



RANA RANCH: TAKING A LEAP IN LAND CONSERVATION

Calaveras County, also known as "Frog town, USA," was made famous by jumping frogs, so it only seems fitting that frogs are helping a local ranching couple take the leap to conserve their beloved ranch.

Roland and Franziska Schabram bought their ranch in 2002 after years of saving and patience. Emmigrating from Germany, they first moved to the Bay Area in 1996 for Roland's job and for better access to deaf health research and tools for their youngest daughter.

"We were never big fans of the busyness of the Bay Area, but we needed to be there for my husband's work and to save a little money," Franziska explained.

Eventually, the Schabrams found the perfect place to make their home in Valley Springs, California. The small town in Calaveras County did not have much going on at the time that the family purchased their first parcel; much of the land was cheap due to limited development and distance to major cities. Although the first parcel they purchased was smaller in size, it offered a big opportunity for Franziska to act on her passion.

"For as long as I can remember, I had always had a love for animals, especially cattle and horses," she exclaimed. "I was excited to finally have a place of my own to raise them."

Just before moving to the new property, the California red-legged frog was discovered by a neighbor on their ranch. Fish and Wildlife Services later visited the ranch and determined that their place provided critical habitat for the federally threatened species. This discovery, along with the local area's "ribbeting" history, led to the family's decision to name the property "Rana Ranch," after the Latin word *rana*, meaning 'frog'.

The California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) is found almost exclusively in California and was made famous by Mark Twain's short story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." According to the National Wildlife Foundation,



competition from invasive species and habitat loss has caused populations to dwindle over the years; at one point they were even believed to be extinct. But fortunately, small populations have continued, thanks in large part to the stewardship found on private working lands.

Due to ranchers' strong environmental philosophy, balanced management practices, humane treatment of livestock, and care for the land and its natural resources, rangelands tend to be biodiversity hotspots. What is good for livestock is generally good for the

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Rana Ranch, Calaveras County

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LEADERSHIP LETTER

Dear Friends,

It's been a busy and gratifying summer for the Rangeland Trust! Back in May, we kicked things off with a spectacular gathering commemorating the Rangeland Trust's silver anniversary at *A Western Affair 2023* (pg. 4–5). This magical weekend gave us all the opportunity to pause and celebrate the fruits of our labor and revel in the achievements of the past 25 years. We reflected on the gifts of the land available to us now *because* of conservation. And we looked forward, recognizing that the lands we conserve today are helping to ensure a brighter tomorrow.

After *A Western Affair* – feeling more energized than ever thanks to the support and generosity of this incredible community – we put our work boots back on and forged ahead to make more conservation possible. I'm pleased to share that over the last few months, we have conserved four more ranches, bringing our grand total to **88 ranches** encompassing nearly **388,000 acres** of pristine rangeland. Together, we are well on our way towards reaching our goal of conserving 100 ranches, and when we do, we know we won't stop there!

Meanwhile, our communications team has also been hard at work sharing the stories of ranching partners to inspire new audiences to join our conservation movement. Our *Tuned in to the Land* podcast is gaining significant traction (*Listen at: www.rangelandtrust.org/podcast*). Recent guests include social media influencer, Markie Hageman-Jones; ProRodeo Hall of Famer, Luke Branquinho; and landowner partners and 2022 Leopold Conservation Awards finalists, Mike and Julie Sardella. On top of that, we will soon be launching one of our most ambitious projects to date: a feature-length documentary showcasing the critical role our ranching partners play in stewarding California's working landscapes and what is at stake if we lose our rangelands and the people who sustain them (pg. 12). Be on the lookout for more information about upcoming screenings beginning this fall and into next year.

Finally, in continuing with our longstanding commitment to serve as a trusted partner to our landowner community, and thanks to three private funders, we are excited to share that soon we will be bringing on a new staff member to fill our newly created "programs manager" position. This will allow us to better connect the ranching community to the best available science and tools to support enhanced stewardship practices and help them meet their additive conservation goals, beyond conservation easements alone. Safeguarding the land is only the first part of our commitment to fulfilling our mission. Making sure the land has a healthy future is just as vital.

