

**Heidi Redd  
Rancher**

Interviewer-Jeff Elstad

Heidi, tell me the history of the Dugout Ranch.

Heidi Redd

Well, s the ranch originally started in the 1800's and it's been a cattle ranch for over a hundred years now. Al Scorup was the main organizer of Indian Creek Cattle Company, but before Al, there were several other small in-holdings up and down the creek but, for the most part, I would say Al Scorup was the originator of the Indian Creek Cattle Company.

Interviewer-Jeff Elstad

What are challenges for ranchers in the West, and how is the economy?

Heidi Redd

Of course, the challenges for all of us in the cattle industry are always tied to weather, and cost of feed, and the market. If the market's kind to us, then we're all smiling and know that we'll carry on. But ranching--one of the interesting things that's happened in the last twenty years to ranchers is that the average age of a rancher is sixty five now, and the young family members coming up are not wanting to participate in the ranching industry. They want to sell off the ranch and do other things. So, we are seeing an eroding number of ranches now days. They're just getting fewer and fewer, and more and more developments on ranch land.

Interviewer-Jeff Elstad

How is the economy these days?

Heidi Redd

As far as the number of cattle, there are fewer, but the demand for beef is less as the people have less discretionary income. They're going, of course, for the more inexpensive cuts of meat, like hamburger, not the steaks. So we are getting a backlog of some degree of cattle, so the market is reflecting that downward trend.

Interviewer-Jeff Elstad

Tell me about your arrangement with The Nature Conservancy, and how has it been working?

Heidi Redd

The Nature Conservancy's been a partner now for eleven years, and I must say, it's been a very good partnership for the Dugout Ranch. They've been excellent about letting me run the cattle herd and I basically run the herd like I've always run the herd, and the cattle belong to me and it's my company, Indian Creek Cattle Company, but the exciting thing is that we've been able to do some scientific research on the ranch and some environmental endeavors that, if I had the ranch alone I could never afford to do. So, I have felt very fortunate to have them as a partner, and especially with tourism cranking up like it has, and the influx of people invading the canyon. Without their help and their support in keeping it pristine, it would be a difficult job now days.

Interviewer-Jeff Elstad

Tell me about your arrangement with The Nature Conservancy, and how it's been working.

Heidi Redd

The Nature Conservancy and I have been partners now for eleven years, and it's been a very advantageous partnership for the Dugout Ranch, I must say. I run the cattle operation. I own the cattle and Indian Creek Cattle Company. Without their support, financially and administratively, with the influx of the tourists we're having and the pressures on the landscape for tourism and mountain climbing and what not, without their help in keeping that at bay and keeping state lands from being sold, I don't know where the Dugout would be, and so I am very, very thankful for their participation and their help.

Interviewer-Jeff Elstad

Ranchers and environmentalists are sometimes at odds. Why do you think this is?

Heidi Redd

Well, I think they misunderstand each other. I'm very thankful for the environmental movement and I think that if it hadn't come along, I don't know where we would be in America. They awakened us all to the dangers and the folly that we were committing. I can remember in the 50s we'd throw garbage out the window, and they awakened our consciousness to this. We do have a limited amount of beauty in the country, and if we don't husband it, and if we don't take care of it, it will be gone. And, I think ranchers were threatened. For a while they felt like the environmental movement was only established to put them out of business, which is very untrue. I think the environmentalists were concerned about what was happening on the land. And they basically, in a lot of ways, showed us better ways to do things and made us better stewards of the land, and made us aware that we needed to be better stewards of the land. So, I think the antagonism that was there in the beginning is slowly fading because I think both sides are seeing the advantages of a ranch as compared to a development, and, if it isn't a ranch, what do you do? You sell it off for development. And so, I think we're seeing that there is room for agreement. There is room for common ground, and that we're all better off if we work together to save this planet, rather than fighting one another.

Interviewer-Jeff Elstad

Wilderness preservation in some circles is controversial. Why do you think this is?

Heidi Redd

I think to some degree, people aren't really aware of what the Wilderness Act would mean. Ranchers, frankly, I don't see why we would be against it. We can still run our cattle, and in cases where we need to get in to work on ponds, we can still do that. I think motorized vehicles, maybe the ATV, the motorcycle, people that want Jeeps, might be against it because it would limit their use altogether. But I think it's just another way, a tool that we all have, to help keep our state the beautiful that it is.

Interviewer-Jeff Elstad

What is the environmental community like to work with?

Heidi Redd

I think, over the years, they've become very good partners. In the beginning, they just wanted, oh more or less, a lot of them were waving the flag, "Cattle Free in '93," or whatever it was, but I think we've come to understand that you can run a cattle operation in an environmentally sound way, and that we are conservationists and we all want to see the best outcome on the land. And so it's easier to work as partners rather than foes.

Interviewer-Jeff Elstad

One scientist called the Colorado Plateau "the epicenter of global warming." Do you see evidence of climate change on your ranch?

