

WHETSTONE

BOYS RANCH AND THERAPEUTIC BOARDING SCHOOL



**"SHARPENING THE CHARACTER
OF YOUNG MEN."**



"WHETSTONE"

A stone used for sharpening the blades of knives or other cutting tools

"AS IRON SHARPENS IRON, SO ONE MAN SHARPENS ANOTHER."

Raise your hand if you know at least one family with a teenage boy whose behavior is leading him down a one-way path to destruction.

Keep your hand raised if this family has no idea if the bundle of joy they brought home from the hospital will even survive the weekend. Keep it there if his parents can't sleep at night, if their marriage is on the rocks, and if his siblings are suffering also.

Now raise your hand if you know what to say to this family, and if you can steer them in the right direction to get back on track.

At this point, I'm guessing your hand is no longer in the air. If you are like most people, you can only sympathize and tell them that you will pray for them.



IF SO, **WHETSTONE** IS AN ANSWER TO THAT PRAYER.

Obsessions with **adrenaline, sex, alcohol, pornography, anger, drugs, and video games** have become commonplace in our society. So common, in fact, that many people mistakenly view them as a normal part of growing up. But while it is normal for a boy to desire freedom and the risks associated with it, he is no longer receiving the training necessary to use it wisely.

As a result, **many young men fall into the deadly traps** of the devil who loves to get his hooks in early and deep. But how can families get through to boys so distracted by screens that they won't stop to go to bathroom, so preoccupied with weed that they won't go to school, and so driven by lust that they can think of nothing else. Whetstone's answer is contained within its mission to **"sharpen the character of young men."**

CHRIS SHAIN | WBR Dad

"Few people can understand the chaos and hurt going through your family when making a decision that your young son can't and shouldn't live at home with you."

STEFANIE POPA | WBR Mom

"Our home had become a battleground. We watched helplessly as our tender hearted, engaging son turned cold and apathetic. Everything was a fight."

At one time, work and adventure were woven into the fabric of a boy's daily life. From the time he woke up at sunrise until he went to bed at sunset, his day was filled with opportunities to test himself, along with the training and mentoring that went along with learning how to use the tools necessary to survive in this world.

Now, too often, he is given an escape from discomfort and an excuse for failure.

Whetstone Boys Ranch and Therapeutic Boarding School exists to stop this trend and to fill this gap. It exists because our communities, our churches, our schools, and our families need it now, more than ever.

Think about a knife and a whetstone. A good knife is often given to a boy on the cusp of manhood as a rite of passage. It is a sign that

he has reached the age of accountability and that he can be trusted with a tool capable of accomplishing great good or causing great harm. He is henceforth expected to keep this knife sharp, ready for the occasion to arise when it will be needed, always using it with the greatest of caution and respect.

Unfortunately, many young men bristle at any criticism. Whether it results from trauma or neglect, their edge has become dull and useless. Since 2011, Whetstone has been helping families apply the right amount of pressure to sharpen their son's mind and shape his heart. With your help our program, outlined in the pages to follow, can change the future. In doing so, as most of our parents attest, you are literally saving lives.





ETHAN LEIKER | WBR Graduate

"Without Whetstone in my life, I would be a mess. Whetstone taught me many ways to control emotions and actions. I have become a better worker and person because of Whetstone Boys Ranch. The staff are always there for you, and will do anything to help you thrive physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Whetstone is truly a life changing experience."

TESTIMONIAL



EVEN THE WIND

AXEL LIIMATTA

Storms they've seen before, it isn't that,
and squalls are not uncommon.
So when the winds and waves come up,
none fear the murky bottom.

They know how ropes and sails should work
to battle nasty weather
and fight the driving rain and dark,
with knowing hands, together.

But still they sink in spite of skill,
cry out at last resort,
seek Yeshua, asleep below—
await His famed retort:

"O ye of little faith!" he speaks
rebuke to last an age,
then turning towards the gale,
"Be still!" He calms the rage.

Be still ambition, knowledge, pride,
all that beneath doth lurk;
and turn to him who calms the seas—
the wind will do his work!

"Here we raise our Ebenezer. Hither by thy help
we've come." Even a tornado, like the one that
struck Whetstone on April 3, 2015, has worked to
sharpen the ranch and all who live and work here.
Each year, we dedicate a week to remembering
and rebuilding. It's what we do on so many levels.





