



CROSSROADS

FALL 2018

LEOPOLD CONSERVATION
AWARD

.....

IMPORTANT PLACES

.....

2018 SUMMER PROJECT
HIGHLIGHT

PHOTO: JOHN FIELDER

Passing Forward the Important Places

Leopold Conservation Award Winner: Beatty Canyon Ranch

WRITTEN BY MAGGIE HANNA

The Wooten Family's management of land, livestock, community, and family are one and the same, and their commitment to this ethic is tangible even in the youngest among them. While waiting on the rest of the Beatty Canyon crew to come in from moving cattle, the members of the 6th generation, the eldest of whom is just shy of 11, shared their vision for the future. Each of these young people looks forward every day to working alongside parents and grandparents, learning and monitoring plant and animal species of the canyonlands, and each is proud to take part in caring for this important place. It was unanimous: each one has every intention of getting an education, trying their hand in the rodeo arena, and making ranching their future.

In partnership with the Colorado Cattlemen's Association (CCA) and the Sand County Foundation, the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) had the distinct honor of recognizing the Beatty Canyon Ranch as the 2018 Colorado Leopold Conservation Award recipient. Beatty Canyon Ranch is owned and managed by the Wooten Family. Purchased in 1929, the ranch is still in the family with 4th, 5th, and 6th generations all on the ranch. Steve and Joy Wooten raised their two daughters, Arin Burnham and Niki Henard, on the ranch, and now have the privilege of teaching and watching their grandchildren share this way of life. Steve and Joy have a deep pride in this family business and take great care in preparing the next generation to be successful, challenging them to take

ownership in the work and find new and better ways of doing business.

The Wootens define their conservation ethic as grazing cattle on native pastureland to produce high-quality beef in a manner compatible and sustainable for the ranch, while providing a high quality life for family, passing the ranch forward through deliberate succession, and achieving financial goals.



The family opens their home and ranch to tours and workshops to advance awareness of modern ranching practices and offer this important

“Steve and Joy’s land ethic is in their DNA. They are generational ranchers who understand, respect, and honor their heritage while also embracing adaptation and innovation.”


— GRADY GRISSOM, 2017 Leopold Conservation Award Winner

landscape for all to enjoy and learn from. Each member of the family is a spokesperson on topics such as grazing practices, treatment for invasive species, beef production issues, wildlife and natural resource management, and family finance and succession planning.

Beatty Canyon Ranch has engaged an array of partners in their work. A notable effort and success has been their riparian work to combat an explosion and spread of tamarisk. This work relied heavily on partnerships and persistence, but today, the health of the river systems on the ranch is dramatically improved. They also worked to combat encroachment of pinyon and juniper trees on soils better suited for a native grassland ecosystem. They have long worked to develop water systems for livestock, adding windmills and stock ponds, installing solar and submersible pumps, and miles of pipeline to distribute water throughout the property.

Since 1990, a hunting enterprise has generated and diversified ranch revenue, as well as spurred the creation of a partnership with neighboring ranchers to improve hunting throughout the region.

This joint effort allows the public to hunt a large swath of private ranchland, has produced significant and positive financial impact to the community, and has provided opportunities to share the importance of agriculture's role in the ecosystem.

As with their approach to land management, the Wootens are integral to their communities. Members of the family serve on the Kim School Board, the Kim Equine Pavilion, the National Little Britches Rodeo, the Piñon Canyon Expansion Opposition Coalition, the Biological/Natural Resource Inventory Committee, the CCA and CCALT boards, and the United States Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, among others. 



► Beatty Canyon Ranch Headquarters near Kim, Colorado. Photo: Russ Schnitzer

2019 Nominations

Nominations for the 2019 Leopold Conservation Award are due November 2018, with applications to follow in February 2019. If you have questions about the award, the selection process, or a nomination, please call Maggie Hanna, 720.557.8266.

Federal Farm Bill Easement Program

IMPACT ON COLORADO



A Colorado State University study, commissioned by CCALT, has found that the federal farm bill **INVESTED \$80 MILLION** in conservation easements in Colorado between 2009 and 2017, which:



HELPED CONSERVE MORE THAN 129,000 ACRES OF FARM AND RANCHLANDS



HELPED CREATE 1,102 COLORADO JOBS



GENERATED MORE THAN \$174 MILLION IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN THE STATE, 80% IN RURAL COMMUNITIES.

Source: Estimated economic impact of Federal Agricultural Conservation Easement Programs (ACEP) on Colorado, 2009-2017; Seidl, Andrew; Swartzentruber, Ryan; Hill, Rebecca; Colorado State University, July 2018.



