



CROSSROADS

— SPRING 2016 ISSUE —

WRITTEN BY CAREY RICHARDSON

They Don't Make More Land

If there's one thing Joe and Lillian Provenza want all landowners to be aware of, it's that once you develop land its serenity, its history, and even parts of its beauty can be lost forever. There are no replacements, no second chances. Once it's gone it's gone.

Born and raised on the Provenza ranch, which sits in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains on the southeast flank of the Spanish Peaks, Joe and Lillian always knew their father wanted the ranch to stay in the family. What they didn't know is that he had been exploring the idea of a conservation easement before his death. It was only after they completed the process with CCAAL that they found a newspaper clipping he had saved listing CCAAL as the highest rated provider.

Thus, they learned they had fulfilled his vision for the future of the ranch—one where both the land and the family who was part of it could thrive for generations to come.

The Provenza Ranch has been in the family since 1946, when it was purchased by their grandfather. Their father was raised on the ranch, their mother a few miles up the road, and now Joe, Lillian and several of their children manage the daily operations



"I encourage everyone to look into a conservation easement ... They don't make more land."

— Joe Provenza



Jerod Smith and Joe Provenza ◀

MORE THAN

245

families have been served through CCALT's land conservation efforts.



29% of the US is in a drought. Learn more at droughtmonitor.unl.edu/mapsanddata/maparchive.aspx

that used to include a cow/calf operation, and hopefully one day will again. But today the ranch focuses mainly on hay production.

Hay is grown on a sub-irrigated meadow near a small spring that provides what little water the ranch gets. In a wet year the ranch can produce 1,000 bales, but recent years have been dry, and the ranch has produced less than half of that. The family has remained agriculturally productive by growing what they can, and all of the land is leased to a renowned outfitter.

The Provenza Ranch is located in an area that has been deemed "normally dry," which means it is dry approximately 80%

of the time. Land in such a climate is prone to erosion damage when it does rain, and because of that the Soil Conservation District gave money to ranchers in the 70s and 80s to install erosion control dams. Joe and Lillian's father built numerous dams on the ranch, which not only established several shallow valleys where water could collect but corrected years of erosion damage and vastly improved the natural beauty of the land. Several years of drought have left these valleys nearly empty, so the Provenzas are hopeful the wet winter will replenish the aquifers and increase hay production.

Sustaining a ranch in a drought is a challenge, and one that the Provenzas have successfully navigated. But wet

“There’s something about putting your feet on your own property. Being surrounded by nature. Knowing it was passed down to you.”

years bring their own challenges. Although hay production can triple or even quadruple in a wet year, the hay has to be turned more frequently and removed from the damp ground shortly after harvest. Using older equipment, as is common for most small ranchers, staying on top of the workload can be daunting. Still, Joe and Lillian wouldn’t change a thing.

“There’s something about putting your feet on your own property. Being surrounded by nature. Knowing it was passed down to you,” says Joe, who values carrying on the family legacy as much as he values the land itself. It’s no wonder his favorite spot on the ranch is “Grandpa’s Rock,” a large outcropping overlooking the valley where his grandfather sat and hunted.

Adds Lillian, whose favorite spot also has a connection to the family as well as the land, “Both our parents grew up here. They each had a connection to this place before they had a connection to each other. And now I live here, and right from my house I see the canyon, and the elk, and I get to have this all the time.”

Listening to Joe and Lillian it’s easy to see why their father was considering a conservation easement. It’s not just their personal history on the land, but the land itself that deserves to be conserved.

Just beyond the ranch a few housing developments have started to crop up. Neighboring ranches have broken into smaller parcels. Both have brought more traffic and more noise. The Provenza Ranch could have suffered the same fate, but instead of watching the land disappear Joe and Lillian are preparing to leave it for the next generation, which includes five children, eight grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Joe and Lillian know it can be hard to keep a ranch within the family, especially a large one, but they’ve taken the first step with a conservation easement. Now they can turn their focus to bringing back cattle. And a horse. Maybe two.

“I encourage everyone to look into a conservation easement,” says Joe. “They don’t make more land.”

