



*Our Mission: To conserve California's working ranches that provide stewardship, open space and natural habitat for future generations.*

## PROVIDERS & STEWARDS

*By Keely Brazil*

**R**ECENT DOCUMENTARIES ON FOOD PRODUCTION IN the United States have sparked a larger conversation about where the nation's food comes from. Most Americans are disconnected from the process; few think about the ranchers and farmers behind the food they eat. Some of these documentaries have perpetuated the idea that food production is corporate and impersonal. The truth is, most large-scale food production in America is still family owned and operated. Rominger Brothers Farms in Yolo County is a perfect example.

Bruce and Rick Rominger are fifth-generation farmers and ranchers. This year, they will complete the sale of two conservation easements with the California Rangeland Trust on a large segment of their family's ranch—about 2400 acres, nearly all of it rangeland. Urban encroachment has left its mark around the historic property.



Three generations of Romingers. Clockwise from left: Bruce, Robyn, Justin, Rich, Evelyne, John, Rachel

"This rangeland is really close to urban populations," Bruce says. "Not only is this the viewshed—everyone in Davis, Woodland, and Sacramento can see these hills—it's also part of the watershed. We need that clean water infiltrating into the ground water. So it's important for the whole ecological system in this valley to keep these hills healthy."

The Romingers have always been a big picture family. Bruce's father Rich Rominger served six years as the Secretary of the California Department of Food & Agriculture, and eight years in Washington, D.C. as the Deputy Secretary of Agriculture at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). His wife, Evelyne, grew up in a dairy family, and always encouraged her four children—Rick, Charlie, Ruth, and Bruce—to "think globally, act locally." In January of this year, Rich and Evelyne were awarded Agricultural Family of the Year by the Yolo County Farm Bureau.

But for Bruce, a career in farming was never a given. It wasn't until he found a book in his college bookstore at UC Davis that his perspective changed.

That book was *Topsoil and Civilization* by Vernon Gill Carter and Tom Dale. Bruce describes its thesis: The great civilizations of the ancient world were built around rich farmland.

**When agriculture was neglected, these civilizations began to decline and eventually collapse.**

The first aspect of a culture to be neglected was always its soil. It was a lightbulb moment for Bruce.

Urban encroachment is visible from the beautiful rolling hills of the Rominger Ranch.

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## PROVIDERS & STEWARDS CONTINUED...

"I'm just here for a little while," he says. "Someone needs to farm this ground. A thousand years from now, people are going to be living here. I need to take care of it today."

Rominger Brothers Farms is a diversified operation, leasing their rangeland for cattle and sheep grazing, producing tomatoes, rice, sunflowers, corn, wheat, almonds, walnuts, wine grapes, alfalfa, and more. A few years back, the family farm was almost divided when the brothers' second cousins decided to part with their share. Bruce searched for a way to keep the property intact, and found the California Rangeland Trust.

"I like the idea of being involved with a land trust that has a bunch of ranchers on the board," he says. "Well-meaning people who aren't from agriculture don't understand it when it gets down to the nitty-gritty details."

The California Rangeland Trust partnered with key groups to purchase the Rominger easements: the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Agricultural Conservation Easement Program—Agricultural Land Easement (ACEP-ALE) and the California Strategic Growth Council's Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) Program\*, which is administered by the California Department of Conservation (DOC). The California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) is an intergovernmental panel that coordinates activities to support sustainable communities and landscapes. Its SALC Program uses the proceeds from the Cap-and-Trade program, California Climate Investments, to conserve California's

**“I'm just here for a little while, someone needs to farm this ground. A thousand years from now, people are going to be living here. I need to take care of it today.”**

agricultural lands and promote infill development.

"California Rangeland Trust is a key player in preserving the integrity of California's natural landscapes," says SGC Executive Director Randall Winston. "We applaud their vision in seeking to protect open spaces that are at risk of ceding to sprawl development and are proud to support their efforts through our SALC Program."

Bruce shares this vision. As farmland moves into the hills and mountains of California, he is concerned about the overall impact on the state's ecosystem.

