

California Rangeland Trust



Annual Report

1999-2000

1221 H Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 916/444-2096

Fax: 916/444-2194

www.rangelandtrust.org

California Rangeland Trust

Annual Report

1999-2000

Mission:

To provide, promote and safeguard the long-term viability and stewardship of rangeland agriculture and the natural balance of the ecosystem.

Introduction

As the California Rangeland Trust reflects on its second full year of operation, we believe that we have made substantial progress towards accomplishing the mission described above. We have increased and diversified our funding stream and established an endowment that will one day support the organization. We have protected several private ranches through conservation easements and are close to supporting substantial additional acreage. We have provided landowner and public education about range management, working landscapes and land conservation. Perhaps most importantly, we have created a strong organizational foundation that will allow us to meet our goals effectively and efficiently over the coming year.

1999-2000 Achievements

During the 1999-2000 fiscal year, CRT developed a strategic plan (the elements are described by the goals listed below). While we recognize that this is a dynamic document, our strategic plan has guided our efforts during the previous twelve months.

Goal: Secure CRT's future through fundraising and sound financial management.

Endowment Fund

CRT's board of director's recognizes that landowner confidence in the organization is directly related to our stability and longevity. With this in mind, CRT established an endowment fund during the 1999-2000 fiscal year to help cover administrative costs. Each board member has contributed to this fund,

and additional donations have been added. At year's end, this Endowment Fund totaled \$16,003.

Private Donations

In addition to Endowment Fund contributions, CRT has actively sought contributions from within the ranching community. Through direct mail, personal requests and other means, CRT raised \$19,148 in contributions from individuals and companies.

Grant Funding

Finally, grant funding has been critical to CRT's success. In the last fiscal year, CRT obtained the following grants:

The David and Lucille Packard Foundation

- \$20,000 for landowner workshops and development of additional conservation tools
- \$10,000 for a working landscapes forum
- \$10,700 for a board planning retreat
- \$50,000 for capacity building and strategic planning
- \$1,118,879 for easement acquisition

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

- \$100,000 for easement acquisition

The James Irvine Foundation

- \$50,000 for general support

The Sorenson Foundation

- \$500 for general support
- \$1,000 for general support

California Department of Conservation

- \$835,000 for easement acquisition
- \$23,915 for development of standard easement and creation of website

Goal: Develop a variety of tools that protect rangeland ecosystems and working landscapes.

Easement Criteria

One of CRT's initial projects was the development of objective criteria for selecting donated and purchased conservation easement projects. During the past year, CRT used these criteria to evaluate potential projects. With the

assistance of our technical advisory committee, CRT has ranked projects according to their open space, working landscape and wildlife values.

However, we have realized that our criteria need to provide additional focus. The Packard Foundation has provided financial support to assist in our efforts to strengthen our criteria and to improve our opportunities for successful easement projects.

Standard Agricultural Conservation Easement

Another critical effort in providing conservation tools to the ranching community has been the continued development of a standard agricultural conservation easement. With a grant from the California Department of Conservation California Farmland Conservancy Program, CRT has developed a model easement, which is posted on our website. This document serves as an educational tool for landowners, agencies and other land trusts, as well as a starting point for negotiations with individual landowners. CRT views this as a living document; refinements will continue to be made.

Mitigation Program

Mitigating the impacts of development can provide important opportunities for ranchers to protect working landscapes. CRT worked with two ranchers in 1999-2000 to establish easements as mitigation for development projects. These efforts, in Kern and Modoc Counties, will be finalized in 2000-2001. Both provide models for other ranching families to evaluate when considering similar projects.

Pilot Projects

CRT continues to pursue a number of pilot projects throughout California. In May 2000, we obtained an option to acquire a conservation easement on more than 10,000 acres in Monterey and Fresno County (we anticipate completing this project within the first several months of the new fiscal year). We have also worked with the Nature Conservancy, the American Land Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land to acquire easements on more than 30,000 additional acres.

Range Management Issues

Many agencies and organizations are grappling with the issue of range management in the context of conservation easements. The CRT board of directors has established policy outlining its approach to addressing this important issue (see attached Resource Management Policy). CRT has also obtained grant funding from the Packard Foundation to develop new easement approaches for dealing with range management in vernal pool ecosystems. This effort will be initiated early in the new fiscal year.

Ranch Diversification Strategies

An additional Packard Grant awarded in 1999-2000 will fund five regional rancher workshops in the new fiscal year. These workshops will focus on land conservation, estate planning, and ranch diversification. CRT recognizes that economic sustainability is a critical component to rangeland conservation. In addition, CRT is co-sponsoring a series of workshops in the Sierra Nevada (with the Sierra Business Council and the Sonoran Institute) that will focus exclusively on diversification.

