

Rodgers Ranch Heritage Center Master Plan Adopted 2014

1 MISSION STATEMENT:

“To restore and maintain the farmhouse, barn and grounds at the Rodgers Ranch Historical Site as a living history museum while educating residents of Contra Costa County through classes and activities.”

2 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The specific purposes for which this corporation is organized are: to preserve, restore, and manage the Rodgers Ranch Historic Site, and to advance education of its historical importance and the importance of green, sustainable living. Such education includes, but is not limited to planning, developing and implementing activities utilizing the Site which supports these purposes.

3 RODGERS RANCH HISTORICAL SITE:

At the present time, the Rodgers Ranch Historical Site, herein after referred to as “Site,” is 2.1 acres in size. It is actually a series of three land parcels owned by the Pleasant Hill Recreation and Park District, herein after referred to as “District.” The historic portion of the Site is approximately 1.7 acres (74,052 sq. ft.). The non-historic portion of the Site is approximately .4 acres (17,424 sq. ft.). This non-historic portion of the site consists of two residential parcels of land that were obtained from Davidon Homes after extensive negotiations between the District and Davidon Homes.

The Site is an example of Contra Costa County’s agricultural past. The farmhouse was part of a 149-acre ranch established by Patrick and Mary Ann Rodgers in 1868, with the wheat barn built shortly thereafter. Over the years, the ranch property was reduced in size to about 18 acres. In 1987, single-family development was approved for the Site, at which time the Pleasant Hill Historical Society recommended saving the original buildings. Through their efforts in 1991, the Site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

4 FARMHOUSE:

The farmhouse is a partial, two-story residence containing 1,135 sq. ft. It is a wood frame building with a partial second story containing 380 sq. ft. The original two-story part was built around 1867 and was home to Dr. Hiram Smith. In 1868, Patrick and Mary Rodgers moved onto the property with their three children. The large living room was added sometime after 1868 with the kitchen added sometime after 1900.

5 WHEAT BARN:

The barn was an original, wheat grain storage barn. Built around 1868, it was one of the first agricultural storage silos in this portion of the San Francisco Bay Region. This structure contained the original silo component with barn storage added to three sides, resulting in a 1200 square foot building. Due to deterioration and safety concerns, the structure was dismantled in 2008, and salvaged wood is stored on site. When funds are available, the barn will be rebuilt to look exactly like the original building on the exterior, but with a more functional interior space.

6 HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The Rodgers Ranch story began in 1855, when Patrick Rodgers, who was born in 1830 in County Tyrone, Ireland, moved to Tuolumne, California, to work in the gold mines. There he met and married Mary Ann Hallans, and they had three children: James, John and Rosemary.

In 1868, the family purchased just over 149 acres containing a two-story home and granary in an area 25 miles east of San Francisco. This property was originally part of a Mexican land grant entitled Rancho Las Juntas. There were only eight other families in this area known as Pleasant Hill, and it was there that Patrick and his wife settled to raise their family and grow wheat. Another child, Sadie, was born at the ranch in 1870. Patrick's brother Edward purchased an adjacent farm, increasing the boundaries of the two families' holdings to Grayson Rd., Pleasant Hill Rd., Oak Park Blvd., and one block west of Taylor Blvd. Besides farming wheat, at a time when "wheat was king" in this region, the Rodgers brothers supported their church and the educational system. In 1891, Edward Rodgers deeded a portion of his land to the Pleasant Hill School District. The old schoolhouse, built in 1920, is located on this site.

Patrick Rodgers died in 1891. After his wife died in 1903, the property was divided among his heirs, with a 34-acre portion containing the house and barn going to his son James. James was a self-taught lawyer and community leader, holding offices as the county clerk and president of the County Bar Association. His junior partner, A.F. Bray, later became a distinguished judge in the county, and the courthouse in Martinez is named in his honor. A safe belonging to James is still located in the law offices of Bray and Bray in Martinez.

In 1915, James sold his portion of the ranch to Rollo Hough, a partner in the Luther Burbank Company. It was to become one of the Burbank Company's "demonstration farms," but due to various problems, the company went bankrupt.

In 1926, the ranch was reduced to 18+ acres and sold to John and Maria Calleri, who farmed the land until 1937, when it was sold to Earle and Alice Tisdale Hobart. The Hobarts had recently returned from China, where Earle worked for Standard Oil Company. Alice wrote novels based on their experiences in China and won awards for her book, *Oil for the Lamps of China*, written in 1933. Soon after purchasing the ranch, they began work on building a new home on the property. Their new residence, a unique combination of Eastern and Western influences, was featured in *Sunset Magazine* in May of 1939. A Chinese "yin and yang" symbol painted by the Hobarts on the northern exterior fireplace chimney, can still be seen today from the Site. While living at the ranch, Alice wrote two other books, *Their Own Country* and *The Cup and the Sword*, (a novel about a French family living in Napa during Prohibition; in 1959, it was made into the movie *This Earth is Mine*, starring Rock Hudson and Claude Rains.)

