Project Partners: Cornerstones Community Partnerships of Santa Fe, New Mexico and the Bureau of Land Management.

History:

The JO Ranch was in operation from 1885 through the early 20th century. Following the Winter Kill of 1886-1887 that devastated cattle operations, ranchers in Wyoming began farming sheep instead. By 1909, the state counted more than 6 million sheep on its ranches, with much of the sheep farming concentrated near the rail lines that provided access to distant markets. The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has an excellent timeline showing the history of Wyoming homesteading, ranching, and farming from 1860-1960. There is also a wonderfully detailed history available of the JO Ranch.

Deep in Carbon County, one of Wyoming’s five original counties, the ranch is about 45 minutes from the nearest town of Baggs, WY and is “off the grid.” There are several buildings onsite; volunteers and field staff worked on the log ranch house, a wood bunkhouse, a stone bunkhouse, and a stone commissary.

The JO Ranch Rural Historic Landscape was highlighted on the National Register of Historic Places in 2010. The site shares that the ranch is “…a rare and well-preserved example of a late 19th-early 20th century western sheep ranching operation in southwestern Carbon County, Wyoming...The JO Ranch also represents traditional Spanish sheep management practices that developed in southern Wyoming rather than the English system employed in the Atlantic colonies. The site consists of a ranch complex of buildings, structures, sites, and objects constructed of locally procured materials in a simple vernacular style and the associated landscape features include a corral system with livestock chutes, irrigation ditches, abandoned farm equipment and barbed wire fences.”

Scope of Work: This June, HistoriCorps collaborated again with Cornerstones Community Partnerships, in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management, to engage volunteers to rehabilitate and preserve four buildings at JO Ranch. Volunteers worked with field staff to learn how to:

- Repair the roof, including installing shake shingles and corrugated metal roofing
- Install rehabilitated windows and doors after removing temporary plywood coverings
- Repair and repoint portions of stone walls
- Repair wood flooring
- Rebuild a wooden porch floor and stoop
- Repair animal holes

**Where:** The remote JO Ranch is approximately 24 miles north of Baggs, WY (map).
GPS Coordinates: 41°21'09.9″N+107°35'59.2″W