Heidi Redd

I do see changes on the ranch. Vegetation-wise, mostly in the vegetation and noxious weeds coming in, but that comes about with the explosion of travel and people coming, but I'm not truly aware of what's causing those problems. Is it global warming? Is it just a glitch in the weather pattern, which we've had forever? I mean, if you look at the rainfall in this area and go back and just see that we've had errant times when it's just been for ten years, very little, very little rain, and then we've had years where it's been, what we call, normal. It's a desert. But, I guess the exciting thing for the Dugout Ranch is the fact that we will be starting some scientific studies on the grasses and the soils and the temperature to help determine whether we are going into a drastic climate change.

Interviewer-Jeff Elstad

One scientist called the Colorado Plateau "the epicenter of global warming." Do you see evidence of climate change on your ranch?

Heidi Redd

Whether its climate change or just the cycle of the wet weather pattern, I don't know. I'm not a scientist, but I do know that I've seen differences in the plants. I've seen more noxious weeds. At times it does seem warmer, but then at times it seems colder, so, I really can't say, and I just know that looking back over the moisture records over the hundred years, you do have cycles of low moisture, and then cycles where you do have a lot of rain. And, the exciting thing for the Dugout is that we will be participating in some studies that can answer these questions more scientifically. But it is a concern of mine. As the climate changes, if it does change, what will that mean to the plants, and will there be plants to sustain a cattle herd? So, it is an important question to have answered and to look into.

Interviewer-Jeff Elstad

With more access, what has been the impact, in terms of use, of climber's camps and ATV, or other such uses?

Heidi Redd

I've seen over the last, oh, twenty years, just a gradual increase of ATV use and, especially in the climbing. It used to be that I would see one or two climbers and I'd wave at them. And now, they come in hoards of three or four hundred, and the impact on Indian Creek has been horrendous. They had to close camping to the Indian Creek corridor from Newspaper Rock for

fifteen miles due to a study that human waste was at such an extent that they just had to close it. Now the BLM is trying to get them to have a little bit more diverse camping, but the key is having designated camping site so they aren't just pulling off and making a fire ring and a campsite anywhere they please, which they have been doing for the last fifteen or twenty years, and it's been to the detriment of the canyon.

Interviewer-Jeff Elstad

Where do you see common ground between ranchers and the environmental community?

Heidi Redd

The most common ground is our landscape that we all love and that we all want to take care of, so if there's anything that binds us and is a bond with us; it's this landscape and protecting it and making sure that it's there for our children.

Interviewer-Jeff Elstad

Can the big and small ranches of the West survive? And, what do you see for the future?

Heidi Redd

We always wonder if the cowboy is on his last legs. I don't think so. I think as long as this world keeps populating at the rate that it's populating, and the demand for food that keeps increasing, not decreasing, I see a place for us. The only thing I think that limits us would be, if we do have climate change and our grasses go, but as far as the cattleman, the farmer, we will become more and more important as time goes on and this world population keeps increasing.

Interviewer-Jeff Elstad

What would you say to people that say that the West is no place for ranching, it's too arid, that it should be done in other places?

Heidi Redd

I think Indian Creek and the Dugout Ranch is a testament that it can be done. It's been done for over a hundred years now. It still has a healthy grass community and it's a healthy landscape, and so, I think that there is a limit and I think you have to recognize as a rancher. For instance, forty-some odd years ago when I first came here, we ran fifteen hundred head of cattle, mother cows. Right now I'm running substantially fewer than that and that's dictated by the grass. I think if you're a rancher and you make that change, if you don't say, "I've always run this number of cattle and I'll always run it." That'll put you out of business. What you have to do is go with what you can run successfully with the forage that you have. Elk was introduced on my mountain, oh, thirty years ago; twenty years ago, and elk and cattle compete for the same feed, so we have to learn to co-exist, and my numbers will have to reflect that co-existing, which means that I run fewer head, which makes it harder to meet the bills. That's the thing. I mean, you can make more money the more cattle you run, that's for sure, but for some reason I've been very blessed and very lucky. Those old Anasazi spirits have been with me, because I've been able to pay the bills.

Interviewer-Jeff Elstad

Do you think there's too much wilderness, or do you think we need more?

Heidi Redd

Wilderness, I think, is purely determined on the land. If there is a piece of land that meets the criteria for wilderness, then yes, it should be looked at and definitely catalogued, and discussions proceed, and then decide whether it is. I think we do need to look at those issues and discuss them and decide from there what should be wilderness. And I don't think there's too much wilderness, and I think that there's certain places that should definitely be wilderness that just won't meet the criteria.

Interviewer-Jeff Elstad

Why is wilderness important?

Heidi Redd

Well, all you have to do is go to Salt Lake, or any metropolitan area and be in the frenzy. Be in the frenzy of automobiles and people and merchants, and then you come back to the landscape and you realize what a wonderful gift it is to all of America to be able to get out of that urban environment and the smog and that rush, and enjoy nature. And, if we ever lost this communing with nature and the landscape, I fear we would really be losing a dear thing in our lives.