Memories, on the other hand, can always be made, and Joe and Lillian are proud that the heart of so many memories, past and future, will be preserved. The legacy of the Provenza Ranch will be passed down for generations to come, much like

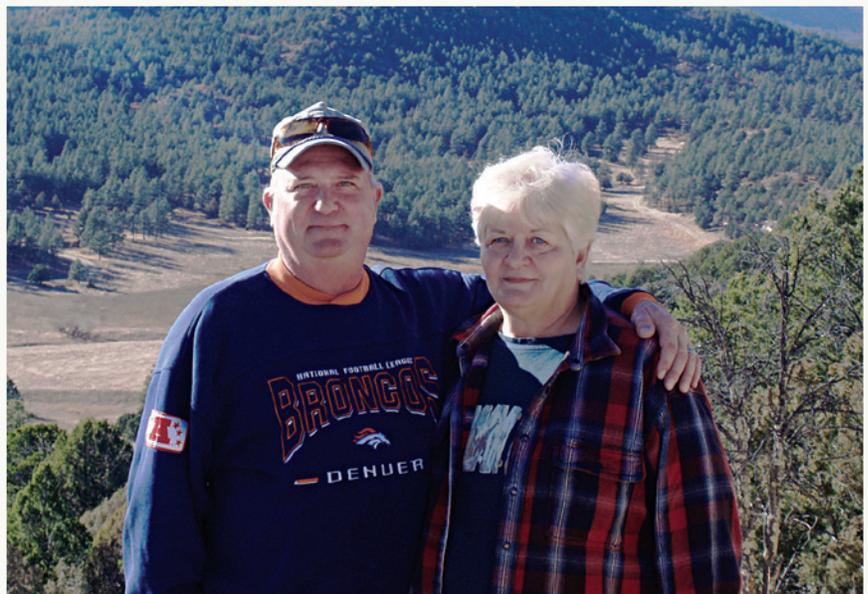
the family lasagna recipe, which goes well with a nice red fermented on the ranch by Joe himself. “Our grandpa was notorious for making and drinking wine,” said Joe. “I’ve sort of made that my hobby.”

“He makes a good blend,” says Lillian.

“We’re Italian,” adds Joe. 

“Both our parents grew up here. They each had a connection to this place before they had a connection to each other. And now I live here, and right from my house I see the canyon, and the elk, and I get to have this all the time.”

— Lillian Provenza



► Siblings, Joe and Lillian Provenza



WRITTEN BY ED ROBERSON | PHOTOS BY ED ROBERSON

LESSONS FROM AN "ANTI-BOOMER"

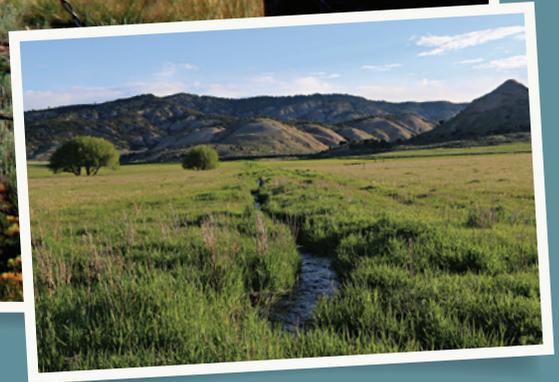
The great western author Wallace Stegner believed that Americans generally fit into one of two categories—"Boomers" or "Stickers." Boomers are "those who pillage and run" and want "to make a killing and end up on Easy Street." Stickers are just the opposite—they are "motivated by affection, by such a love for place and its life that they want to preserve it and remain in it."¹

Since America's westward expansion, the West has always attracted more

than its fair share of Boomers. Like moths to a flame, Boomers have flocked to the West for its expansive landscapes and natural resources that offer a potential one-way ticket to Easy Street. Western history is full of flamboyant, infamous Boomers—from trappers to miners, from developers to oilmen—who have descended on an area and, as quickly as they could, extracted every last bit of value from the land. When the resource (pelts, gold, land, oil) was diminished to the point of unprofitability, the Boomers

picked up, moved the entire operation to a new area, and repeated the process.

Ranchers, however, are the anti-Boomers. Since the first cattle drives came West, ranchers have relied completely on their specific parcel of land to sustain their operations year after year, generation after generation. Boomers have come and gone time and again, but ranchers have remained steadfast, respectfully stewarding their ranches, ensuring that they are healthy and productive from one year to the next.



