

OUR MISSION



onserving the open space,
natural habitat and
stewardship provided by
California's ranches.

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

I would first and most importantly like to thank our staff for the dedication and passion with which they serve the California Rangeland Trust. Working for a non-profit organization entails having a strong belief in its mission and a determined commitment to succeed. Our board of directors has set an ambitious schedule of goals as we continue to update our strategic plan and expand our visions of what we would like to accomplish in the next five to ten years.

By the time this report is printed, we will have completed the multi-faceted Hearst Ranch project, which is unprecedented in its scope and represents a great accomplishment for the future of ranching in California. Finding adequate funding to meet the needs of the ranchers throughout the state that are interested in voluntarily preserving their working landscapes will continue to be a challenge. Support from donors will continue to be critical, as the board is committed to completing agreements on those applications designated as Tier I priorities. It has been a real pleasure to serve as chairman of the California Rangeland Trust and work with a very dedicated board and staff. I look forward to another successful year.

— Mike Bennett, Chairman



USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service chief, Bruce Knight (left), and California Rangeland Trust Chairman Mike Bennett discuss resource policy.



California Rangeland Trust

2003-2004 ANNUAL REPORT

ANCHERS HELPING RANCHERS

2004 marked a banner year for the California Rangeland Trust. The organization is on the threshold of becoming one of the largest land trusts in the state and continues to be looked to as a leader in land use issues, policy and conservation. An organization founded and led by ranchers, the California Rangeland Trust is working to preserve California's ranchlands to create a sustainable future for the state's cattle industry.

RANGELAND CONSERVATION

At the close of CRT's fiscal year in 2004 (June 30), the organization held 75,000 acres in conservation easements. However, pending projects that were completed during the last half of 2004 increased this acreage to almost 76,000.

By the end of 2005, additional pending project closures will increase this amount to 170,000 acres making CRT one of the largest land trusts in the state. The largest of those projects, the Hearst Ranch, has brought a great deal of attention to CRT. This landmark agreement has created a unique partnership between the California Rangeland Trust, the Hearst Corporation, American Land Conservancy, the State of California, Wildlife Conservation Board, Coastal Conservancy, State Parks and Cal Trans.

Once completed, the California Rangeland Trust will hold the easement on the 80,000 Hearst Ranch and ensure that this property is forever protected for its habitat and rangeland values.

Additional projects that are pending closure include the following funded by the Wildlife Conservation Board: Yolo Land and Cattle, Inc., Yolo County (6,983 acres); DS Ranch, Plumas County (8,200 acres).



MONITORING AND STEWARDSHIP

In addition to working with landowners through conservation easements, the Rangeland Trust is committed to maintaining the highest standards possible. This past year, board members and staff had formalized training with certified range managers. In addition, the organization formalized audit policies and procedures. These recent accomplishments, along with the board's previously established policies, help assure accountability to the public and private entities that provide funding.

RESOURCE POLICY

In addition to its land preservation work, the Rangeland Trust has also provided input on legislative and regulatory issues. Most notably, Nita Vail, executive director of CRT provided testimony for the governor's California Performance Review. Some of the key points that were made included the need to increase efficiency in using existing bond funds for environmental enhancement and the advantages of conservation easements versus fee title acquisition. The Rangeland Trust has also made recommendations in areas of resource policy, with the intent of doing what is best for the state's ranchers.

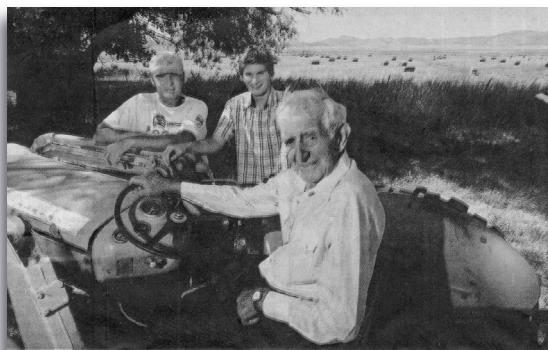
LAND TRUST ALLIANCE STANDARDS AND PRACTICES

The California Rangeland Trust has staked a place at the forefront of the land trust community and is acting as an "ambassador" by assisting the Land Trust Alliance, a national umbrella organization, in updating its standards and practices. The land trust community first adopted these guidelines in 1989. The revisions reflect what has been learned and the need to assure the public of the land trust community's commitment to ethics and accountability.

