



HORIZONS

Spring 2025

The Vision of Generations



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HAPPY 30th ANNIVERSARY CCALT!

Messages From Leadership, Past and Present



*From One
Generation
to the Next*

FOUNDING LEADERSHIP *Reflections of a Vision*

As we reflect on CCALT's journey over the past 30 years, we are both humbled and amazed by what the organization has achieved. What began as a bold (and somewhat controversial) idea - the Colorado Cattlemen's

Association establishing a land trust -

has grown into a thriving community of landowners who have committed to keeping their land available for production agriculture. The commitment and foresight of these landowners have been a crucial catalyst for the success we see today. We are deeply proud of CCALT's evolution and the enduring impact it continues to make.

Jay Fetcher
CCALT Founder

Lynne Sherrod
CCALT's Executive Director
1997-2006

Erik L. Glenn
Executive Director

Stacy Kourlis Guillon
Board President

ACTIVE LEADERSHIP *Evolution of a Vision*

Over the last 30 years, we've seen agriculture and conservation evolve together. More and more producers have embraced CCALT's work and found value in our services. Our journey to provide Colorado producers the very best conservation solutions continues to evolve with innovative programs like the Additive Conservation Program and our succession planning support. Both of these efforts offer new opportunities to partner with our landowners and support their operations and conservation visions. It reflects what we have always known: that conservation isn't an obstacle to productivity - it's an asset. Going forward, CCALT will continue developing and championing new approaches to meaningful conservation, helping production agriculture thrive in Colorado.

HORIZONS

A New Name and A New Look

For those who have followed CCALT for a long time, you may know that our spring newsletter was originally titled Crossroads. During the pandemic, priorities changed (as everyone can relate to), and we said goodbye to the Crossroads title. This 30th Anniversary year offers an opportunity to find a title that better reflects the spring newsletter's purpose: to introduce you to new perspectives and active efforts from CCALT's family.

Today we introduce the new spring newsletter title: HORIZONS. HORIZONS acknowledges that CCALT's mission supports innovative and inspiring ideas and stories that uniquely advance working lands conservation.

Thirty years typically marks the passing of one generation of time. CCALT's landowner-partners, staff, and board of directors set a standard of excellence during our first 30 years, and we will continue to build and expand upon these

figurative and literal horizons. We also recognize that modern times are changing more quickly than ever before, and evolving agricultural practices and innovative conservation approaches will be needed to address the challenges ahead.

Agriculture and working lands will always be relevant to Colorado's identity. Agriculture helped build this state, and conservation is a tool that producers will continue utilizing to support the resiliency of working landscapes and rural communities.

As we embark upon our second generation at CCALT, HORIZONS now describes the endeavors and beginnings each spring season offers. We look forward to introducing you to voices and perspectives each year that support our mission to Conserve Colorado's Western Heritage and Working Landscapes for the Benefit of Future Generations. ~

Photo credit: Dawn Reader

AGRICULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

By: Jake Hettinger

The Wisdom of Generations

Jake Hettinger is a fifth-generation rancher in Northeast Colorado and a senior at Colorado State University.

“They showed me the true value of hard work, perseverance, and the importance of honoring tradition while remaining open to new ideas.”

Conservation has always been important to our family. Every time we considered expanding our Northeast Colorado operation, we carefully weighed the impact on the land to ensure it could thrive for future generations. Embracing conservation easements just made sense for us, allowing our business to grow while still protecting the environment.

This conservation journey with the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust started with our X7 Ranch conservation easement near Merino. Our commitment took on even deeper meaning with the recent completion of the Hank's Creek conservation easement near Montrose. This project not only safeguards our unique landscapes and wildlife but also stands as a promise to balance agricultural productivity with responsible care. Hank's Creek isn't just a piece of land to us - it's a legacy we're proud to continue.

From a very young age, I knew I wanted to be part of my family's farming and ranching tradition. I vividly remember long summer days spent irrigating corn with my dad and chilly winter nights helping with calving - moments that taught me to appreciate the land and its values. My grandparents and parents have been my greatest teachers on this journey. They showed me the true value

of hard work, perseverance, and the importance of honoring tradition while remaining open to new ideas. Their stories of the early days - filled with both challenges and triumphs - continue to inspire me every day. They proved that blending time-tested practices with modern technology is the key to sustainability.

Earning my degree in Agricultural Business from Colorado State University (CSU) in May will be very important to the future of our family's agricultural operation. I come from three generations of CSU graduates so it's only natural that I become the fourth. The Agricultural Business program provides practical insights into marketing, agricultural law, and modern business strategies that are essential in today's evolving ag industry. What I appreciate the most is how I can directly apply what I've learned to our daily operations. I am very happy with my decision to get my education at CSU. As I approach graduation, I feel confident and excited that the knowledge I've gained will empower me to advance my family's legacy for the next generation.

