2009 Annual Report
Dear Friends,

The Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) is pleased to report that 2009 was a very successful year. CCALT has now protected 227 ranches covering more than 350,000 acres. The Land Trust completed 25 new conservation easements and added acreage to 16 existing projects in 2009. In total, we partnered with landowners in protecting more than 34,600 acres of land across the state.

CCALT is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year and it is hard to believe how much we have achieved in such a short time. This success would not have been possible without the support and guidance of the membership of the Colorado Cattlemen’s Association and our landowners. The conservation community and agriculture are coming closer together, particularly as science continues to demonstrate that the stewardship provided by ranchers is also protecting important biological resources.

The Land Trust is a highly efficient and effective organization, which is in turn leading many landowners and their advisors to work only with CCALT. Clearly, our landowner-focused approach is working, and we are impressed by the amount of interest in conservation from Colorado’s ranching families. We continue to work with our existing funders such as Great Outdoors Colorado, U.S. Department of Agriculture and local county open space programs to find ways to increase their support of ranchland projects. We are also looking to expand our reach and to find common ground with wildlife groups, local communities and others, to achieve more conservation successes across Colorado.

When the Land Trust was formed in 1995, it was clear that we would need to stand on our own financially. CCALT took two key steps toward that financial stability in the past year. We established a separate Legal Defense Fund to ensure that the Land Trust has the financial resources to defend our conservation easements. CCALT also established an Operating Endowment Fund through a generous gift from Cold Mountain Ranch. This Fund will one day support a portion of our daily activities.

While we have been remarkably successful, our work is by no means complete. Much of Colorado’s agricultural land and heritage is still at risk of being lost to development and urbanization. In the coming year we will initiate new projects in ranching landscapes where conservation efforts are just beginning such as the White River Valley and North Park in northwest Colorado. We continue to work in other areas including Saguache Creek, the Gunnison Basin and the Wet Mountain Valley where additional projects are now developing. We look forward to even more success in our 15th year of land conservation!

William E.L. Fales
Board President

Chris West
Executive Director
Successes and Highlights

CCALT is proud to announce that 2009 has been another banner year for ranchland conservation across Colorado, protecting more than 34,600 acres. The support of individual contributors is critical to our past successes and to our future as one of the leading conservation groups in Colorado. We would like to thank every landowner who has protected their lands through CCALT.

CCALT Protects Scenic Mountain Ranches

Cold Mountain Ranch

One of CCALT’s newest easements is the Cold Mountain Ranch located along the Crystal River near Carbondale. The 610-acre ranch consists of lush irrigated hay meadows along more than a mile of Highway 133 at the foot of Mt. Sopris. The ranch is one of the few remaining working ranches in the Roaring Fork Valley. It also provides an important visual buffer on the south side of Carbondale and provides critical winter habitat for elk and mule deer in the area.

The ranch was protected in partnership with Pitkin County who co-holds the conservation easement with CCALT. Pitkin County provided funding, along with Great Outdoors Colorado lottery funds, to make this protection possible.

A.W. Salisbury Ranch

The A.W. Salisbury Ranch, featured on the cover of this report, is located in the Upper Little Snake River Valley in northern Routt County. This traditional and historical ranch, previously known as the Saddle Pocket Ranch, is believed to be the longest-owned family business in Routt County. The ranch has been in the same family since 1881 when A.W. Salisbury came west from Illinois. The ranch is now owned by the O’Toole family - direct descendents of A.W. Salisbury, who raise sheep and cattle throughout the Little Snake River Valley. Four generations currently reside on the ranch, including George Salisbury, who was born there in 1921.

This scenic property can be seen from Routt County Road 129. The property is traversed for more than two miles by cottonwood-lined Little Snake River and Battle Creek, and hosts populations of Colorado River Cutthroat trout.

CCALT, in partnership with the Routt County Purchase of Development Rights Program, Great Outdoors Colorado and The Nature Conservancy, purchased a 770-acre conservation easement on the historic ranch December 31, 2009. The O’Tooles and a neighbor have protected more than 3,700 acres in the valley since 2008.

2009 Land Trust Alliance Accreditation

The Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust was awarded accreditation status in 2009 by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance.

The accreditation seal recognizes land trusts that meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent.
2009 Donors

The Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust would like to express our sincere thanks to those individuals, businesses, and organizations that have partnered in CCALT’s unique vision. We particularly want to thank the 41 landowners who contributed easements in 2009.

2009 Donors

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CCALT is proud of our 15-year record of fiscal responsibility and organizational growth. In 2009, the conservation easements accepted by the Land Trust were valued at $35,895,468. CCALT raised $6,805,225 in grants for conservation easement purchases and our landowner partners donated more than $29 million in land value! Fifteen years ago when CCALT accepted its first easements, we established a dedicated Stewardship Endowment Fund to provide for the long-term stewardship of our conservation easements and we add to that Fund with each new project. As of December 31, 2009, the Fund balance was $1,649,984.

We would like to thank the organizations that provided grants in 2009. CCALT appreciates our partnership with the Colorado Conservation Trust, Great Outdoors Colorado, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Routt County, San Miguel County, Tax Credit Connection, Colorado Division of Wildlife and The Nature Conservancy. CCALT is also thankful for the many sponsors of the John Fielder Ranches of Colorado project: Mirr Ranch Group, Xcel Energy, Johnson Storage & Moving, FirstBank, KUSA (9NEWS) and 5280 Denver’s Magazine.
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Photograph by Pat O’Toole

Back Cover: Savage Ranch, Weld County

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