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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

## Chaffee County

*Conserving a landscape through ranching partnerships*

Only a few hours drive from Denver along Highway 285, Chaffee County is home to the vibrant communities of Buena Vista and Salida, and endless outdoor adventures along the Arkansas River and in the Collegiate Peaks; as well as a rich agricultural heritage.



*Rafter 26 Ranch, Chaffee County*

Chaffee County was established in 1879 and the history of the county and the surrounding area is a complex mix of many influences. Early in its history, the area experienced an influx of explorers, miners, railroad expansionists, farmers and ranchers. Today, the region is known for its recreational opportunities, stunning beauty, and the pristine agricultural landscapes which make this region an attractive vacation destination.

Along the Collegiate Peaks Scenic and Historic Byway, the drive through Chaffee County takes you past many historical ranches that have been, or are in the process of, being protected from development forever. Local ranch families are partnering with the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) and many public and private funders to preserve this spectacular landscape for future generations to enjoy.

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# Spotlight on Colorado, continued

Seven traditional ranching families are currently working toward their shared goal of preserving Chaffee County's rich agricultural heritage. These highly visible ranches contribute significantly to the physical attractiveness and economic well-being of the county and the entire Upper Arkansas Valley.

You might wonder why these seven families decided to pursue conservation. Below are two of the landowners' stories which offer a glimpse into the passion that they each have for the land and their community and how, through working with CCALT, they were able to achieve their goals.

## **Rafter 26 Ranch – The Rooks Family**

The Rafter 26 Ranch lies at the base of Mount Princeton just to the south and west of Buena Vista. The ranch frames the view of Mt. Princeton for travelers entering the Upper Arkansas Valley on Highway 285. The Rooks family has operated the Rafter 26 Ranch since the 1960s. In 2010, they started the process of conserving the ranch when they donated an easement to CCALT with the help of The Trust for Public Land (TPL).



The Rooks Family hopes to complete their conservation project in the upcoming years. When asked why he decided to put an easement on his property, Lee Rooks said, "When you look out there long after I am gone it will look something like it does now. We can leave a legacy that won't be changed or tainted. It is something that can be left behind and we are so proud that we could do this."

## **The Hutchinson Ranch**

The Hutchinson Ranch is the oldest ranching operation in the Upper Arkansas Valley. The Hutchinson family settled in the valley in the early 1860s and established the ranch shortly

thereafter. The ranch is highly visible to the public as they travel between Salida and Poncha Springs along Highway 50.

Over the past few years, the Hutchinson Family worked with TPL, CCALT, and Land Trust of Upper Arkansas (LTUA) to permanently protect nearly the entire ranch. Income generated from the conservation easement provided the Hutchinson family with money to pay down debt, transition ownership to the next generation, and pay for long-term health care needs for the family patriarch.

"If ranching teaches you anything, it is the need to be flexible. In order to preserve the ranch legacy, we needed every ounce of that flexibility in order to keep this ranching heritage alive. Pursuing a conservation easement was our best option, and our family appreciates greatly all who helped make this preservation effort become a reality," said Art Hutchinson.

## **How can you help protect these important landscapes?**

For 2014, CCALT has launched the *Save an Acre* campaign to raise the funds to protect another 1,000 acres of prime ranch land in Chaffee County. That means CCALT must secure \$25,000 to meet this goal. We are now accepting donations to our Save an Acre program and we would love for you to join us in this celebration of land conservation by attending our annual Sunset BBQ at the Hutchinson Ranch in Salida, Colorado on August 23rd. More information about the event and Save an Acre can be found online at [www.ccalt.org](http://www.ccalt.org).



Art, Wendell & Abby Hutchinson  
Photo courtesy of TPL & Darcy Kiefel



## Thinking Ahead

**D**o you catch yourself thinking about the legacy you would like to leave your children or grandchildren? One of the common myths is that you don't have to worry about that sort of thing unless you are wealthy. Contrary to that belief, everyone has an estate. Basically, an estate is comprised of everything you own, no matter how large or modest.

*Estate planning* is thinking ahead and naming whom you want to receive your estate and also enables you 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. Working with CCALT staff and your financial advisor can make planning ahead for the future much easier.

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 that you can access online at [www.ccalt.org](http://www.ccalt.org). 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](mailto:alyssa@ccalt.org) or 303-225-8677.

## Please Welcome Anne Rogers!



Anne Rogers joined CCALT's staff in February, 2014 as the organization's Controller. Anne holds an MBA from Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University and has a BA in Accounting from Iowa State University. She is an Iowa native who moved to Colorado in 1999.

Previously, Anne served as the Controller for a Denver-area technology firm and has held various finance and accounting roles throughout her career.

### CCALT Wish List

ATV's & a Trailer  
Pre-Paid Fuel Cards  
Digital Camera  
New Vehicle Tires  
Lightly Used Vehicle

# CCALT Prepares for the Future

The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) is preparing for the future. Because conservation easements are a permanent tool, we need to ensure that we have the finances in place to meet our obligations to uphold them. CCALT has obligations to landowners, donors, the agricultural community and the public to ensure that the terms of the conservation easements will be enforced. CCALT takes its responsibilities very seriously and is working to ensure that we have the necessary financial resources to stay in business and fulfill our perpetual obligations.

