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Our Mission: The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust protects Colorado's agricultural land, heritage and families for future generations by conserving working rural landscapes.

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Spotlight On Colorado

Southern Routt County

*Partnering with ranching families to create
a conservation legacy*

Winding along the highly scenic Colorado Highway 131 corridor from Toponas north toward Yampa, travelers can enjoy a spectacular landscape consisting of one beautiful ranch after another; representing thousands of acres of highly productive agricultural land along the Yampa River and its many tributaries. The topography of the countryside is also quite unique, including not only ranchland, but many prominent and distinctive rock outcroppings and features.

Southern Routt County, or South Routt, is located directly between two of the most popular locations in the Colorado Mountains - Vail and Steamboat Springs. Despite its desirable location, the local economy continues to be driven by agriculture and ranching.

Ranching families across the entire landscape in South Routt have come together with the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) to protect their properties with conservation easements. These efforts have begun to create a contiguous stretch of protected properties along Highway 131.

These landowner partnerships are turning into a landscape initiative with CCALT and other conservation organizations holding easements on more than 15,000 acres. The Land Trust is also working with several new families who are interested in protecting their land and heritage. These relationships are how a conservation legacy begins.

Rita Nelson and the Bobby George Family

Rita Nelson, her son Bobby George, and his two daughters Madison and Morgan are the owners and managers of the family's agricultural operation located around the town of Yampa. Over the last five years, the family has placed all of their property, including the G5 Ranch, into conservation easements with CCALT in an effort to secure the land for the current and next generations.

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Spotlight on Colorado *continued*

The family's history in the area dates back to the late 1800's. It doesn't take much time spent with this family to gain an understanding of how they have been so resilient in maintaining the operation through so many generations and so many years. They never stop working and never stop thinking of creative ways to make the operation as sustainable as possible. The old saying, "there's no rest for the weary" describes this family's way of life. The work never stops, and the neither does their drive to continue ranching.

"We are family ranchers and my daughters are fifth generation. We don't hire managers or buy fancy machinery. We actually work the land ourselves. We have to make a profit with our cattle, sheep, and hay businesses," said Bobby George.

Recently facing family deaths and disinterest of other family members in keeping the operation running, Rita, Bobby, and the girls were able to use the proceeds from the easements to buy out other family members' interest in the portions of their holdings. They were able to buy neighboring properties to expand the operation and further sustain the ranch. This is a wonderful example of how conservation easements can help landowners keep their land in ranching for generations to come.

Project partners including the Routt County Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program, lottery funded Great Outdoors Colorado, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service Farm and Ranchland Protection Program all contributed funds to CCALT's efforts in the South Routt region.

"The properties conserved in South Routt are an integral part of preserving important viewsheds along Hwy 131 and other county roads, as well as providing healthy habitat and corridors for wildlife," said the PDR Board of Commissioners.

South Routt is just one example of a region where donor dollars are hard at work. CCALT is currently partnering with landowners to protect an additional 5,000 acres in South Routt over the next few years. While we have several project funders providing valuable support, the Land Trust needs your help! CCALT can protect one acre for the operational cost of only \$25.00. Your support of the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust can help make our efforts in South Routt a success.



Madison, Morgan & Bobby George

The G5 Ranch

Leaving Your Legacy



Have you been thinking about the legacy you would like to leave your children or grandchildren? Would you like to plan ahead in order to minimize the estate taxes that your family will pay when they inherit your estate? Conservation easements are an excellent estate planning tool if you are a landowner; and including the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) in your estate plans is a great way to protect Colorado's special places.

Charitable bequests are also a common method of giving where an individual can name CCALT, or any other charity, as the heir to a portion of his or her estate. Leaving a bequest allows you to make a significant contribution toward the protection of Colorado's working farms and ranches for future generations, while reducing the impact of estate taxes on your heirs.

If you plan to make a gift through your will, CCALT has language that may be useful to you during your estate planning. For more information, or if you would like to talk with someone about making a planned gift, contact your financial advisor or contact our Development Director Alyssa Street at alyssa@ccalt.org or 303-225-8677.

Farewell to a Friend

Miles Davies was a friend and one of the founders of the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT). Serving on the CCALT Board of Directors since 2007, Miles was a leader in helping ranchers protect their land for future generations.

Miles grew up on his family's ranch in Deer Trail, Colorado. After graduating from Colorado State University with honors, Miles returned to ranching in Deer Trail and raised his four children with his wife, Jeanne. Miles was committed to agriculture's legacy in Colorado through his extensive involvement in agricultural organizations since 1942. He was a seventy-year member of Colorado State Grange, served as vice-president and was on the executive committee for many years.

Other activities included membership in the Colorado Agriculture Commission, CSU Livestock Leader Council, and National Western Stock Show Association. He was director of Colorado Simmental Association, helped organize the American Simmental Association and was director of the National Cattleman's Beef Board. Miles was a member of Colorado Cattlemen's Association since 1951 and was President in 1995.



Miles Davies

Miles always cared for the land and was recognized as the Colorado Division of Wildlife Runner Up Landowner of the year in 1991. He was recognized for his excellence in cattle breeding performance and received many awards. He was one of the first cattlemen to introduce Simmental cattle into America and one of the first ranchers to use artificial insemination and embryo transplant in his cattle-breeding program. Miles and Jeanne were recognized by CSU's Animal Science Department as Ag Leaders in 1993. Miles was inducted into the Colorado Agriculture Hall of Fame in 2009.

