



Photos by STEVE HAGGERTY/ColorWorld/Via TNS

The lower lake near the Ranch at Emerald Valley in Colorado, fed by Little Fountain Creek, is just big enough for boating.

A special brand of hospitality

Guest ranch near Colorado Springs keeping traditions alive

By ANNE Z. COOKE
Tribune News Service

MANITOU SPRINGS, Colo. — I was returning from a hike up Mount Vigil, the peak you can see from the Ranch at Emerald Valley, near Colorado Springs, Colo., when a leathery-faced cowboy walked by, humming a tune and leading a horse.

At the same moment, a car pulled up and the driver, eyes masked behind dark sunglasses, leaned out and asked for directions to the ranch, which just happened to be where I was staying.

I would have answered, but at that moment the old cowboy stopped dead, looked at the license plate — “Texas,” he muttered — looped the reins around the saddle horn and unwrapped a piece of gum.

Then he pointed down the road.

“That way,” he said.

“Thanks,” said the driver, hesitating.

“I’m Tony,” he added.

“Say, do you know why they call it Emerald Valley? Was there a gold mine here? Gemstones, maybe?”

Curious myself, and still out of breath, I stepped closer, the better to hear.

“Well now, I couldn’t say,” replied the cowboy, pulling a dented Army canteen off his belt. “I’ve wondered on it myself. Might be for them green trees, a



Recording artist Jeff Houlton, 40 years a guitarist and a campfire tradition, entertains on Wednesday and Saturday evenings at the Ranch at Emerald Valley in Pike National Forest near Colorado Springs, Colo.

hideaway-like, where a person can git away and think.

“They used to call it Camp Vigil, after that mountain there. Real special for old Mr. Penrose, Spencer Penrose he was, the man who built the first lodge up there on Cheyenne Mountain. Back in the 1920s, that was.”

The cowboy paused for another long swallow.

“The way they tell it,” he said, “he’d git down here with his friends, sittin’ up late, telling stories about mountain climbing and all. That’s a purty fine log cabin he had, the one they still

got. It’s renovated now, with a real bar, all chinked up, nice and tight. You’ll see. No rain gittin’ in there.

“All kind of trees shades them log cabins, and your creek has a waterfall and lakes stocked regular with trout. The cabin on the hill is a palace, big enough for weddings and such. The cook’s in the kitchen most days, handy with the fixin’s. I stop in now and then and he makes me a plate.”

When the cowboy took another swallow, I spoke up.

“Is Spencer Penrose the one who built the zoo at the bottom of the mountain,

and every time there was a parade he rode the elephant through town?”

“Yes, ma’am,” said the cowboy. “He bought the land for them animals. It’s what happens to folks from the East when they git to this here West. The land took old Penrose and it’s took the new owner, too. The rocks, the hills and your meadows, they call you to put down roots.

“You buy an acre, build a cabin, git some chickens and you think you’re done. Then the place next door gits a sale sign so you buy it, git a rail fence and a cow and call

THE NITTY GRITTY

A half-dozen hiking trails and climbs start at the ranch and explore the surrounding Pike National Forest. For guests combining a visit to Cloud Camp and to the Ranch at Emerald Valley, the 5.3-mile hike from the top of Cheyenne Mountain down to the ranch is a favorite.

FOR INFORMATION: Learn more about the Ranch at Emerald Valley; about Cloud Camp, the lodge atop Cheyenne Mountain; and about the parent property, the Broadmoor Hotel, in Colorado Springs, Colo., at www.broadmoor.com. Rates vary depending on the season and weather.

INCLUDED IN DAILY RATES:

Transportation between the Ranch at Emerald Valley and the Broadmoor Hotel, a 9-mile drive. On-site activities and equipment, trail hikes, nature walks, fishing gear, horseback rides, all meals, snacks, beverages, wine, beer and bar drinks. Because the Old Stage Riding Stable is a concession, long horseback rides, such as the popular cattle drives, are priced separately.

GETTING THERE: Fly into Denver, then drive or fly to Colorado Springs.

it a ranch. Then that homestead down by the creek, well, you need water in these parts, so you buy it, too. That’s history, hereabouts.”

With that, the old cowboy tipped his hat, nodded to both of us, clucked to the horse and they disappeared down the road.