As you can see, your support is making a big impact. The Rangeland Trust is growing and evolving. Together, we are providing ranchers with conservation solutions. We are connecting them to the tools and resources they need to help them better manage their land. We are influencing changes in public opinion and showing people why keeping ranchers ranching and protecting rangelands matters for all of us. Thank you for helping us get this far. Let's continue this work to secure a better future for all.

Sincerely,



Michael Delbar
CEO

IT'S TIME TO START YEAR-END PLANNING

Knowing that you'll likely have a lot going on in the final weeks of 2023, we wanted to help you prepare by making sure you are aware of some important deadlines.

As you start to think about how to have the greatest impact with your year-end generosity, here are three types of gifts that can benefit the rangelands you want to protect *and* you, too.

IRA

If you are 70½ or older, you can give *any amount* up to \$100,000 per year from your IRA directly to a nonprofit organization like ours. *You will not pay income taxes on the transfer.* If you are required to take minimum distributions, you can use this transfer to satisfy your obligation.

To do: We must receive your gift by Dec. 31. If you have check-writing features on your IRA, your check *must clear your account by Dec. 31* to count toward your required minimum distribution for the calendar year. Plan ahead to allow for processing time, which can take up to 2 weeks.

Appreciated Stock

It has been a good year for the stock market. Avoid paying taxes on appreciated value and capital gains by donating mature securities, and qualify for an income tax charitable deduction when you itemize.

To do: *Contact your broker to complete the transfer by Dec. 31.*

Donor Advised Fund

Now is a great time to contribute to an existing fund and enjoy tax savings when you itemize. You can then recommend a grant (or recurring grant) to enable more conservation through the California Rangeland Trust.

To do: Complete the contribution to your Fund by Dec. 31. You do not have to *designate* the funds this calendar year to receive the tax benefits.

Let's Team Up

As we approach the end of our 25th anniversary year, we're happy to help ensure that you can advance rangeland conservation in smart ways. Please contact Shannon Foucault at (916) 444-2096 or sfoucault@rangelandtrust.org for free resources.

All of us at the California Rangeland Trust are grateful for your partnership in helping celebrate 25 years of conservation, and more importantly, reaching our first 100 conserved ranches.

Information contained herein was accurate at the time of printing. This information is not intended as legal or tax advice. For such advice, please consult an attorney or tax advisor.

California Rangeland Trust Federal Tax ID # 31-1631453

Why Do You Conserve?

During this anniversary year, we especially want to remember the people that motivated you to get involved in working lands conservation. Consider making your gift in tribute to that person and tell us how they inspired you.



LEGACY COUNCIL

The California Rangeland Trust Legacy Council is hard at work raising awareness in support of rangeland conservation.

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A WESTERN AFFAIR 2023

In true Western fashion, *A Western Affair 2023* served as the big celebration for California Rangeland Trust's 25th anniversary. Hosted in May at the beautiful Yolo Land and Cattle Co. near Esparto, CA, the event brought together nearly 400 ranchers and conservation enthusiasts from across the state to commemorate 25 years of conserving working lands and keeping ranchers ranching.

While "celebrating the fruits of our labor," the weekend was spent

honoring the achievements of the past, acknowledging the bounty of agricultural goods and services provided by the land, enjoying good company and pasture-to-plate flavors, and looking ahead to all that is possible for the future.

Because of the generosity and spirit of those who attended and supported the event from afar, we raised over \$360,000 toward achieving our next big milestone -- conserving 100 ranches!

Thank you for helping to make this



event an affair to remember! The future of California's working lands is a little bit brighter because of this wonderful community.



A kickoff party was held on Friday, May 19 and featured a "taste-of-the-land" experience with food and beverage pairings from acclaimed regional chefs and local wineries.



On Saturday, May 20, nearly 400 guests gathered at Yolo Land and Cattle Company for an unforgettable affair commemorating the Rangeland Trust's 25th anniversary.



Prepared by local chefs, Ravin Patel and Juan Barajas, guests were treated to a culinary experience like no other, which featured slices of beef steamship rounds.



After dinner, guests raised their paddles in support of **rangeland** conservation. In total, the event raised more than \$360,000.



At the kickoff party, the Stone family was presented with a custom oil painting of their iconic red barn as a token of appreciation for hosting the main event the following day.



