

Cattlemen land trust protects Saguache Creek ranch

Posted: Thursday, Dec 6th, 2012

SAGUACHE — The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) announced this week that they have permanently protected more than 400,000 acres of private farm and rangeland. The Land Trust, formed by members of the Colorado Cattlemen's Association in 1995, is the largest statewide or regional land trust in Colorado and ranks sixth nationally in acres protected by conservation easements.

CCALT surpassed the 400,000 acre goal by the recent protection of working ranches in North Park and along Saguache Creek in the San Luis Valley.

"It's fitting that these two ranch landscapes are the places that helped us reach this milestone," said Executive Director Chris West. "They are traditional ranching communities and CCALT's strength is working with families who have been on their land for generations, many since the homesteading days," he continued.

The area now protected by CCALT is larger than Colorado's iconic Rocky Mountain National Park and the City and County of Denver, including DIA. Another perspective would be to imagine an area of protected agricultural land approximately one mile wide along both sides of Interstate 25 from north of Fort Collins to south of Trinidad.

These ranchers value their land and its ability to produce food for all of us and are using conservation easements to ensure that it will be there for future generations.

Agriculture remains an important pillar of Colorado's economy, leading Governor John Hickenlooper to say that Colorado is being led out of the recession by agriculture. The conservation of ranches and farms not only preserves the lands' ability to produce food, but also supports the vibrant recreation and tourism economy in Colorado.

Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust protects productive agricultural lands and the conservation values they provide by working with ranchers and farmers, thereby preserving Colorado's ranching heritage and rural communities.

The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) was formed by the membership of the Colorado Cattlemen's Association, to allow Colorado's agricultural landowners to explore their land conservation options. For more information visit www.ccalt.org.

Valley Courier December 6, 2012

About Conservation Easements: Conservation easements are voluntary but permanent real estate contracts that serve to preserve the conservation values of the property, including scenic, wildlife habitat and agricultural productivity. More than 1.2 million acres of private land in Colorado have been protected by conservation easements.