressed with the power of the horses. Strength and movement not my own lifted me up the incline. Now the horses rest, and we scan with awe the rugged terrain.

When it's time to descend, we approach the edge of the ridge to take the trail down. When my horse and I reach the lip, it is like stepping off the edge of the abyss. I look down at the switchbacks below us, thinking, "This is impossible. Isn't there an easier way? We'll lose control! We'll tumble down!" My eyes are wide, my knuckles white.

I flash back twenty years to the snow-covered slopes of Colorado. The bottom is such a distant plunge down the steep run, I can only gulp. I am learning to ski. Back and forth, learning to turn, to go down an impossible slope by turning back and forth across it, carving my own switchbacks and learning that the way down a steep slope is to look – not at the bottom – but at the next turn, right in

front of me, one turn at a time. There's too much terror in facing the whole slope. But I can face the next twenty, forty feet.

So as my horse finds his footing, horseshoes slipping on the rocks, sturdy legs searching, adjusting, I am focusing on one turn at a time. The next ten, twenty feet. It is so steep at times that my back is almost parallel to his. If I glance down at the riders ahead of us, I can hardly bear it. I have to focus on where we are, and what's immediately ahead.

You really have to trust your horse, I think. In fact I think a lot about trust. It is such a challenging lesson that when I lie in bed that night and begin to drift off to sleep, I'm on horseback again, descending switchbacks, my psyche still dealing with it, just as when I was learning to ski. Those nights, I'd startle awake, my body jerking, trying to turn on the ski slopes in my dreams.

There are many things we cannot bear if we look too far or at the bottom. How to work through grief. How to handle a deep loss. How to recover from a disaster. How to reach a distant and difficult goal. How to stay clean and sober. Sometimes it's too much to look at the whole thing, the rest of your life, the end of the year, or even the week ahead. Sometimes the faith we need, the trust that can get us through, is one day at a time. One turn at a time. The next twenty feet. The next twenty minutes.

When it levels out, I can take the long view again. I look at the ridge behind and above us, more in awe than before of its peril and beauty, more aware of the sheer gift of being alive.

Grace hath brought us safe thus far.

Grace will lead us home.

Some Volunteers Still Needed for 2011

Volunteers during the sessions help in a million ways – always making a contribution to the smooth running of the Ranch. We could use the assistance of a couple of volunteers, especially in June.

We will be having Volunteer Week again from May 29 – June 4. We have a robust group already committed, but a few more hearty workers would be welcomed. To discuss volunteering, contact Joyce at joyce@ringlake.org or phone 888.458.5253 toll free.

Driving to the Ranch

If you plan to drive to the Ranch and would be interested in carpooling, let Carl Koch, Director, know. He can try to connect you with other guests coming from your area.

GoodSearch & GoodShop



Ring Lake Ranch can earn a donation every time you search the Internet and shop online! Search the web with Yahoo-powered GoodSearch.com and they'll donate about a penny to the Ranch each time you search! Shop at more than 1,300 GoodShop.com merchants including Amazon, Best Buy, Toys R Us, and others, and a percentage of each purchase will go to Ring Lake Ranch!

2011 Registration

2011 RATES

All rates are per person and based on double/multiple occupancy
Includes lodging * meals * seminars * horseback riding * guided hiking * boating. No charge for children 12 & under.

Scholarships are available: Contact – Carl Koch at mailing address below or carl@ringlake.org

ADULT FEES FOR 6 DAY SESSIONS

Basic lodging with shared bath \$730
Basic lodging with private bath..... \$820
Larger cabin with private bath..... \$885
Kitchenette cabin..... \$990

YOUTH FEES FOR 6 DAY SESSIONS

Youth (ages 13 – 17)..... \$560
Child (ages 12 and under)no charge

ADULT FEES FOR 2 CONSECUTIVE SESSIONS

Basic lodging with shared bath \$ 1290
Basic lodging with private bath..... \$ 1440
Larger cabin with private bath..... \$ 1545
Kitchenette cabin..... \$ 1740

YOUTH FEES FOR 2 CONSECUTIVE SESSIONS

Youth (ages 13 – 17)..... \$ 970
Child (ages 12 and under)no charge

All fees exclude sales & lodging taxes. Daily and off-season rates are available upon request.

To reserve a private room, contact Carl or Joyce about additional fee & availability.

Receive a 10% discount on your session fees by bringing someone new to the Ranch with you. Please indicate on your registration form who the new guest is. When they register, we'll record the discount. Thank you for spreading the word about Ring Lake Ranch.

Deposit:

To hold your reservations, we request a deposit of \$245/adult and \$135/youth for 6 day sessions or \$430/adult and \$185/youth for two sessions. The deposit is refundable (less a 20% handling charge) up to 60 days in advance of the session for which you have registered. After that time, the deposit is refundable (less 20%) only if we can rebook your space in the session.

No. of Registrants:

_____ Adults @ rate _____
_____ Youth (13-17) _____
_____ Children(12 & under) no charge

TOTAL (without taxes) _____

Deposit Amount _____

Session

Dates _____

Registrant Name(s) _____

Names & ages of children (if applicable) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone () _____ Work Phone () _____

Cell () _____ Email _____

Accommodation preference:

- Basic/shared bath Basic/private bath
 Large/private bath Kitchenette Cabin A

Roommate preference (registering separately)

- One bed? Two beds?

Is walking over steep or rough terrain difficult for you?

- Yes No

Any other physical limitations? _____

Dietary restrictions/food allergies: _____

Will you need transportation from the airport?

(see spring Carillon or website for charges)

- No Yes Jackson/Riverton

Signature _____

Date _____

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I prefer to use my (circle one) **Visa** **MasterCard**

Card #: _____

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Return form to:

(Sept. 24 to May 6)

(May 6 to Sept 14)

Ring Lake Ranch

Ring Lake Ranch

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Return Service Requested

Come join us at Ring Lake Ranch for “renewal in a sacred wilderness.”



See the complete listing of our outstanding programs for 2011 on pages 4 & 5. From discovering new wonders through the lens of a camera to women sharing stories of support and challenge, from singing and praying the psalms to exploring God's land of fire and ice (the Ranch), from immersion in Wisdom to delving into creation and creativity, 2011 will be a summer filled with inspiration, challenge, community, and refreshment at Ring Lake Ranch.

For more information about our programs and the Ranch community, please visit our website: www.ringlake.org