During the cocktail reception, "Bolo" the Stone's mini horse greeted adults with cold beer and supplied countless smiles to guests of all ages.



This truly magical affair concluded with dancing under the stars to live music by Buck Ford.

Rangeland Trust Presents 2023 Conservation Awards

Every year, the California Rangeland Trust honors individuals who have made significant contributions to rangeland conservation throughout the Golden State. This year, it was our pleasure to award the **2023 Conservation Impact Award to Dr. Jaymee Marty** and the **2023 Conservationist of the Year Award to Steve Sinton** at *A Western Affair*.

The Conservation Impact Award honors those who have excelled in environmental protection and made significant contributions to the advancement of conservation. Throughout her longstanding career as a well-respected ecologist, Dr. Jaymee Marty has helped tackle complex conservation issues. Notably, her research has helped change perceptions surrounding the environmental impacts of cattle grazing on vernal pools by showing the benefits grazing can have on biodiversity. Over the years, Jaymee has been critical in helping to rethink the best ways to manage California's vernal pool ecosystems.

The Conservationist of the Year award recognizes extraordinary achievement in volunteer conservation by a private landowner, demonstrated by their exemplary stewardship of natural resources and their leadership abilities. During this milestone year for the Rangeland Trust, it seems there is no person more fitting to receive this award than Steve Sinton. In fact, some would argue that the Rangeland Trust would not have gotten off the ground if not for his hard work and perseverance. As founding chairman, Steve led a group of equally committed ranching peers to build the foundation that continues to guide the organization 25 years later. Beyond this, Steve and his family made the commitment to forever conserve their own 12,700-acre Avenales Ranch in San Luis Obispo County in 2017 and are dedicated to responsible stewardship and care of their land and livestock. Steve's actions speak for themselves in showcasing his deep desire to



Dr. Jaymee Marty was honored with the 2023 Conservation Impact Award.



Steve Sinton was honored with the 2023 Conservationist of the Year Award.

protect working lands and the natural resources they support.

We tip our hats in appreciation to Jaymee and Steve for their exceptional commitment to the cause of conserving rangelands and keeping ranchers ranching.

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100 RANCHES AND 100 MORE!

25 years ago, California Rangeland Trust was just an idea. Brick by brick, **you built it into what it is today**. Your commitment to securing viable rangelands for our shared future breathes life every day into the vision we set out to realize with you all those years ago.

This spring, we asked you to share what you are fighting for with your support. You responded with:

- ★ "We're fighting for the preservation of open space, agriculture, and wildlife habitat."
- ★ "For the future of our young people... they're the ones that will inherit our earth and its precious resources."
- ★ "100 ranches and 100 more!"

We know there are many varied and personal reasons you are part of this movement. Keep sharing with us and guiding us as we forge ahead together. Your support is significant.

In fact, you just conserved over 15,000 acres of land!

This year alone, your donations have made it possible for the following ranches to be permanently protected:

Nakagawa Ranch in Calaveras County

Silacci Ranch in Monterey and San Benito Counties

Sans Topo Ranch in San Benito County

Hog Hills in Madera County

Varian Arabians in San Luis Obispo County

Bufford Ranch additions in Kern County

...and there is some more good news coming this Fall!

While we celebrate the progress we've made together, the work of conservation is an ongoing journey. As California's housing needs continue to grow, so does the importance of preserving these vital landscapes. There is plenty of work ahead of us, and plenty of opportunity, too.

All Californians depend on ranchers. Right now, many ranchers are relying on the Rangeland Trust to help protect working lands. And we rely on each of you to help make their conservation possible.

Mary Vail, whose been giving to the Rangeland Trust for almost 20 years, recently spoke about the importance of conserving working lands in California. **"I continue to support this organization for the work they're doing resulting in environmental benefits, healthy food, and protecting family farming and ranching."**

Because of your investment in the Rangeland Trust, the stewards on these ranches can continue to provide sustainable and local food sources, fresh water cleansed and stored in healthy soils, and carbon sequestration.

Let's continue to further the imperative to keep ranchers ranching. **With 88 ranches and 388,000 acres conserved, we're just getting started!**

You can count on us to keep fighting for the land and its stewards. When you invest in working lands conservation, you're investing in a brighter future for California. Together, we can get to 100 ranches conserved, and on to 100 more!

