

We are a working ranch on 55 acres in a remote setting more than 15 miles from town or bus. We are not within walking distance of town or bus transportation. However, someone generally drives to town at least once a day. You can catch a ride with them to a bus stop or sometimes you are able to use a ranch vehicle if you pay for your own gas. The road to and from the ranch is a beautiful but narrow country road. A few people bike on the road, but we ourselves do not consider it to be a good road to ride a bike. It is very steep so is quite a work out for biking. Cell phones do not work on the ranch so guests must go into town to use their cell phones and/or purchase a phone card so they can make long distance call from the land line phone at the ranch.

Most of our out of area resident volunteers who are out of the area fly into San Francisco Airport and take the airport shuttle to Santa Rosa where we meet them to take them to our ranch.

We are mostly a working ranch with ducks, rabbits, chickens, cats, dogs, horses and goats. Obviously, guests who come to stay with us should not have any allergies or sensitivities to any animals. We have one dog and one cat that live in the kitchen.

The ranch is permanently occupied by my husband and I who are in our later 50's. Youth from the ages of 5 years old through 18 who come after school and weekends to help (especially with the horses). We have up to 5 resident volunteers (Wwoofers, HelpX, etc) at a time as well as 2 other people who live in a separate cottage on the ranch who help out full-time. Generally, there are people around the ranch. However, much of the work is independent of others. Some may, at times, feel isolated such as when you are out on the ranch working alone or feeding. Other times, the ranch comes alive with guests, volunteers, staff and youth. There is a wide variety of work to be done so it is rare that we get complaints about the lack of diversity. Most resident volunteers enjoy the opportunity to learn to work with animals and livestock.

Our guests stay in a (caravan) trailer, bunk house, individual bedrooms in the main farm house or basement flat. Most have a private or semi private accommodation.

Parents with older (10years plus) children may be considered by arrangement

The property is in a dense forest of Doug fir trees on uneven terrain. The weather is cold and wet December through February, warmer and less rain March thru May; hot during the months of June through September and mild to cool in October and November.

We run a nonprofit organization teaching life skills to youth through their on-going service work helping homeless animals and learning environmental appreciation. You can read more about our program at www.mcdonaldranch.org. Please understand that we run a viable, demanding business. As such, we must be professional, organized and we must perform the service people are paying for i.e. care of homeless animals and safe, fun for children. Schedules of times and lists of tasks are given to resident volunteers and must be adhered to. Work must be done well, thoroughly and efficiently. Many of the tasks are performed by one person so it is best that you are a person who can work alone. My own work is very, very long hours at the computer and phone doing administration, accounting, program planning, reports, etc. We are very dedicated to children and animals. All money that comes into our organization goes to expenses in running the ranch. No one has a paid position including ourselves. My husband works at a hospital as an x-ray tech earning the money needed for our personal needs. Everyone must be extremely frugal so that expenses do not go over the income we bring in to cover them. That means utilities are used carefully (lights off when one leaves the room, clothes are hung on clothes lines rather than use the dryer if possible, heating

and cooling of home is maintained at 68 degrees, trips to and from town are minimized so gas is not wasted needlessly, doors and windows are closed in the winter/open in the summer, etc).

Horse back riding is offered to resident volunteers who have experience and lessons may be arranged. There is a pond with small paddle boat and a swimming pool usable during summer months. The main farm house has a pool table and there are several hiking trails on the property or near by. Our ranch is in one of the most scenic spots in our country in the midst of wine country and 1 ½ hr drive to San Francisco or 1 hour to the ocean coast.

Our main focus is working and teaching animal husbandry and working with livestock. However, we do not slaughter or consume (eat) animals raised on this ranch.

Most resident volunteers assist with caring for the animals especially the horses. However, other areas of need for help are with carpentry, landscaping, gardening, maintenance, cleaning, cooking, errands, administration, gathering, cutting and splitting wood for winter, assistance with youth who come to the ranch, fencing, electrical, plumbing. We are open to consider any other skills or experience resident volunteers may have to offer.

Most of the time meals are self catered. We give \$30.00 per week to each resident volunteer to buy their own groceries. We also provide basic condiments such as spices, sugar, flour, catsup, mayonnaise, mustard, oils, and eggs; basically, anything that you would not use up in the time you are here.

All resident volunteers put in a 5 to 6 hour day on the ranch with an additional hour of community help (cooking, cleaning, landscaping, shopping, etc) 5 days a week. Our work day is divided into shifts between 7am and 7pm. Two days per week are off time for each resident volunteer.

During the summer months of May through August, we give priority to resident volunteers who are able to do a 4 week minimum stay. Throughout the rest of the year a two night minimum stay can sometime be offered but we prefer at least two week stays; no maximum stay requirement. Help is always needed year around.

Smoking, drugs or drinking is not allowed anywhere on the ranch and all those who are on the ranch must be mature, respectful people able to provide excellent role models to the youth that come to the ranch.

Dogs may be allowed with prior agreement and arrangement but must be current on all vaccinations as well as spayed or neutered.

Language spoken: English, some Spanish

Misc information: As of October, 2008, we have had 16 resident volunteers come to stay with us. We have enjoyed their visits and gained from their help on our ranch. For the most part, we have had good experiences and hope the resident volunteers who have come will return next time they are traveling again. There have been five resident volunteers that did not work out as well as the others. One was young and seemed to be need a quick, sudden place to live more than being in the spirit of a "willing worker" joining in with a community of shared farming. She seemed to stir up a fair amount of negative, discomfort during her short stay. The other seemed to have a great deal of personal issues (two on drugs) encumbering their ability to comprehend, learn and remember how to do work

assignments. Finally, another resident volunteer that didn't work out was a gal who came to this ranch to overcome her fears of animals but left abruptly when someone told her we had black wild pumas on our ranch. While we do not have wild pumas, we do occasionally have mountain lions and bob cats as well as an abundance of other wild life. If you aren't comfortable being around animals, this is not the place to visit.

We are entering our second year hosting site and are learning things as we go. Something that is coming to our attention rather quickly is that resident volunteers like nice accommodations but are not taking very good care of what we are providing to them. At the current rate, what started out being nice accommodations won't be very nice much longer. So, a detailed list of what is expected of resident volunteers in caring for their accommodations follows below.

We have been told by other resident volunteers that we offer nice accommodations. We certainly try to but have found that some have not been too concerned with others who follow them. Hopefully, when you arrive, your room, RV, trailer, caravan will be neat and clean from the last resident volunteer who used it. If not, unfortunately, your first task will be to clean up your area after the last person who used it and then leave it clean and tidy for the next resident volunteer who comes. We are trying to be more specific about the maintenance in hopes that future volunteers will be able to enjoy their rooms/RV's as well.

So, on a weekly basis, you will be asked to do the following:

Bedrooms in the ranch home:

- Dust furniture and vacuum carpet
- Empty waste basket
- Food, drinks and dishes are not allowed in bedroom areas

Private or semi private bathrooms:

- Clean toilet bowl and sink with cleanser
- Polish counter top and faucet fixture with Windex
- Sweep floor
- Scrub down the shower with Tile – X or Shower Power
- Dust window sills, etc

Main Bathroom:

You are expected to use Tile – X on the shower walls and the tub EACH TIME you shower for health and sanitary reasons for all those who use the shower.

Please let us know of any questions you may have that have not been covered in this synopsis. If you decide to do a stay with us, please print and return the attached application to confirm your reservation. We look forward to meeting you and having you as a resident volunteer on our ranch.

Linda, Richard, kids and critters at McDonald Ranch