

*Our mission is to conserve the open space, natural habitat and stewardship provided by California's ranches.*

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## Home on the Range

### A Genasci Tradition for Almost 100 Years

At 95 years old Attilio Genasci does more before 9:00 AM than most of us half his age do all day. A typical morning for Attilio could have him disking fields, repairing dams, pairing and feeding cows, and keeping up with his historic 1909 barn. Attilio does everything it takes to work a 500-acre ranch that has grazing capacity and hay production. Jim Genasci, his son who owns an adjacent 920 acres said, "My father is an extremely hard worker who always looks for success and never worries."

This might be explained because the Genasci Ranch has been in Attilio's family for almost 100 years. In fact, his parents, who emigrated from Italy, bought the Ranch the year he was born. Since that time, the Genascis have cared for the land and managed it, so that generations to come will know the beauty that first drew them to a home on the range.

Attilio's love of the land led him to attend a meeting a number of years ago where conservation easements were discussed. Attilio quickly realized a conservation easement would protect his Ranch forever from the residential development that was creeping ever closer. Genasci's 500 acres will contribute to a total of 25,000 acres in Sierra Valley that are already protected by conservation

easements, or are on the verge of being preserved. Attilio is respected as one of the "fathers" of the Sierra Valley for his fervor to protect the land. His efforts are supported by other ranchers who are making strides to protect their own working landscapes and by organizations in the Sierra Valley like the California Rangeland Trust, Sierra Business Council, Feather River Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy.

Attilio's son Jim owns the ranch adjacent to Attilio's. Together they work their two ranches, and together they seek to protect the Genasci Ranch. On his 95th birthday, friends and neighbors gathered around Attilio, Jim, Jim's wife Mary

and their two sons to celebrate the signing of an option for the conservation easement. On that beautiful clear Sierra Valley day, Attilio reminded all of us:

"The land belongs to the generations. You have it while you're here and when you pass on, hopefully you pass it on in better condition than you found it."

The easement was approved for



Photo credit: Chris Stewart, San Francisco Chronicle



Attilio Genasci

funding by the Wildlife Conservation Board at its August meeting. Attilio's speech to the Wildlife Conservation Board about his love of the land sparked spontaneous applause. The Sierra Business Council is providing additional funding for the transaction.

"It's ranchers like Attilio, who have a true love for the land and the generations to come, that the California Rangeland Trust exists for," says Mike Bennett, chair of the California Rangeland Trust. "His effort to preserve this land will ensure viable ranching for his son and daughter-in-law and all those to come. It will also continue the legacy of beauty that working landscapes provide the community at large."

All that aside, there is still one compelling reason that Attilio Genasci will always have for preserving the land that has a special place in his heart — Angie Genasci, his wife. Angie's ashes are sprinkled in the pasture behind the house. Placing an easement on his land is a tribute to her.

# Hearst Contract for Conservation

By Steven D. McDonald,  
CRT Director and Treasurer

Five years ago, the Hearst Corporation, under the leadership of Stephen Hearst, as Vice President and General Manager of the Sunical Land and Livestock and San Simeon Ranch Divisions, began looking for conservation solutions to the generational and economic pressures facing both the family and the Board of Directors after local and environmental concerns delayed development proposals for Hearst Ranch.

At a campfire in Los Banos, Steve Hearst and I discussed the possibility of California Rangeland Trust providing an environmental solution for their San Simeon Ranch. The Rangeland Trust had completed other easements with California ranching families and thought that the Hearst family, although a large corporation, had similar needs and obstacles experienced by ranching families. Our organization was off to a good start, but dreamed of making a bigger difference by providing opportunities for ranchers to ensure their private property rights while promoting, through their stewardship, working landscapes protection of natural resources and habitat. Hearst wanted to maintain the ranch as it is today without future development potential. Hearst sought only to keep the right to seek permits to build twenty-seven home sites and an Inn designed by Julia Morgan for WR Hearst.

The beginning of a viable project grew over the years from the willingness of our board and the Hearst Board to explore the possibility of partnering with other land trusts. This coalition of land trusts would devise a credible and viable solution for the issues faced by Hearst, as well as attempt to meet environmental and local concerns. Someone suggested the name of the



project should be "The Manhattan Project." We soon learned, however, that a better name was "Project Compromise," because it would take cooperation from all sides to make the effort work. Several years later, after many months of negotiations and compromises, the result was an agreement presented to the State Resources agencies in 2003.

