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## ranch roundup

### plant patrols

No, it's not a creature from a B-grade sci-fi flick, but it is a life form that's causing some real headaches for Forest Service and Philmont managers. Leafy spurge, an aggressive invasive plant that displaces natural vegetation by usurping available water and nutrients and depositing toxins in the soil, has been found growing in at least one patch along the Middle Ponil northwest of the Barker Wildlife Area. Forest Service officials are concerned that Philmont hikers may cause the unwanted infestation to spread through the Valle Vidal by carrying seeds on the soles of their boots.

To evaluate the threat, Philmont is cooperating with the USFS in a monitoring program this summer. At each of the three exit points that Philmont campers use in the affected area, three members of each passing crew scrape everything off their boots into plastic bags that are collected by the staff at Rich Cabins. The scrapings are then planted into pots that will be monitored over the winter to see what grows. Officials hope to determine if Philmont hikers truly have a potential for spreading the spurge.

On Philmont itself, in the Barker, and on neighboring ranches, spraying has been carried out to prevent the plant's spread. However, the Forest Service can't spray because of court issues with its Environmental Impact Statement.

Up north of Dan Beard, Philmont campers are carrying out a conservation project for the Forest Service to eradicate another invader, musk thistle, from about 25 acres in the Valle Vidal.

### notes from all over

With the help of a gift from Ranch Committee member Chuck Walneck, a 1905 Model T Ford that had been in the Villa garage is being restored to original colors and drivable condition . . . a film team from The American Experience, a PBS program, was due at the Ranch in July . . . an effort to reduce total vehicle mileage paid off in 2006, and Ranch managers hope to achieve similar results this year . . . 14 crews this summer took advantage of a new Ranch policy allowing crews that have been on the waiting list for reservations for four or more years to have a guaranteed slot and priority for dates and itineraries . . . the Double H staff has increased its medical capabilities with two paramedics on staff . . . PSA member Jim MacGillivray has been appointed as new chairman of the Ranch Committee's Property and Facilities Task Force . . . Philmont's Dave Kenneke is serving as president of the New Mexico Emergency Services Council . . . the OA Trail Crew has completed the new trail from Copper Park to Greenwood Canyon . . . the crew is now working on a new trail from Dean Cow over Chandler Pass and down Trail Canyon to mile marker 9 on the Ponil Road . . . the remodeled Camping Office and Logistics buildings share a much larger covered patio that has proven to be a popular addition with crews going through check-in . . . former FBI Director William Sessions, a 1945 Philmont camper, participated in the Ranch's annual camp inspection in June.

—Compiled by Mark Stinnett

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