



*Mountain View Ranch, Routt County, Colorado  
Photo Credit: Krista Monger*

## **Historic Hay Meadow Conserved in the Elk River Valley**

**STEAMBOAT, Colo (June 2, 2020)** – A deep-rooted passion for agriculture and a dedication to land led a young Routt County ranching family to pursue conservation with the Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT), permanently conserving a portion of their ranch in the Elk River Valley, and ensuring it will always remain open and available for agricultural production.

The Mountain View Ranch is located just a few miles west of Steamboat Springs, Colorado. The ranch’s lush irrigated pasture frames the meandering Elk River corridor and snow-capped peaks of the Park Range, harboring many of the characteristics that residents and visitors alike associate with rural Routt County. The property is the headquarters and centerpiece of a multi-generational ranching operation run by Krista Monger and Justin Warren.

Participants in 2019’s inaugural SBT GRVL race will instantly recognize this idyllic stretch of Routt County, as all three race courses passed by the property. The area’s outstanding scenery and proximity to world-class recreational opportunities made the Mountain View Ranch highly vulnerable to residential development. Conversion of the Mountain View Ranch from agriculture would have come at a high societal cost, including the loss of a scenic landscape and fragmenting of critical wildlife habitat for big game, greater sandhill cranes, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, and bald eagles. However, thanks to the Monger/Warren family’s dedication to seeing this land permanently protected, it will always remain intact for current and future generations to enjoy.

This project leveraged previous conservation investments to build upon an existing protected landscape of nearly 2,900 acres within just three miles of the Mountain View Ranch. The conservation easement transaction was made possible by Routt County’s Purchase of Development Rights Program, which contributed \$237,000 towards the easement acquisition and cash reimbursement for certain qualifying transactional costs. The Natural Resources Conservation Service also contributed funding towards the conservation easement. With the Mountain View Ranch permanently protected, CCALT now holds more than 65,900 acres under conservation easement in Routt County, preserving the inspiring scenery, productive agricultural lands, and critical wildlife habitat that defines the Yampa and Elk River Valleys.

“This is a great example of how a conservation easement can help ranch succession,” says Megan Knott, director of stewardship at CCALT. “Here you have the fifth generation buying the ranch from the fourth. With Elk River frontage and water rights this close to Steamboat, this property is of utmost importance to protect and give the sixth generation a shot at a future in agriculture.”

**About the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust**

The [Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust](#) (CCALT) is a nonprofit land conservation organization whose mission is to "...conserve Colorado's western heritage and working landscapes for the benefit of future generations."

**About the Routt County PDR Program**

To date, [PDR](#) has completed conservation projects totaling 49,510 acres in Routt County. For more information, please contact Kendra Alfieri at Routt County, 970-879-0108.

**About the Natural Resources Conservation Service**

[Natural Resources Conservation Service](#), formerly known as the Soil Conservation Service, is an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture that provides technical assistance to farmers and other private landowners and managers.