The partnership with American Land Conservancy, Hearst Corporation, and California Rangeland Trust was truly a blending of all the parties' interests: the partnership was sensitive to the need for representation of the State's and people's concerns for access, resource and habitat protection, as well as the landowner's interest in protecting private property rights. Here, the rancher agreed to sell the majority of their future development rights, gifted land and made many concessions, including legal title to thirteen miles of coastline to the State.

This conservation easement and gift of land was presented to the State for its review and input. Thereafter, the proposal endured a year of balancing the State's and rancher's interests and extraordinary public review. At all times, the public's desire for a fair and equitable agreement was protected. As a consequence, the people of California have been ensured protection of the magnificent working landscapes existing on the east side of Highway One. In addition, the public has incredible permanent legal access through State ownership of land on the west side of Highway One. The California Department of Transportation will now own Highway One, instead of holding only an easement. The

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# Historic Santa Barbara Area Ranch Moving Ahead for Consideration by Wildlife Conservation Board

In Santa Barbara County, at a midway point between the rural coastline of Gaviota and the expansive flower fields of the Lompoc Valley, California's scenic Highway 1 passes through El Chorro Ranch. The ranch, nestled in the center of the San Julian Valley, is now in its fourth generation of family ownership and stewardship by the Isaacson family. Today, the Isaacsons have made the decision to keep the cattle grazing ranch in perpetuity with a conservation easement to be held by the California Rangeland Trust.

"We have cared for and ranched this property for sixty-five years," explains Bob Isaacson, who lives on the ranch along with wife, Sally, and daughter, Katie. "Our mother's desire is that the ranch remains intact as a future home and center for her three sons and their spouses, six grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. Having a portion of the property value converted into liquid asset funds will give us a number of options that would enable us to keep the ranch both in the family and in ranching."

The El Chorro Ranch conservation easement project is one of four initial projects that the California Rangeland Trust is doing in partnership with Land Trust for Santa Barbara County. The partnership is focusing on developing voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs in the Gaviota Coast and Santa Ynez – San Julian, and Los Alamos Valley regions of Santa Barbara County. El Chorro Ranch, along with the La Purisima Ranch (spearheaded by the Santa Barbara Land Trust), is a cornerstone of the partnership's implementation of strategic conservation projects in a region so important to the

Central Coast's agricultural production. The area also contains some of Santa Barbara County's most important habitat areas, particularly with respect to steelhead trout, California tiger salamanders and red-legged frogs.

El Jaro Creek, a lifeline for a large and diverse population of wildlife, meanders through the ranch between the highway and the farming fields. El Chorro Ranch also provides a key portion of the valley's wildlife migration corridor as well

as being a reliable habitat, sanctuary and breeding area for deer, bobcat, mountain lion, and gray fox. It is critically and centrally situated within the San Julian Valley. As it includes a mosaic of grassland, coastal sage scrub, coastal live oak woodland, and riparian plant areas, it provides ecological niches suitable for a wide variety of native species of carnivores, omnivores and herbivores both large and small.

El Chorro Ranch was once part of one of the three largest Mexican land grants in the county, the historic Rancho San Julian. Before that, it was within the La Purisima Mission lands, and it also supplied beef to Santa Barbara's Spanish era Presidio as a portion of Rancho Nacional. As such, the property has been used for cattle production since the 1770's.

Under the Isaacsons careful guidance, cattle production remains the chief use of the land some 230 years later. The exemplary vernal pools, vibrant oak woodlands and golden cot-

tonwoods along the El Jaro Creek serve as ample testament to the symbiotic existence enjoyed over time between cattle ranching and natural resources.