EBENEZER

EST. 2015



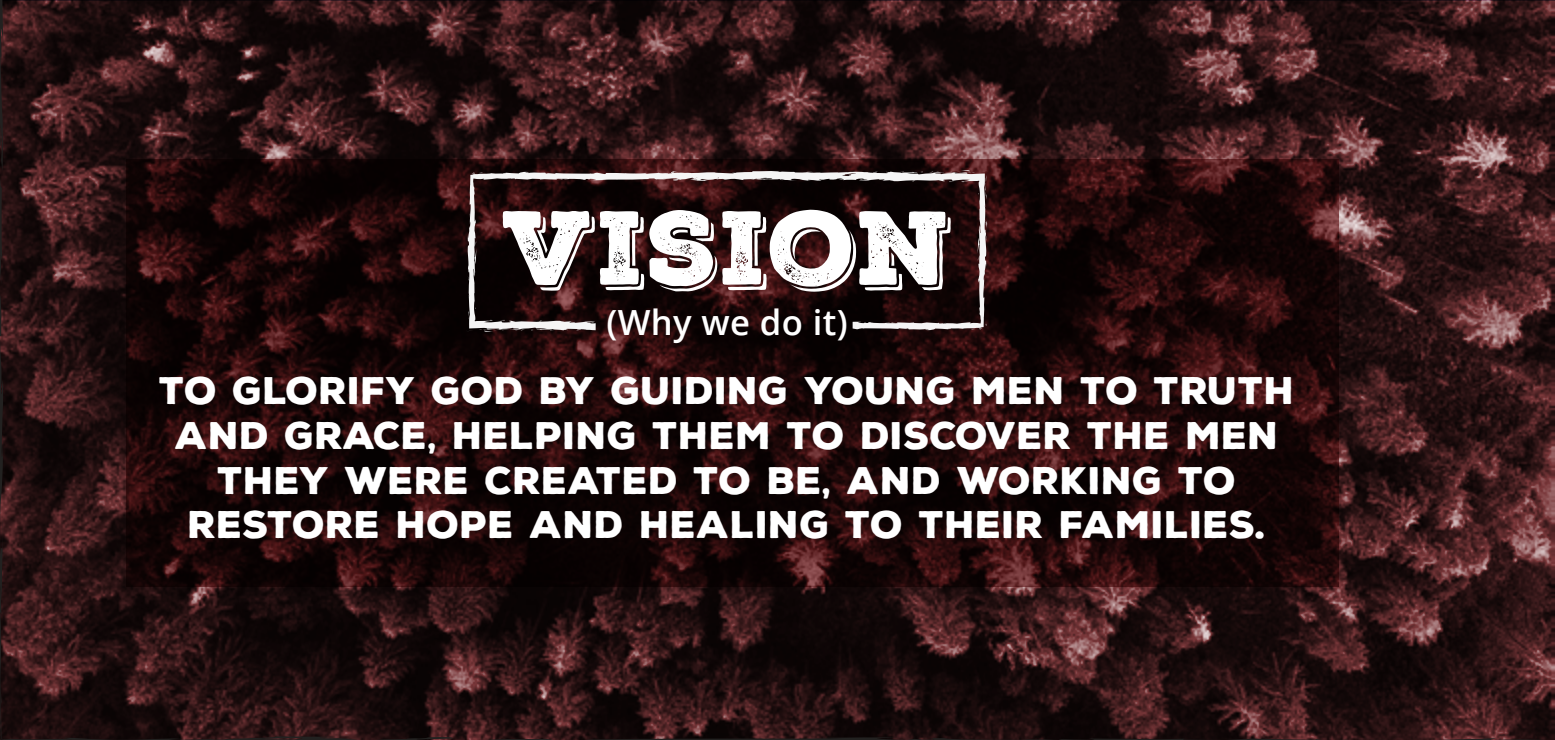
Here at Whetstone, we believe it's important to know what we do, and why we do it. We've spent many, many hours sitting around conference tables, bringing others in to help us think through and put words to these, and sending countless emails back and forth. Out of these meetings, came these simple statements of truth that speak deeply to each of us and give us a foundation and direction to keep ourselves focused.