The Wooten family on Beatty Canyon Ranch. Photo: Russ Schnitzer ◀

CCALT STAFF UPDATES



AMBER POGIALES EXTERNAL RELATIONS COORDINATOR

Welcome to new CCALT staff member, Amber Pougiales, External Relations Coordinator. Amber grew up in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, where she developed her love for open space, outdoor adventure, and Colorado's unique western heritage. She joins CCALT after spending nearly eight years in Oregon, where she earned her undergraduate degree in Environmental Studies from the University of Oregon. Amber is currently finishing classes to complete her graduate degree in Natural Resource Stewardship from Colorado State University. Amber's key role at CCALT will be event planning and facilitation.



MAGGIE HANNA TRANSITIONS TO CONSERVATION MANAGER

Maggie joined the CCALT team as the External Relations Coordinator in 2015. This fall, Maggie is transitioning to the CCALT project team in the role of Conservation Manager. In this capacity, Maggie will work with landowners on conservation projects, oversee the Leopold Conservation Award, and assist with annual monitoring.



Important Places The San Luis Valley

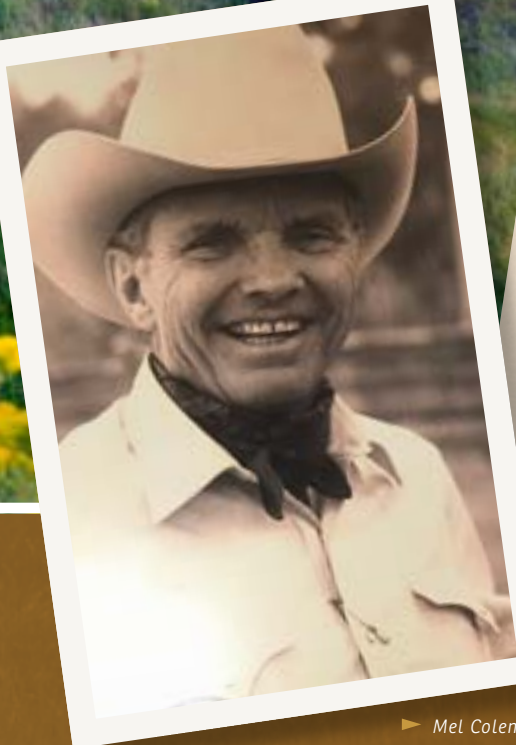
WRITTEN BY JAYNE THOMPSON

Celebrating the history of families and the important places they steward is nothing new for the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT). Recently, the CCALT staff reviewed our own organizational history, and along the way stumbled upon a treasure chest of historical papers, handwritten notes, years of printed emails, and news clippings from across Colorado, each sorted in weathered manila envelopes, most with handwritten labels peeling off.

One document in particular caught the eyes and hearts of the CCALT team as we sorted files on the cold concrete floor of our storage unit. The letter

on the following page was written by Glenn Melvin "Mel" Coleman Sr., around the year 2000. The letter, which we suspect he was asked to write by CCALT staff at the time, is Coleman's view of what Saguache, Colorado and the San Luis Valley might look like in 20 years' time. At the time, 2020 surely seemed like a long way away.

The Coleman Ranch was founded in 1875 (one year before Colorado became a state) and Mel Coleman was a proud fourth generation Saguache rancher who took over management of the ranch in 1950. Mel is no longer alive, but the Coleman name is synonymous with natural beef, and Mel is credited with the development and growth of



► Mel Coleman


Colorado's and the nation's natural beef industry. Mel believed deeply in conservation and the importance of ranching and agriculture to the Saguache community and the San Luis Valley. The Coleman family was among the first to conserve their ranch and then advocate for conservation easements as a useful tool for other families in the Valley.