*The partnership of California Rangeland Trust and Santa Barbara County Land Trust has set a goal to protect 50,000 acres of land in agricultural production. The partnership does extensive landowner outreach, identifies appropriate partners to meet landowner and conservation goals for specific projects, and connects the project teams to resources and funding to meet objectives.*

# USDA NRCS Chief Bruce Knight Tour – June 22, 2004

Bruce Knight, chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), toured the ranch of Yolo Land & Cattle Co. in June of this year. The afternoon tour and barbeque was coordinated by California Rangeland Trust, the California Cattlemen's Association, Yolo Land & Cattle Co., NRCS, Yolo Resource Conservation District and Yolo Land Trust. The partners saw this as a great opportunity to showcase the efforts of ranch conservation to a national representative appointed by the Bush administration. A bus load of others accompanied Mr. Knight on his tour, namely State Conservationist Chuck Bell and Richard Rominger, former U.S. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture and founder of Yolo Land Trust, and handful of others representing federal and state government and the non-profit conservation partners.

The Stone Family, owners of the Yolo Land & Cattle Co., are great examples of ranchers that employ stewardship principals that will enhance the value of their land for habitats

and grazing. One excellent example is fencing off one of their 100 farm ponds to prevent cattle from wading into the water to drink. Instead, a gravity flow system enables water to be directed into a concrete trough a small distance away. This unique approach allows for a combined habitat for birds, turtles, fish, and cattle.

The tour gave Nita Vail, Executive Director for California Rangeland Trust, the opportunity to advocate the pending easement partnership with Yolo Land Trust and Yolo Land & Cattle. The easement would prevent development of the ranch while continuing to allow cattle ranching and agritourism activities: two focuses of the Stones' ranch management plan.

California Rangeland Trust looks forward to partnering future projects such as this with the NRCS, as it gives the Trust an opportunity to educate others on the benefits of collaborative efforts that can assist in conserving the open space, natural habitat and stewardship provided by California's ranches.



Left to Right - Scott Stone, Casey Stone, Bruce Knight

## "A Western Affair" Remembered

Abbie and Mark Nelson's Five Star Land and Livestock ranch in Wilton, provided a great location for California Rangeland Trust's 3rd annual fundraiser. Their hospitality to over 220 guests helped raise over \$55,000 to help CRT continue to preserve the golden landscapes of California.

The evening was filled with spirited sounds of patriotism and western pride. Katie Rice, daughter of Rich and Jennifer Rice, contributed by singing the national anthem and was escorted by Carson Stone, son of Scott and Karen Stone, who displayed the American flag. For the rest of the evening, the festive bluegrass tunes of the Plainfield Pickers, led by Rangeland Trust Director Scott Stone, provided great entertainment.

Guests feasted on a delicious steak dinner prepared by George Gough with the assistance of Tom Whalen, and



Carson Stone



served by the California Young Cattlemen. One of the most successful finishing touches of the evening was the live auction with Col. Bill Lefty as master of ceremonies.

"We were pleased with the success of the event," said Mike Bennett, chair of the California Rangeland Trust, "thanks to the hard work and dedication of the fundraising committee, chaired by Kendra Wilber." The committee also included

Abbie Nelson, Jakki McDonald, Jennifer Rice, Carole Siveira, Karen Stone, Nita Vail and Emily Fransicovich.

# May 2004 Range Ride

The 2004 Range Ride held at the Koopmann Sunol Ranch on May 27, 2004, was a combined effort between California Rangeland Trust, the California Cattlemen's Association, and the Alameda County Resource Conservation District. The ride provided an opportunity for local government officials, representatives from state and federal agencies, funders from supporting foundations and members of the media to experience first hand the benefits of utilizing mitigation easements and grazing as a management tool, as a viable option to enable continued ranching in California.

Since the Koopmann Ranch, owned by Rangeland Trust Director Tim Koopmann, hosts a 32-acre mitigation easement for the California tiger salamander habitat, it provided



to provide protected nesting sites for native birds.

Thanks to Tim and Melinda Koopmann, and all of our partners, the event was an overall success and enjoyed by all who attended.

the perfect venue for this learning exchange. In addition, the ranch management plan includes watershed protection and enhancement programs, solar power to pump water to designated watering area, and a partnership with the Audubon Society

*Continued from page 2*

Hearst Ranch project also allows the State Parks system to obtain additional land for its purposes, and improves access to the coastal areas.

All in all, this is a fantastic opportunity, and now a great project, that has had years of compromise and the balancing of interests with all parties and people involved. It is not perfect, but it is a viable and worthwhile endeavor where everyone wins in the long run. Sure, no one side received everything they wanted, but this is a good financial opportunity for the State; as the landowner receives just a little over one third of the appraised value for the development rights extinguished through the agreement.

