



NEWS RELEASE

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Longtime Steamboat Family Conserves Ranch and adds to the Emerald Mountain Protection Effort

Emerald Mountain is a special place for Routt County residents and visitors alike. The view from Rabbit Ears Pass and from the Steamboat ski area leaves a lasting impression. The conservation of Emerald Mountain's open lands is integral to protecting important wildlife habitat, as well as the health of the Yampa River watershed and the local agricultural economy. Significant time, money and effort have been invested to protect the private lands that adjoin the extensive public lands on Emerald Mountain.

The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) has been quietly protecting land around Emerald Mountain for the past seven years. CCALT's first conservation easement in the area was donated by Allan White and Jane McLeod in 2006 and protected 145 acres of productive ranchland. In late 2011, CCALT completed a 286 acre conservation easement on the Summer Ranch on the south end of Emerald Mountain with longtime local rancher Vernon Summer. Vernon Summer has long been conservation minded. In 1997, Mr. Summer conserved 150 acres of irrigated meadow along County Road 14 as the demonstration project for the Routt County Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program. The PDR Program is still going strong today.

Today, CCALT in partnership with the PDR Program is thrilled to announce the protection of 490 acres of the Emerald Ridge Ranch.

The Emerald Ridge Ranch is owned by Doug Scott and his three sons who are the fourth generation to steward this land. Doug Scott's grandfather, H.C. Lufkin began assembling the ranch in 1919 and continued acquiring additional parcels through the 1940's. In 1954, H.C. Lufkin sold the ranch to his son, long-time Steamboat rancher, Don Lufkin, who owned it for over 40 years utilizing the land for summer pasture for his Routt County ranching operation, as well as for hunting and other recreational uses. Don, who is now 89, still resides in Steamboat at the Doak Walker Care Center. Don sold the ranch to his nephew, Doug Scott, in 1994, but

continued to use and enjoy the ranch until 2006 when he entered the Doak. Both Don and Doug shared a desire that much of the ranch be protected and conserved in order to preserve for future generations its outstanding attributes as one of the most unique and beautiful mountain ranches in the south Yampa Valley.

The ranch, situated on the south side of Emerald Mountain, provides spectacular views of the Park Range to the east and views of the Flat Tops Wilderness to the southwest. Thorpe Mountain and Blacktail Mountain are visible to the south and the Steamboat Ski Area is highly visible to the northeast. Walton Creek Canyon in Routt National Forest is visible to the east of the Property. The Property is also visible from Routt County Roads 14, 22, 35 and 41 Colorado State Highway 131 and US Highway 40 and an important piece in protecting the view into Routt County from Rabbit Ears Pass.

The ranch sits just south of the Emerald Mountain land managed by the State and Bureau of Land Management. Within three miles of the Property there are over 2,700 acres protected with conservation easements and the Cyprus Valley State Habitat Area and Chuck Lewis State wildlife area are both nearby as well. Despite conservation efforts, subdivisions border the ranch adding a sense of urgency to the protection of the ranch.

“With the protection of a large portion of the Emerald Ridge Ranch, the conservation work that has been done over the years in this area is really starting to come together and will shape the future of this landscape and the agricultural economy” said Megan Manner, the Director of Stewardship for CCALT. Megan has been the project lead in the Emerald Mountain area of Routt County.

CCALT currently holds 32 easements in Routt County covering more than 20,000 acres. Successful ranching in the area relies upon a “critical mass” of productive ranches in order to attract the goods and services required by those enterprises. Taken together, successful conservation efforts in the area play a vital role in Routt County’s agricultural and recreational economy as well as protection of wildlife. The loss of any of the large ranches from the area would threaten the sustainability of the other agricultural operations in the area.

The PDR Program assisted CCALT in acquiring the third and final phase of this conservation easement through a bargain sale. The PDR funds, in the amount of \$200,000, helped leverage a very generous landowner donation, which was made possible by the State of Colorado’s conservation easement tax credit program and other similar conservation easement incentives.

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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. For more information visit www.ccalt.org.