Use the enclosed envelope to invest in 100 ranches today.



IT'S A GIFT TO GROW UP ON THE LAND

MICHELLE COX grew up in Monrovia, California, with endless memories of enjoying life in the great outdoors. Visiting the San Gabriel River, hiking in the mountains, riding horseback, and playing in nature strengthened both her connection to the land and her spirit of adventure.

At one point during her first career as a Flight Attendant, Michelle found herself based out of Saint Louis, Missouri. A fateful personal ad for a country & western dance partner led Michelle to reconnect with a lifelong love: rodeo. One day, her dance partner invited her to go on a cattle drive in Wyoming. With the friends she made on that journey came a trip to the National Finals Rodeo (NFR) in Oklahoma City, and the flames of passion were fed.

Michelle loved going to rodeos as a kid. When her family moved to Tucson, Arizona, she became a regular at the Tucson Rodeo – something she continues to attend every February. After that first NFR trip, Michelle volunteered with the California Pro Rodeo Circuit, fundraising as the Northern California Circuit Committee Representative for several years. She then became a PRCA Rodeo Timer and has been a Gold Card Member for a decade.

When the airline she worked for closed down, Michelle had the opportunity to reinvent herself. She studied and performed for two years as a stand-up comic before combining her skills and personal interests into a second career as an outdoor educator for youth learning about our natural resources. She joined the Contra Costa Water District's Public Information Office as an Educator for elementary schools on field trips at the Los Vaqueros Watershed, led summer camps at Joaquin Miller Park in Oakland, and became a Certified Interpretive Guide at the Oakland Zoo.

Her time on the land and in the rodeo arena has driven two important goals for Michelle – first to help urban youth experience and be inspired by the outdoors; and second to preserve the traditions, working lands, and open spaces that have so deeply enriched her life. By giving both her time and financial support, Michelle is making sure more children can grow up connected to the land and all of its gifts.

Michelle first met the California Rangeland Trust in 2012 while attending a rodeo at the Cow Palace in San Francisco. She recalled that her childhood friend Carson Scheller (a founding Board member of the Rangeland Trust) had mentioned being part of this project, so she came to our booth to learn more. She soon became an annual donor, and in 2022 made a future commitment through her estate plan that will further support the conservation of working lands and the people who steward them. Through her gifts, Michelle is helping ensure both agricultural lands and our iconic Western traditions are around for the next generation.

Thank you Michelle, for all your support today and tomorrow!



Michelle Cox: From Stewardess to Stewardship

VARIAN ARABIANS RANCH'S NEXT CHAPTER

In 2014, iconic horsewoman Sheila Varian started a conversation with the Rangeland Trust about the future of her beloved Varian Arabians Ranch. She came to us with the desire to preserve her property and to help determine what its future would be. Her initial goal was to conserve the ranch, but unfortunately, we lost Sheila too soon. Her remaining wishes were only that, when her longtime ranch manager, Angela Alvarez, was ready to retire, the Rangeland Trust would sell the ranch, conserved, and use some of the proceeds to protect other ranches in the region. Over the years, friends like you have sent in donations towards conservation of the ranch, kept in touch, and continued to encourage everyone involved. Now we can finally share with you what that next chapter looks like!

This summer, we closed on the sale of the Varian Arabians Ranch property. The new stewards of this historic ranch are Simon and Caprice Arkell. Under the property's new name, "Varian Equestrian Center," the Arkell's plan to offer premiere boarding facilities for all breeds of horses, host equestrian competitions, provide educational workshops and clinics, and open up the facility to local horse trainers to conduct their training programs. They will also maintain a historical display in tribute to Sheila and her legendary impact on the Arabian horse breed. To learn more, please read the full press release at:

WWW.RANGELANDTRUST.ORG/VARIAN-ARABIANS-RANCH

We believe we are finally realizing Sheila's dream. Her ranch is now forever conserved as a working ranch. The Arkells are committed to conservation and thoughtful stewardship of the land in their care, the incredible story of the woman who built the ranch, and their responsibility to be of service to the local community. There is a bright future ahead, not only for this ranch but for the many other ranches that will be conserved in perpetuity because of Sheila and this wonderful community of supporters. Long live the V!