The two land trusts, the State agencies, the private non-profit groups, the people of California and the Hearst Corporation deserve the credit for accomplishing this agreement. All who worked on the project committed many extra hours and sacrifices to obtain, through public scrutiny, an achievement that will protect the resources and habitat for generations to come. The agreement has gone through three State agencies for approval and has received unanimous approval from Cal Trans, the Wildlife Conservation Board

and the California Coastal Conservancy. The only remaining approval is from the California Public Works Board for acceptance of the gift of new State owned lands.

The efforts of the California Rangeland Trust to complete this conservation easement are exemplary and show the professionalism that our Executive Director, Nita Vail, and the Board of Directors have developed over six years of dedication to their mission to conserve the open space, natural habitat and stewardship provided by California ranching families. The team that worked through this project for many hours includes CRT Director Steve Sinton, Nita Vail, and myself, with a special mention for Carson Scheller, founding CRT Director, for his initial work in CRT's formation and the commencement of this project. The staff and consultants are commended for their ownership of this project over the years. Al Jahns, our attorney, has kept us legally straight while doing a great job in leading all parties through compromise to agreement. It has truly been a team effort by all.

The number one person who has made this entire project work is Stephen Hearst with his insight, trust, leadership, compromise and patience. His past and future stewardship on the Hearst Ranch

should be recognized with a completed project. He has set an example of how other ranchers in the industry can continue to protect their private property rights, while conserving their resources and habitat for generations of Californians to come.

It has been my pleasure to contribute to the overall effort that molded this agreement into something to be proud of. My only hope is that we learn two valuable lessons from our efforts with this project. First, to truly conserve working landscapes in California we must endeavor to work through compromise and realize that the best stewards of the land are the rancher families, not through state ownership. Another definition for conservationist is the ranching family. Second, a conservation easement is primarily a voluntary agreement by a ranching family to sell their future development rights and other negotiated items while still maintaining their ranch as it is today with all the private property rights that go with fee title ownership. Through balancing environmental and ranching interests we can conserve those working landscapes while allowing ranching families to protect and use easements as a generational tool to meet business objectives and assist in their estate planning.

# California Rangeland Trust: An Ambassador Organization for Stewardship Standards

The Land Trust Alliance (LTA), an umbrella group for land trusts nationally, has invited California Rangeland Trust to help champion the importance of the Land Trust Standards & Practices (S&P) as the ethical and technical guidelines for the land trust community. The 2004 S&P revision, a top priority of the land trust community, is the most comprehensive review of land trust operating benchmarks since they were issued fifteen years ago.

Standards and Practices were created by and for the land trust community in 1989 and describe how to responsibly operate a land trust. Since that date, the land trust community has made significant advances in conservation and has gained increased public recognition. The proposed revisions reflect both the invaluable lessons learned in the practice of conservation over the last fifteen years and the need for every land trust to take responsibility for safeguarding the public's trust in land conservation.

Nita Vail, Executive Director of the Rangeland Trust, notes the benefits of acting as an ambassador for S&P revisions. "By accepting this invitation," Vail said, "the Rangeland Trust has committed to publicly support widespread understanding of these evolving institutions." Vail also noted that the mainstreaming of voluntary conservation efforts has forced established land trust organizations to set the bar high in terms of ethics and accountability.

In 2000, the Rangeland Trust Board passed a resolution adopting the LTA Standards and Practices guidelines for all of

its operations. Since that time, S&P have shaped the Rangeland Trust's policy and procedural development. As a result of its unwavering adherence to S&P and its leadership role in developing higher standards for land stewardship, LTA called upon the Rangeland Trust among other land trusts in the West and throughout the country, to serve as an Ambassador organization to help complete the review and completion process, and encourage other land trusts to adopt the new standards. A Land Trust Ambassador understands the value of the S&P, has read and understood the most recent set of revisions, and is familiar with the process used to revise the S&P.



LTA will formally adopt the final S&P revisions at its September 2004 Board of Directors Meeting. Land trusts will be asked to adopt the revised standards starting in July 2005. For more information on S&P or to learn how you can help to champion S&P go to: [www.lta.org](http://www.lta.org).

