

**For Release:**

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**Workers Forced to Labor for \$750/Month File Federal Court Complaint against Bair Ranch and High Canyon Adventures of Glenwood Springs, Colorado, along with the Western Range Association.**

Three Peruvian workers have filed a complaint in the US District Court for the District of Colorado against members of the Bair family and their ranching and tourism companies, as well as the organization that recruited them to work in the United States. The complaint includes the following allegations:

The Plaintiffs, Pines Vivas Moreno, Gerson Salvatierra Hinostroza, and Jesus Salvatierra Hinostroza, are only three among the many men who have been recruited over the years to travel from Peru to the United States to work on this Colorado ranch as shepherders through the "H-2A Visa" program.

Each of the men accepted a job offered by Western Range Association representatives in Lima, Peru who told them they would be working as shepherders on a sheep ranch in Colorado and would be provided with sufficient food, water, and housing, in addition to wages which would enable them to provide for their families. WRA illegally required the Plaintiffs to pay extensive fees and expenses in order to obtain their visas.

However, upon their arrival at Bair Ranch, plaintiffs found themselves spending very little time caring for sheep out on the range. Instead, they spent most of their time working unrelenting 15- and 16-hour days, maintaining the grounds and guest cabins used by tourists vacationing at High Canyon Adventures or working in the surrounding alfalfa fields. Rather than receiving the proper hourly minimum wage and overtime pay required for this "ranch hand" labor, plaintiffs were paid at the far lower H-2A shepherd wage of just \$750 per month.

Plaintiffs bring this case as a "Collective Action" because they worked as ranch hands alongside other workers who were also paid the H-2A shepherd rate. Once certified as a Collective Action, plaintiffs will be able to seek wages owed for themselves in addition to all other workers improperly paid by defendants since April 1, 2013.

In addition to violating the minimum wage and overtime laws, the Bair family failed to provide the Plaintiffs with sufficient food, water, and access to medical care after having suffered serious on-the-job injuries.

Although Plaintiffs expected to work hard, they also expected to be treated humanely. Instead, they were provided with old, poorly maintained, rodent-infested mobile housing units and sometimes went hungry when their employers failed to bring them food. One plaintiff was forced to walk to a neighboring ranch to ask for water to drink. Another was required to return to work just days after part of his finger was cut off while operating a lawn mower. Two of the plaintiffs were also subjected to physical violence and threats by members of the Bair family.

Attorneys Jenifer Rodriguez of Colorado Legal Services and Sarah Parady and Mary Jo Lowrey of Lowrey Parady, LLC represent the Plaintiffs in their lawsuit. Ms. Rodriguez, an expert on wage requirements and working conditions for Colorado's agricultural workers, including shepherders and ranch hands, says the case presents "an example of employers improperly utilizing the H-2A Program to underpay migrant workers and avoid hiring U.S. workers at a fair wage—and this time it's to support the tourist industry."

Plaintiffs are not alone in their experiences of mistreatment and abuse at the hands of the Defendants. Other workers have filed similar court cases in the past against members of the Bair family, the James Craig Bair Ranch Co., High Canyon Adventures, LLC, and Western Range Association, Inc. Fittingly, the plaintiffs filed their Complaint on Cesar Chavez Day (March 31, 2016), taking a stand on behalf of farmworkers throughout the United States.

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