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Cowboy Campground at Legacy Park, Idaho City - The New Generation

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Many calls received during the pandemic were life changing, often with negative overtones. However, on a Tuesday evening in July 2020, Bob and Sabrina Amidon, received a phone call from a friend which would culminate in a very positive outcome.

All the caller said was, "I know you are avid horse people; did you hear that Cowboy Campground in Idaho City is for sale?"

Quick research confirmed the details of the news. A plan was put together, and with the help of a private finance company, an offer was turned in just 14 hours after receiving the phone call. Crazy times often demand quick actions. In this case, a rapid response had saved Cowboy Campground and opened the way for its continued preservation. Only an hour's drive from Boise, it will continue not only as a horsemen's first resource for camping in the Boise National Forest, but now features campsites for all outdoor enthusiasts, most recently welcoming the OHV camper community since 2021.

The Amidon's received the assistance of other like-minded horse people like Pastor Frank and Kim Hartmann of Boise, and thereby raised the needed down payment in record time to make sure the closing could happen. They created Cowboy Campground LLC, got their business licenses, and capped off their first few months of ownership with a huge fundraiser. Wanting to start updates, Cowboy Campground at Legacy Park was established and renovated with 17 newly sponsored horse campsites. Now increasing to 24 in total, each campsite features between 1-3 safe horse paddocks for the equine community. The sponsored sites include the contributor's name, new panels, new picnic tables and, of course, a lil' bit of love. Phase II of the renovations is now under way and the Amidons are looking for sponsors for the general sites, which could include shade/weather covers, new picnic tables & fire rings. New contributors even have the option of being involved in planning amenities for their designated spot.

The little cabins which had been a part of the previous campground have received some long-needed TLC and are repainted and three are already fully renovated. One is now a dedicated chapel to hold weddings and a variety of other functions. There were lots of commitments by like-minded horse friends and companies in helping with endless hours and hard work. Please take a moment and see the wonderful list of volunteers and supporters at the CowboyCampground.com website. The owners were blown away at times with the thoughtfulness and volunteer hours they have received in the last 26 months and appreciate every moment, including the great feedback received on social media, as well as in person.

Legacy Park will soon be a great destination for retreats, youth camps, educational clinics, Equine Sport challenges and, of course, long trail rides and trips to Idaho City. With that said, they are looking for sponsors and grants to help create an amazing park for the City of Idaho City and Boise County to be proud of.

The future for these 15 acres will be preserved as it is intended to be: "a Campground & Event Space" for future generations to enjoy with their horses and families. The next step has been completed in early 2022, with the creation of a non-profit 501(c)3 organization to oversee and run this gem in the rough and grow it to be a marvelous destination for future generations to enjoy. Legacy Park Trust Inc. is actively looking and asking for grant money to grow and purchase the land to complete the goal of being preserved and never sold. Due diligence and extra hours of work have paid off, highlighted by the recent acceptance into Idaho Give's and newly added Crowdfunding, which are organizations that check credentials before accepting new venues. A new grant writer is on board and excited to help them reach their goals.

Cowboy Campground at Legacy Park has been an ever-expanding horse campground for over 25 years and now features a park that can offer so much more. Education, training and competitive events along with short & long trail rides, large gatherings for groups, weddings, memorials and anniversaries have been held, yoga/health retreats, events and seminars, 4-H, youth, rodeo bible camps and off-road enthusiasts have already booked their events. Continued expansions are allowing for all recreational vehicles & tent enthusiasts to enjoy the campground and have a safe place to be, especially with the changing world that we are currently experiencing. The upper tier is known as the horse area, which sports an arena & two round pens for our equine friends, the lower tier has great sites for non-motorized and OHV campers. With changing the former courtyard into a beautiful, rustic, event area, and turning a small building into a practical, little chapel; Hosting weddings, family events, corporate dry camping retreats in addition to horse camps and educational events has become a charming, full functional addition. Sadly a few events weren't able to be hosted this year, including a few veterans groups and one special needs event, since they are in need of full-service sites currently, which they are working diligently to change. Hookup fees were paid for last year April and a grant has been approved to finish the sewer hookups from a family trust donation. This work will proceed as soon as we get the final approval from the city. Plans and state permits are ready.

"In-the-planning stages", and waiting for a sponsor, are a challenge walking trail, that will also offer educational/historic/forestry references and will also feature fitness tips for beginners and will challenge the athlete in everyone and yoga/fitness retreats for all levels. Not only do they have great plans already in the works, but to secure the ongoing success and keeping this Gem In The Rough in the hands of owners with the foresight to keeping it as intended, open ground, for which the 501(c)3 foundation has been created. Legacy Park Trust Inc. will oversee and run Cowboy Campground @ Legacy Park to ensure it will be conserved for future equine lovers and camping families to come after it is purchased from the current owners LLC. With losing so much private land to developers, this is a pertinent piece of property that needs saving and preserving. They are looking in partnering with amazing companies and people to conserve this great place.

The Home Depot Foundation joined in July 2022 and has been an awesome partner in contributing a gazebo, seating area with fireplace and a flagpole with our country's glorious red, white & blue flag, this will be a distinguished addition to the area. Everyone is beyond excited to have this completed by May 1st 2023. A world wide corporation has just contributed a corporate matching gift to a donation received and Legacy Park Trust is excited and grateful to work with a new grant writer on future gifting.

The Park's name is tribute to everyone that had a hand into planning this place, ie. The Sterling Family and Bill's group of friends that worked long hours on this project over the years. Another great story to tell.

2022/2023 was the starting point of being able to receive funding and accept donations at a Trust Account at Wells Fargo, which will hold in-trust the donations received to purchase the land. After the purchase the Nonprofit Board will help grow and run this great facility and allow for other nonprofit organizations to use it for camps and events, at no charge to them if need arises, and keep this wonderful Gem in The Rough from being developed into housing or commercial property.

One huge project that will serve all of the community, guests and future travelers is the build of full service sites for the summer season. They are not planning to be a year round RV or Trailer Park, but a summer destination and helping the community of Idaho City continue to grow and offer additional community services.

Cowboy Campground's owners have been a great supporter of the Idaho City Community, strong members of the Idaho City Chamber and are always willing to help, they have been supporting Idaho City Days, The Chili Cook Off, sharing leftover Halloween candy with the police department to hand out and had a blast participating with the Trunk N Treat.

If you would like more information on helping make their goal, please contact them through their website, www.CowboyCampground.com.