## Conservation Easement Stewardship Update

Conservation easement stewardship has been one topic in the forefront of the news lately with the development of several high profile projects. This standard is one the Rangeland Trust is treating as a high organizational priority. With guidance from Certified Range Managers Ceci Dale-Cesmat and Tim Koopmann as well as Environmental Consultants, Orrin and Cindy Sage, the Rangeland Trust has undergone a rigorous review of its monitoring and stewardship protocols. In addition to employing the use of new technologies such as GPS and digital photography, the Rangeland Trust has adopted a formal "audit policies and procedures." The audit policies and procedures are intended to reinforce the Rangeland Trust's effective stewardship in its rangeland conservation program and to assure accountability to the public and private entities that provide funding in support of that program. "The Rangeland Trust's audit policy reflects our efforts to maintain credibility and transparency," says Jennifer Rice, Director for CRT.

## Standards and Practices

*\*Draft as of October 11, 2004*

1. Mission
2. Compliance with Laws
3. Board Accountability
4. Conflicts of Interest
5. Fundraising
6. Financial and Asset Management
7. Volunteer, Staff and Consultants
8. Evaluating and Selecting Conservation Projects
9. Ensuring Sound Transactions
10. Tax Benefits
11. Conservation Easement Stewardship
12. Fee Land Stewardship

For more information: [www.lta.org/sp/index.html](http://www.lta.org/sp/index.html)

# Thank You Donors!

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## CRT 3rd Annual Fundraiser Donors

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## Have You Utilized a Succession Planning Consultant or Counselor?

Many of you have utilized consultants, counselors and other resources on your journey to generational succession and estate planning. California Rangeland Trust is constantly receiving inquiries from individuals that are in need of such knowledge and tools. In order to better serve our support-

ers, we would like to hear from you regarding these resources so that we might be able to pass them on to other ranching families. Please email or mail those contacts that have been helpful to you and your family and we'll keep a list available for interested callers. Keep in mind, we will not recommend

these to individuals, but suggest them as resources that our members have utilized. Please send pertinent information to: [modonahue@rangelandtrust.org](mailto:modonahue@rangelandtrust.org) or California Rangeland Trust, 1221 H Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.

# Events Roundup

## LTA 2004 Rally

*October 28-31 in Rhode Island*

Take part in the largest gathering of land conservation leaders in the country! This four day conference will give you the opportunity to attend seminars, workshops, take field trips, and network with other open space enthusiasts. For more information on the event and details about registration, go to: <http://www.lta.org/training/rally.htm>.

## Election Day

*November 2, 2004 – Don't forget to vote!*

## CCA/CCW 2004 Convention

*November 11-13 in Sacramento*

The 88th annual California Cattlemen's/Cattlemen's Association Convention will be held at Sacramento's Sheraton Grand Hotel this year. Be sure to attend California Rangeland Trust's Easement 101 workshop on Thursday, Nov. 11. This free session, facilitated by Michele Clark, Transaction Director for CRT, will cover the basics of land preservation tools such as conservation easements, and how they might play a role in your ranching business. For convention information contact Rachel Hickerson at 916-444-0845 or go to [www.calcattlemen.org](http://www.calcattlemen.org).

## CRT's Cowboy/Cowgirl Poet Breakfast

*November 12 at the CCA/CCW Convention*

Join the California Rangeland Trust for our fourth annual breakfast. You'll be provided with entertainment by poets Jeralyn Strong and Norma Fox and give first hand feedback from landowner Attilio Genasci's experience with a conservation easement. For more information about this year's event call Emily Fanciskovich at 916-444-2096 or obtain registration materials through the California Cattlemen's Association at 916-444-0845 or [www.calcattlemen.org](http://www.calcattlemen.org).

## Central California Agriculture Symposium

*Strategies for Sustainability, Nov. 15-16 in Paso Robles*

Not only will this year's symposium include a series of expert presentations and educational workshops on rangeland conservation, but it will be followed by a dynamic field tour of two working ranches in the Central Coast region; one of which is our very own Steve Sinton's, CRT Director, Sinton Ranch. For conference info go to: [http://www.carcd.org/ag\\_symposium](http://www.carcd.org/ag_symposium) or call California Association of Resource Conservation Districts at 916-457-7904 x14.



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