Miles was a leader in conservation and CCALT would not be where it is today without his guidance and dedication. He will be missed and remembered as one of CCALT's most valued Board Members.

Sage Grouse Tour Promotes Conservation in Northwest CO

by Deborah Richie and Maggie Hanna

Heather Stirling of the Elkhead Ranch wears a jacket she had emblazoned on the back with “Real Women Eat Beef.” She’s proud of her cattle, and the sage grouse that share the land. For the last five years, she’s added conservation easements to protect her secluded ranch north of Hayden. Within view of her home by Elkhead Creek is the schoolhouse featured in the acclaimed book, *Nothing Daunted*, by Dorothy Wickenden.

“If you take care of the land, it takes care of you,” she told an assembled group on her porch, as they enjoyed a barbecue featuring her beef. Stirling’s ranch was part of a five-county tour in the state’s northwest corner, led by the Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) and the Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI) in early August. Some 50 people, including U.S. Congressional aides - as well as landowners, federal, state and non-profit partners - joined the three-day swing of private ranchlands.

One of the base concepts for the Initiative is that what is good for ranching and rangeland will inevitably be good for sage grouse and other wildlife. Large, intact landscapes, plant diversity, perennial grasses and forbs; and stewardship of those resources through grazing are all good aspects of ranching and healthy sage grouse communities.

“Since the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) launched the Sage Grouse Initiative in 2010 with Farm Bill dollars, we’ve seen unprecedented growth in ranchland protection and restoration in northwest Colorado,” said Chris West, CCALT Executive Director. “These Farm Bill dollars make a great difference on the ground for ranching and wildlife and are exceptionally leveraged by project partners.”



Sage Grouse Tour

In Memory

CCALT would like to recognize several of our landowners and friends of the Land Trust who have passed away within the last two years. Their legacies will live on forever through their contributions to Colorado’s rich agricultural heritage.

Scott Carpenter
Miles Davies

Maud Duke
September Hughes

Roy Johlgrén
Nancy Kueter

Don Lufkin
Donald Robotham

Jean Rusk
Vernon Summers

Robert B. Wamsley

There's bipartisan support as well, earning praise from both U.S. Rep. Scott Tipton (R-Colo.) and U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.).

"The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust plays a valuable part in local species conservation efforts, working with willing farmers and ranchers to keep agricultural land in production while also conserving sage grouse habitat," said Rep. Tipton.

The SGI harnesses the Farm Bill to strategically focus budgets and partner matches. The Initiative is primarily focused on private lands covering 56 million acres in 11 western states and serves as a catalyst for public land enhancements. The goal is to take proactive measures to conserve sage grouse and prevent a need for listing under the Endangered Species Act, a decision slated for 2015.

"The conservation programs in the Farm Bill are essential for encouraging these types of voluntary, local efforts to protect native species and their habitats, strengthen our agriculture and ranching communities, and preserve the quality of land for future generations," said Sen. Bennet.

In North Park, ranchers and partners are piecing together a large protected block of the state's largest intact mountain valley. Over the past five years, NRCS, with other funding partners including Great Outdoors Colorado and the Gates Family Foundation, has allowed numerous long-time ranching families to secure conservation easements on nearly 20,000 acres that protect both their heritage and the land.

Rancher John Rich in North Park is working to complete a conservation easement with CCALT, one of seven made possible with recent SGI dollars. "It's a godsend," he said. "We work hard raising a family on a little ranch. There's not a lot of money there."

To the west, the tour stopped at several Moffat County sites to see water and fencing improvements on the Bord Gulch Ranch near Great Divide and fire restoration on the neighboring Visintainer Ranch. The final stop was the Cross Mountain Ranch – 26,000 acres containing some of the finest sage grouse habitat in Colorado and when completed, will be the largest property protected with SGI dollars. The tour unveiled the project on the banks of the Yampa River just upstream of Dinosaur National Monument.

The tour was not only a great opportunity to see the work being done to conserve northwest Colorado, but also a unique tool to bring together numerous stakeholders around the sage grouse issue and find common ground for moving forward with shared visions and goals.

"Ranchers and sage grouse both need the same thing - big, intact healthy rangelands," said Tim Griffiths, SGI national coordinator for the NRCS. "CCALT has become a national leader, conserving our irreplaceable working lands in the sagebrush-steppe, and ensuring a future for both agriculture and wildlife."

CCALT hopes that our initial partnerships with the Sage Grouse Initiative will continue to bring additional Farm Bill funding into Colorado. The Land Trust looks forward to building new partnerships in the further protection of ranchland and this invaluable habitat.

on Cross Mountain Ranch



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CCALT Board Members Honored

CCALT Board Members Steve Wooten and Larry Kueter received prestigious awards in September. The Land Trust is pleased to have such accomplished conservation leaders on the Board of Directors!

Steve Wooten

The George E. Cranmer Award



The George E. Cranmer Award is bestowed on special persons who have distinguished themselves in open space preservation. They leave a legacy that will be valued and enjoyed for generations to come. This is the most esteemed conservation award that an individual can receive in Colorado. Steve was honored by Colorado Open Lands on September 12th.

Larry Kueter

The Kingsbury Browne Fellow and Conservation Leadership Award

At the national level, Larry Kueter was named the Kingsbury Browne Fellow at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and received the Kingsbury Browne Conservation Leadership Award from the Land Trust Alliance on September 17th in recognition of his outstanding leadership, innovation and creativity in land conservation across the nation.

