

Coronado National Forest Huachuca Mountains Brown Canyon Ranch



History

Brown Canyon Ranch offers many recreational opportunities in a scenic setting not far from the neighborhoods of the city of Sierra Vista. Dog-walkers, trail runners, hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers all enjoy the network of trails in the area. Birdwatchers and picnickers take in the peaceful views from benches and tables on the edge of spring-fed ponds. All visitors soak up the history surrounding the adobe ranch house that was built over a century ago.

The property in Brown Canyon was first permanently occupied by John Thomas Brown and his family, who settled there around 1880. It passed through the hands of other users during the latter part of the 19th century until the current ranch house was built by James and Tom Haverty between 1905 and 1907. James and his wife, Lessie, homesteaded the ranch in 1912 and owned the property until 1921, when they sold it to William and Margaret Carmichael. The Carmichaels were major land owners and significant philanthropists in early Sierra Vista. During their ownership, Harvey James, the owner of several mining claims in Brown Canyon, lived up in the canyon in the summer but sometimes rented the house in the winter. He and his wife would often invite friends to the ranch for a social potluck and dance in the living room. Also during the time of the Carmichaels, a Yaqui Indian named Chico Romero lived there with his wife and daughters. In 1946 the Carmichaels sold the ranch to Roy and Stella Rambo, who operated it as a cattle ranch. They in turn sold the property to Samuel and Cecile Barchas in 1957, together with their additional ranch holdings across South Highway 92 (OY Ranch). The Barchas family did not live at Brown Canyon, but in a stone house at OY Ranch. Sarah Barchas obtained Brown Canyon Ranch through gift deeds from her parents in 1960 and 1961. Brown Canyon Ranch is also known as the Barchas Ranch and was acquired by the Forest Service in a land exchange with Sarah in 1998. The Friends of Brown Canyon Ranch, other volunteers, Boy Scouts and school groups have all helped with the renovation of Brown Canyon Ranch with the support of the Forest Service archeologist.

The signed Nature Trail, a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile loop, begins near the eastern edge of the house pond. For a longer hike, Brown Canyon Trail #115 begins to the west of the ranch complex and continues up Brown Canyon for 2.5 miles before making a left-hand turn at a stone spring box and climbing out of the canyon. At 4.2 miles the trail ends at the junction with the Hamburg Trail #122, which leads to more hiking opportunities in Ramsey Canyon.

For further information contact: Sierra Vista Ranger District, 4070 South Avenida Saracino, Hereford, Arizona 85615, (520) 378-0311. Alternatively, visit the Friends of the Brown Canyon Ranch website at www.browncanyonranch.org.

