

Cultural and Historic Resource Acquisitions



Northeast corner of Pump house ca. 1900. Courtesy Arizona Historical Society

Steam Pump Ranch

Site: 15 Acres

Acquired: 2007

Cost: \$4,500,000

Fund: 2004 Bond Funds

Background

The Steam Pump Ranch is a collection of agricultural buildings and historic ranch structures located on approximately 15 acres in the Town of Oro Valley, Pima County, Arizona.

The Steam Pump Ranch was established by George Pusch (1847-1921) and John Zellweger (c.1847-1924) in 1874. Shortly after their arrival they purchased a portion of the old Canada del Oro Ranch, registered the PZ brand, and constructed their ranch headquarters and a steam pump for a watering stop along the Camp Grant Road (Oracle Rd). Steam Pump Ranch became a stopover place for travelers in the 19th century and a place where livestock could be watered and rested. After the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1880, the ranch expanded to include land along the San Pedro River between Mammoth and Winkelman and facilitated the consolidation and shipment of cattle from smaller ranches, as well as providing produce, chickens and eggs for the Tucson market.

The Steam Pump Ranch is today listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its association with the history of cattle ranching in southern Arizona. The ranch reflects a depth of history - from the early arrival of American settlers shortly after the region's acquisition by the United States, frontier settlement and conflict, the boom and bust periods of the late 19th century associated with the arrival of the railroad, recurring drought cycles, through the modernization of cattle ranching in the first half of the 21st century.

Natural and Cultural Resources

Built along the Canada del Oro Wash and the historic route from Tucson to Camp Grant (now Oracle Road), the ranch has a feeling of open space and still retains its historic landscape reflective of its ranching history and setting beneath the Pusch Ridge Wilderness Area of the Coronado National Forest. This feeling of open space is increasingly rare in the growing Town of Oro Valley. The landscape is also consistent with its history of being in a floodplain and riparian area, as evidenced by the generally flat topography and prevalence of mature mesquite and cottonwood trees and introduced plantings.

Long Term Goals

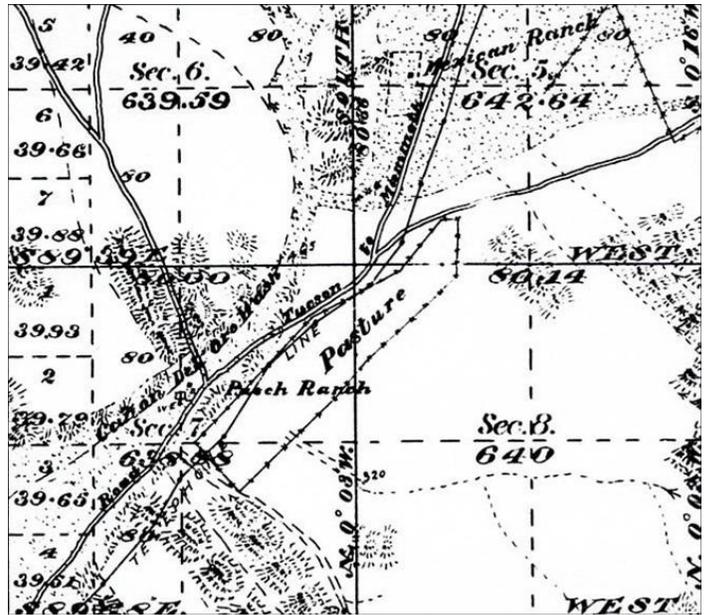
The well-received Steam Pump Ranch Master Plan acknowledges the historic resources of the Steam Pump Ranch that reflect two eras of ownership, the Pusch era (c.1874-1931) and the Procter/Leiber era (c. 1933-2005). This parcel, though relatively small, provides a place of respite and reflection where the public can enjoy, use, and experience this historic place and founding site of Oro Valley that still holds the buildings, landscape, and stories from its frontier era past.



