

SASS

A Brief History



Cowboy Action Shooting was first created in 1981 by Harper Creigh aka Judge Roy Bean, SASS #1. After watching a couple of old westerns on TV on a rainy Saturday afternoon, he had a brain storm. An avid shooter in Soldier of Fortune and IPSC type action shooting matches he called shooting buddies, Gordon Davis and Bill Hahn and presented an idea to shoot their next match using western type guns. The rest, as they say, is history.



Cowboy Action Shooting began at a shooting range in Coto de Caza, California. In the beginning, very loose rules were adhered to. But before long an assemblage of rules began to take shape and the new shooting sport evolved into what it is today.

In April 1982, the first END of TRAIL was introduced. Sixty-five registered shooters competed. It wasn't until 1987, however, that SASS, The Single Action Shooting Society was formed. By then the Wild Bunch was formed and a membership organization was created to preserve and promote the sport of Cowboy Action Shooting.

Cowboy Action Shooting is the fastest growing outdoor shooting sport in the country. Attracting competitors from around the world, Cowboy Action Shooting is not only a sport that tests the shooters accuracy, but also a forum that brings back the days of the Old West in a veritable celebration of the cowboy lifestyle.

The Single Action Shooting Society is the governing organization of Cowboy Action Shooting, worldwide. Today, with over 75,000 members, SASS is represented in all fifty states and 18 foreign countries. The organization endorses regional matches conducted by its more than 500 SASS affiliated clubs and promulgates rules and procedures to ensure safety and consistency in Cowboy Action Shooting matches. Most importantly, however, SASS members share a common interest for preserving the history of the Old West.



SASS is headquartered in Yorba Linda, California and maintains a staff of 14 employees who conduct the day-to-day operations. All SASS publications, including The Cowboy Chronicle, SASS Rule Book, Territorial Governor Bulletin, END of TRAIL Publications, among others, are published in-house.

In the years since its inception, SASS has been owned and run by a board of directors know as "The Wild Bunch." These individuals wrote the rules, created the membership benefits and developed The Cowboy Chronicle, monthly Journal of The Single Action Shooting Society. Many individuals have contributed to the growth and direction of SASS and Cowboy Action Shooting and the board has evolved equally. Today there are six Wild Bunch members who meet on a regular basis to administer the organization's ever growing concerns, each using his unique talents and expertise directing the organization in areas including membership services, marketing and public relations, accounting, shooting range management, and safety.



The Wild Bunch members are:
Harper Creigh, AKA **Judge Roy Bean**, SASS #1, SASS Ambassador / Boyd A. Davis, AKA **General U.S. Grant**, SASS #2, SASS President / Brad L. Myers, AKA **Hipshot**, SASS #7, Special Programs Director / Don Ormand, AKA **Tex**, SASS #4, Editor of The Cowboy Chronicle and SASS publications editor / Lamar Shellnut, AKA **Coyote Calhoun**, SASS #201, SASS Marketing Director.

In the beginning, all rules for Cowboy Action Shooting were determined by the Wild Bunch. Today, things are much different. One of the early developments of SASS was the enlisting of Territorial Governors. These individuals were, and still are, voted in annually by members of their SASS affiliated clubs and given the responsibility of club representation. Until the last few years, Governors acted only as an advisory board. Today, however, it is the consensus vote of the Territorial Governors that determines any new rule changes in the game.

SASS has evolved and spread its game around the world. With Judge Roy Bean traveling to sometimes three matches in one month across the country, SASS also attends such major conventions as The Shot Show, NRA Convention, Ducks Unlimited Outdoor Festivals and a myriad of guns shows and events.

In 1999, SASS expanded its national Cowboy Action Shooting Championship program to include seven SASS Regional Events; Western, Northwest, Southwest, High Plains, Midwest, Northeast, and Southeast. The year-long program starts with Shootout at Mule Camp, The SASS Southeast Regional in May and ends with END of TRAIL, The World Championship of Cowboy Action Shooting, in April.