MISSION

(What we do)

SHARPEN THE CHARACTER OF YOUNG MEN



VISION

(Why we do it)

**TO GLORIFY GOD BY GUIDING YOUNG MEN TO TRUTH
AND GRACE, HELPING THEM TO DISCOVER THE MEN
THEY WERE CREATED TO BE, AND WORKING TO
RESTORE HOPE AND HEALING TO THEIR FAMILIES.**

CORE VALUES

(How we do it)

➤ BIBLICAL TRUTH

We take the Proverbial concept of “iron sharpening iron” to its limit, using every opportunity to hone the virtues of Honesty, Self-Control, Kindness, Loyalty, Responsibility, and Perseverance – all of which are necessary for a successful and fulfilling life after Whetstone.

➤ LOVE OF CREATION

Countless lessons about truth and beauty can be gleaned by observing nature, overcoming the challenges posed by the outdoors, and being pushed outside our comfort zones. Whetstone is intentional about providing ample opportunity for boys to experience the Creator of a classroom without walls.

➤ AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Whetstone staff models the life of Christ through authentic relationships within a loving and supportive environment that has clear boundaries and expectations. Living, learning, and working alongside the boys, we provide consistent mentoring and accountability.

➤ EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Whetstone’s licensed counselors shape the future of families by offering weekly individual and group therapy along with multiple family intensives. These sessions provide personalized training in family dynamics, languages of relationship, parenting styles, communication, and trauma response.

➤ INTELLECTUAL GROWTH

Whetstone provides an individualized program of mastery-based learning in a supportive environment designed to sharpen the mind and shape the heart. We do so by equipping boys with skills to be life-long learners who recognize the benefits of academic rigor, personal responsibility, and the power of imagination.

➤ JOY OF WORK

Whetstone helps boys discover joy in meaningful labor through its focus on teamwork, responsibility, and safety. In doing so, boys will look better, act better, and live better.

COUNSELING & FAMILY THERAPY



Whetstone's licensed counselors shape the future of families by providing weekly phone calls, two-day family intensives, group therapy, and supervised home visits. These models provide consistent training in family dynamics, languages of relationship, parenting styles, communication, and trauma response. They also guide our staff in responding to behaviors on the behavioral, cognitive and emotional levels, each of which is necessary for a successful transition into the home environment after graduation.



STEFANIE POPA | WBR Mom

"Whetstone was everything we couldn't give our son. He deserved to be in an environment where his temptations didn't exist. He needed to be in a place where he had opportunities to explore new interests, challenge himself, and find a purpose."

TESTIMONIAL

ADVENTURE & OUTDOORS



Nature is God's classroom. Countless life lessons are shaped within us by simply sitting still long enough to observe the forever constant and constantly changing properties of wind, sky, earth, and water. Our 285 acre ranch, nestled in the Ozark Mountain Region, provides awesome and ample opportunity for boys to interact with the Creator of a classroom without walls. In addition, each boy participates in at least one "Adventure Week," which includes camping, fishing, swimming, hiking, canoeing, kayaking, rock climbing, rappelling, and survival training.



DYLAN HOWE | WBR Graduate

"I am ridiculously grateful for all of you. You all have helped bring the real me out from the shell I had put myself in. Whetstone wants to help. They know how to help. And they do such a good job at it if you let them."

TESTIMONIAL

CHARACTER TRAITS & SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT



Our unique 3 Level/6 Trait system is incorporated into every aspect of our program. We take the sharpening concept to its limit, using every opportunity to hone Honesty, Self Control, Kindness, Responsibility, Loyalty, and Perseverance, traits that we believe are necessary for a successful and fulfilling life after they leave Whetstone. This character training extends from chapel in the morning to bed-prep at night. Sharpening means that we “preach the gospel at all times, and use words when necessary.”



DYLAN TUCKER Mentoring Specialist

“I am extremely grateful for my time at Whetstone as it was instrumental for personal growth, leadership development, and fostering healthy relationships. Whetstone sharpened my character as I helped boys sharpen theirs. Together, we learned that nothing is as important as our relationship with Christ.”

TESTIMONIAL

ACADEMICS & TRAINING



Whetstone Academy provides a year-round, individualized program of mastery-based learning, uniquely integrated to empower students with skills to be life-long learners who recognize the benefits of intellectual curiosity and academic rigor. Small group settings are guided by certified teachers and counselors, using a team-based approach. Students frequently share their thoughts in writing and during lively discussion, sharpening critical thinking skills in the process. Whetstone's graduates either catch up, keep pace, or advance beyond their current grade level.



