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*The mission of the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust is to help 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.*

## Contact us

8833 Ralston Rd.  
Arvada, CO 80002  
303-225-8677 (ph)  
303-431-6446 (fax)  
E-mail: [info@ccalt.org](mailto:info@ccalt.org)  
[www.ccalt.org](http://www.ccalt.org)

## Conservation Partnership Protects Prairie Ranch in Arapahoe and Elbert Counties

Beneath the vastness of the prairie sky, cattle graze on the sprawling Middle Bijou Creek Ranch in eastern Arapahoe and Elbert counties. With the help of numerous partners, a conservation easement will ensure that this scene will remain intact for future generations.

In February 2008, CCALT, the Trust for Public Land (TPL), Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Arapahoe County, preserved the agricultural productivity and sweeping vistas of the Middle Bijou Creek Ranch, a 12,578-acre multi-generational working farm and ranch near Deer Trail.

"What a jewel, what a wonderful piece of land," said Commissioner Susan Beckman, who serves as Board Chair. "With this purchase, Arapahoe County residents and visitors will be able to enjoy its beauty forever."

Middle Bijou Creek Ranch, 40 miles east of Denver, occupies an important role in a growing network of public and privately conserved properties that serve to protect the western heritage of Arapahoe and Elbert counties.

"The Trust for Public Land is overjoyed to help the landowners stay in farming and ranching," said Justin Spring, TPL Project Manager. "This will allow them to continue their excellent stewardship of the land."

TPL brought this project forward to GOCO for funding. John Swartout, Executive Director of GOCO said, "This project competed well in the process because of the strong partnership that

has come together to achieve it, because it is a unique opportunity to protect a very large area of shortgrass prairie habitat, and because it can serve as a catalyst for additional land protection in the area."

"The Middle Bijou Creek Ranch is an extraordinary accomplishment for all of the partners," Colorado NRCS Easements Coordinator Gary Finstad said. "This project, at 12,578 acres, is the largest conservation easement ever funded nationally in the history of the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program."



**Wilson Creek on Middle Bijou Creek Ranch**

The Colorado State Tax Credit Program has once again proven to be a useful tool for Colorado's farmers and ranchers. Conservation easements like the Middle Bijou Creek Ranch are the type of properties that the legislature intended to support through this program. This partnership of ranchers, the county government, and land conservation groups has helped ensure a future for agriculture, wildlife habitat, and scenic views in this area.

## Conservation Easement First to Protect a Working Ranch in Chaffee County

For nearly 60 years, the Roberts family has raised cattle and hay in the lush meadows of the Post Office Ranch west of Salida. Late last year, the family placed an easement on the property making it the first conservation easement-protected working ranch in Chaffee County.

The 310-acre ranch, bisected by the South Arkansas River, is used for cow-calf operations and hay production. Mature cottonwoods, willows, and alders border the river and provide important habitat for numerous species including wintering bald eagles. Irrigated hay meadows and pasture make up the majority of the property.

Senior water rights and abundant seep water enhance the biological and agricultural productivity. Adjacent public land is important winter range for local deer and elk populations, which are commonly seen on the ranch.

The easement, held by the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT), was funded in part by Lottery dollars through Great Outdoors Colorado, the United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service's Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, the Colorado Conservation Trust, Trout Unlimited, Land Trust of the Upper Arkansas, and Chaffee County.

"Doing this, first and foremost, requires a love for the land," said Dean Roberts, owner of the Post Office Ranch. "My family has owned the property since 1952. The easement makes it possible

for my family to continue to own and ranch the property, which would probably not have been the case without a conservation easement. If you don't call that protecting family ranches, I don't know what you would."

Protection of the ranch is a critical first step towards securing Chaffee County's agricultural landscape. Colorado Conservation Trust's recent report, "Colorado Conservation at a Crossroads," identified Chaffee County as one of 13 counties

in the state with the highest potential threat of losing its ranching heritage, but with limited capacity to prevent it.

Chaffee County's relatively small amount of agricultural land and its proximity to the Front Range and westward population pressures make the County's farms and ranches extremely vulnerable to rapid growth and loss of water rights. Productive irrigated agricultural land, like that found on the Post Office Ranch, accounts for only 1.8%

(11,669 acres) of the county's total land area.