In 2004, SASS purchased a rustic 480-acre ranch in the rolling

hills 20 miles east of Albuquerque, New Mexico where it is building the world's premiere Cowboy Action Shooting facility. Christened Founders Ranch in honor of those who founded SASS, the ranch is a one by three-quarter mile rectangle surrounded by a seven-foot game fence containing a small herd of American buffalo and several longhorn cattle. Located six miles off Interstate 40 at the top of the grade east of Albuquerque, Founders Ranch has its own roads, a good well, and ample electricity. The property also contains a three-bedroom ranch house and a 1500 square foot steel barn. The facility includes a state-of-the-art twenty bay shooting range, camping pads for up to 600 recreational vehicles, parking for up to 4000 cars, as well as a weather proof road network. The center piece of the shooting facility is a functional Western Town replica opposite the shooting range used by SASS and its sponsors and vendors. An equestrian center is located at the northern most portion of the ranch which includes a 150 by 300 foot arena.



Founders Ranch is home to The Single Actions Shooting Society's Cowboy Action Shooter™ television series which premiered on the Outdoor Life Network September 27. Hosted by sport television veteran Peter Young, Cowboy Action Shooter™ is a weekly half-hour series for and about the sport of Cowboy Action Shooting™. The program celebrates America's Western heritage as it follows SASS' national championship shooting program across America and explores the social and cultural activities that surround the sport and its

organization's members. Sponsored by the Single Action Shooting Society, and presented by Cimarron Firearms Company and Colt's Manufacturing Company, Cowboy Action Shooter™ not only dives into the competition and social aspects of the nation's fastest growing shooting sport phenomenon, it also takes a behind the scenes look at the famous guns and gunslingers that won the West, both on screen and off. Viewers meet the industry's makers and manufacturers and learn techniques from the experts as well as the game's Champions. In addition, Cowboy Action Shooter™ explores historic sites and incidents and chronicle the nation's deep affection for our Great American West while it travels from competition to competition.

The COLT/SASS program provides SASS Members the opportunity to create their own legend with the Special Edition Colt SASS Single Action custom built to the member's specifications with his or her SASS badge number as the serial number.

The SASS Affiliated Gun Stores program is designed to educate Gun Store owners about SASS so that we can refer our members in their area. This effort provides SASS friendly locations where our members can purchase firearms and equipment from retailers knowledgeable about SASS rules, customs and requirements. To date more than 400 retail gun stores have joined the program, many supporting the Cowboy Action Shooting clubs in their area.

The SASS Web Site at www.sassnet.com receives on average 1.5 million visits per month and continues to grow. The Cowboy Chronicle now prints over 30,000 copies and supports advertising from more than 150 advertisers.

Men, women, and children have all shared the benefits of the unique shooting design that focuses more on our American history, camaraderie and the safe recreational use of firearms instead of pure competition.

SASS has made an effort to bring support from not only those in the shooting industry, but from the non-shooting arenas as well. SASS continues to produce END of TRAIL, The World Championship of Cowboy Action Shooting and it is still our flagship event, taking place every April at Founders Ranch, New Mexico. END of TRAIL, the granddaddy of all Cowboy Action Shooting events regularly hosts over 1600 competitors and conventioners with more than \$250,000 in sponsorship support. On average some 25,000 spectators and participants attend the annual event.



END of TRAIL, however, is not the only major Cowboy Action Shooting event. SASS has more than 500 affiliated clubs, the majority of whom present annual multi-day events, some having escalated to proportions once never imagined.

SASS has come a long way since its origins back in 1981. It has become a direct reflection of the membership who join with heart and vigor expanding and keeping alive the Spirit of the Game.

SASS must give credit to many individuals and groups who have contributed to the growth and direction of Cowboy Action Shooting. The bottom line however is SASS members are what make the organization and The Wild Bunch is determined to lead, and at the same time, follow the direction our great sport is taking us. 🐾