Ranchers are Stickers. They are in it for the long haul, and they must ensure that their finite natural resources (land, grass, water) not only produce this current year, but every year for the next 50 years. The idea of extracting every last drop of value out of a ranch with no regard for the future is a recipe for overgrazing, an unsustainable herd, and, ultimately, financial ruin. The Boomer mentality is simply incompatible with ranching.

Yes, ranchers are motivated by profit, but for many ranchers it seems that financial success is just a tool that serves their primary motivation—a

desire to continue living and working on land that they love, preserving a ranching heritage that is slowly disappearing. The Sticker description seems to fit perfectly—ranchers have “such a love for place and its life that they want to preserve it and remain in it.”

CCALT plays a vital role in helping Colorado ranchers remain true to their Sticker way of life. Through its conservation easements, CCALT ensures that Colorado’s productive lands will remain true working ranches forever. No matter what type of economic pressure

the Boomers dole out, ranchers will be able to continue doing their meaningful work in places they love and respect.

For the non-rancher, it is important to understand that the positive impacts of protecting these working ranches go far beyond agriculture. Conserved ranches benefit families, communities, economies, water resources, and the outdoor-centric lifestyle that makes Colorado so special. Any Coloradan who loves the state’s expansive open spaces and scenic vistas should support CCALT and its critical work protecting ranches and ranching heritage. ©

¹Wendell Berry, *It All Turns on Affection* (2012)



WRITTEN BY CAREY RICHARDSON | PHOTO BY ED ROBERSON

WHAT CAN WE DO TO SAVE WATER?



400 gallons of water are used per day by the average American family.

MORE THAN

200

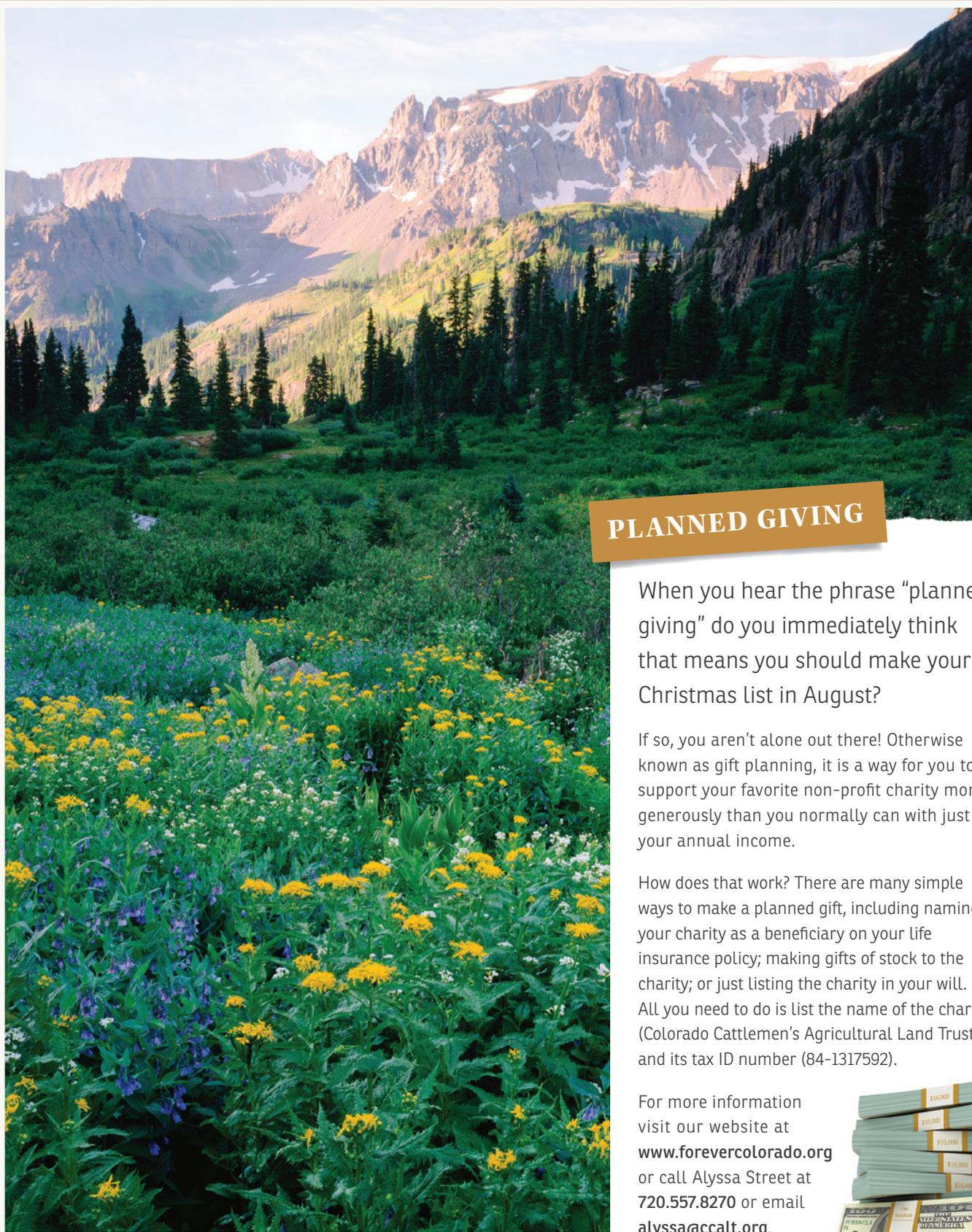
gallons of water can be saved a month just by turning off the tap while you brush your teeth in the morning and before bedtime. That's enough to fill a fish tank that holds six small sharks!