Every decision I make on the ranch is guided by my family's wisdom, reminding me that our legacy is built on resilience and a genuine passion for agriculture. I'm forever grateful for the lessons they've shared. ~



The Hettinger Family



Photos courtesy of the Hettinger Family

A PLAN IN PLACE

Succession Planning for Living Legacies

By: Karina Puikkonen

Those who work in production agriculture spend a lifetime building a livelihood with the land. Passing down an agricultural operation honors a way of life that requires every second of every day. This way of life doesn't just become what you do, it is who you are.

In the next few decades, 63% of Colorado's agricultural producers will reach retirement and large amounts of agricultural land will change hands, making farms and ranches vulnerable to conversion and development if succession plans aren't in place.

The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) is honored to be one of the land conservation organizations across the country coming together to support retiring farmers and ranchers who want to see their land stay in agriculture and to assist new generations with land access.

"Family farms and ranches are almost like children to these families," CCALT's Succession Program Manager Dan Skeeters said. "Succession planning provides the best outcomes for the land, the agricultural operation, and the family."

The goal of the Land Transfer Navigators Program is to provide education and resource support to farmers, ranchers, landowners, and the next generation of producers while facilitating a better understanding and connections during the succession planning process.

"You spend your whole life building it up and putting it together, it's hard to think you're not going to do this forever."

Effective succession plans help keep agricultural lands viable for future generations of Colorado agricultural producers. CCALT Board of Directors Member Sandi Turecek and her family have experienced both sides of the succession process.

Lessons Learned

Ranching was always in Sandi and Keven Turecek's blood. They grew up on family ranches just 14 miles apart, and a requirement Sandi had for a future spouse was that he had more calluses than she did.

Beginning in the late 1980s, Sandi and Keven built their own cattle and farming operation on the Stacked Lazy Three Ranch by purchasing land parcels from

both sets of parents and acquiring additional lands from neighboring ranchers who retired without heirs to take over their operations. The Turecek's initial introduction to succession planning came as a recipient of someone else's succession plan.

After a long illness, Keven's father passed away in 2000. Keven and his brother had been managing their parents' ranch, but without a succession plan in place the only solution after a four-year legal battle was to divide the land amongst the siblings.

"It was like every other farm or ranch. It takes the whole unit to make it work. So, dividing it up dissolved the workability of it," Sandi said. "After going through all of that, we decided we weren't going to put our kids through that."



Keven and Sandi Turecek, circa 2016

A Place They Call Home

Sandi and Keven's four children grew up on the Stacked Lazy Three Ranch. Their youngest son, Tyler, also discovered ranching was in his blood, working with his parents side-by-side. At the beginning of their succession planning process in 2016, Sandi and Keven had a conversation with the whole family to discuss the way forward for the ranch.

"We wanted to see the ranch continue to be a working ranch and a place everyone could come back to," Keven said. "Sweat equity is real. Tyler would live on the ranch, and make a living on the ranch, and keep the ranch together, which is what we wanted."

The entire family supported the plan and has been able to watch it unfold over the past decade. For Tyler and his wife Page, the family created the Turecek Cattle Company, LLC to handle inheritance needs by allowing Tyler and Page to manage the day-to-day operations of the ranch and increase shares in the agricultural operation over time. By stepping back, Sandi and Keven can still provide counsel when needed as they mentor their son and daughter-in-law, but they also just enjoy spending more time with their entire family.

"We laugh about it at this point, I think we're working for Ty," Sandi said.

No two people will run a ranch the exact same way. Sandi and Keven acknowledge they ran their operation differently from their parents, and Tyler is also making changes to accommodate his vision for keeping the operation successful during his tenure so he can pass the work ethic he inherited on to his children.

"I want the ranch to be here another 100 years, but my long-term goal has little to do with what I want. I'm going to do the best I can for the ranch and teach my boys how to run it," Tyler said. "If that isn't in their future, then this place and my grandparent's and parent's hard work also gave them the building blocks to be successful in whatever they decide to do."



Conservation Mode

For the whole family, the succession plan also included placing portions of the ranch into a conservation easement with CCALT in 2017. Sandi and Keven invested the financial incentives the easement provided into a nest egg that will be divided amongst all the siblings upon their passing.

For the Tureceks, conservation will help the family operation continue for generations to come, will keep the family connected to the legacy they built together, and will contribute to a much larger vision of conservation in the state.

"Conservation made it available for Page and I to step up into a position where we

can run the ranch," Tyler said. "It really progressed our generational idea of what this ranch is going to be moving forward."

