

Title: Continuing the Legacy: Ensuring the Future of the Bee Family Centennial Farm Museum

Faculty Mentor: Adam Thomas (Public Lands History Center, Department of History, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO; Adam.Thomas@colostate.edu)

Other Mentors: Amber Webb (Family Consumer Science Agent, Larimer County Extension, Fort Collins, CO; webbam@co.larimer.co.us)

Location: This project will take place in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Goals, Scope, and Objectives: The overall goal of this internship is to provide the student with opportunities to develop skills in public history, public communication, and organizational management by creating a real-world museum management and administrative policy document. To meet this goal, the scope of work includes (1) researching museum management procedures and policies at peer institutions; (2) learning and interpreting the significance of the Bee Farm Centennial Farm Museum in the larger context of Colorado's agricultural history; (3) shadowing museum staff to understand and evaluate daily practices; and (4) authoring a site management plan based on the findings from the previous three scope elements. This internship fulfills an important objective of fostering relationships among CSU Extension, CSU Public Lands History Center, CSU History Department, and the Bee Farm Museum. It also fulfills the objective of helping plan the long-term preservation and operation of an important site in Colorado's agricultural history and the invaluable artifacts and records it contains. The intern will be working with Bee Farm staff and directors.

Background: The Bee Farm Museum maintains and interprets perhaps the most complete record of a single family's efforts to homestead and farm the high plains of northern Colorado. The agricultural history museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that preserves the Bee Farm National Register Historic District, located about nine miles northeast of downtown Fort Collins. Since the museum opened to the public in 2002, a very small group of Bee family members have dedicated themselves, without compensation, to cataloging and preserving thousands of artifacts and documents; constructing exhibits; maintaining historic structures; raising crops and livestock historically associated with the farm; and leading hundreds of public tours and educational programs. However, these family members are getting older; thus they are increasingly interested in securing the future operation of the museum beyond the Bee family. A critical step in this process is developing a site management plan, which will allow museum professionals outside the immediate family to continue to maintain and operate the farm museum, preserving the site and its extensive collection for future generations.

Outcomes: By the end of the internship, the intern will develop important skills necessary to: (1) research and analyze historic farm museum operations and (2) create a usable site management plan.

Mentor Backgrounds: Dr. Adam Thomas is a practicing public historian who serves as the undergraduate internship coordinator for the CSU History Department and is vice president of the Bee Farm Board of Directors. Amber Webb is the Family Consumer Science Agent for Larimer County Extension. She has worked on historical farm operations in Pennsylvania and via Extension in Weld County, integrated with an ag tourism component and public education.

Travel Funds: As this internship is located within Larimer County, no travel funds are necessary.