



► Top: The Halandras Ranch, Bottom: The Halandras Family



“The Halandras family has a deep connection to agriculture in that it defines the very core of who we are.”

—Tawny Halandras

CCALT’s Approach to Conservation

The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) partners with ranching and farming families who manage agricultural lands and the resources they provide to conserve Colorado's ranching heritage. CCALT's approach to conservation is unique among conservation organizations. The focus of the organization is to assist families who own, manage and steward the land and its bountiful natural resources.

Conservation Easements 101

What You Should Know Before You Get Started

What is a conservation easement?

Conservation easements are voluntary agreements between landowners and a qualified conservation organization that permanently limits the development and subdivision of properties. Easements are permanent and run with the land through any and all conveyances of the property. Each conservation easement is unique and is tailored to each landowner and each specific property. These agreements are used to conserve land in perpetuity and they are designed specifically to protect the conservation values of a property. Examples of conservation values include open space, wildlife habitat, agricultural lands, scenic vistas, and historic properties.

While conservation easements restrict development and subdivision, they do not restrict the landowner's ability to continue to use the land for traditional uses such as crop production, grazing, hunting, fishing and low impact recreation. Conservation easements **do not** require public access.

What are the benefits of a conservation easement?

CONSERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND: Conservation easements ensure that the land will always be available for agricultural production. Conservation easements also reduce the value of the land, which may make it easier to transfer land to the next generation of farmers and ranchers.

FINANCIAL AND TAX INCENTIVES:

Landowners who sell or donate development rights through perpetual conservation easements may be eligible for certain financial and tax benefits through direct cash payments, federal income tax deductions, additional estate tax exemptions, and transferable state income tax credits. Proceeds from direct cash payments and/

or sale of transferable state tax credits may help landowners buy out partners, reduce debt, save for retirement, pay for long-term health care or college education, or purchase land and equipment to expand and/or diversify the agricultural operation.

PRESERVE RURAL COMMUNITIES AND WESTERN HERITAGE:

Conserving agricultural land with conservation easements can help to maintain the viability of the economic base of rural communities by stabilizing and promoting the main economic engine of rural Colorado – agriculture and the businesses that support agriculture. Easements also offer a way for communities to work together to conserve the natural resources, open space, scenery, and wildlife habitat that drive recreation and tourism.

Who owns the land after a conservation easement is conveyed?

The landowner retains ownership of the property after a conservation easement is conveyed. The conservation easement conveys only certain rights (i.e. the right to develop or subdivide) to the designated land trust or other holder. The rights that are conveyed to the land trust are then extinguished.

What rights are typically retained by the landowner after a conservation easement is conveyed?

The landowner retains full ownership in the property including, but not limited to: the right to sell, lease, convey, or otherwise transfer the property; the right to continue existing agricultural operations and customary rural enterprises (i.e. farm, ranch, graze, hunt, fish, etc.) and the right to control access.

How much does it cost to convey a conservation easement?

Depending on the structure of the transaction, the conveyance of a conservation easement may cost between \$80,000 and \$160,000 per transaction.

How long does a conservation easement encumber the property?

Conservation easements are perpetual documents and will encumber the property forever, regardless of ownership transfers.

What affect does a conservation easement have on the value of the property?

A conservation easement will typically reduce the value of a property between 25% and 65%, depending on the terms of the conservation easement and location of the property.



“When I look out at the ranch I know that long after I am gone it will still look something like this. We have left a legacy.”

—Lee Rooks, Rooks Ranch