"We can't keep putting land into production forever. Eventually, there will be no wild lands left. When we have an opportunity—especially near an urban area like this—to preserve some of that and to say, 'OK, this is never going to be converted, this is going to stay grazing land forever and a place for wildlife,' I think it's something we ought to consider."

Farmers and ranchers like the Romingers present a more accurate picture of food production in the United States—one Americans should see. They are a hardworking, educated, and passionate family that cares about every aspect of their land and considers themselves its stewards and providers. In their decision to partner with the California Rangeland Trust, the Romingers are conserving grazing land in Yolo County forever, protecting the wildlife

corridor, and offsetting the negative side effects of urban development in the area. As a farmer who cares about the health of the hills in his stewardship, Bruce Rominger believes this partnership is the right choice for his family, his neighbors, and the generations to come.

"When you're out in these hills at nighttime, it's just dark," Bruce says. "The animals get their say and their time to run around. People in Davis can look out there and say, 'That's wild country. There are bears and mountain lions right there.' I love that. I think that's important."



Rachel Rominger

\*The SALC Program is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide program that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment—particularly in disadvantaged communities. The Cap-and-Trade program also creates a financial incentive for industries to invest in clean technologies and develop innovative ways to reduce pollution. California Climate Investments projects include affordable housing, renewable energy, public transportation, zero-emission vehicles, environmental restoration, more sustainable agriculture, recycling, and much more. At least 35 percent of these investments are located within and benefit residents of disadvantaged communities, low-income communities, and low-income households across California. For more information, visit the California Climate Investments website at: [www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov](http://www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov).



# REFLECTIONS ON 19 YEARS AT CRT: LOOKING PAST AND LOOKING FORWARD

By Andy Mills



I REMEMBER WHEN I FIRST HEARD OF the Rangeland Trust. Wayne Jensen, our livestock advisor, came to a Santa Barbara County Cattlemen's Association director's meeting and announced that the CCA had sponsored formation of a conservation arm that would help ranchers interested in placing conservation easements on their land. They needed a field representative.

This struck a chord with me. My family had been forced to sell our beautiful ranch to address estate tax issues. If a cattleman's land trust had been available, I would probably still be living on that ranch today. I already had a job, but felt compelled to pursue this opportunity. Their mission to save not just the land, but the rancher along with it, resonated with me deeply.

My first assignment as field representative for the Rangeland Trust was to attend local association meetings in two different counties. At first, ranchers responded negatively to the easement concept and to the involvement of government agencies. But as we continued to provide information and support, interest gradually built. Within two years, easement applications were regularly arriving at our Sacramento office.

Initially, there was enough government and private funding to support a number of our easement projects. Then the recession hit. Agency funding dried up. Projects we considered of critical importance to the livestock industry and to preserving wildlife habitat stalled. Many are still in limbo—frustrating and painful for all involved.

Conservation funding seemed to be the last segment to achieve relief from the recession, and we are still far below initial funding levels. Mitigation easements provided a partial backstop. Developers, including government agencies, needed to secure land for preservation in projects that impacted resources. Thankfully, progress on completing projects and reducing our backlog began to gradually accelerate.

So, what does the future hold?

Mitigation projects play a role in the future, but cannot serve everyone who deserves help. That's why we have grown our staff to explore and develop new models for obtaining the funding necessary to support our rancher constituents. Growing interest from private and corporate foundations to fund conservation is a bright light for the future of the Rangeland Trust. I believe that in the long term, this support will serve as the primary basis for funding easements.

As a staff member who was here from the very beginning, I am proud to retire at such an exciting time in the organization's history. I am pleased to witness the California Rangeland Trust growing and functioning at such a high level, with the support of a professional staff that has the expertise necessary to take us into the future. I am honored to join the Board of Directors and hope to contribute in some measure to the further growth and success of a wonderful organization.



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Between meetings, ranch tours, and the Messaging Task Force, the Legacy Council is hard at work raising awareness of California Rangeland Trust and fundraising projects in queue.



