



The Wooten family, representing Beatty Canyon Ranch, Co., in Las Animas County, CO, is the recipient of the 2018 Colorado Leopold Conservation Award.

Photo courtesy of Colorado Cattlemen's Association.

Beatty Canyon Ranch Co. in Las Animas County, CO, has been selected as the recipient of the 2018 Colorado Leopold Conservation Award.

Beatty Canyon Ranch is a multi-generational ranch that has long served as an example of cutting-edge conservation. Owned and operated by Steve and Joy Wooten and Brady and Arin Burnham, the ranch currently has the fourth, fifth and sixth generations of land stewards involved in day-to-day operations. Controlling invasive species, grazing management, and a focus on wildlife habitat are just a few of the reasons the ranch has become a popular outdoor recreation destination in addition to a successful livestock enterprise.

The prestigious award recognizes extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation, and is presented annually by Sand County Foundation, the Colorado Cattlemen's Association (CCA), the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust and Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the Leopold Conservation Award inspires other landowners and provides a visible forum where farmers, ranchers and other private landowners are recognized as conservation leaders. In his influential 1949 book, *A Sand County Almanac*, Leopold called for an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage, which he called “an evolutionary possibility and an ecological necessity.”

The \$10,000 award and a crystal depicting Aldo Leopold will be presented to Beatty Canyon Ranch at the CCA annual convention in Loveland, CO, June 18.

This year, many outstanding landowners were nominated for the award. This year’s finalists for the award are the Livingston Ranch of Stratton, CO, and the Stults Ranch of Wray, CO.

“Our congratulations to the Wooten Family and Beatty Canyon Ranch,” said Todd Inglee, president of CCA. “The quality of applicants made the decision to choose just one recipient a real challenge. In the end, this award properly recognizes the stewardship of working ranches and the outright benefit those ranches bring to the environment,” Inglee continued.

“The 2018 Leopold Conservation Award nominees featured an impressive array of families and operations from around the state. The Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust is proud of the conservation accomplishments of each of the applicants,” said Erik Glenn, Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust executive director. “These applicants showcase the diversity of agriculture in Colorado and the dedication that farming and ranching families have to the lands they steward, their communities, and their families. We are particularly proud of this year’s winner—the Beatty Canyon Ranch and the Steve and Joy Wooten Family.”

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association CEO Mike McInnes commented, “Tri-State and its member electric cooperatives are proud to support the Leopold Conservation Award. The environmental stewardship recognized with the award reflects the strong conservation ethic of rural communities and their electric cooperatives.”

The Leopold Conservation Award in Colorado is made possible through the contributions from Tri-State Generation and Transmission Assoc., American AgCredit, The Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, The Nature Conservancy, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. — **CCA**

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