"Keeping these ranchlands in continuing productive agriculture, along with the culture, water and the ability to recharge aquifers that they represent, are hugely important to the County," said Tim Glenn, Chaffee County Commissioner.

The remaining 127 acres of the Post Office Ranch will be protected with a conservation easement this summer.



**Collegiate Peaks from Post Office Ranch**

## Have you seen our new website yet?

CCALT has just added the ability to give donations online on a secure site. Come and check us out!

[www.ccalt.org](http://www.ccalt.org)

Don't forget that you can find information on donating a conservation easement, frequently asked questions, and all of our literature online. You can also RSVP for special events and look at all of our event photos. We look forward to your visit!

DONATE NOW THROUGH **Network for Good**

**DONATE**  
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### CCALT Wish List

- GPS System for Vehicle
- Lightly used pickup/SUV
- Fireproof Filing Cabinet
- New/Used Computer
- Cell Phone
- Natural Resource Reference Library

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## National Western Stock Show Dinner Honors CCALT Landowners

We are very thankful to Sue Anschutz-Rodgers for hosting our annual landowner dinner. The National Western Stock Show dinner is our chance to thank landowners for their donations and dedication to land conservation in Colorado.

Governor Ritter was the guest speaker and showed his ongoing support for our conservation easement program. Over 130 guests gathered to honor our landowners and those responsible for the success of our organization.

John Swartout, GOCO Executive Director, and



*Sue Anschutz-Rodgers & Governor Bill Ritter*

Senator Norma Anderson, GOCO Board President, were presented with a framed picture of Saguache Creek at the dinner in recognition of their financial support and help in the protection of that area.

Thank you to all of our landowners and all of you who attended. We have posted pictures of the dinner online. Visit our website at [www.ccalt.org](http://www.ccalt.org) and go to our Events page.



*Stan & Tracy Johnson with Roland & Virginia Wilson*

## First Annual Cattlemen's Shootout Goes Out with a BANG!



*The Pyramid at Rocky Mountain Roosters*

Several teams came together on November 13, 2007 for the first annual CCALT/CCA shootout fundraiser. Teams participated in both a trap shoot and a live guided bird hunt with dogs.

We would like to thank all of our participants for making the shootout a success. Be sure to visit our website at [www.ccalt.org](http://www.ccalt.org) to see the photos from this event. See you next year!

### Congratulations to our winners!

**Top Trap Shooter:** Geston Lusk with a 22 out of 25

**Second Place Winner:** Dennis Brenner's team (Tim Canterbury, Eric Shaffer, Geston Lusk, Dennis Brenner) with a score of 49 out of 100

**Third Place Winner:** Carl Donner's team (Tommy Thompson, Ron Marold, Justin Smith, Doyle O'Donnell) with a score of 48 out of 100

### Thank You to Our Sponsors

LiphaTech, Bob Roark & Merrill Lynch, Anadarko Petroleum Corporation, Rothgerber Johnson & Lyons LLP, Colorado Conservation Trust, and Round Mountain Ranch.



## Save the Date!

Come join us this summer at our annual BBQ for food, drinks, music, and a live auction on Saturday, July 12, 2008. We will be celebrating land conservation at the beautiful Dakan Ranch in Sedalia, Colorado. The Dakan Ranch has been protected by a CCALT conservation easement.



*Red Rocks at the Dakan Ranch*

Tickets for the BBQ will be \$150 per person and proceeds from the event will go towards the protection of Colorado farms and ranches. Visit us online at [www.ccalt.org](http://www.ccalt.org) for event details and to RSVP. We can't wait to see you there!

## CCALT Wins LTA Accreditation Lottery

In October, CCALT won the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) accreditation lottery allowing us to participate in round two of the 2008 accreditation program. Land trusts are increasingly called on to demonstrate their accountability to the public. In order to become accredited, CCALT will undergo a rigorous independent external review.

This accreditation program will verify that we have the policies and programs in place to protect the land we have under easement. Once the process is complete, the Land Trust Accreditation Commission will award CCALT with a seal. The accreditation seal will allow the Land Trust Alliance to provide the public with the assurance that CCALT meets established standards for organizational quality and permanent land conservation.

We are proud to be a part of this program to ensure quality assurance for our industry and our organization. More information about the accreditation program can be seen at [www.landtrustaccreditation.org](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org).