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## Planned Giving

### A POWERFUL PIECE OF PAPER WHY A WILL IS THE WAY

**E**STABLISHING A FINANCIAL FOOTPRINT STARTS WITH three basic documents: A birth certificate, a driver's license, and a Social Security card. With those simple pieces of identification, you can open a bank account, apply for a job, or buy a car or home.

But what document helps your loved ones manage those assets after your passing? A will. Without one, those closest to you may endure unnecessary stress and anxiety because they don't know your intentions.

Despite the importance of this document, a recent poll found that 33 percent of Americans still don't have a will.

#### What a Will Can Do

No matter if you're 21 or 101, a will should be among your most important documents. When you create one, you ensure that the individuals and causes you care about now are being taken care of after your lifetime. With a will, you can:

- Direct the division of your property the way you choose, not the way the state decides.
- Make special financial arrangements for family members who are minors, disabled, or unfamiliar with money management.
- Select an executor who is qualified to settle your estate promptly and economically with careful attention to your wishes.
- Name a guardian for any minor children.
- Devise an estate plan—with the help of a qualified attorney and other advisors—to ensure that all your assets are passed on pursuant to your wishes.
- Support the charitable organizations and causes that are important to you.



#### Keep it Updated

Already have a will? Keeping it up to date is just as important as the document itself. If you've experienced life changes such as a birth, death, marriage, divorce, or other major life event, consider taking a second look at your will and making changes accordingly.

#### Use Your Will for Good

If the California Rangeland Trust is among your special causes and is in your existing will, or if you are creating or updating your will and would like to include a future gift for our work, we would appreciate your letting us know. Already a number of our friends and donors have responded. Those who have let us know of their future plans will receive an invitation to our first gathering of the Planned Giving Society.

The Planned Giving Society's inaugural event will be a special hosted lunch in the Fall of 2018. Contact Cecilia Tonsing (916-444-2096 or [ctonsing@rangelandtrust.org](mailto:ctonsing@rangelandtrust.org)) if you would like more information.



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# Annual Fund

## HELP THE RANGELAND TRUST CONSERVE THE ROCK FRONT RANCH

We have recently received a CHALLENGE GRANT to conserve one of the ranches in our portfolio: the Rock Front Ranch. This small but mighty ranch protects a valuable corridor for wild animals, allowing them to pass between portions of the Los Padres National Forest without having to face the peril of crossing a highway. The large cliff that gives the Rock Front Ranch its name is an important stopover for many migrating birds—including the iconic peregrine falcon.

For more than 100 years, California families have grazed cattle on this scenic gateway to a valley rich in resources for humans and wildlife alike. **YOU can help shape the next chapter for the Rock Front Ranch.**

We have received a Challenge Grant from the Henry Mayo Newhall Foundation for \$30,000 that is dependent on our ability to raise **\$165,000 by May 1, 2018** towards purchasing the conservation easement on the Ranch. With this challenge, we believe that **the Rock Front Ranch can be the first project in our history to be 100% funded through contributions from the community!**

Visit [www.RangelandTrust.org/Rock-Front-Ranch](http://www.RangelandTrust.org/Rock-Front-Ranch) to learn more about how you can help us rise to the challenge and conserve the scenic and historic Rock Front Ranch.



This year marks the 20 year anniversary of the California Rangeland Trust. 20 years of protecting vital rangelands; 20 years of partnering with visionary supporters; 20 years of preserving the Western lifestyle; 20 years of protecting clean air, water, wildlife, open spaces, and healthy food for generations to come.

This landmark is about all of you—our founders, our partners, our supporters and friends—who helped the California Rangeland Trust grow and thrive.

And you have stories, so many stories that need to be told and shared.

That's why we're celebrating this milestone by putting the spotlight on 20 of those stories. Our 20 Years/20 Stories Series will follow conservationists, partners, farmers, and ranchers who demonstrate the importance of California rangeland through their words and actions every day. You won't want to miss one story. Keep following our blog and social media, join our email list, and watch for future issues of the Rangeland Trust newsletter!

