

# Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust



## North Park Ranchers Conserve Prime Sage Grouse Habitat

**N**orthwest Colorado harbors prime sage grouse country, linking classic sagebrush habitat to rivers, aspen forests, and soaring peaks. Here, ranchers are embracing conservation easements at an unprecedented rate.

Sage Grouse Initiative dollars are infusing critical funds for the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) to help ranchers protect their lands from development. The other key factor is the trust and credibility of CCALT.

North Park, the largest intact valley remaining in Colorado, illustrates accelerated success on the ground. SGI contributed to seven out of ten conservation easements, totaling more than 17,000 acres.

"After six years of neighbors talking to neighbors we are seeing a landscape-level conservation effort," said Carolyn Aspelin, CCALT director of conservation transactions. She explained there's often only a brief window of opportunity for ranchers who need payments from conservation easements to help them operate in the black.

"Since the NRCS launched the Sage Grouse Initiative in 2010 with Farm Bill dollars, we've seen unprecedented growth in ranchland protection and restoration," said Chris West, CCALT executive director.

*"It's a godsend. We work hard raising a family on a little ranch. There's not a lot of money there."*

~John Rich, North Park Rancher



## Meet the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust

### About

CCALT protects Colorado's agricultural land, heritage and families for future generations by conserving rural landscapes. Hundreds of ranching families have stepped up to place conservation easements on their land via CCALT, resulting in more than 404,385 acres of productive agricultural land protected to date.

### Role with Sage Grouse Initiative

The land trust is a vital partner of the Sage Grouse Initiative, working together to keep and connect sage grouse strongholds on ranches. SGI dollars are speeding up the ability of CCALT to complete conservation easements in a timely manner.



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