GINA DEGENHART WBR Mom and Board Member

"After completing the Whetstone program, our son returned home a profoundly changed young man. Praise the Lord! He is better able to relate with family members, peers, and those in authority. His spiritual growth is a testimony to the love and nurturing he received at Whetstone."

TESTIMONIAL

MENTORING & RELATIONSHIP



Sharpening occurs within a consistent and supportive environment. Our uniquely low ratio allows each staff member – from counselor to cook – to spend quality time with each boy in the schoolroom, on the work truck, around the campfire, and around the dinner table. Through relationship, boys find success where there was failure, hope where there was fear, and life where there was loss.



KEVIN WOOTEN | WBR Volunteer

"Because we believe in the ministry that happens at WBR, for the past decade we have taken a group of men 400 miles one way to WBR to help with whatever projects they put in front of us. We also support WBR financially. We want WBR to succeed in their mission. We need WBR to succeed in their mission. The Whetstone team is investing in these young boys at such a crucial moment in their lives as they decide what kind of men they are going to be."

TESTIMONIAL

AGRICULTURE & FARMING



The fastest way to move cattle is to move them slowly. The same is true of our boys. If we want to sharpen them, we must be steady and intentional. We must close space, hold space, and give space when necessary. The agriculture program at Whetstone allows us to sharpen the character of young men by working side by side with them, building their self-esteem and shaping their vision of what it means to be a man. Guiding young men to the next phase in life is a lot like loading cattle into a trailer and taking them to a new pasture. They might resist loading up, but they can't deny the benefits of green grass.



NATHANIEL ROBINSON WBR Graduate

"Before I entered the program at Whetstone I was troubled, angry, and disrespectful to my parents. I learned how to control myself in difficult situations, and go by the phrase 'it's hard, but it's good.'"

Most importantly, I got my life back."

TESTIMONIAL

RECREATION & EXERCISE



Whetstone Boys Ranch maintains a dynamic program of strength and endurance training by engagement in distance running, calisthenics, as well as team and individual sports such as basketball, football, whiffle ball, golf, ultimate frisbee, swimming, and disc-golf. Each month, our recreation coordinator leads the boys in a series of training and competitive exercises designed to help them develop skills that they can be proud of and that they will be able to transfer to their everyday lives. Beyond mere competition, athletics allow boys the opportunity to learn and practice important life-skills such as self-control, patience, endurance, fortitude, attentiveness, and commitment. We try to capitalize on these bed-rock virtues, while also having loads of good old-fashioned FUN!



JOEL MEINERS Mentoring Specialist

"My first impression when I came to work at Whetstone, was 'Wow, I've never found so many good people in one place!' I was amazed by the care and love they demonstrated. I felt like I joined a family. I got to be a big brother to the boys, while being mentored and coached by the best."

TESTIMONIAL

WEEKEND & EVENING PROGRAMMING



Whetstone was founded upon the belief that boys are built for adventure. This is simply the way they are wired. Our entire program is built around providing such forums for self-improvement. We are committed to designing an exciting program for boys that includes weekly opportunities for creative projects and skill development. During his stay, this will include woodworking, fishing, gardening, guitar, board games and puzzles, disc golf, bowling, model building, and weekly field trips to factories, mills, state parks, national forests, hiking trails, riverways, concerts, sporting events, museums, and more!



DARCIE SARUWATARI WBR Mom

"The Whetstone staff are individuals of high character. They are loving and are very good at what they do. The ranch provided a positive and supportive environment for my son to heal and grow."

TESTIMONIAL

CONSISTENCY & ROUTINE



Life requires rhythm, and Whetstone is intentional about maintaining consistency and structure. Boys have regular wake-up time, showers, chapel, meals, chores, school, recreation, exercise, free time, and bed-time or sleep. We NEVER allow boys unsupervised access to the internet, phones, television, music, movies. All exposure to these things is monitored closely and used intentionally to build character, educate, and counsel. Used properly, a schedule with clear boundaries and expectations is essential to sharpening minds and shaping hearts.