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## 20 YEARS 20 STORIES

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# 2016 ANNUAL REPORT & FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## ONE YEAR OF SUCCESS IN CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION

Thank you for helping us protect California's wild spaces and the life sustained by rangeland. During 2016, four new easements were completed, and 4,765 acres of rangeland added for a year-end total of 291,830 conserved acres in California. Because of your support, the California Rangeland Trust was able to accomplish incredible things in 2016. We couldn't have done it without you!



**14 MILES OF  
FRESHWATER STREAMS  
CONSERVED**



**19 WILDLIFE SPECIES  
OF SPECIAL STATUS HABITAT  
PROTECTED**



**15 PLANT SPECIES OF  
SPECIAL STATUS HABITAT  
PROTECTED**



**200 STUDENTS  
ENGAGED THROUGH 5  
YOUTH RANCH TOURS**

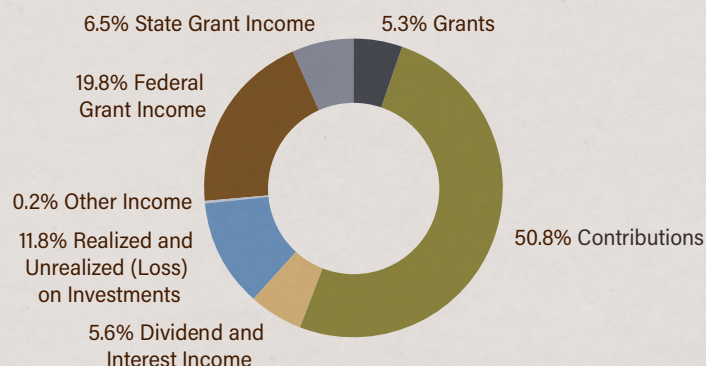
## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

DECEMBER 31, 2016

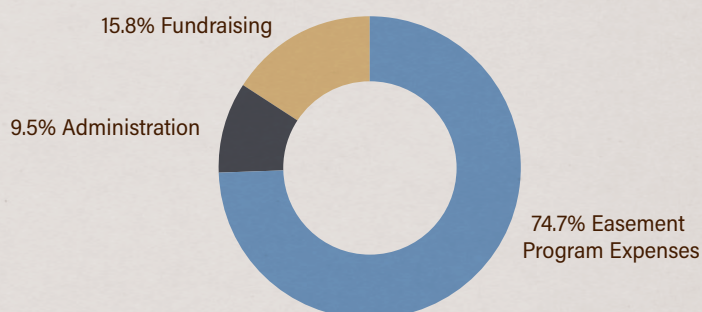
ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$	808,540
Restricted Cash and Cash Equivalents		230,561
Investments		16,448,103
Accounts Receivable		69,044
Prepaid Expenses		695
Projects in Development		773,674
Property Held for Sale		1,000,000
Conservation Easements		2,913
Mitigation Deposit		129,388
Property and Equipment		752,093
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>20,215,011</b>

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS		
Accounts Payable and Other Liabilities	\$	160,475
Mitigation Liability		125,005
Note Payable		135,000
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>420,480</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$	10,472,504
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets		1,444,945
Permanently Restricted Net Assets		7,877,082
<b>Total Net Assets</b>		<b>19,794,531</b>
<b>Net Assets at End of Year</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>19,794,531</b>

## 2016 REVENUE & OTHER SUPPORT



## 2016 EXPENSES



The above information is a financial "snapshot" in time. We are pleased to see the assets and investments remain strong as they are directly ear-marked for our mission—to conserve California's working ranches that provide stewardship, open space, and natural habitat for future generations.



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## JIM SINTON IN MEMORIUM

The California Rangeland Trust remembers the storied life of Jim Sinton, a San Luis Obispo County rancher and supporter of conservation in California.