## **Thinking Ahead**

Since CCALT's founding in 1995, funding for easement stewardship has been an essential component of each conservation easement project that we have completed. Landowners or project funders are asked to contribute to CCALT's Stewardship Endowment Fund when each easement is completed. These funds are then pooled and invested by professional investment managers to cover the costs of annual visits and easement oversight. As of today, CCALT has approximately \$2.3 million invested in the Stewardship Endowment Fund.

In preparing for the future, the question that the Land Trust is focusing on now is, "Does the existing endowment have enough money to meet our obligations to the landowners and other stakeholders who have entrusted us with their donations?" CCALT must also be able to justify the amount we request for stewardship contributions from landowners and funders are sufficient. To do this, CCALT has engaged the help of investment professionals who are building financial forecasts based on actual data and reasonable assumptions. These forecasts will help CCALT to better plan for the future and more appropriately react to economic changes.

**Does the existing endowment have enough money to meet our obligations to the landowners and other stakeholders?**



## **The Power of Financial Forecasting**

Financial forecasting is a powerful tool that many businesses use to determine future management decisions. However, very few non-profits have engaged in this type of high-level financial analysis. Because of our perpetual conservation obligations, we must develop consistent, accurate and transparent forecasts that we can rely on and that landowners and donors can trust.

## **Why should this matter to me?**

As a stakeholder in CCALT, you deserve to know that we are making every effort to be good financial stewards. As shown in the endowment forecast graph, CCALT is using the forecasting tool to ensure that we have the next 20 years' finances to take

care of our conservation responsibilities. We are also using the recommendations to make adjustments to ensure that we have a similar projection 20 years from now.

"My professional background in finance and ranch real estate gives me a deep appreciation for CCALT's efforts to ensure the long-term financial viability of their conservation efforts," said Ed Roberson with Mirr Ranch Group. "Through the use of this financial modeling tool, CCALT can quantitatively demonstrate that they are taking the necessary steps to continue conserving and stewarding working ranches throughout Colorado in perpetuity."

CCALT and its financial team will evaluate the forecasting model every other year. This review will allow for adjustments, and we anticipate that the accuracy of the forecasting will increase over time as CCALT's data becomes more accurate. The Land Trust will continue to provide updates to our donors and landowners on our forecasting efforts and financial health throughout the coming years.

# *New Farm Bill Conservation Program benefits Colorado, ranchers, farmers and all Americans*

There is a nice bonus for Colorado in the Farm Bill that President Obama signed on February 7, 2014. The new Agricultural Lands Easement program will provide grants to purchase conservation easements that permanently restrict development on important ranches and farm lands, thus ensuring our agricultural future.

These voluntary agreements will ensure that land stays in agriculture and continues to be an important – and growing – part of our state's economy. The predecessors to this program have already conserved more than one million acres of economically and ecologically important agricultural lands. The new program will easily double that total.

Senator Michael Bennet joined Senate Agricultural Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (Mich.) in leading the effort to pass this bi-partisan bill, working with other Colorado leaders, including Representative Scott Tipton (CO-3), a member of the House Agriculture Committee.

## **Why should land conservation matter to the vast majority of Americans who are neither farmers nor ranchers?**

Senator Bennet also changed the law to allow the Agriculture Secretary to waive a local cash-match requirement. This waiver will allow the program, at no additional cost, to protect the most important ranches and farmlands; even if they are in rural counties that don't have the funding to match the federal grants.

The main question for the public is: Why should land conservation matter to the vast majority of Americans who are neither farmers nor ranchers?

While producing crops, livestock and other agricultural commodities for all Americans; properly managed working ranch lands and farms protect important habitat for our wildlife and fish. They also maintain cherished scenic vistas and safeguard our water supplies and the water quality of our rivers. In addition, conserving farms and ranches keeps farmers and ranchers on the land, and is protecting an important part of our state's economy.

For example, more than 150 years of Colorado history - and a part of its future - were preserved when the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust and the Trust for Public Land completed an effort to protect 650 acres of the Hutchinson Ranch in Chaffee County.

Protection of the Hutchinson Ranch was made possible by funding from the Farm Bill programs that Senator Bennet just improved, along with lottery-funded Great Outdoors Colorado and a significant grant from Chaffee County.

Though these lands – exemplified by the Hutchinson Ranch – are productive and important for agriculture, without action they are very much at risk. Non-agriculture development overtakes two acres of productive agricultural land every minute. Conservation easement programs, however, ensure that our state's most beautiful and productive ranches and farm land will continue into the future.



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## *Save the Date!*



Save the Date for the CCALT Annual Sunset BBQ. There will be dinner, drinks and an auction; so be ready to have a wonderful time celebrating the Upper Arkansas Valley's ranching heritage on one of CCALT's protected ranches. RSVP today!

### **2014 CCALT Sunset BBQ**

Hutchinson Ranch in Salida, CO  
Saturday, August 23, 2014  
5:00 - 9:00 p.m.  
Tickets are \$150/person

The proceeds from the event will go toward the protection of Colorado's beautiful and productive agricultural lands. To RSVP for this exciting event or for sponsorship opportunities, please contact Alyssa Street at [alyssa@ccalt.org](mailto:alyssa@ccalt.org).