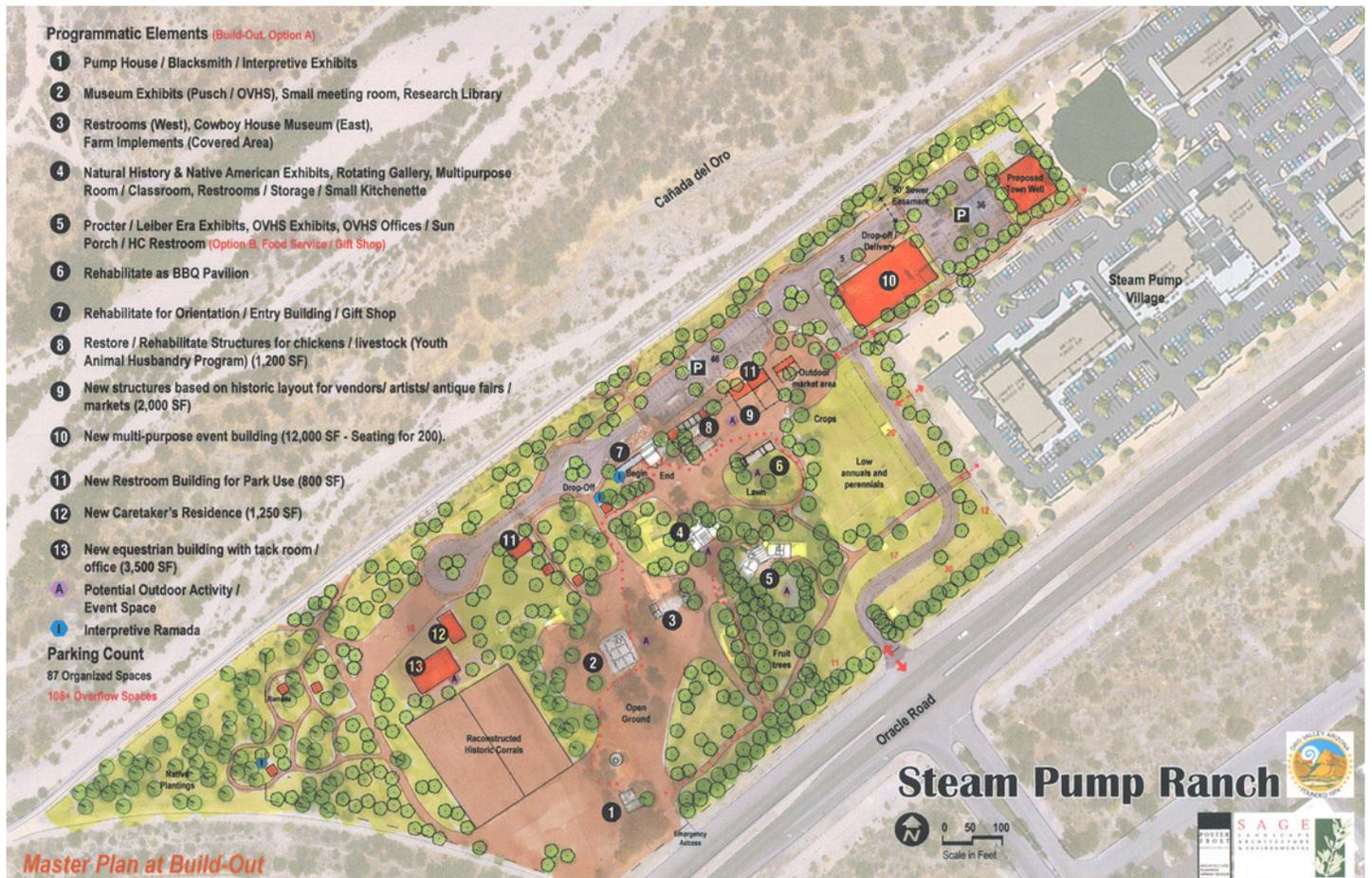
Southeast corner of Pump house. Date unknown. Courtesy Arizona Historical Society



South elevation of Pusch ranch house ca. 1900. Courtesy Arizona Historical Society



General Land Office (GLO) Survey Map 1902



Steam Pump Ranch Master Plan (Poster-Frost-Mirto Associates) prepared for Pima County and the Town of Oro Valley