Jim passed away in late December at the age of 101. He had recently seen the successful closure of a conservation easement on the Avenales Ranch, owned by the Sinton family for six generations. For years, Jim expressed his desire to protect the Avenales Ranch. In October 2017, he saw the finalization of a conservation easement on the property, ensuring that his vision would be realized, and the Sinton family's land preserved forever. In all, 21 contiguous and non-contiguous parcels were extinguished, ensuring the perpetual protection of over 12,600 acres.

A veteran of World War II, Jim graduated UC Berkeley with a degree in agricultural economics. He was pivotal in the 1960s study that challenged and eventually overturned the old ranching idea that acorns were unsafe for cattle consumption. His work concluded that oak trees were actually beneficial to grazing range.

A true cattleman, Jim will be remembered for integrity, forward thinking, enduring curiosity, and a thirst for learning. He was a passionate land steward, named California Rangeland Trust's Conservationist of the Year in 2009. Jim also received honors from the Santa Lucia chapter of the Sierra Club, and the California Native Plant Society.



Jim's son Steve Sinton was a founding member of the California Rangeland Trust in 1998 and still serves on the Emeritus Council. His grandson, Daniel Sinton, is a current Director at the California Rangeland Trust.

Jim's life and work embody the spirit of a cowboy conservationist. With the legacy of his ranch preserved forever by the California Rangeland Trust, his work will continue to inspire conservation efforts and impact Californians well into the future.



## PRES HOTCHKIS IN MEMORIUM

Preston B. Hotchkis passed away on November 18, 2017 in Santa Barbara, surrounded by his family and his wife of 65 years, Maurine.

Pres had been a generous and longtime supporter of the California Rangeland Trust, awarding annual gifts through his family's foundation to help advance our mission of conserving rangeland in California. The cause was close to his heart, having sadly witnessed the sale of the Bixby Cojo-Jalama Ranch, his family's largest ranch. An accomplished lawyer and businessman, Pres loved the "simpler time" that ranching had brought to his life. He helped to form a nonprofit foundation to preserve and restore the remaining 7.5-acre Rancho Los Alamitos, which had been deeded to the City of Long Beach in 1968. The Rancho now hosts local youth as part of a cultural geography project with the Long

Beach School District, passing on the connection to the land, animals, history, and people of California that Pres cared about so deeply.

Pres' three grandsons worked on the ranches north of Santa Barbara during the summers in order to learn the ways of the cowboy, just as he did as a boy. One of those grandsons, Ryan Frisby, is now carrying forward his grandfather's vision with the Elizabeth Bixby Janeway Foundation.

Pres was born on May 27, 1929 in Los Angeles, California, to Preston and Katharine (Bixby) Hotchkis. He received his B.S. from UC Berkeley in 1951 and served as an officer in the Strategic Air Command. He returned to Cal to earn his law degree from Boalt Hall, Class of '56. For seven years, Pres practiced law with Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher in Los Angeles. In 1964, he made the



decision to help his grandfather's business and became President & CEO of Bixby Ranch Company in Long Beach. He remained Chairman of the Board until the company liquidated in 2007. He contributed his time and support to Rancho Los Alamitos Historic Ranch & Gardens, Elizabeth Bixby Janeway Foundation, Pacific Legal Foundation, Hoover Institution, Metropolitan Water District, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, Berkeley Foundation, and many more.

Cattle graze in the wildflowers on the Avenales Ranch.



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A WESTERN AFFAIR  
JUNE 16, 2018



We are grateful for the overwhelming support received for our 20th anniversary celebration and *A Western Affair 2018*. Table sales in December were highly successful, and the tickets that went live on our website January 1st were bought up quickly. Due to this enthusiastic response, ***A Western Affair 2018*** has already **SOLD OUT!**

We understand this is disappointing news to a lot of people—we have never sold out this early for an event. To be added to our **waitlist** for tickets, please call **916.444.2096** or visit our website at **[www.RangelandTrust.org](http://www.RangelandTrust.org)**. The waitlist is on a first-come, first-serve basis. We will contact those on our waitlist as tickets become available. For those that already purchased a ticket or table, you will receive details closer to the event.

Stay tuned for the location announcement for *A Western Affair 2019*, which will be released this summer.