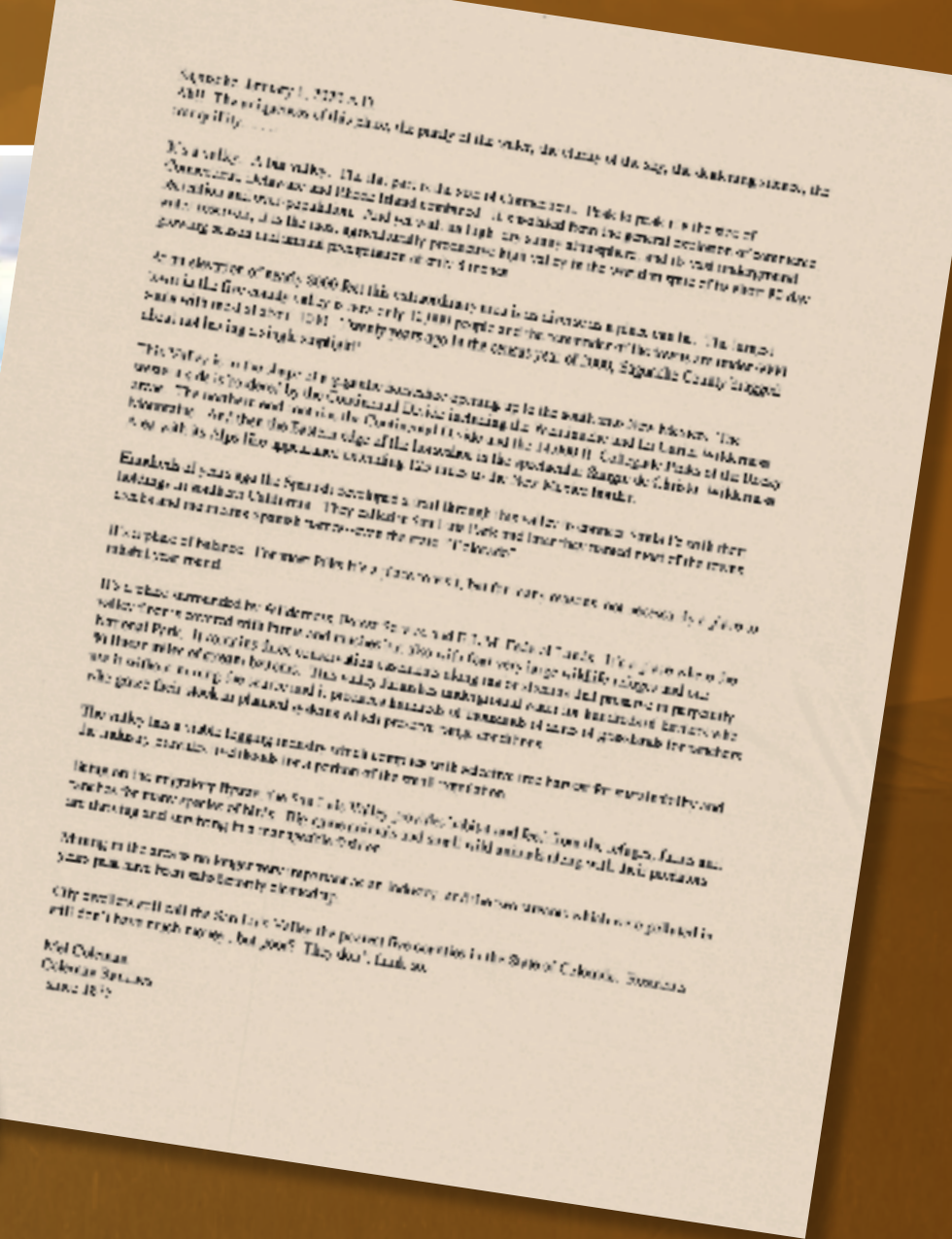
Today, Coleman Ranch is still in operation, owned and managed by Coleman's nephew, Tim Coleman. Mel's 2020 vision of the Saguache community and surrounding area is right on the money: agriculture still defines this high mountain valley, the region is still home to one national

park and multiple wildlife refuges, and Saguache is still populated by locals and not listed as a top tourist destination. However, in contrast to what Mel thought might be three conservation easements conserving land along the valley's river bottoms, CCALT now holds 35 conservation easements in the Valley, conserving more than 37,000 acres of Colorado's most productive ranch and farm land. It's not quite 2020, but Mel would probably agree that CCALT is following his vision pretty closely!

The Saguache ranching community represented everything that Mel believed was good in the West, and this letter captures a glimpse

of how important this place was to him. Sometimes history shifts the story and causes you to reassess where you are and what success looks like. When I called Mel Jr., Mel's son, to share this letter with him and get his permission to share it with you, he remembered his dad with a few words: "The Valley was everything to him. Everything."

I hope you enjoy reading about the San Luis Valley in the words of Mel Coleman; it was an important place for him, and it's still an important place for many. 



2018 Summer Project Highlight

Conservation Success in Summit County

WRITTEN BY JAYNE THOMPSON

Travelers, truckers, and weekend warriors heading west of Denver along Interstate 70 catch their first glimpse of Summit County, Colorado after a long climb past Loveland Ski Area and a short drive through the Eisenhower Tunnel, a gateway to the Rocky Mountains. Expansive views of conifer-covered mountains greet motorists as they exit the tunnel and begin their descent into Silverthorne. Home to four major ski areas and two large reservoirs, Summit County offers hundreds of recreational opportunities, earning it the nickname, “Colorado’s Playground.” Today, the county is one of the most sought after places to live, work, and recreate in the state.

