



Helena Silve/Courtesy

A new conservation easement would conserve 1,310 acres of the 2,400 acre Knott Ranch, still operated as a cattle ranch by members of the family that has owned it for five generations, along Routt County Road 29 about 35 miles southwest of Steamboat Springs.

County commissioners to vote on Knott Ranch conservation

UPCOMING EVENT

Routt County Board of Commissioners vote on Purchase Development Rights

- Tuesday, September 27, 2011, 11 a.m.
- Routt County Courthouse, 522 Lincoln Ave., Steamboat Springs
- Not available / Free

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Steamboat Springs — The Routt County Board of Commissioners could vote Tuesday to put \$750,000 of Purchase of Development Rights program tax dollars toward the conservation of 1,310 acres of the scenic Knott Ranch along the upper Trout Creek Valley about 35 miles southwest of Steamboat Springs.

The PDR funds would be combined with \$450,000 in lottery proceeds from Great Outdoors Colorado and the Knott family's donation of 30 percent of the \$1.74 million appraised value of the land.

The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust would hold the easement.

Routt County's voter-approved PDR program is funded by a 1.5-mill property tax. The process works by providing voter-approved tax dollars as an incentive to landowners, often ranch families, to enter into a conservation easement that sets the land aside from development. The property owners donate a substantial portion of the value of the easement as determined by an appraisal.

The Knott Ranch comprises a significant portion of the private land along upper Trout Creek. It consists of irrigated hay meadow, pasture, mixed aspen forest, shrub lands and more than two miles of Trout Creek.

The ranch, viewable by the public along Routt County Road 29, straddles a narrow canyon that opens into a valley with backdrops that include Pinnacle Peak, Sand Point, Mount Orno and Pyramid Peak in the Flat Tops.

The Knott family first settled on the land in 1936 when Courtney Ives purchased the property and moved to the Upper Trout Creek Valley from Steamboat Springs. Courtney's daughter, Doris Ives, married Dan Knott and together they purchased the property in 1957 and later expanded its agricultural operations. Doris Knott continues to live on the property and is active in the business decisions of Knott Land & Livestock Co. Her grandson, Tyler, is the fifth generation of the Knott family to live and work on the ranch.

"Conservation easements can be a valuable tool for landowners and working operations. At this time, the conservation easement provides us with a unique opportunity to advance our operation and to maintain its sustainability into the future," Tyler Knott said in a prepared statement.

He has a degree in ranchland ecology and watershed management that prepares him to run a conserved ranch.

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