

Colorado Cattlemen's
Agricultural Land Trust



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Chris West, Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust – 303-225-8677
Chris Leding, Great Outdoors Colorado - 303-226-4530
Chris Herrman, KeepItColorado.org – 970-245-2889

CONSERVATION PARTNERS PROTECT NORTH PARK RANCH

DENVER – Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) has announced the purchase of a conservation easement on the 729-acre Iva Mae Ranch along the Michigan River in Jackson County. This is one of the first purchased conservation easements completed in the North Park area by a traditional ranch family.

The Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Board awarded a \$575,000 Lottery grant to the project, providing the important first funding for the land trusts' efforts. In addition, CCALT has raised more than \$237,000 in matching funds to make this easement purchase a reality. This funding came from private individuals, foundation grants and corporate sources, including the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation through the Colorado Conservation Partnership, Gates Family Foundation, Arrow Electronics, Inc. and the Conservation Resource Center.

North Park is unique as it is the last intact mountain ranching community in the state. The Iva Mae ranch is 2.5 miles southeast of Walden on Colorado Highway 14 and its irrigated hay meadows and pastures lie along more than a mile of the Michigan River. The river corridor contains willow wetlands that provide important habitat for numerous wildlife species including moose, elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer and sandhill cranes. The ranch has been in continuous agricultural production for more than a century and in the current family's ownership since 1926.

“North Park is exceptional with its distinctive and irreplaceable working landscape and the Iva Mae Ranch is an important part of this landscape, said Bill Fales, President of the CCALT Board of Directors. “Following the lead of the local ranchers, there is a great opportunity to preserve the agricultural productivity and heritage of Jackson County. CCALT is excited to have GOCO and the Colorado Conservation Partnership share in our efforts to protect the Iva Mae Ranch and we hope that this is the first of many conservation projects in North Park.”

The Iva Mae Ranch is one of the few ranches in North Park with unobstructed 360-degree views of all the surrounding mountains including the Medicine Bow Range and Rawah Wilderness to the east, the Park Range and Mount Zirkel Wilderness to the west, and the Never Summer Range and Wilderness to the south. Maintaining the Iva Mae Ranch as agricultural open space will provide contiguity of habitat for the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge which is adjacent to the west of the ranch. In addition, protecting the water rights in the Michigan River associated with the ranch will in part protect the water supply for Walden and other downstream agricultural and recreational uses.

The primary threat to the Iva Mae Ranch was subdivision and the conversion of the property to residential or second home development. The protection of this ranch will ensure that the important wildlife species identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan, natural, cultural and historical resources of this property will remain intact.

The Holsingers have been intrigued by conservation easements for years. They believe that it is a way for them to protect not only their land, but the ranching way of life. “That’s why we deal with CCALT...because they understand agriculture and ranches. The Colorado Cattlemen’s Association has been around for over 140 years and has always been an organization you can trust,” said Debbie Holsinger. Natural resources attorney Kent Holsinger represented his family in the transaction. “Private landowners are the best stewards of land and wildlife habitat,” he said. “And conservation easements are a good tool to help keep families on their lands,” Holsinger added.

Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) helps Colorado's ranchers and farmers protect their agricultural lands and encourage continuing agricultural production for the benefit of themselves, their families and all of Colorado's citizens. CCALT has partnered with landowners in the protection of 180 farms and ranches covering more than 285,000 acres since 1995. For more information visit www.ccalt.org

Great Outdoors is the result of a citizens initiative passed in 1992. It receives up to half of Lottery proceeds. GOCO’s mission is “to help preserve, protect, enhance and manage the state’s wildlife, park, river, trail and open space heritage.” To date, GOCO has awarded \$3.15 million for projects in Jackson County.

Colorado Conservation Partnership envisions a Colorado in which our finest farming and ranching lands, unique wildlife habitats, world-renown recreational landscapes, scenic vistas and open spaces are permanently protected for current and future generations. For more information visit www.KeepItColorado.org

Pictures Available Upon Request

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