

## Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust accreditation renewed

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The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) has achieved renewed accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance.

"Our accreditation renewal is a reflection on all of the high-quality conservation work that we do," said Chris West, CCALT Executive Director. "When we were founded, this was the expectation that was placed on CCALT the agricultural community in Colorado.

The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust was founded in 1995 and serves ranchers and farmers across the state. The Land Trust has worked with more than 270 conservation-minded landowners to protect more than 425,000 acres of working ranches and farms.

Accredited land trusts are authorized to display a seal indicating to the public that they meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent. The seal is a mark of distinction in land conservation.

"CCALT is one of the first land trusts to receive renewed accreditation, a significant achievement for the land trust and a major milestone for the accreditation program. CCALT is an important member of the 280 accredited land trusts that protect more than half of the 20,645,165 acres currently owned in fee or protected by a conservation easement," said Commission Executive Director Tammara Van Ryn. "Accreditation renewal, which must be completed every five years, provides the public with an assurance that accredited land trusts continue to meet exceedingly high standards for quality."

Each land trust that achieved renewed accreditation submitted extensive documentation and underwent a rigorous review. "Through accreditation renewal land trusts are part of an important evaluation and improvement process that verifies their operations continue to be effective, strategic and in accordance with strict requirements," said Van Ryn. "Accredited organizations have engaged citizen conservation leaders and improved systems for ensuring that their conservation work is permanent."

Land conservation helps ensure clean air and drinking water; safe, healthy food; scenic landscapes and views; recreational places and habitat for wildlife. In addition to health and food benefits, conserved land increases property values near greenbelts, saves tax dollars by encouraging more efficient development, and reduces the need for expensive water filtration facilities. Across the country, local citizens and communities have come together to form more than 1,700 land trusts to save the places they love.

Community leaders in land trusts throughout the country have worked with willing landowners to save over 47 million acres of farms, forests, parks and other areas people value, including land transferred to public agencies and protected via other means. Strong, well-managed land trusts provide local communities with effective champions and caretakers of their critical land resources, and safeguard the land through the generations.