

# Summertime Standouts: Warner College of Natural Resources

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## Jon Byerly, rangeland ecology



Jon Byerly gets around the properties he is monitoring in a variety of ways.

Land conservation takes many forms, and as Warner College rangeland ecology major Jon Byerly is finding out this summer, can be pretty complex.

Byerly is interning this summer with the [Colorado Cattleman's Agricultural Land Trust](#), a private land conservation nonprofit that works with willing landowners to place conservation easements on their properties.

Conservation easements transfer the development rights from the property owner to a land trust or local government, which holds them, to ensure the land remains open space. This preserves both the land's agricultural heritage with grazing and cattle operations and protects its ecological and aesthetic values.

Easements require annual monitoring, which is where Byerly comes in. He's spending his summer walking, riding, and in some cases, flying the conserved lands to produce monitoring reports. "Most of my job is touring the ranches, interviewing and owners, taking photos and documenting potential violations." Byerly explained. Not a bad way to spend summer when you consider some of the amazing ranches under easement with CCALT.



Covering more ground from the air, Byerly checks an easement out from above.

“It has been really interesting getting a better understanding of the conservation easement world,” he added. “Working at the intersection of landowners, conservation groups and federal and local governments has been fascinating.”

Despite a steep learning curve, Byerly has gained a broader perspective on conservation issues and the inherent complexities of private lands conservation. “Being on the ground, talking to stakeholders and learning every day from professionals is experience you don’t get in class.”

Not only that, but the networking and connections he’s made with agency and NGO staff, landowners and others will contribute to a network he’ll readily tap as he moves forward as a professional. Byerly plans to apply his range management skills in a career helping private landowners use sound practices in managing their lands.