

Pheasant Valley Ranch Concludes Two Part Conservation Project After Eight Years



Photo: Provided by Landowner

Villa Grove, Colo. (December 3, 2021) -- Since 2014, the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) has been working with the Ridgely family on a conservation easement on their Pheasant Valley Ranch which is located along US Highway 285 near the town of Villa Grove. Nestled in the northern end of the San Luis Valley, the ranch comprises 3,858.2 acres of agricultural and natural landscapes. Pheasant Valley Ranch sits on the valley floor and soaks up mountain views of the Sangre De Cristo and Culebra mountain ranges.

The Ridgely Family, owners of Pheasant Valley Ranch, have conserved the ranch to maintain the open spaces and agricultural viability of these lands. Conservation of the Pheasant Valley Ranch was completed in two phases both of which were made possible through financial support from Great Outdoors Colorado's (GOCO) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

"We're proud to support the partnership that resulted in the permanent protection of the Pheasant Valley Ranch, a critical effort that safeguards agricultural heritage, resources, and wildlife habitat in the San Luis Valley," said GOCO Executive Director Jackie Miller. "Through efforts like these, we ensure that the landscapes that Coloradans value, and benefit from, remain for generations to come."

The first phase of the project wrapped up in 2017. The initial easement conserved 1,766.2 acres of the Pheasant Valley Ranch. The second and final phase of the project was completed on December 3, 2021.

“The Ridgely family’s commitment to maintaining the ranching heritage of the northern end of the San Luis Valley by conserving the Pheasant Valley Ranch is a testament to the conservation ethic of Colorado’s farming and ranching families. These families work tirelessly to grow food and fiber, provide habitat for wildlife, and steward other important natural resources that are important to the prosperity of Colorado and the well being of its citizens. CCALT is grateful to partner with families across Colorado like the Ridgely’s on conservation projects that provide a multitude of public benefits. CCALT is also grateful to GOCO and NRCS for their continued commitment to helping conserve the landscapes that have long defined Colorado.”

The northern end of the San Luis Valley is defined by its openness which is maintained by the community of ranching families that steward the landscape. Several historic ranches along San Luis Creek between Poncha Pass and the town of Villa Grove have been conserved through the voluntary efforts of landowners partnering with conservation organizations like CCALT.

“The Pheasant Valley Ranch is one of the largest agricultural operations in Saguache County totaling over 3,800 acres,” said Clint Evans. “The five counties within the San Luis Valley rely on the agricultural industry and the preservation of prime farmland like the Pheasant Valley Ranch is critical to the entire contribution of agricultural conservation efforts NRCS and other partners have made within that region.”

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 5,400 projects in urban and rural areas in all 64 counties without any tax dollar support. Visit GOCO.org for more information.

About the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical and financial assistance to help agricultural producers and others care for the land. The Agency prioritizes conservation planning and uses conservation programs in the Farm Bill to implement most of its efforts including the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program which is designed to protect the agricultural viability, grazing uses and related conservation values of prime agricultural land by limiting nonagricultural uses of that land.

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