Joint Ventures

CRT is working in partnership with a variety of organizations to acquire conservation easements on various properties. CRT's role includes easement negotiation and legal review. In addition, CRT will generally hold and monitor the easements acquired in partnership with other groups. Since CRT is in a support role in terms of fundraising for these projects, cost recovery can be a challenge. In several cases, partner organizations have indicated that they cannot reimburse CRT for project-related costs. In other cases, these costs are reimbursed. Furthermore, stewardship endowments are generally not included in fundraising. An additional challenge is providing input into easements that have been largely negotiated by other organizations. Finally, CRT requires legal review of all easements it accepts. Such review is costly.

CRT is developing a policy for participating in collaborative projects and for recovering its costs. This policy will be finalized at CRT's board meeting in late November 2000.

Currently, CRT is engaged in partnership projects with the American Land Conservancy, the Nature Conservancy, the Trust for Public Land, the Sierra Business Council, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Goal: Educate the public regarding the substantial benefits of the environmental stewardship provided by ranching families (external communication).

Future of California's Working Landscapes Forum

In partnership with the California Cattlemen's Association, the University of California and the Nature Conservancy, CRT organized a one-day forum on working landscapes in the east Bay Area. With funding from the Packard Foundation, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, the Nature Conservancy,

the California Beef Council and the Livestock Memorial Research Fund, this event provided information on working landscapes to government agencies, local elected officials, nonprofits and others. Similar workshops are being planned for additional urban audiences.

Range Ride

Again in 2000, CRT joined the California Cattlemen's Association and the Sierra Nevada Alliance in sponsoring the annual Range Ride. The Sierra Business Council added its sponsorship support to this year's event, which featured a discussion of private land conservation in Sierra Valley and Forest Service grazing issues on the Tahoe National Forest. Participants included ranchers, agency staff, and nonprofit staff and board members. Outcomes included increased desire on behalf of agencies, ranchers and nonprofits to work together to address the conservation of working landscapes and public rangelands.

Land Trust Alliance Ranch Lands Learning Circle

In April 2000, CRT executive director Dan Macon was invited to participate in a two-day workshop on ranch land conservation, sponsored by the Land Trust Alliance. This event brought together leading experts in ranch land conservation, including staff from the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust, the American Farmland Trust, the Jackson Hole Land Trust, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the Nature Conservancy (Montana), the Sonoran Institute and Utah Open Lands. Participants discussed the strengths and weaknesses of conservation easements as applied to working ranches, and developed strategies for improving their usefulness.

CRT Website

As part of a grant from the California Department of Conservation, CRT unveiled its Internet presence in 2000. The website, found at www.rangelandtrust.org features organizational information, downloadable easements and other documents, and information on CRT projects. During the coming fiscal year, CRT will take steps to upgrade the website.

Goal: Educate ranching families regarding resource stewardship and land protection (internal education).

Rancher Outreach

CRT staff and board members were featured speakers at landowner workshops throughout California during the last twelve months. These workshops were sponsored by a variety of organizations, from local cattlemen's associations to the Audubon Society.

In addition, CRT provided articles and interviews for industry publications designed to increase rancher awareness of land conservation opportunities. CRT's website also played a vital role in reaching landowner audiences.

During the coming year, CRT will coordinate five regional workshops for ranching families. These workshops will be designed to answer questions specific to each region, and they will provide information on conservation easements, estate planning, range management, ranch diversification and other topics.

Goal: Build organizational capacity to effectively manage current and future challenges.

Financial Accountability

Once again, CRT has contracted with the firm Jones McLevich Glazer to provide financial audit services.

Board Development

In November 1999, CRT board members and staff participated in a planning retreat, which focused on the organization's strategic plan and transaction processes. While the terms of several directors expired, additional board members were added. Finally, the board created a number of subcommittees to more effectively divide its work.

CRT Board of Directors

Steve Sinton, Chairman
Shandon, California

Jack Hanson, Vice Chairman
Susanville, California

Darrel Sweet, Treasurer
Livermore, California

Carson Scheller, Secretary
Los Alamos, California

Mike Bennett
Ducor, California

Glenn Drown
Santa Ysabel, California

Steve McDonald
Sanger, California

Dina Moore
Kneeland, California

Cindy Noble
Graeagle, California

Nita Vail
Sacramento, California

Darrell Wood
Susanville, California

CRT Technical Advisory Committee

Dr. Al Beck
Eco-Analysts

Frank Mohan
Certified Public Accountant

Carrie Lou Berry
Next Step

David Perreira
Dunn and Perreira

Rod Carter
Northern California Farm Credit

Tom Pettitt
Pettitt Lands Company

Ceci Dale-Cesmat
Natural Resource Conservation Service

Jim Rickert
Western Agricultural Services

Chris Leininger
CL Associates

Orrin Sage
Sage and Associates

Martha Lennihan
Lennihan Law

Dr. Ken Tate
U.C. Cooperative Extension

Wayne Long
Multiple Use Managers, Inc.

Bill Thomas, Esq.
Livingston and Mattesich

CRT Management

Dan Macon
Executive Director

Andy Mills
Conservation Director

Sharon Bradford
Office Manager

Cristi Bozora
Development Consultant

Martha Lennihan
Legal Counsel