“Guess I’ll see it for myself,” said the driver, adjusting his sunglasses

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Notification service informs island residents about Hawaiian volcanoes

Hawaii residents are likely familiar with the Volcano Activity Updates that the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory issues for Kilauea and other active Hawaiian volcanoes. These updates, which provide situational awareness of volcanic activity and hazards, were formally established in 2006.

In addition to daily, weekly or monthly updates, other types of notifications provided through this service include Volcanic Activity Notices (VANs), Status Reports, Volcano Observatory Notices for Aviation (VONAs) and Information Statements.

Before and during the 2018 lower East Rift Zone eruption and summit collapse events, HVO used these notification types to alert the public to changing activity at Kilauea.

Today, we will explain VANs and VONAs. This is timely because just this week, HVO issued a VAN and VONA to communicate a change in status for Mauna Loa Volcano.

Like updates, VANs and VONAs include the name and location of the volcano and a description of the activity and associated hazards. Each notification lists the Volcano Alert Level, which informs people on the ground about the volcano's status, and the Aviation Color Code, which informs the aviation sector about airborne ash hazards.

VANs are released when there is a significant change in volcanic activity. In the lead up to the 2018 LERZ eruption, HVO released four VANs alerting people to changes at Kilauea and the potential consequences of those changes. On April 17, 2018, a VAN conveyed that Pu'u 'O'o was becoming increasingly pressurized, and hypothesized that a new eruption site might form on or near the Pu'u 'O'o cone as a result.

A VAN was then issued April 24 to let people know that Kilauea's summit lava lake in Halema'uma'u was high, and occasionally overflowing, increasing the risk for rockfalls and explosions. In it, HVO extrapolated that if a new vent occurred on or near Pu'u 'O'o, the summit lava lake level would likely drop.

After Pu'u 'O'o collapsed April 30, 2018, because of the withdrawal of locally-stored magma, HVO released another VAN on May 1. This notice stated that the collapse, along with earthquakes and deformation propagating down Kilauea's East Rift Zone, indicated that an outbreak of lava farther downrift was possible.

When lava was observed

Volcano Watch

erupting in the Leilani Estates subdivision May 3, HVO issued a VAN heralding the start of the 2018 LERZ eruption. This VAN changed the Volcano Alert Level for Kilauea from Watch (escalating unrest or eruption underway with limited hazards) to Warning (hazardous eruption underway).

With the LERZ eruption fully underway, another VAN was issued May 9, 2018, confirming HVO's April 24 forecast that the release of pressure at Pu'u 'O'o would lead to a drop in Kilauea's summit lava lake. This VAN emphasized that explosive hazards were possible, including ash-fall downwind of the summit.

VONAs are issued when aviation hazards are associated with changes in volcanic activity. They inform pilots, air traffic controllers and meteorologists about ash emissions associated with explosive eruptions, including information about height and behavior of the volcanic ash cloud.

At Kilauea's summit, low-level ash emissions were nearly continuous after the lava lake dropped out of view May 10, 2018, but posed no hazard to aviation. However, on the morning of May 15, ash emissions increased noticeably. In response, HVO issued a VONA — the first ever for Kilauea — notifying the aviation industry that a 3,000- to 3,600-m (10,000- to 12,000-ft) plume was transporting ash and vog in a southwest direction.

This VONA was accompanied by a VAN changing Kilauea Volcano's Aviation Color Code from Orange, denoting an eruption with little to no ash emissions, to Red, signifying that an eruption was underway with significant volcanic ash emissions.

HVO released several more VANs and VONAs in 2018 as dynamic activity continued at Kilauea's summit and LERZ. On Oct. 5, 2018, the Aviation Color Code returned to Yellow and the Volcano Alert Level was downgraded to Advisory, both indicating that volcanic activity decreased significantly.