MICHAEL HOWE | WBR Dad

"My son went to Whetstone because he was out of control. Our home life situation was untenable. Through the love, patience, and wisdom of Whetstone staff, my son was basically transformed over nine months."

TESTIMONIAL

DECISIONS & CONSEQUENCES



Ultimately, a boy's success in our program comes down to his and his family's willingness to engage in the process. Whetstone cannot force any boy to change. We can and do, however, structure his life in such a way that forward movement is very attractive. From merits, to honor points, to allowance, to level advancements and more freedom, he is given a wide range of reasons to improve. If, on the other hand, he chooses to rebel, well we have clear boundaries and consequences all prepared and documented beforehand, that will guide him through that set of choices as well. We also reward effort, recovery, and "rebounds" that recognize the many baby steps necessary in recovery. We like to say that our system works, if you work our system.



JORDEN KELLER WBR Graduate, USMC

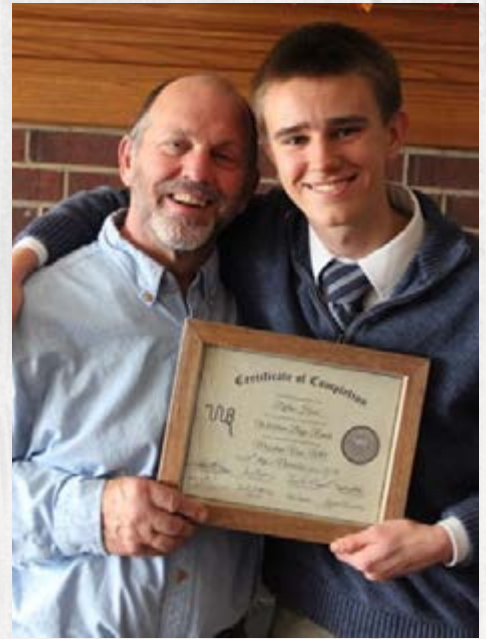
"This ranch is a miracle and so are the staff. They helped me to find my way back to God and showed me how to be a great sharp young man and without them I would never have made it where I am now. They teach you, sharpen you, and build relationships with you. This place is a miracle and it saves lives and families!"

TESTIMONIAL

SHARPENED BY

grace

by Kristen Tucker



I can still visualize where we were sitting on an orange upholstered pew, towards the middle back. In the pulpit were two young men, sharing their dream to “sharpen the character of young men.” As a family, we were in the middle of the tumultuous teen years, trying to traverse the parenting hows of raising three boys into solid young men.

The vision resonated with us. Whetstone would help struggling young boys build strong character while living on a ranch, with the ultimate goal of family restoration, both spiritually and physically. Although we were floundering ourselves, we believed that hard physical labor and the outdoors were very

therapeutic for boys as they navigated the challenging teen years while also figuring out their own role in God’s story.

It was that day that we made a bold future commitment to Whetstone Boys Ranch, and specifically to Brandon and Jeremy. At the time, we did not have monetary funds to help them get started, but we did see ourselves in what they called the grandparent role. We wrote in the pledge card: “We will dedicate two years to be grandparents.

In 2017, prompted by the Holy Spirit, we sensed the time had come. We made a call, reminded Jeremy of our commitment, and asked if we could make the move. In the spring





of 2019, we rented our home in Lakewood, Colorado and moved to rural Missouri to begin our Whetstone Journey.

Just as Abraham had no idea where God was leading him, neither did we. We did not realize the vast differences in culture, lifestyle, vocation and more that we would be facing. Yet God led, and we followed. In some ways, we believe that God had some important things to teach us, not only about ourselves, but more importantly, about Him and who He is.

In the last two years, we have had a front row seat to watch and participate in God's work at Whetstone. We have rearranged our schedules to cover for sick staff members, cooked and served meals for ravenous teenage bellies, chaperoned field trips, comforted homesick boys, and filled in wherever and whenever the ranch needed us. It's been hard, but it's been a "good hard." One area we hope to have left a lasting impact is in the woodshop. Providentially, Gary's career in construction equipped him to share his love of hand

tools and woodworking. Every Saturday for two years, he had the opportunity to pour into dozens of boys' hearts, sharing his passion for quality craftsmanship and sharpening character all along the way. Every graduate during this time has walked away with a handmade wood frame for his diploma, which we hope will hang in his dorm room, or study, or office for decades to come. We feel truly blessed to be part of shaping this future.

