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Finalists for Colorado Leopold Conservation Award Selected

ARVADA, Colo. – Three finalists have been selected for the prestigious 2020 Colorado Leopold Conservation Award®.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the award recognizes ranchers, farmers, and foresters who inspire others with their dedication to land, water, and wildlife habitat management on private, working lands.

In [Colorado](#) the \$10,000 award is presented annually by Sand County Foundation, [Colorado Cattlemen's Association](#), [Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust](#), [Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association](#), and [USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service](#).

The finalists are:

- **Collins Ranch of Kit Carson in Cheyenne County:** Toby and Amy Johnson's family are cattle ranchers who have implemented a grazing system focused on the long-term sustainability and improvement of grass and soil health. By utilizing more, but smaller, pastures their rotational grazing system protects against overgrazing. Cattle are moved to fields of corn stalks during the winter. Water tanks for cattle and wildlife have been moved away from meadows and creeks to reduce erosion.
- **LK Ranch of Meeker in Rio Blanco County:** The innovative grazing management, fencing and watering systems implemented by the Klinglesmith family have made their ranch more ecologically and economically resilient. Conservation easements placed on the ranch ensure that water rights will remain for agricultural and wildlife in perpetuity. New irrigation equipment reduces the amount of water needed to irrigate hay fields, and any late season hay growth is left standing to feed mule deer and elk.
- **May Ranch of Lamar in Prowers County:** From a carbon credit offset program and rangeland health assessments, to how cattle are properly cared for, rancher Dallas May and his family utilize a variety of third-party verifications to measure and manage conservation success. In addition to managing the grasslands his cattle graze, the Mays have installed wildlife-friendly fencing, improved wetlands and streams, restored playas,

and planted native trees. They actively work with conservation groups by hosting surveys of bird species, tours and biological inventories on the ranch.

This year's recipient will be announced in April. The formal award presentation will take place on Monday, June 15 at the Colorado Cattlemen's Association's 2020 Annual Convention, which will be held at the Colorado Springs Marriott in Colorado Springs.

"Agriculture producers positively benefit the environment, our communities, and our economy while feeding a growing society through sustainable production practices that produce more by using less," said Steve Wooten, Colorado Cattlemen's Association President. "This approach is the very backbone of stewardship that the Leopold Conservation Award honors and CCA celebrates the award recipients and applicants, and also all of Colorado's farmers and ranchers for their conservation contributions."

"The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust is proud to celebrate the voluntary conservation accomplishments of Colorado's farmers and ranchers," said Erik Glenn, Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust Executive Director. "The 2020 Leopold Conservation Award nominees and applicants showcase the diversity of agriculture in Colorado and the dedication that farming and ranching families have to the lands they steward, their communities, and their families."

To learn more about previous recipients, including the 2019 recipient, Livingston Ranch of Stratton, Colorado, visit <https://www.sandcountyfoundation.org/our-work/leopold-conservation-award-program/state/colorado>.

The Leopold Conservation Award in Colorado is made possible by generous contributions from the Colorado Cattlemen's Association, Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Sand County Foundation, Gates Family Foundation, Stanko Ranch, American AgCredit, The Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, The Nature Conservancy in Colorado, and McDonald's.

Sand County Foundation presents the Leopold Conservation Award to private landowners in 20 states for extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation.

For more information on the award, visit www.leopoldconservationaward.org.

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LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD PROGRAM

The Leopold Conservation Award is a competitive award that recognizes landowner achievement in voluntary conservation. Sand County Foundation presents the award in California, Colorado, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin, and in New England (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont).

www.leopoldconservationaward.org

SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

Sand County Foundation inspires and enables a growing number of private landowners to ethically manage natural resources in their care, so future generations have clean and abundant water, healthy soil to support agriculture and forestry, plentiful habitat for wildlife and opportunities for outdoor recreation. www.sandcountyfoundation.org

COLORADO CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Colorado Cattlemen's Association (CCA) is the state's only nonprofit trade organization exclusively representing Colorado's beef producers. Founded in 1867, CCA is the nation's oldest state cattlemen's association. www.coloradocattle.org

COLORADO CATTLEMEN'S AGRICULTURAL LAND TRUST

Recognizing the need to help Colorado's ranching and farming families protect their agricultural lands, in the face of growing development and economic pressures, the Colorado Cattlemen's Association in 1995 formed the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT). To date, CCALT has partnered with hundreds of ranching families in the protection of more than 637,000 acres. www.ccalt.org

TRI-STATE GENERATION & TRANSMISSION ASSOCIATION

Tri-State Generation & Transmission Assoc. is a wholesale electric power supplier owned by the 43-member electric cooperatives and public power districts it serves. Tri-State generates and delivers electricity to its member systems that serve more than one million people across nearly 200,000 square miles of Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico and Wyoming. www.tristate.coop.

USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

NRCS is a federal agency committed to helping private landowners care and make healthy choices for the land and water, while using them productively. Through voluntary incentive-based programs, the NRCS works directly with farmers, ranchers, forest owners and other land stewards to provide technical expertise and financial assistance to make conservation work on private lands. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/co/home/>