World War II brought a change in ownership and, in 1942 Dr. Kaho and Helen Daily purchased the ranch as a summer home. The Dailys and their three daughters enjoyed country living, and in the 1950s, they made the ranch their full-time residence. The original farmhouse became a caretaker's home, and the Dailys kept the 18+ acres a working ranch during this post-war era, as most of the surrounding lands were being urbanized. Almond trees produced the last salable crop from the ranch.

In 1978, the property was sold, and the newer Hobart house was subdivided into its own lot. Mr. Bob McAdam Jr. lived in the original farmhouse until the ranch property was sold to Davidon Homes. In 1985, Davidon Homes proposed constructing single-family homes on the 18+ acres of the ranch. It was at this time members of the Pleasant Hill Historical Society recommended saving the older buildings of the ranch homestead. In 1987, the Pleasant Hill City Council approved the single-family subdivision for Davidon Homes, recommending that the District accept a 1.7 acres park dedication and develop the lands as a heritage park.

7 FRIENDS OF RODGERS RANCH:

In 1985, Friends of Rodgers Ranch, a subgroup of the Pleasant Hill Historical Society, was formed to pursue the preservation of the Rodgers Ranch site. With the approval of resolution 86-09-25B in 1986, the District set aside the Site as an historical park. By 1987, Friends of Rodgers Ranch, hereafter referred to as FORR, began raising monies for the preservation, restoration, and maintenance of the site as a living history museum. In 1991, FORR incorporated as a 501c3 nonprofit organization and succeeded in having the property approved and listed within the National Register of Historic Places. Since then, FORR with the support of the District, the City of Pleasant Hill, and the broader community, raised sufficient funds to restore the farmhouse, which includes a new foundation, porch, roof, handicap accessible

restroom, security screens on the windows, interior fireplace with original brick, and the interior itself. Through additional funds and volunteer efforts the grounds have been further restored, developed and improved with the addition of eight new almond trees, split rail fence, new front lawn, outdoor display cabinet, redwood benches, gazebo, restored rock wall, erection of windmill, construction of community gardens, herb garden, bee garden and the Rodgers Ranch Urban Farm with storage shed.

8 RODGERS RANCH HERITAGE CENTER:

In 2013, seeing the evolution of the site and potential for growth, FORR began doing business as “Rodgers Ranch Heritage Center,” hereafter referred to as “Center.” With restoration complete, the Center and its partners may use the house for many activities, including as a museum.

A new website www.rodgersranch.org; email RodgersRanchHeritageCenter@gmail.com; Facebook page www.facebook.com/RodgersRanch; and logo were launched to reflect this change.

8.1 MEMBERSHIP:

The Center is still a membership-based organization and has the following membership levels:

- \$1,000 – Corporate Benefactor
- \$500 – Major Donor
- \$250 – Benefactor
- \$100 – Donor
- \$75 – Contributor
- \$40 – Family
- \$25 – Individual
- \$10 – Student
- \$0 – Life

In 2014, membership benefits were offered. Businesses who donate \$250 or more receive a website link. Family memberships of \$40 or greater receive a discount on the summer Round Up programs. All members were invited to a membership appreciation event at the ranch.

As of 2014, the Center has over \$50,000 in assets and 74 memberships (45 are Family and 7 Benefactor level or greater).

8.2 PROGRAMS:

8.2.1 Round Up:

Every summer, the Center produces four heritage day camps for children ages 7 – 12. Each session has its own theme that relates to the ranch, and docents from the Center provide relevant activities and experiences.

8.2.2 Field Trips:

Every year brings new students to the Site as part of sponsored field trips by their schools or scout troops. Docents from the Center provide activities and experiences related to the ranch.

8.2.3 Holiday Boutique:

In December, the Center presents a holiday boutique, offering unique and mostly hand-made gifts to the public. The house is open for viewing with an old fashioned Christmas theme and decorations.

8.2.4 Harvest Festival:

The Center, along with its many partners, presents a Harvest Festival in the fall. Community service displays, workshops on harvesting and preserving food, and family activities are offered. The Site and its structures are opened to the public for touring.

8.2.5 Polling Site:

The ranch house has been used as a polling site, with patriotic decorations, bunting, and flags that take visitors back to a time when the community gathered together to vote, make their voices heard, and celebrate what it meant to be American.

8.2.6 Community Gardens:

Garden beds have been constructed for the community, allowing those to grow a garden when they would not otherwise have the means.

