



Saguache Creek Ranch – Moffat, Colo.

Saguache Creek and San Luis Creek Conservation Legacy Grows

Moffat, Colo. (January 22, 2021) - The [Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust \(CCALT\)](#) is pleased to announce the completion of another conservation project in the San Luis Valley. The 2,300-acre Saguache Creek Ranch outside of Moffat, Colo. is now conserved. The project was made possible with leadership from landowners Dale and Andrea Gerstberger, and with support from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), a program administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Dale and Andrea Gerstberger purchased Saguache Creek Ranch in 2014 after moving from Kansas to Colorado. As fourth generation ranchers, Dale and Andrea didn't waste any time re-establishing their agricultural operation in the Centennial State. Today, the lush hay meadows on Saguache Creek Ranch support Dale and Andrea's cow-calf operation. The family was introduced to conservation easements through their neighbor John Werner. John's property borders Dale and Andrea's ranch, and John has been a supporter of CCALT since conserving his own property in 2014. With the addition of Saguache Creek Ranch, there is now a contiguous block of conserved land along the eastern boundary of Werner's property and an additional 2.3 miles of Saguache Creek and 3.5 miles of the North Branch of Saguache Creek conserved in the San Luis Valley.

With over 1,840 acres of dense wetlands, Saguache Creek Ranch is a rarity in Colorado, where wetlands cover only 2% of the state. The ranch is prime habitat for Sandhill Cranes, a state species of special concern. Ducks Unlimited has identified the San Luis Valley as the most important breeding area in the state for migratory birds, including Sandhill Cranes, which migrate annually through the area in the

spring and fall. Additionally, the ranch offers habitat for big game species such as elk and pronghorn, which utilize the lower elevation ranchland on the valley floor as winter range.

“The Saguache Creek corridor is an inspiring conservation success story, with nearly the whole stretch of river perpetually conserved from where it flows off public lands, through the town of Saguache, and now for several miles south of town as it merges with the North Branch. This landscape scale conservation outcome would most certainly not be the success it is today without tremendous support from partners like GOCO and the USFWS, which have invested heavily in the area over the past 25 years,” said Brad Cory, CCALT conservation manager.

“Congratulations to the project partners for this impressive milestone in the San Luis Valley conservation movement,” said Chris Castilian, GOCO executive director. “And our sincere gratitude to Dale and Andrea Gerstberger for their generosity of spirit in thinking long-term about Colorado’s lands, people, and wildlife.”

Dale and Andrea turned to conservation due to mounting threat from development and increasing financial pressures related to the current drought and their recent purchase of the property. Conservation of the property will alleviate some of those pressures and allow the Gerstberger family to continue their family’s long ranching tradition. Conservation will also ensure that the scenic views and wildlife habitat associated with ranch will remain pristine.

#

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 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.*

North American Wetlands Conservation Act [The North American Wetlands Conservation Act](#) conserves North America’s waterfowl, fish and wildlife resources while producing a variety of environmental and economic benefits. Its success is driven by partnerships involving federal, state and local governments; nonprofit organizations like DU and community groups. This program represents a sound investment of limited federal dollars as each federal dollar must be matched at least one to one but funds are often doubled or tripled at the local level.

Media Contact:

Jayne Thompson
Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust
720-557-8264
Jayne@ccalt.org