On March 26, 2019, with the ongoing eruptive lull on Kilauea, HVO lowered the Volcano Alert Level to Normal and the Aviation Color Code to Green. However, HVO continues to closely monitor volcanic activity and releases

Ground-based Volcano Alert Levels

Normal

Advisory

Watch

Warning



Aviation Color Codes

Green

Yellow

Orange

Red

Increasing level of concern →

△ Unassigned (insufficient monitoring to make assessment)

The USGS Alert-Notification System for Volcanic Activity includes Volcano Alert Levels, which rank a volcano's status for people on the ground, and Aviation Color Codes, which rank airborne ash hazards for the aviation sector. This four-tiered system ranges from Normal/Green to Warning/Red to indicate increasing level of concern. To learn more, visit https://volcanoes.usgs.gov/vhp/about_alerts.html.

weekly updates for Kilauea (and now Mauna Loa) and monthly updates for the other active Hawaiian volcanoes.

The USGS Volcano Notification Service is a free service that sends notification emails about volcanic activity at US monitored volcanoes, including Hawaiian volcanoes. HVO encourages all Hawaii residents to sign up at <https://volcanoes.usgs.gov/vns2/> to receive these automatic notices.

Volcano Activity Updates

The USGS Volcano Alert level for Mauna Loa was changed July 2 to Advisory. For definitions of USGS Volcano Alert Levels, see https://volcanoes.usgs.gov/vhp/about_alerts.html.

For the past several months, earthquake and ground deformation rates at Mauna Loa Volcano have exceeded long-term background levels. An eruption is not imminent and current rates are not cause for alarm. However, they do indicate changes in the shallow magma storage system at Mauna Loa.

Following a significant earthquake swarm in October 2018, HVO seismic stations have recorded an average of at least 50 shallow, small-magnitude earthquakes per week beneath Mauna Loa's summit, upper Southwest Rift Zone and upper west flank. This compares to a rate of fewer than 20 per week in the first half of 2018.

Shallow earthquakes are occurring in locations similar to those that preceded Mauna Loa's most recent eruptions in 1975 and 1984.

During this same time

period, GPS instrumentation and satellite radar have measured ground deformation consistent with renewed recharge of the volcano's shallow magma storage system. The current rate and pattern of ground deformation is similar to that measured during inflation of Mauna Loa in 2005 and again from 2014-18.

Together, these observations indicate the volcano is no longer at a background level of activity. Accordingly, HVO elevated the Mauna Loa alert level to Advisory and the aviation color code to Yellow. This increase in alert level does not mean that an eruption is imminent nor that progression to an eruption is certain. A similar increase in activity occurred between 2014 and 2018 and no eruption occurred.

Kilauea Volcano is not erupting and its USGS Volcano Alert level remains at Normal.

Rates of deformation, gas release and seismicity on Kilauea have not changed significantly during the past week. Rates of seismicity across the volcano remain low.

Real-time sulfur dioxide emission rates are low at the summit and below detection limits at Pu'u 'O'o and the lower east rift zone when last measured June 19 and June 13, respectively.

Since early March, GPS stations and tiltmeters at the Kilauea summit have recorded deformation consistent with slow magma accumulation within the shallow portion of the Kilauea summit magma system (1-2 km or approximately 1 mile below ground level). However, gas measurements have yet to indicate significant shallowing

of magma. HVO continues to carefully monitor all data streams at the Kilauea summit for important changes.

Further east, GPS stations and tiltmeters continue to show motions consistent with slow refilling of the deep East Rift Zone magmatic reservoir in the broad region between Pu'u 'O'o and Highway 130.

Hazards remain at the lower ERZ and summit of Kilauea. Residents and visitors near the 2018 fissures, lava flows and summit collapse area should heed Hawaii County Civil Defense and Hawaii Volcanoes National Park closures and warnings. Civil Defense advises that lava flows from the 2018 eruption are primarily on private property; people are asked to be respectful and to not enter or park on private property.

There were two events with three or more felt reports in the Hawaiian Islands during the past week: a magnitude-3.7 earthquake 14 km (9 mi) south of Volcano at 8 km (5 mi) depth occurred at 9:37 p.m. July 1, and a magnitude-2.6 earthquake 14 km (9 mi) southeast of Volcano at 6 km (4 mi) depth occurred at 2:43 p.m. June 30.

HVO continues to closely monitor Kilauea and Mauna Loa for any signs of increased activity.

Visit HVO's website (<https://volcanoes.usgs.gov/hvo>) for past Volcano Watch articles, Kilauea and Mauna Loa updates, volcano photos, maps, recent earthquake info, and more. Call 808-967-8862 for Kilauea and Mauna Loa updates. Email questions to askHVO@usgs.gov.

