



# Intermountain West Joint Venture

Conserving habitat through partnerships

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## Migratory Birds and Agriculture Conserved: Colorado Land Trust Partners with the IWJV

Hannah J. Ryan, IWJV Communications Specialist

The snow-capped peaks of northwestern Colorado give way to sagebrush on the mountain flanks and, in the valley bottoms, lush hay meadows and willow-lined streams. The private ranchlands at these lower elevations provide habitat for a multitude of wetland-dependent wildlife in the context of working agricultural lands. It is here that ranchers and a dynamic land trust dedicate time and energy to conserving habitat for a diversity of birds including Wilson's Phalarope, Greater Sandhill Crane, and Greater Sage-grouse.

"Working lands are increasingly important for migratory bird species," said Chris West, Executive Director of the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT). "Ranchers and farmers have helped create valuable habitat for more than a century with practices like flood irrigation. We all have the same goal – to protect working ranches and the wildlife they sustain."



Photo by CCALT

From left to right, CCALT Director of Conservation Transactions Carolyn Aspelin and landowners Shane Mowry, Dick Mowry and Suzanne Mowry during a field visit at the Mowry Ranch in Jackson County.

Formed in 1995, CCALT is the first land trust in the nation created by mainstream agricultural producers (Colorado Cattlemen's Association). CCALT works with Colorado's ranchers to implement conservation, often through the use of agricultural conservation easements.

"CCALT achieved this by learning the priorities of landowners, what's important to them, and what their ranches need," said Carolyn Aspelin, Director of Conservation Transactions.

Today, there is immense, mounting pressure on rural landowners to sell for development, she said. CCALT works to demonstrate the value of conservation easements for working lands by traveling around the state and holding workshops called "Easements 101." These workshops help debunk stereotypes about easements and explain how they can work for some properties and not others.

To support these efforts CCALT reached out to the Intermountain West Joint Venture (IWJV) in 2011 to discuss how their conservation efforts and stewardship with traditional ranchers could support bird habitat. Based on these conversations CCALT applied for and received two IWJV Capacity Grant

awards in 2011 and 2012 to support landowner outreach, including Easements 101 and kitchen-table outreach.

"Now we have a waiting list of landowners interested in having CCALT help them find funding to enter into an easement," Aspelin said.

This support, along with numerous other partnering organizations, has led to the protection of 20 ranch properties covering 14,500 acres. 2013 will result in the completion of at least six new CCALT conservation easements on over 6,000 acres in the four proposed watersheds.

"Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust is a model for land trusts, watershed groups, and other non-profits working to conserve agriculture and wildlife in Colorado," said Ali Duvall, Assistant Coordinator for the IWJV.

"Investing in passionate organizations that work with ranchers, exploring ways to partner with them, and providing resources for working lands and the migratory birds they support is what the IWJV is all



Photo by CCALT

Russell Ranch in Rio Blanco County.

## Newsletter issues

Conservation Roundup: Fall 2013

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## Did you know?

Because habitats within the

Intermountain West are critical to supporting hemispheric populations of Long-billed Curlew, the IWJV has selected this as a priority species for conservation. Curlews prefer open grasslands (short- to mixed-grass and open or recently grazed pastures) with maximum heights less than 30 cm. (Fellows and Jones 2009)

about.”

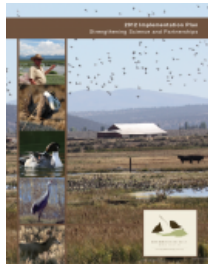
Key Partners: An array of conservation partners work to actively maintain the agricultural communities and wildlife that depend on these productive lands. Key partners include private ranchers, private foundations, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Ducks Unlimited, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, and Colorado Partners for Fish and Wildlife.

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Also in the Spring, 2013 issue of Conservation Roundup:

- [Unlocking the Secret of Invasive Phragmites and its Expansion in the Great Salt Lake](#) (By Dr. Karin M. Kettenring, Utah State University)
- [Flood Irrigation Practices Offer Win-Win for Ranchers and Wildlife](#) (By Sal Palazzolo (Idaho Department of Fish and Game) and Karen Fullen (NRCS))
- [White-faced Ibis Study: Focus for Conservation in Eastern Idaho](#) (By Rob Cavallaro and Colleen Moulton, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and Jay Carlisle, Idaho Bird Observatory)
- [Ducks Unlimited Acquires Landmark Property in Market Lake, Idaho](#) (By Chris Bonsignore and Chris Colson, Ducks Unlimited)
- [Bridging the Gap Between Public Wildlife Areas and Private Ranchland](#) (By Matt Holland, Pheasants Forever)
- [Finding Common Ground Through Relationships, a Nevada Rancher's Perspective](#) (By Hannah J. Ryan, IWJV Communications Specialist)

### 2013 Implementation Plan



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Contact Webmaster: [iwiv@IWJV.org](mailto:iwiv@IWJV.org)

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