8.2.7 Site Availability:

Site grounds are open to the public for use during daylight hours. The farm house is open for viewing on Thursdays from 9:30am – 1:00pm or by appointment.

8.3 PARTNERS:

8.3.1 Scout Projects:

Throughout the years, scouts have contributed greatly to the ranch, completing the following projects as a group, an Eagle Scout project or a Gold or Silver Girl Scout award:

- Re-building the rock wall between the house and barn
- Erecting a split rail fence in front of the property
- Making and erecting a new Rodgers Ranch sign
- Building and installing a display cabinet

- Erecting a windmill that once stood on a farm at the corner of Pleasant Hill Rd. and Boyd Rd.
- Building and installing four redwood benches
- Planting gardens around the house
- Building a gazebo between the house and parking lot
- Spreading gravel around the community gardens and building a redwood bench next to the gardens
- Erecting a split rail fence in front of the Rodgers Ranch Urban Farm and Teaching Gardens
- Building a storage shed for the Urban Farm
- Building informational display cases for the Urban Farm and herb garden

8.3.2 Rodgers Ranch Urban Farm and Teaching Gardens:

In 2012, master gardener Marian Woodard and her husband John Matthesen developed an urban farm on the hillside behind the house, teaching classes on sustainable and biodynamic gardening to the community. Community members, students, children, and adults with special needs learn about growing and harvesting plants. Each year they host an Expo and Plant Sale, bringing hundreds of attendees to the ranch.

8.3.3 The Northern California Unit of the Herb Society of America:

The Northern California Unit of the Herb Society of America meets monthly at the ranch and has maintained and expanded the herb gardens to the side of and behind the house. Each year, they host Herb Day, with herb-related information, classes, and vendors.

8.3.4 The Pleasant Hill Historical Society:

The Pleasant Hill Historical Society utilizes the house to organize, display and archive historical material pertaining to Pleasant Hill and surrounding area.

9 GOALS:

9.1 CURRENT YEAR - 2014:

- 9.1.1 Organization: Adopt new Bylaws; amend existing Articles of Incorporation to change name from Friends of Rodgers Ranch to Rodgers Ranch Heritage Center and amend statement of purpose; change and adopt Mission Statement and new slogan; reimagine standing committees for implementing these purposes: Education; Fundraising; Marketing; Membership; Monuments; Museum; Programs; and Structures & Grounds; and formulate a Master Plan to create and achieve goals for realizing said purposes.
- 9.1.2 Education: Partner with DVC to offer classes required for degree; increase awareness within the educational community of what we offer; continue Round-Up; and give tours of site to troops and schools.
- 9.1.3 Marketing: Begin community newspaper campaign to increase awareness and grow membership; Clean up webpage; and add Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation and Master Plan to website.
- 9.1.4 Membership: Increase by 20% over year before (61 members in 2013).
- 9.1.5 Projects: Install a historical monument with bronze plaque recognizing Patrick Rodgers and family as one of the earliest pioneers of Pleasant Hill and participants in California's 2nd Gold Rush; repair door to pantry; and replace kitchen faucet.

9.2 NEXT YEAR - 2015:

- 9.2.1 Organization: Negotiate and implement Land Use Agreement between District and Center; fine tune Bylaws as needed; negotiate and create more autonomy with all Center\Site partners; and implement the following standing committees: Education; Fundraising; Marketing; Membership; Monuments; Museum; Programs; and Structures & Grounds.
- 9.2.2 Education: Expand field trips and class activities with Diablo Valley College History, Archeology and Culinary Departments; continue Round-Up; offer and expand small group classes; and increase private youth tours and school field trips.
- 9.2.3 Fundraising: Seek grant money and donations to increase checking account balance by at least \$25,000 by year's end.
- 9.2.1 Marketing: Build on 2014 ad campaign; add blog and content to webpage; and increase social media presence, create more buzz and awareness of Site.

