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High Country Lamb Ranch Conserved

ARVADA, Colo. (February 2, 2018) –The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) has partnered with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Habitat Partnership Program (HPP), the Routt County Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Board, and the Maneotis family to conserve the High Country Lamb Ranch in Routt County. Tom Maneotis and his family have owned and managed the 1,489 acre ranch outside of Steamboat Springs, Colorado for generations.

For travelers driving into Steamboat Springs from the I-70 corridor, the High Country Lamb property is visible for more than three miles along Highway 131. Shrubland, aspen forests, and irrigated meadows define the landscape of the ranch as its hillsides rise above the highway, providing residents and visitors the agricultural landscape they expect to see in Routt County. From the high points on the property, the towns of Yampa and Phippsburg are visible, as are stunning views of the Flat Tops.

The property is a vital part of the Maneotis family's larger agricultural operation. The ranch is grazing ground for both sheep and cattle, providing summer range for the cattle and fall range for the sheep as they return from the high country. The Maneotis family specializes in selling high quality grass-fed lamb directly to Whole Foods. The conservation easement ensures that Tom's children and grandchildren will have the opportunity to eventually take over the operation and continue growing quality lamb for Colorado. In addition to cattle and sheep, the ranch provides forage and habitat for big game, including winter range for elk and mule deer. Conservation of winter habitat on ranches like the High Country Lamb Ranch is critical because a significant percentage of big game winter range is privately owned.

Conservation of High Country Lamb Ranch adds another key piece to CCALT's conservation efforts in Routt County. The ranch itself is in close proximity to several other conserved properties, and builds on the more than 30,000 acres of CCALT conserved land in the county.

"The visibility of High Country Lamb Ranch from Highway 131 makes this project unique," said Molly Fales, CCALT director of transactions. "If the timing is right, travelers along the highway can see herds of several hundred elk grazing on the ranch's meadows. High Country Lamb Ranch is a great example of how landowners manage land for the benefit of livestock and wildlife."

"The PDR board is pleased to see this project move towards completion and highly commends the landowners' dedication to planning for the future. Through their efforts, it is apparent that the operation can and will be successfully operated by family members for many future generations," said Claire Sollars, Chair for the PDR board.

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Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust conserves Colorado's western heritage and working landscapes for the benefit of future generations. For more information visit www.ccalt.org.

Routt County PDR Program has, to date, completed 54 conservation projects totaling 40,598 acres. For more information, please contact Helena Taylor at Routt County, 970-879-0108.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife HPP is funded by revenue from the sale of big game licenses. The program works through local communities to develop partnerships among landowners, land managers, sportsmen, the public and Colorado Parks and Wildlife to reduce conflicts caused by deer, elk, pronghorn and moose to agriculture. HPP also assists CPW to meet game management objectives for deer, elk, pronghorn and moose.