Volcano Watch (https://volcanoes.usgs.gov/hvo/volcano_watch.html) is a weekly article and activity update written by the U.S. Geological Survey Hawaiian Volcano Observatory scientists and affiliates.

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and revving the engine. "Can I give you a ride?"

"No thanks, I'll walk," I said. "The ranch is pretty close now, down around the corner."

Alone again, I got to thinking. That cowboy was right.

Gossip is just another word for history, especially in ranch country. In the late 1890s, the dirt track here was known as Gold Road. I'd seen the mine tailings myself, a heap of yellow dirt pushed up past the trail, where our horseback ride turned toward the corral. And for all that, they never did find gold.

After the last gold strike petered out, arrivals included a settler, a Girl Scout Camp and finally Spencer Penrose, who leased the 16-acre parcel from the Pike National Forest for his newly created social club, the Pikes Peak Camping and Mountain Trails Association. The

club didn't last, but the cabin survived the years, including an interval as a dude ranch, in the 1970s.

After the Broadmoor Hotel changed hands, in 2011, the new owner, Philip Anschutz, bought the property, eventually restoring and enlarging the lodge and building guest cabins, hoping to re-create the ranch and its era, along with an authentic touch of wilderness.

When the work was finished, it was so accurate that I couldn't tell the old walls from the new ones, or the antiques from the reproductions. The interior furnishings, custom made, not only echoed the era but added a decided touch of luxury. The 10 guest cabins — sized for two, four or eight guests — had their own chinked logs and period decor; all outfitted, of course, with modern amenities.

As for the so-called

"palace," that's where I stayed. By the time I tried to make a reservation, every cabin was booked, except that one up the hill. Climbing uphill on a winding stone path, I thought I was banished to the barn.

Then I saw the flagstone patio — large enough for a 50-guest reception — and opened the front door. The living room, furnished with hand-tooled leather chairs, luxurious sofas and a man-sized fireplace, begged me to sit down; the walls, hung with Western and Native American art, insisted I take a closer look.

The kitchen, large-partry sized, included a long center island, surrounded by walls covered with cupboards, and counters with three sinks and the latest appliances. With bedrooms upstairs and down (and bathrooms for each), there

was room for eight.

After that, no day was like another. You could sleep late, or eat breakfast early, then climb the ridge to see the views. Five or six other trails climbed peaks or crossed through the forest, or you could ride horseback. A hot lunch and farm-fresh salad or sandwich was followed by a game of Scrabble, a walk around the perimeter or a nap in the hammock.

Come 4 p.m., I fetched the fly rod and headed for the lake, where the rainbow and brown trout were breaking the surface. Used the wrong fly and came away empty.

Cocktail hour followed, improved by the chef's hors d'oeuvres. Dinner time lasted as long as you could eat or talk, in the dining room or stargazing around the campfire.

Wednesday and Saturday evening

campfires, when recording artist and cowboy singer Jeff Houlton entertained, were the biggest surprise of all. Corny, you're thinking? Maybe, but don't laugh yet.

I was watching the fire toss up sparks and sipping a smooth cabernet, expecting to hear the usual background thrumming, elevator music, usually, when Houlton tuned the strings and tore into the "Orange Blossom Special," astonishing everyone with his lightning-fast picking and perfect rhythm. Not only did he wow us with some of the smartest flat picking ever — and faultless two and three-finger work — but he sang each song differently, turning the most ordinary lyrics into a drama with an ending.

As the guests called out requests, he called on the vast repertoire he hides under that cowboy hat and performed

as asked. Country and western, pop, bluegrass, Pete Seeger, Elton John, the Grateful Dead — he knew them all.

Listening, I couldn't help wondering why it felt so familiar.

Then I remembered.

The evening reminded me of Stead's Ranch, founded in 1904 and long gone now, a historic guest ranch and lodge tucked among the pines, beneath snowy peaks, in Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park.

For many a golden summer, a worldwide procession of guests came through Stead's, all sitting around the campfire together, sharing the West's special brand of hospitality.

Which is just how it felt that night at the Ranch at Emerald Valley, at the end of the track they once called the Gold Road.

I think they've hit pay dirt after all.