We are a fallen people, living in a fallen world. This has become so apparent to us as we began loving on the

hurting boys in our care. The awareness that many suffer because of the sins of others is a hard reality. Yet, God provides grace, understanding and hope for ourselves, the boys and their families.

Our Whetstone Journey was a gift, prompted by the Holy Spirit. God filled a need at Whetstone and used this opportunity to teach and refine us. Although our two years is coming to an end, the grandparent role continues because sometimes a boy just needs an older adult who can journey beside him.

Maybe it is you.



OPPORTUNITIES

FROM THE DESK OF OUR DIRECTOR

I tell a new boy on the day he arrives at Whetstone Boys Ranch that coming here is an opportunity, not a punishment. Each new boy tends to think that because of his actions, he is being sent away. The truth is that stepping away from his home is a step towards his family. The truth is that his parents have provided their son with an incredible blessing, and a choice to become the man that God is calling him to be. It takes several months before he can begin to understand this, but most boys eventually do.

God is doing a mighty work at Whetstone. Every minute of every day, a boy's character is being sharpened, and a family's future is being shaped back into the form that God designed.

I humbly present you with an opportunity help us accomplish this essential task. Join with us to sharpen minds, shape hearts, and share in the relationship.

Sincerely,

JEREMY THOMPSON





NATHAN ROW | WBR Graduate, WBR Intern

"My time spent at Whetstone was a season of my life to develop my character. To be pulled from the 'norm' of my everyday life back home and thrust into everyday hard work really made my head spin. But looking back, I wouldn't want it any other way. The relationships that I have with the men at Whetstone Boys Ranch are the ones that are the closest to me today.

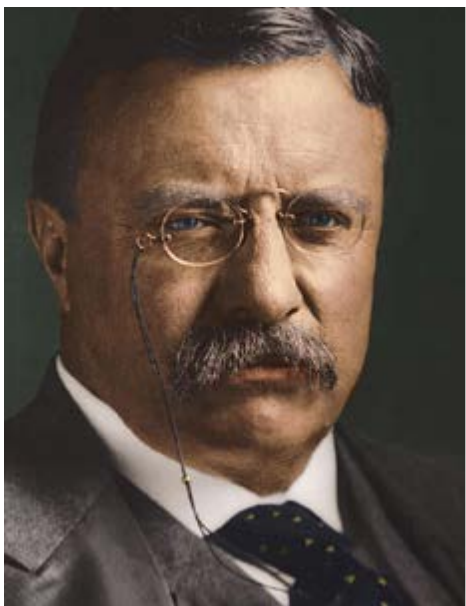
At age 22, nearly 6 years after I first stepped foot through those doors, I have a deeper understanding of what Christ is calling us to be – mentors to the younger generations, and servant leaders in our communities. In fact, I feel this so strongly that I returned as a summer intern to give back what I was given. I will always be part of the Whetstone family, and I know that they will always be part of mine."





October, 2021, Whetstone Boys Ranch celebrated its 10 year anniversary. We would not have made it this far without everyone involved. We will need even more workers, more vision, more prayer and more money to take us through the decades to come.

And if the following decades are anything like the first, we will be reminded, day after day and year after year, that God's love knows no limits. As we come to put our trust more fully and more completely in him, he takes us to places we cannot imagine. We invite you to come to these places with us. Boys aren't the only ones called to challenge, work, and adventure.



"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood."

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

WE NEED...

Mentors and teachers.

Referrals and recommendations.

Board members and prayer warriors.

Evening shift workers and overnight direct care supervisors.

Visionary donors and widow's mites.

Mental health professionals and community advocates.

Families to serve and servers called to work with families.

YOU MAY...

Have a boy in your family who needs sharpening.

Be at your wit's end with your own son who is spiraling out of control.

Have a deep and abiding compassion for boys lost in darkness and dancing on the brink of destruction.

Be looking for a place to invest your time, your money, your influence, your knowledge, and/or your skill.

If so, Whetstone Boys Ranch might be where God is leading you.

JOIN US IN THE ARENA.



**"AS IRON SHARPENS IRON,
SO ONE MAN SHARPENS ANOTHER."**
- Proverbs 27:17

WHETSTONE BOYS RANCH

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