



View of Greenland Ranch looking south to Pikes Peak.

Photo Credit: John Fielder

17,700+ Acre Greenland Ranch Conservation Easement Transferred to the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust

Douglas County's Greenland Open Space Remains in County ownership and open to the public.

Douglas County, CO (July 13, 2020) – Coloradans and visitors alike should all recognize the iconic Greenland Ranch. The property makes up a significant portion of the “big green open space” that relieves commuters on their drive along I-25 between Denver and Colorado Springs. The ranch is the last defense preventing the houses and strip malls of Denver’s suburbs from connecting to our southern neighbor and forming one giant megalopolis from 16th Street Mall to Pikes Peak. First conserved in 2000, the Greenland Ranch offers commuters a prairie-to-peaks Colorado view that hasn’t changed in hundreds of years and a glimpse at the oldest operating cattle ranch on the Front Range. The conservation easement that first protected Greenland Ranch from development and subdivision twenty years ago has been transferred to the Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) to hold and steward into the future.

Original conservation of Greenland Ranch was facilitated by The Conservation Fund, Douglas County, and landowner John Malone in 2000, but the project was anticipated long before then. Former Colorado Governor Roy Romer advocated for the state to support conservation of Greenland Ranch as early as 1977, emphasizing that if the state didn’t act to conserve the property, Denver and Colorado Springs would grow together and the landscape between them would be lost to office towers, shopping malls and housing developments forever. By the early 1990s, Douglas County was the fastest-growing county in the country.

Ultimately, conservation of Greenland Ranch was made possible with support from multiple private funders, funds from a dedicated sales tax in Douglas County, and a transformative grant from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO). GOCO, a political subdivision of the state and trust fund, was voted into effect by Coloradans in 1992 to help preserve and enhance the state's parks, trails, wildlife, rivers, and open spaces. GOCO’s investment in conserving Greenland Ranch was the organization’s largest ever grant – surpassed only by its support of the Trampe Ranch conservation easement in the Gunnison Valley nearly twenty years later in 2018.

On July 26, 2000 John Malone officially acquired and conserved the historic Greenland Ranch headquarters and the ranch property east of I-25. The conservation easement was conveyed to The Conservation Fund and Douglas County, with the intent that the easement would one day be transferred to a statewide or local land trust to hold and steward.

Simultaneously, Douglas County purchased and conserved the remaining 3,600 acres of Greenland Ranch west of I-25, and created the Greenland Open Space, which is now available to the public for passive recreation uses. Greenland Open Space is not part of this conservation easement transfer and will continue to be owned and operated by Douglas County.

The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust is a statewide conservation leader, and the fourth largest land trust in the nation, with a specific focus on ranch and farm land protection – making the organization the best choice to hold and steward the Greenland Ranch conservation easement moving forward. During the transfer, CCALT worked with all of the previous partners and Malone to update the conservation easement and strengthen the protection of Greenland's significant conservation values.

"Protection of Greenland Ranch 20 years ago was the culmination of decades of work to preserve this iconic property. The original agreement between Malone, The Conservation Fund and Douglas County, always anticipated a transfer of the conservation easement to a statewide or local land trust. All the parties believe that CCALT is the best organization to steward this property into the future," said Sydney Macy, who spearheaded the project on behalf of The Conservation Fund.

While this is not a new conservation project, the transition of the Greenland Ranch conservation easement is worth noting for several reasons. First, it highlights the importance of partnerships to Colorado's conservation community. The Conservation Fund, Douglas County, CCALT, and the landowner have worked together to make sure that the efforts of the past are carried forward into the future. Second, a new wave of people have come to call Colorado home, and they too should recognize the public benefits provided to them via Greenland Ranch. Coloradans all gain value from the scenic vistas, robust wildlife habitat, and classic "western" feel that are provided courtesy of Greenland Ranch.

Private land conservation touches everybody who lives in or visits Colorado. Greenland Ranch, perhaps better than most, can help us share that story.

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About The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust - [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 Conservation Fund – At The Conservation Fund, we make conservation work for America by creating solutions that make environmental and economic sense. Top-ranked for efficiency and effectiveness, The Conservation Fund has worked in all 50 states since 1985 to protect more than eight million acres of land. In Colorado, The Conservation Fund has been instrumental in protecting over 260,000 acres of land in Colorado, and spearheading the I-25 Conservation Corridor project in Douglas County—protecting more than 35,000 acres of historic ranches and open space, spanning 12 miles along the highway in one of the nation's fastest growing counties. conservationfund.org

About Douglas County – Douglas County has actively protected its open spaces, since County voters earmarked a portion of their sales tax for such purposes. Since the inception of this program in 1995, the County has ensured the protection of over 63,000 acres of important open space, ranch land, and wildlife habitat. Access to County open spaces has been increased, with 90 miles of trails on County Open Space.

About Great Outdoors Colorado - Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) invests a portion of Colorado Lottery proceeds to help preserve and enhance the state's parks, trails, wildlife, rivers, and open spaces. GOCO's independent board awards competitive grants to local governments and land trusts and makes investments through Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Created when voters approved a Constitutional Amendment in 1992, GOCO has since funded more than 5,300 projects in urban and rural areas in all 64 counties without any tax dollar support. Visit GOCO.org for more information.