Passing on a family farm or ranch is a deeply personal decision. Keeping the land whole and agriculturally productive with dedicated and knowledgeable stewards not only becomes the main goal for producers who want to transition their working lands to the next working hands, but for CCALT - which will always remain committed as a conservation partner, **From One Generation to the Next.**

To learn more about the Land Transfer Navigators Program please contact Dan Skeeters (dan@ccalt.org, 720-557-8274). Succession planning helps ensure financial security for retiring landowners and long-term success for successors.

Conservation Easements

As a Succession Planning Tool

Tangible Benefits

FINANCIAL FLEXIBILITY...

to support the family
to pay down debt
to fund retirement

REDUCES TAXES...

for Estate/Gift Tax
for Capital Gains Tax
for Property Tax
for Income Tax

Intangible Benefits

Land remains in agriculture
Land will never be developed
Water rights are not separated
Strengthens family relationships
Reduces the purchase price for the next generation
Gives permanence to each legacy

PLANNED GIVING

For a Brighter Future

Spring is a season of renewal - a time of optimism and restored belief in the possibility of what tomorrow may bring. The younger generation exemplifies this as they participate in working lands stewardship and conservation alongside their families.

Thanks to the generosity of so many across Colorado and beyond who empower the work of the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT), we are filled with optimism for the future. The interest in conservation services across Colorado has never been greater, and the impact of this crucial work has never been more evident.

Increasingly, families are approaching CCALT and asking how they can support this vital work not only today, but well into the future. These thoughtful conversations often lead to consideration of designating a planned gift to CCALT as part of an individual's will or trust.

Planned giving is an impactful way to ensure your commitment to conserving Colorado's working lands, open spaces, and wildlife habitats lives on. It is a thoughtful way to ensure future generations continue to enjoy the values and attributes that make our state Forever Colorado.

If you would like to learn more about planned giving and how a bequest to the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust will make a lasting difference, please contact Darryl Seibel (darryl@ccalt.org; 720-557-8266). We would be happy to visit with you and share more about the enduring impact of a planned gift.~





A VISION OF CONSERVATION

The Additive Conservation Program Evolves

Conservation easements provide permanent protections for working lands, ensuring their agricultural and ecological values remain intact. However, conservation doesn't stop once an easement is in place. It's an ongoing commitment that requires care, resources, and fresh ideas.

CCALT created the Additive Conservation Program to go beyond easements and create ongoing opportunities to support our landowner-partners. Whether it's improving soil health, boosting irrigation efficiency, restoring wildlife habitat, or reducing wildfire risks, the program offers practical solutions that strengthen both conservation efforts and the economic viability of agricultural operations.

CCALT recently added two full-time staff members dedicated to this program, and we're expanding the Agricultural Resiliency Fund—a small grant program that supports landowner-led restoration and infrastructure projects. Plus, we're strengthening partnerships with state and federal agencies to bring in more technical and financial resources.

At the end of the day, conservation is about land stewards and their vision for the land, which is to ensure Colorado's working landscapes remain productive, resilient, and full of life for future generations. ~

“What is our vision for additive conservation?
To ensure these lands don't just survive. They THRIVE.”

What's Next You Ask?



In Western Colorado, Additive Conservation Manager Kathleen Voight is leading efforts to help agricultural producers improve water infrastructure and address the growing risk of wildfires. By supporting landowners with irrigation system upgrades through the Agricultural Resiliency Fund,

CCALT is ensuring that working lands stay productive and resilient despite ongoing water challenges. At the same time, CCALT is working alongside landowners and local partners to reduce wildfire risks and strengthen landscape resilience in Routt County through the Steamboat Front Wildfire Ready Action Plan.



On the opposite side of the state, CCALT's newest team member, Eastern Colorado Additive Conservation Manager Girija Kulkarni, will partner with landowners on grazing and rangeland health strategies that improve soil quality and ecological function for more resilient agricultural operations through

the Colorado Soil Health Program. In Northeast Colorado, CCALT is also supporting landowners through a Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration grant, which provides funding to agricultural producers near F.E. Warren Air Force Base to assist in stewarding working lands while reducing land-use conflicts.





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SAVE THE DATE!

August 9, 2025

FOREVER COLORADO BBQ

Dakan Ranch | Sedalia, CO

2024-2025 ANNUAL PARTNERS

Thank You!



ALLBRIGHT
BRUCE & LESLIE



ANB Bank



GREG PENKOWSKY



**KELTON FAMILY
FOUNDATION**



Holsinger Law, LLC



ACCREDITATION RENEWAL

Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) is applying for renewal of its land trust accreditation, ensuring it meets national conservation standards. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission invites public comments on CCALT's compliance with these standards. Open the QR code to learn more:



Visit:
www.landtrustaccreditation.org,
or email your comment to
info@landtrustaccreditation.org.