



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Maggie Hanna, [maggie@calt.org](mailto:maggie@calt.org), 720.557.8266

### **L Bar Slash Ranch Conserved – Meeker Ranch Adds to Growing Conserved Landscape**



MEEKER, Colo. - The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) is proud to have partnered with the Sheridan Family to conserve the 1,727-acre L Bar Slash Ranch (the "Property") located in eastern Rio Blanco County, Colorado. This conservation easement is an important addition to the growing conserved landscape surrounding the community of Meeker. It exists in an area of vibrant agricultural operations and abundant wildlife habitat. Notably, the L Bar Slash Ranch provides important big game (mule deer, elk, and moose) seasonal ranges and migration corridors, habitat for several small game

species, and habitat for a variety of non-game and special status species. Of particular importance, the Property provides habitat utilized by the largest elk herd and the second largest mule deer herd in Colorado – herds that are among the largest in the United States.

The property has been utilized to support cattle grazing and recreational big game hunting for more than 70 years. The current agricultural operation supports cow/calf pairs through the summer and early fall. The Property offers outstanding scenic values that are highly visible to the public and that embody the rural, largely undeveloped nature of eastern Rio Blanco County. Three named creeks originate and flow through the Property as critical components of the White River watershed. The Big Beaver Creek, the Little Beaver Creek, and the "Big Muddy" Creek each add to the conservation, agricultural, and wildlife values of the L Bar Slash Ranch. In addition to these creeks, a total of thirteen ponds are located on the Property used primarily for livestock and wildlife water.

"L Bar Slash Ranch is thrilled to partner with CCALT, The Nature Conservancy, and CPW-HPP to complete our donated conservation easement," said Kelly Sheridan, who owns the Ranch in partnership with his brother, J.H, and manages ranch operations with help from his wife, Denise, and two sons, Dax and Teagan. "The conservation easement will help in allowing our cattle and hunting operations to continue for future generations and will help us expand our current privately held ground, and increase our hay production, pasture, and herd size. Together this will allow us to be more productive and to continue our family-owned and operated business. We are fortunate to be able to work side by side with our family and to carry on the legacy of Jim and Caroline Dodo, and Mark and Gretta Sheridan. Knowing the property will stay available to the agriculture industry into the future is very important to us. Thanks to CCALT for all their hard work, what a great organization!"

The L Bar Slash Ranch is adjacent to the 16,600-acre Oak Ridge State Wildlife Area and within one mile of the White River National Forest. More than 36,000-acres of protected private lands exist in



the upper White River Valley and are held and stewarded by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), CCALT, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The landscape immediately surrounding the Property is largely unaltered and undeveloped. This wide expanse of open lands provides habitat for an abundance and diversity of wildlife, as well as significant agricultural and recreational value. However, rural residential development continues to occur, making conservation of the remaining large, intact parcels of critically high importance. Conservation of the L Bar Slash Ranch builds upon existing conservation investments in eastern Rio Blanco County and contributes to the maintenance of this large, mostly unaltered landscape.

CCALT Conservation Manager John Gioia shared that “the Rio Blanco County and Meeker-area ranching community has exemplified a strong dedication to permanent conservation for many years. Kelly and J.H. are building upon the Sheridan family’s conservation legacy in the area with this conservation easement on the L Bar Slash Ranch, an integral component of the brothers’ cattle operation and also a key wildlife corridor connecting two significant areas of public land. CCALT is grateful for Kelly’s and J.H.’s perseverance over several years to ensure the completion of this important conservation project.”

Kelly’s and J.H.’s dedication to permanently conserving the L Bar Slash Ranch has persisted over the course of several years. The property is a key component of their cattle operation and a critical piece of wildlife habitat that will help ensure permanent protection of a wildlife corridor between two significant areas of public land.

Transaction cost assistance for this donated conservation easement was provided by The Nature Conservancy and the Colorado Parks and Wildlife’s Habitat Partnership Program.

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***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 Colorado Parks and Wildlife***

*Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) works to perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state, provide a quality state parks system, and provide an enjoyable and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that educate and inspire current and future generations to serve as active stewards of Colorado’s natural resources.*

***About The Nature Conservancy***

*The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a global conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, TNC creates innovative, on-the-ground solutions to the world's toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together. TNC is tackling climate change, conserving lands, waters and oceans at an unprecedented scale, providing food and water sustainably and helping make cities more sustainable. To learn more, visit: [nature.org/Colorado](http://nature.org/Colorado)*