Coloradans know that drought is a normal, recurring weather pattern. Droughts that can span months or years have a significant impact on our ability to grow food. While water used in the food production process has environmental benefits, like recharging aquifers, some may think our society can conserve more water by reducing the amount that goes to agriculture. Those perceived savings, however, can have unintended environmental consequences. A more appropriate place to conserve water is within our own individual daily activities.

Many Coloradans obey watering restrictions and have turned to xeriscaping to conserve water. For some of us those conservation practices have become a way of life, but we can do even more by modifying our individual daily routines.

Did you know that Americans consume between 80-100 gallons of water per day doing routine tasks like showering, brushing our teeth and washing dishes? How do we consume so much while performing routine tasks? Letting the faucet run indefinitely as we do the dishes or brush our teeth. Taking long showers. Doing laundry. Flushing the toilet. It all adds up.

Most of us don't intend to waste water, but it's really easy to do. The good news is there are some simple steps you can take to conserve our water resources. Turn the faucet off while you brush your teeth. Install water-efficient appliances like low flow shower heads and toilets. A few small changes can go a long way toward conserving our water resources and ensuring that we will always have water for really important things like growing our food. 



PLANNED GIVING

When you hear the phrase “planned giving” do you immediately think that means you should make your Christmas list in August?

If so, you aren’t alone out there! Otherwise known as gift planning, it is a way for you to support your favorite non-profit charity more generously than you normally can with just your annual income.

How does that work? There are many simple ways to make a planned gift, including naming your charity as a beneficiary on your life insurance policy; making gifts of stock to the charity; or just listing the charity in your will. All you need to do is list the name of the charity (Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust) and its tax ID number (84-1317592).

For more information visit our website at www.forevercolorado.org or call Alyssa Street at 720.557.8270 or email alyssa@calt.org.





NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
DENVER, CO
PERMIT NO. 2882

CCALT FOREVER COLORADO BBQ

SAVE *the* DATE

Join us for dinner, drinks and an auction on

JUNE 25, 2016, 5-9 P.M.

at The Bluffs in Byers, CO. Tickets are \$150/person. Proceeds from the event will go toward the conservation of Colorado's beautiful and productive agricultural lands.

To RSVP, or to learn more about sponsorship opportunities visit our website www.forevercolorado.org or contact Maggie Hanna at maggie@ccalt.org or at 720.557.8266.

Photo courtesy of Dušan Smetana Photography



8833 Ralston Rd. | Arvada, CO | 80002
303.225.8677 | info@ccalt.org

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

The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust protects Colorado's agricultural land, heritage and families for future generations by conserving working rural landscapes.