OUTREACH EFFORTS

Outreach and public relations have gotten a lot of attention during the past year. The Rangeland Trust is developing a formalized marketing plan to go hand in hand with its fundraising efforts.

The organization has revised and created new outreach and fundraising materials. In addition to those efforts, the group held several events and education projects throughout the year. Proactive media outreach has also been important in furthering the organization's goals and fostering a more positive view of cattle ranching's role in the environment.



Attilio Genasci, 95, surveys his Sierra Valley land with his 56-year-old son, Jim (in cap), and 18-year-old grandson, Angelo.

Preserving the high Sierra Valley

Creative tactics will defend ranchland against development

By Greg Lucare
SACRAMENTO BUSINESS CHIEF

LOYALTON, Sierra County — When people ask him how old he is, Attilio Genasci points through the kitchen window of the ranch his parents bought in 1909, the year he was born.

"See those mountains," the 95-year-old says. "They we-

ren't here." Genasci is talking up his age and a plan he worked out to preserve 900 acres of his bird-and-critter rich ranch in the Sierra Valley — one of the largest alpine valleys in the United States — for generations to come. The conservation easement covers about a third of his spread near Loyalton.

"We have a lifeboat in this easement to save our land," Ge-

nasci says. "It's our salvation." Protecting his land from development also fulfills a pledge to his wife, Angie, who died in 1995.

Fifty years ago, developers wanted to purchase property from Genasci and build homes. His wife said the land would never be for sale for that purpose.

"I'm not going to betray the trust Angie placed in me," he

says. "No one will stop me from my goal." Development pressures from nearby Truckee and Reno are already squeezing Sierra Valley. In Plumas County, which contains part of the valley, the supervisor representing the area has backed development in other parts of the county.

Around the kitchen table are Genasci's son, Jim, and Nita

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The California Rangeland Trust Range Ride has become a popular media outreach event that allows reporters and members of the environmental community to get a firsthand look at rangeland stewardship. The 2004 ride (pictured above) was held on the Koopmann ranch and highlighted a mitigation project between the Koopmann family, the City of Pleasanton and the California Rangeland Trust.

Positive media coverage has been a key component to CRT's outreach efforts. This San Francisco Chronicle article features 95-year old Sierra Valley rancher Attilio Genasci (pictured with his son Jim and grandson Angelo) and his lifelong wish to preserve his ranch.



The California Rangeland Trust Board of Directors and Staff

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PARTNERSHIP OF RANGELAND TRUSTS (PORT)

Staff and board members of the California Rangeland Trust are working closely with a new group and recently formed 501(c)3 that brings together cattlemen's land trusts throughout the country. Members include the California Rangeland Trust, Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust, Kansas Livestock Association Ranchland Trust, Montana Land Reliance, Oregon Rangeland Trust, Ranch Open Space of Nevada, and the Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust. The Partnership of Rangeland Trusts is allowing cattlemen's and trusts throughout the country to speak with one voice on several issues at the national level.

THE OUTLOOK

The future of ranching and the California Rangeland Trust looks bright. The organization is continuing to expand staff capabilities and is developing a major donor program to solidify its funding base. The board and staff are committed to continually adapting their approach to meet the changing fiscal and political environment, while staying true to the core values of the organization. One of CRT's foremost goals is to transact projects that are currently classified as Tier I and to diversify its approach to include other land preservation tools such as mitigation easements and donated conservation easements to help as many ranchers as possible.

California Rangeland Trust

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