

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

**Chris West
Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust
303-225-8677
cwest@ccalt.org**

Conservation easement protects historic ranch near Steamboat Lake State Park

The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) announced today the protection of the historic Frye Ranch, just south of Steamboat Lake State Park. The ranch is owned by Scott Carpenter, and his wife, Patty. Best known as a spaceflight pioneer, Carpenter was one of the original seven astronauts selected for NASA's Project Mercury in 1959. He was the second American to orbit the Earth and the fourth American in space. Known to most locals as the Frye place, the 480-acre ranch was homesteaded in 1904 by Scott's great uncle, John Frye. The original cabin still stands on the property today.

Just south of Steamboat Lake State Park, the ranch buffers Routt National Forest for 2.6 miles and features highly productive irrigated meadow surrounded by aspen-lodgepole forests. The property sets the foreground for the public views of Sand and Saddle Mountains and Meaden Peak. The protection of the ranch helps preserve the pastoral landscape of the Upper Elk River Valley as well as the excellent wildlife habitat provided by the meadows.

"This ranch has been in our family for more than a hundred years," Carpenter said, "and the conservation easement will assure that this rich heritage is protected for the benefit of future generations." The conservation easement will be held by the CCALT. It was made possible by \$200,000 in funding from the Routt County Purchase of Development Rights Program and by the landowners' willingness to donate more than 90 percent of the easement's value.

"The Carpenter family has made an impressive commitment to agriculture and tourism in Routt County," said Megan Manner, CCALT Project Manager. "By protecting their ranch, they are not only ensuring the family legacy but are also adding great public value. Conservation of the ranch protects wildlife habitat, water quality in Upper Elk River watershed, and the views from the surrounding public lands." Manner added that the ranch is "extremely productive and helps ensure that sustainable agriculture will have a future in Routt County."

The Upper Elk River Valley is an exceptional place, where landowners and land trusts have already protected much of the larger landscape. More than 10,000 acres of private land are

protected in the Upper Elk Valley, contributing to a remarkable example of how voluntary measures can create and preserve a working landscape.

CCALT's roots in Routt County are deep. As a result of significant interest in conservation by the local ranching community in the 1990's, the Colorado Cattlemen's Association formed the land trust in 1995. One of the land trust's founding members, Jay Fetcher, is a lifelong rancher from Clark. This conservation easement is just one part of the Cattlemen's Land Trust's protection efforts across Routt County. CCALT holds twenty-five easements on working ranches in Routt County, covering almost 14,500 acres. The organization is working on many new ranch conservation efforts that will protect upwards of 5,000 acres in Routt County in the next few years. Statewide, CCALT has been instrumental in protecting more than 370,000 acres of land on over 250 farms and ranches using conservation easements.

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Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust protects productive agricultural lands and the conservation values they provide by working with ranchers and farmers, thereby preserving Colorado's ranching heritage and rural communities. For more information visit www.ccalt.org.