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Monday, January 26, 2015

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\$5.6 million conservation easement preserves grouse habitat

Updated 2:21 pm, Wednesday, January 14, 2015

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CRAIG, Colo. (AP) — An agriculture-preservation group and a northwestern Colorado ranch have agreed on a conservation easement to preserve about 25 square miles of greater sage grouse habitat.

The Colorado Cattlemen's [Agricultural Land Trust](#) said Wednesday the owners of the Cross Mountain Ranch will be paid \$5.6 million in exchange for keeping the land permanently free of development.

The trust says about half the money comes from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Sage Grouse Initiative. The rest comes from Colorado Lottery revenue and other sources.

The land is described as key sage grouse habitat near Dinosaur National Monument.

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The conservation easement is part of a broader effort by states, local governments and landowners to protect the greater sage grouse without resorting to an endangered or threatened species designation by the federal government.

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