

## Gambling money preserves Colorado ranch

written by: Jeffrey Wolf Kevin Torres 13 hrs ago

SALIDA - The mountains that straddle the upper Arkansas Valley through Chaffee Country tend to hide a graveyard of forgotten farms.

"There are a lot of farms that are being sold and split up," Abigail Hutchinson, a rancher, said.

Along a rural stretch of Highway 50 between Poncha Springs and Salida, there is one farm that has survived what so many other farms have not.

"They disappear," Hutchinson said.

Hutchinson is a seventh-generation rancher who manages her family's farm. The Hutchinsons have owned the property since 1860.

"We pretty much do it the way my great, great, seventh-great grandfather did," Hutchinson said.

Like many other Colorado farms, Hutchinson saw her family's land deteriorate. Money is an issue and it's tough to keep things in shape.

"The family has kept it up the best they could through the years," Katy Grether a preservationist from Salida area Parks Open Space and Trails (SPOT), said.

As a preservationist and someone who has visited the Hutchinson Ranch as a kid, Grether knew how to help.

"It made it a very rewarding and deserving project," she said.

Grether submitted an application for grant money from the state, which is collected from casinos and other gambling operations.

The State Historical Fund Grant has donated close to \$500,000 to the Hutchinson Homestead so far. Some of the money is matched by the county and town.

"It's been a wonderful thing for Colorado," Grether said. "We couldn't have done it without the money."

The money was used to restore the ranch's homestead, its barns, land and so much more.

The grant was created to help historic sites and land in need of preservation.

Eventually, the Hutchinson family would like to create a Ranch and Homestead Museum and Learning Center on their property.

Already, children and their families come to the farm to learn about agriculture and ranching.

"It's the family's goal to see it stay a ranch and stay as open space," Hutchinson said.

To learn more about the Hutchinson Homestead, visit <http://salidaparksopenspacetrails.org/>.

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**NO, I have some rules!**

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