The increase in population and development pressure in Summit County threatens the very things that make this place so special—its heritage and scenic and natural resources. Hay fields, river frontage

and mountain meadows are competing with shopping complexes, golf courses, and housing subdivisions to accommodate the demand from both seasonal visitors and year-round residents. Today, fewer than 38 ranches remain in Summit County, and of those ranches, only eight are greater than 500 acres.


On August 1, 2018, the Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) partnered with Summit County Open Space and private landowners—Doug Childs, Sean Flanigan, and their families—to conserve the historic Knorr Ranch. The conservation project represented a unique public/private partnership and a united effort from traditional ranching families, neighbors, and community partners from all different walks of life, who all value this place. As neighboring landowners, Doug and Sean’s desire to purchase and protect the property propelled the project forward and

the Summit County Open Space Program supported the effort with a contribution of \$1.6 million towards the conservation. Funding for the project was also made possible with support from a Habitat Partnership Program Grant from Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

The Knorr Ranch is located north of Silverthorne, Colorado along the southeastern shoreline of Green Mountain Reservoir and adjacent to the White River National Forest. The property is the foreground to the Eagles Nest Wilderness and the Gore Range, and is visible for six miles along State Highway 9, the main north/south highway through Summit County. The ranch, which was first homesteaded in the late 1800s (portions of which were originally located under Green Mountain Reservoir), was recently listed for sale with the potential to be developed into 64 home sites. Based on its

location and attributes, it was easy for the Childs and Flanigan families to picture the neighboring property carved into residential lots or a golf course subdivision as they drove past the for sale signs. In an effort to halt the impending development, the two families came together to purchase 1,123 acres of the ranch and then conserve it with CCALT, successfully eliminating all 64 potential home sites. In addition to this effort, Summit County acquired more than 500 acres of the ranch for open space. The Knorr family, whose agricultural roots in Summit County span back generations, will continue to retain ownership of the historic ranch headquarters.

“I’m thankful to my neighbors for panicking so much that they put big money down,” said Karen Foster, the great granddaughter of the Knorr legacy. “It’s uncommon for public and private to work so diligently together, the decisions were hard, but we are so thankful to be able to retain parts of the ranch in our family ownership, and thankful that the land will stay open, hopefully forever.”

The Knorr Ranch conservation project preserves the very essence of what makes Summit County an important place for so many, and it is a shining example of the successes that can result when multiple partners work together towards a common goal. At the end of the day, all of the parties invested in this project had one thing in common: they believed the Knorr Ranch was an important place worth protecting. Because the Knorr Ranch will remain as it is today into perpetuity, this landscape will continue to showcase and benefit Colorado for generations of travelers, kayakers, hikers, and all Coloradans to come. 



**To date, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and Summit County Open Space have invested more than \$10 million to conserve almost 8,000 acres around Green Mountain Reservoir and the surrounding area. CCALT holds four conservation easements in Summit County.*



Knorr Ranch. Photo: Ren Martyn, Sotheby’s International Realty ◀



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A MONTHLY GIVING SOCIETY
IN SUPPORT OF CCALT

MONTHLY SUPPORT OF
CCALT GOES

42%
Further

IN ONE YEAR THAN DONORS
WHO GIVE ONE TIME
ANNUALLY

Contact Amber at Amber@ccalt.org to sign up.

2018 Legislative Wins

1. Colorado Lottery proceeds will continue to be allocated to Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) in support of conservation and outdoor recreation through 2049. Senate Bill 66 extends the voice of Coloradans who first voted to have lottery funds support GOCO in 1992. To date, GOCO funding has helped organizations like CCALT permanently protect more than one million acres of working agricultural land, wildlife habitat, and open space.

2. Extension of Colorado’s transferable conservation easement tax credit program. The passing of House Bill 1291 created the country’s first Division of Conservation, extended the conservation easement tax credit program, and established a framework for creating the next generation of conservation incentives for Colorado landowners.

Since 2000, conservation easement tax credits have been used to conserve more than 2.2 million acres of land. The Governor signed the bill into law on May 21, 2018 and in his public remarks called this one of the most important pieces of legislation that the Colorado General Assembly passed in 2018.



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Visit us at www.ccalt.org to learn more or find additional information about the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust.