

## HERITAGE AND INNOVATION

**I**F THERE WAS A DICTIONARY OF NAMES, you might find the name Van Vleck atop the definition: heritage and innovation. Van Vleck ranching roots run deep – 161 years deep – in the greater Sacramento area, and the family is employing cutting-edge strategies to ensure the land will continue to support cattle and wildlife yet another 161 years from now.

The main obstacle to this goal is cashflow. "Cattle ranching does not generate significant income," Stan said in a recent interview. He said that while land values continually increase, the income stream from agriculture does not and that "the return is too low for the asset value." Rather than try to convince future generations to work several jobs in order to keep the ranch and hope each successive generation is able to do the same, he had a radical idea: make the business much more profitable so it becomes a "good business decision" to keep the business and not just for the love of agriculture.

Eliminating the temptation to sell for development is no small feat. The ranch sits directly across the highway from 3,000 homes; the current average home price sitting at just under half a million dollars. And this price may keep climbing. The total estimated population of California in 1856, the year Amos Van Vleck staked a homestead in what is now the Apple Hill area, was just over

500,000. While it is unlikely the state will see another 8,000% population increase in the next 160 years, an additional 20 million people will call California home by the year 2050 per California Department of Finance's long-range population projections.

Stan Van Vleck is no stranger to the temptation to sell. In fact, to ensure the ranch stayed in agriculture, he had to buy out the rest of the family. And although his two children would like to stay in the family business, the pressures that they and their children are likely to face down the road could mean that the ranch won't make it to the 9<sup>th</sup> generation.

The Van Vleck story is the story of California ranching: drought, inheritance taxes, increasing land values, and a fluctuating cattle market creating a dark cloud on the horizon. It's no surprise that other income streams are needed. From putting in vineyards or orchards, to running a hunting club, to hanging a shingle as a guest ranch, many of the popular methods of diversification often alter land use and operations to some degree. Stan means something totally different when the topic turns to diversification.

(continue on pg 3)



Van Vleck Family



Van Vleck Cattle

## IN THIS ISSUE

LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP .....	2
HERITAGE AND INNOVATION (CONT.) .....	3
PLANNED GIVING .....	5

THANK YOU DONORS! .....	6
CELEBRATING 300,000 ACRES .....	7
A WESTERN AFFAIR 2018 .....	8

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### CHAIRMAN

Jack Hanson, Susanville

### VICE CHAIRMAN

K. Mark Nelson, Wilton

### SECRETARY

Sylvia Cattani, Bakersfield

### TREASURER

Valerie Gordon, Alpine County

### IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

Darrel Sweet (Emeritus), Livermore

Carolyn Carey, Alturas

Ceci Dale-Cesmat, Winters

Clayton Koopmann, Sunol

Doug McDonald, Manhattan Beach

Andy Mills, Santa Maria

Dan O'Connell, Colusa

Jack Rice, Woodland

Daniel Sinton, Santa Margarita

### EMERITUS DIRECTORS

Devere Dressler, Gardnerville NV

Steve McDonald, Sanger

Steve Sinton, Shandon

Scott Stone, Woodland

Darrell Wood, Vina

### STAFF

Nita Vail, Chief Executive Officer

Michael Delbar, Chief Operating Officer

Cecilia Tonsing, Chief Development Officer

Joe Navari, Stewardship Director

Jeremiah Leibowitz, Transaction Director

Jessica Kong, Communications Director

Shannon Foucault, Development Director

Jon Cartwright, Finance Manager

Nancy Schaefer, Bay Area Program Manager

Nancy Lemos, Conservation Associate

Leigh Geren, Development Associate

Alyssa Rolen, Legacy Council/

Special Events Coordinator

Jenna Lamberta, Community

Outreach Coordinator

## LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

*By Valerie Gordon, Fund Development & Outreach Committee Chair*

THE CALIFORNIA RANGELAND TRUST is on the eve of its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, a good time to reflect on how far we have come and where we are headed. What started as a dream of a few progressively minded cattlemen and women to protect ranches in California has grown beyond what the original founders could have expected. The Rangeland Trust has protected 310,668 acres to date and has another 400,000 acres waiting to be protected. "Waiting for what?" you might ask. In a word: funding. When CRT started, most of the funding to purchase conservation easements from willing sellers came from the state of California. But things have changed: The State's budget for conservation grants has diminished significantly and more land trusts are vying for pieces of a smaller pie.

The Rangeland Trust is proactively addressing this changing reality. While we continue to work with the State on projects, we are also looking elsewhere for funding opportunities. We are pleased to get support from a variety of local and national foundations who care about preserving ranching and rangeland in California. In addition, CRT is launching a new initiative to include individuals who want to participate in helping to make a difference in California's ranching and environmental future. Most Californians are passionate about the open space that ranches provide: some come from ranching backgrounds, some appreciate the clean air and clean water that ranches provide, others value that ranches provide habitat for livestock and wildlife alike, and still others simply enjoy driving by a ranch and seeing happy cows grazing. **Our job at CRT is to help connect people who care about California's environment and ranching with an opportunity to do something about it.**

For many years, we have had a strong group of dedicated donors who support us with their generous contributions. We are looking to build on this group by reaching out to more people who may only know a little about CRT's work, but who--if they knew more--would be thrilled to help us achieve our mission. Towards this end, we are adding a focus of getting to know more individuals who have a capacity and an interest in giving financial support to CRT.

This is a shift for CRT. As ranchers, we usually don't like to ask for help. We are born to figure it out on our own. However, to achieve our goal of protecting every ranch that wants to be protected, we need to ask for help. We can't do it alone. As one very smart rancher in the CCA leadership said: "What took you guys so long to ask for this kind of help?"





## HERITAGE CONTINUED....

What if there were a way ranchers could get paid to graze their own land? And what if that cash could be used to invest in opportunities outside of agriculture? Even outside California? That is exactly what the Van Vleck family is doing by investing easement proceeds into commercial property strategically in business friendly states like Texas. On May 12, 2017, **California Rangeland Trust's first easement in Sacramento County** – a 285 acre mitigation easement through Teichert Construction – closed on Van Vleck Ranch. While the Van Vlecks may be the newest addition to the Rangeland Trust tribe, they are no strangers to conservation. Nearly 800 acres of vernal pools, wetlands, uplands, and Swainson's Hawk habitat on the ranch were conserved in 2009 through another mitigation easement with Westervelt Ecological Services. The proceeds from that easement were used to buy out family members who no longer wanted to be part of the business. Van Vleck stated "easements have become an important tool for our business by allowing us to pull equity out of the business without taking on debt or selling land and reducing the size of their cattle operation. Partnering up with CRT was one of the best decisions we made in this process. They were responsive, efficient and understood the needs of a commercial cattle operation like no other."

*“Partnering up with CRT was one of the best decisions we made in this process. They were responsive, efficient and understood the needs of a commercial cattle operation like no other.”*

It is now recognized that well-managed grazing preserves and improves the quality of wildlife habitat and that there's a symbiotic relationship between agriculture and environmental stewardship. For this reason, developers often need to find ranch land to permanently protect before they can get a green light on their project. Under current regulations, developers must offset the habitat their project will impact by conserving a similar landscape in close proximity to the project.

These private deals are known as **mitigation easements**; and because they are private, they have the potential to be far more lucrative than traditional conservation easements. They can also take less time to implement. Like traditional conservation easements, the landowner agrees that the land will never be developed, subdivided, or turned into intensive agriculture. They can be more restrictive. Often the easement will require the land be grazed under a management plan. In other words, the landowner will be paid to ranch.

Unlike traditional easements where proximity to urban areas or prime cropland greatly affect the easement value as determined by an appraisal of the highest land use, mitigation conservation easements value land for habitat, the value of which is privately negotiated between the developer and the landowner. Under the right circumstances, this can create a seller's market.

With two mitigation easements already in place, the Van Vleck family is looking forward to doing more. And yes, the entire family is involved. Stan and his wife, Nicole Montna Van Vleck, have brought their children, Christian and Tori, into the easement and investment decision process, truly preparing for generations to come.

## LEGACY COUNCIL

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

### CO-CHAIRS

Emily Pope Taylor  
Vacant

### MEMBERS

Michael Campbell  
Kelly Cash  
Pam Doiron  
Devere Dressler  
Glenn Drown  
Angelo Genasci  
Valerie Gordon  
Alexandra Gough  
George and Kassandra Gough  
Erik and Sandy Gregersen  
Sherry Harkins  
Bruce and Elizabeth Hart  
B. Wayne Hughes Jr.  
Natasha Hunt  
Eric Hvolboll  
Caroline Power Kindrish  
Lynn Kirst  
Richard and Sharon Kline  
Jack Kuechler  
Ken and Julie LaGrande  
Eric and Megan Lindberg  
Paul and Tina McEnroe  
Cindy and Morris Noble Jr.  
Will and Danice Noble  
Hayes and Patricia Noel  
George Nolte  
Steve and Liz Peterson  
Adrianna Pope Sullivan  
Bill and Kristin Reynolds  
Jessica Schley  
Steve and Jane Sinton  
Scott and Karen Stone  
Steve and Renee Thompson  
Ben and Cheryl Trosky  
John Vosburgh





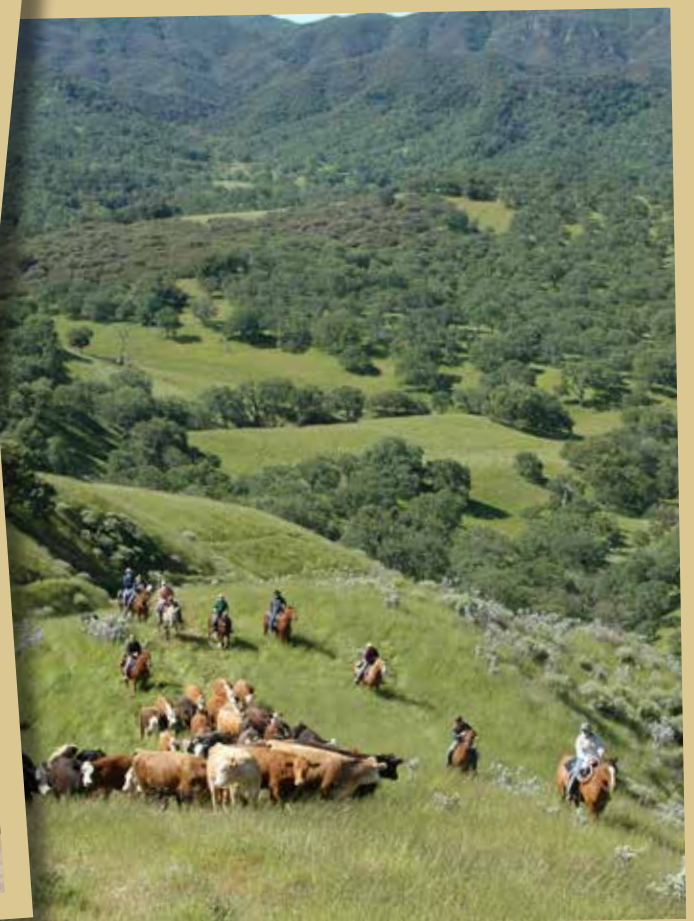
Directors and staff gather for a recent board meeting at the Rangeland Trust headquarters in Sacramento



Drone Cowboys piloting a drone on the Rock Front Ranch and Spanish Ranch in the Cuyama Valley this spring



Where Your Food Grows and Grazes field trip on Spring Valley Ranch



Gathering on the Avenales



# Planned Giving

## 5 EASY WAYS TO MAKE AN IMPACT BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR

By Bob Woods, Development Consultant

**W**E INVITE YOU TO START PLANNING now for how you want to make an impact this year. There are many easy ways to give to the Rangeland Trust, several of which offer attractive benefits for you while supporting our important work.

Here are five popular ways you can help conserve rangeland this year:

*Give cash.* Cash is the simplest way to give to support our current needs, both restricted and unrestricted. We will provide a letter documenting your gift for use at tax time.

*Give appreciated stock.* When you donate shares of stock, we'll sell it and you'll eliminate all the capital gains tax you would have paid had you sold the stock yourself. Your gift will be deductible at the day of delivery's full fair market value (assuming you have held it for more than one year).

*Donate an insurance policy.* A life insurance policy you no longer need makes a perfect year-end gift. To qualify as a deductible gift, California Rangeland Trust must become the policy owner. For most types of insurance policies, your tax deduction is usually the lesser of the cost basis or the fair market value of the policy.

*Make a gift from your IRA.* If you are 70½ or older, you can transfer any amount up to \$100,000 annually, tax-free, directly from your IRA.

*Include the California Rangeland Trust as a bequest in your will or trust.* Start by contacting us to request official wording for your gift. Then ask your estate-planning attorney to use this language when you create your will or trust. If you already have a will or trust, simply ask your attorney to update the existing document. Afterward, let us know of your plans so that we can honor your gift today as a member of our Planned Giving Society.

**And remember, if you notify us of your planned gift today, you will be invited to participate in a special luncheon in 2018 in honor of all our friends who are looking out for the future of California Rangeland Trust.**



Shandon, CA



Barney Skelton crossing a creek at the Rock Front Ranch, Cuyama Valley

# THANK YOU DONORS!

## CALIFORNIA RANGELAND TRUST DONORS

APRIL 16, 2016 - JULY 31, 2016

THE ATASCADERO HORSEMEN'S CLUB  
AVENALES SPORTSMEN'S CLUB  
LAURIE BALDWIN AND MARK MICKELSON  
LOUIS AND SHERYL BARBICH  
JEAN BELL  
CLAY BOSS  
GEORGE AND RUTH  
BRADFORD FOUNDATION  
ARNOLD AND SYLVIA CATTANI  
TIM AND KATHY CRAWFORD  
BERT AND CANDEE FORBES  
ERIK AND SANDY GREGERSEN  
B. WAYNE HUGHES, JR.  
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION  
AL AND CHRISTIE JAHNS  
THE JOHN S. KIEWIT  
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION  
KEN AND JULIE LAGRANDE  
MONICA LASGOITY AND JEFF LEFORS  
MORRIS AND CINDY NOBLE  
KEVIN AND DONICA O'LAUGHLIN  
PANORAMA MEATS, INC.  
BARBARA PARSONS AND  
JEANNE HELPHENSTINE  
PATAGONIA.COM  
SOREN PETERSON  
RALEY'S FAMILY OF FINE STORES  
VALERIE RAYMOND

STEVE AND JANE SINTON  
JOHN AND ELIZABETH STEVENSON  
FRANCIS SWEET  
ARNULFO VALDIVIA  
BOB AND DEBBIE WACKER  
EFFIE WESTERVELT  
WILLIAM T. WHITE III  
DOUG AND CATHERINE WINNETT

### HONORARIUM

#### THE SINTON FAMILY

THE ATASCADERO HORSEMEN'S  
CLUB, LARRY AND PAMELA SMITH  
AND RYAN SMITH

#### THE VAIL AND WOOLLEY FAMILIES

KEARNEY AND LESLIE MARTINS

### MEMORIALS

#### RON ARINGTON

TERRI ARINGTON

#### JIM CHANCE

JEFF GOOKIN

### VARIAN

FAITH DUNCAN

JIM AND LAURI GRACE

SHEILA MCCORMICK

DIANNE THOMAS

CLINT, DAWN, MIKALYA VORIS  
AND PEACE MAKER V+++  
AND PRECIOUS V



### EDITOR

JESSICA KONG

### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

SHANNON FOUCAULT, VALERIE GORDON,  
JESSICA KONG, BOB WOODS

### CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

VALERIE GORDON, JESSICA KONG,  
DANIEL SINTON, NITA VAIL

### CONTRIBUTING ILLUSTRATORS

JESSICA KONG

### CONTACT US

1225 H STREET

SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

916.444.2096 | RANGELANDTRUST.ORG

JKONG@RANGELANDTRUST.ORG

California Rangeland Trust is a  
501(c)(3) nonprofit organization,  
federal tax identification #31-1631453.



*Celebrating 300,000 acres*

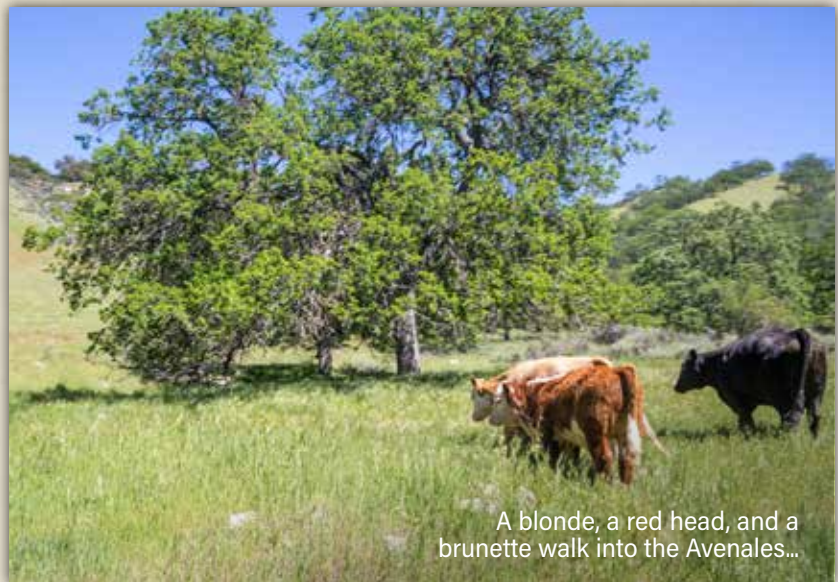
## THANK YOU FOR HELPING US ACHIEVE THIS INCREDIBLE MILESTONE

*By Shannon Foucault, Development Director*



**I**N COMPLETING THE CONSERVATION EASEMENT ON Avenales Ranch this summer (see story in the Spring 2017 Newsletter), we are honored to be able to say that more than 300,000 acres of wide open rangeland are protected forever. We want to thank, from the bottom of our hearts, anyone who has ever made a gift, of any amount, to support the work of the Rangeland Trust. You helped make this landmark achievement possible.

With a steady stream of new applications pouring in to protect ranching lands in California, there is a lot more work to do. Public funding is dwindling, while demand for development and intensive agriculture is growing. Every gift counts in protecting what matters. What will you invest to help protect the next 100,000 acres?



A blonde, a red head, and a brunette walk into the Avenales...



Brangus bulls grazing the Spanish Ranch, Cuyama Valley

CALIFORNIA  
RANGELAND  
*Trust*

1225 H Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
[www.rangelandtrust.org](http://www.rangelandtrust.org)

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT # 2180  
SACRAMENTO, CA



## ANNOUNCING A WESTERN AFFAIR 2018!

You are invited to participate in an extraordinary event commemorating California Rangeland Trust's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. In true Western style, *A Western Affair 2018* will bring California's rancher conservationists from across the state to celebrate. *A Western Affair 2018* will take place on Saturday, June 16, 2018 at the historic Hearst Ranch in San Luis Obispo County's Old San Simeon Village.

A day of activities that bring The West to life will culminate in fine dining and superb wines in an elegant setting overlooking the ocean. The 80,000 acre Hearst Ranch is a working cattle ranch that was preserved forever in 2005 through a conservation easement held by California Rangeland Trust. Its selection as the location for this special celebration, with views overlooking both Hearst Ranch and Hearst Castle, will serve as a reminder of the critical importance of California Rangeland Trust's commitment to conservation.

For more information visit  
[www.rangelandtrust.org/events/](http://www.rangelandtrust.org/events/)