- 9.2.2 Membership: Have 100 members at year's end and increase membership by 20% or more every year thereafter; increase contact with members and the public utilizing newsletters, blog, webpage and social media; and add more incentives and benefits for membership, including discounts on workshops, classes, and programs.
- 9.2.3 Monuments: Begin work on storyboard project for installation throughout Site, creating a self-guided tour and a more visceral connection for visitors.
- 9.2.4 Museum: Increase hours of availability for general public and recruit volunteers to serve as docents; create revolving display themes; and formulate policies and procedures for the procurement and deaccession of donated items.
- 9.2.5 Programs: Create quarterly programs for the general public and membership with either historical or green-sustainability themes, and present a reveal monument event.
- 9.2.6 Structures and Grounds: Repair and repaint exterior door of middle room; complete and hang lace curtains throughout rest of farm house; install natural gas line to house (PG&E); increase and improve exterior Site lighting; install Site security cameras (exterior); recycle the water from kitchen sink to outdoors; expand and showcase Herb Garden; and repair roof.
- 9.2.7 Partners: Continue to recruit and work with interested parties that help to achieve the Center's stated purposes.
- 9.3 FIVE YEARS - 2019:
 - 9.3.1 Organization: Reevaluate all official Center Documents including: Land Use Agreement between District and Center; all other Center agreements; Articles of Incorporation; Bylaws; and Master Plan.
 - 9.3.2 Education: Continue field trips and class activities with Diablo Valley College's History, Archeology and Culinary Departments; Round-Up; offer and expand small group classes; and increase private youth tours and school field trips.
 - 9.3.1 Fundraising: Seek grant money and donations to increase checking account balance by at least \$250,000 by year's end.
 - 9.3.2 Marketing: Build on previous ad campaigns and utilize blog(s), web content, and social media, for continued buzz and awareness of Site.
 - 9.3.3 Membership: Have 200 members and increase membership by 35% or more every year thereafter; continue contact with members and the public utilizing newsletters, blog, webpage and social media; and continue to add more incentives and benefits for membership including discounts on workshops, classes, and programs.

- 9.3.4 Monuments: Finish storyboard project for installation throughout Site, creating a self-guided tour and a more visceral connection for visitors.
- 9.3.5 Museum: Continue recruitment of docents; maintain regular hours; and create revolving display themes.
- 9.3.6 Programs: Continue quarterly programs for the general public and membership with either historical or green-sustainability themes, and reveal monument events.
- 9.3.7 Structures and Grounds: Continue split rail fence around front yard and original front of house; grow different rose bush species along all parameter split rail fences; install Memorial Plaque project – rose bushes; plant flowers around gazebo; install exterior solar panels; install storyboard monuments throughout Site; and install brick patio and surrounding walkways.
- 9.3.8 Partners: Continue to recruit and work with interested parties that help to achieve the Center’s stated purposes.

9.4 TEN YEARS - 2024:

- 9.4.1 Organization: Reevaluate all official Center Documents, including Land Use Agreement between District and Center; all other Center agreements; Articles of Incorporation; Bylaws; and Master Plan.
- 9.4.2 Education: Continue field trips and class activities with Diablo Valley College’s History, Archeology and Culinary Departments; Round-Up; offer and expand small group classes; and increase private youth tours and school field trips.
- 9.4.3 Fundraising: Seek grant money and donations to increase checking account balance by at least \$500,000 by year’s end.
- 9.4.4 Marketing: Build on previous ad campaigns and utilize blog(s), web content, and social media for continued buzz and awareness of Site.
- 9.4.5 Membership: Have 550 members and increase membership by 20% or more every year thereafter; continue contact with members and the public utilizing newsletters, blog, webpage and social media; and continue to add more incentives and benefits for membership, including discounts on workshops, classes, and programs.
- 9.4.6 Museum: Continue recruitment of docents; maintain regular hours; and create revolving display themes.
- 9.4.7 Programs: Continue quarterly programs for the general public and membership with either historical or green-sustainability themes.

- 9.4.8 Structures and Grounds: Restore Wheat Barn and Site storage.
- 9.4.9 Partners: Continue to recruit and work with interested parties that help to achieve the Center's stated purposes.

- 9.5 TWENTY FIVE YEARS - 2039:
 - 9.5.1 Organization: Reevaluate all official Center Documents including: Land Use Agreement between District and Center; all other Center agreements; Articles of Incorporation; Bylaws; and Master Plan.
 - 9.5.2 Education: Continue field trips and class activities with Diablo Valley College's History, Archeology and Culinary Departments; Round-Up; offer and expand small group classes; and increase private youth tours and school field trips.
 - 9.5.3 Fundraising: Seek grant money and donations to increase checking account balance by at least \$35,000 by year's end.
 - 9.5.4 Marketing: Build on previous ad campaigns and utilize blog(s), web content, and social media, for continued buzz and awareness of Site.
 - 9.5.5 Membership: Have 1,500 members and increase membership by 10% or more every year thereafter; continue contact with members and the public utilizing newsletters, blog, webpage and social media; and continue to add more incentives and benefits for membership including discounts on workshops, classes, and programs.
 - 9.5.6 Museum: Continue recruitment of docents; maintain regular hours; and create revolving display themes.
 - 9.5.7 Programs: Continue quarterly programs for the general public and membership with either historical or green-sustainability themes.
 - 9.5.8 Structures and Grounds: Maintain all Site structures and grounds.
 - 9.5.9 Partners: Continue to recruit and work with interested parties that help to achieve the Center's stated purposes.