

# Permit for wedding venue sought

Tom Ross  
STEAMBOAT TODAY

## STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

Plans for a new wedding and special event venue on a ranch just off Elk River Road, known as La Joya Dulce, are scheduled to go before the Routt County Planning Commission on Oct. 6, and according to a local wedding planner, there is plenty of demand in the destination wedding industry here.

"We've just gone through the roof with weddings," Lindsey Grannis, of One Fine Day, said Wednesday. "And that's been our biggest thing, we don't have a lot of venues."

The La Joya Dulce (pronounced La Hoya Doolchay) property represents roughly a third of what was previously known as Triple Diamond Ranch on Elk River Road/Routt County Road 129. The entrance to the ranch is off C.R. 129 a couple of miles beyond Mad Creek Village. The entrance gate to the property frames a view of Elk Mountain.

The permit applicants are Wayne Stewart Jacobsen and his wife, Kathie Dunn, of Orange County, California. Dunn said Friday they spend about 25 percent of the year on the property and plan to live there full time in retirement.

Dunn said she and her husband love sharing the beauty of the ranch and the Elk River Valley with visitors, and when it came to naming their property, they wanted to honor its history as a part of Three Diamond Ranch, or by extension one of three jewels.

"My husband, who is very romantic, said 'You are my sweet jewel,'" which led the couple to come up with a Spanish translation for The Sweet Jewel — "La Joya Dulce," Dunn said.

"We plan to grow this business slowly to ensure that we have an incredible facility with

"We plan to grow this business slowly to ensure that we have an incredible facility with little or no impact to traffic, view corridors, noise levels, environmental impacts or the agricultural/ranching/rural nature of the Elk River Valley."

Kathie Dunn  
Ranch owner, permit applicant

little or no impact to traffic, view corridors, noise levels, environmental impacts or the agricultural/ranching/rural nature of the Elk River Valley," Dunn wrote in the narrative submitted to the planning department.

On Friday, she said a ranch manager helps them to produce grass-fed beef on their acreage, which is served at Mambo Italiano in Steamboat Springs.

"I'm active in fixing fences on the ranch, and I use my horse to move cattle," Dunn said.

Jacobsen and Dunn are asking the county to begin with hosting as many as eight events during 2017 and as many as 20 events in 2018 and each year thereafter. They said their intent is to run a "venue-only" business, leaving catering, transportation and other wedding services to other providers.

Steamboat's popularity as a wedding destination has grown significantly, according to Grannis, with an 18 to 20 percent increase in the last cou-

ple years. But she adds that the number of brides, who either live here or grew up here, is also on the rise. The cost of a catered wedding at a local venue has also jumped.

Grannis, who has been in the business here for 15 years, said she can recall when a wedding here could cost as little as \$15,000. Not any more.

"The cost has totally grown," Grannis said. "The minimum budget for a Steamboat wedding is \$50,000. I've done weddings that cost \$120,000."

The owners of La Joya Dulce said they would provide two different event venues on the property to allow wedding and parties to be scaled to the size of the event. For large weddings, they have a 60-foot-by-40-foot barn for catering and an insulated 90-foot-by-140-foot steel building that could host events in all seasons.

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# Lost man found on Buffalo Pass trail

Matt Stensland  
STEAMBOAT TODAY

## STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

The Routt County Sheriff's Office and Search and Rescue volunteers successfully found a lost hunter Thursday.

The hunter was reported missing after not returning from hunting Wednesday on Buffalo Pass.

On Thursday, the man's wife located the 65-year-old's car on Buffalo Pass. He had been hunting grouse by himself with two dogs.

Rescuers heard the man yelling for help near Dry Lake. Rescuers were able to walk the hunter out. He had gotten lost and was not injured.

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