THANK YOU DONORS

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SALLY FRIEND IN MEMORIAM

Judith (Sally) Bryant Friend passed away peacefully on her ranch in Cambria, California at the age of 90.

Sally was born on December 26, 1932, in Pasadena, California to Judith Tilt and Ernest Albert Bryant II. Graced with supple hands and a natural seat, she was born to ride horses and grew up exploring her father's land on the historic Trabuco Ranch.

In 1952 she married Spencer Dennis, and in 1958, after her two children, Michael and Katie, were born, Sally was granted the use of a house on Rancho Santa Ana. The ranch became the focus of her adventures until it was sold in 1979. While there, she created a barnyard filled with animals and instilled within her children a love for exploring the natural world.



In 1979, Sally married Robert (Bob) Friend, and they moved to their Cambria Ranch. Before long, Sally and her brother, Earnest III, purchased the Las Piletas Ranch on the Carrizo Plain. Sally and Bob started Friend Ranches with a crossbred cow-calf operation on each ranch. Their cattle were renowned for their uniformity and health.

Later splitting off from her brother, Sally took her half of the Piletas and began her legacy of reassembling the original Carrizo Ranch. She had great respect for the Yokut and Chumash people who inhabited the Carrizo Plain for thousands of years. Over a thirty-year period, she bought one severed parcel at a time, marking each acquisition with an "X" on a large map—her family has long referred to it as a "subdivision in reverse". Sally's goal was to ensure that the entire Carrizo Ranch would remain whole and protected, which she achieved by donating the development rights on more than 27,000 acres to the California Rangeland Trust. In 2020, Sally, along with Michael, were honored with the prestigious Conservationist of the Year award for their exemplary stewardship and work in safeguarding their beloved ranch.

Sally will be deeply missed, but we know her legacy will live on as her story continues to inspire future conservation efforts that will positively impact Californians well into the future. Fly high Sally Friend.

Sally Friend supported the Rangeland Trust in many ways. She was an ambassador and a major gifts donor. She was also a valued landowner partner, and her donation of the conservation easement on the Carrizo Ranch stands as the largest donated easement in our 25-year history. To recognize her tremendous support of the organization and her devotion to rangeland conservation, we have created the Sally Friend Memorial Fund to support our efforts to further protect our state's working lands. To donate please visit go.rangelandtrust.org/donate or use the enclosed envelope.

JERRY HEMSTED IN MEMORIAM

N. Jerry Hemsted passed away in cowboy style on Sunday, June 4, 2023.

Born on April 24, 1942, Jerry grew up attending schools in Redding, California, before transferring to Red Bluff High School for his senior year. He graduated in 1960 and went on to attend Fresno State before returning home in 1961 to run his family's cattle and trucking businesses. In 1965, Jerry married his wife, Joan, with whom he had three children—Jamie, Jessie, and Julie.

Jerry loved cattle ranching and was dedicated to serving the industry. He was active in the California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association—serving in various leadership positions within both organizations, including as CCA President from 1999-2000. As part of his involvement with CCA, Jerry was instrumental in the creation of the California Rangeland Trust. In fact, at the 1997 CCA Annual Convention, he presented the resolution that established the committee that went on to form our non-profit land trust.



Jerry was awarded the prestigious Livestock Man of the Year award in 2016 at the Cow Palace by the California State Chamber of Commerce and the Grand National Rodeo Horse and Stock Show. He was deeply committed to the beef industry and will be greatly missed.

RANA RANCH CONT.

environment and for wildlife, including a variety of special-status species. The Rana Ranch is no exception.

The Schabrams started a cow-calf operation when they bought the property, and their cattle rotationally graze the land to fend off invasive species and prevent overgrowth that can alter the natural ecosystem. Franziska joked, "It started with two cows and as we figured out our system, it grew and grew and grew!"

As their herd began to grow, the need to expand the ranch became more apparent. When the recession hit in 2008, the Schabrams saw many of their neighbors start to sell out. With more and more people fleeing to rural areas from urban centers like Sacramento and Stockton, they saw many ranches subdivided and turned into 5-acre ranchettes. With some of their direct neighbors looking to leave the ranching business, they jumped at the opportunity to purchase some of the surrounding parcels, one by one, to grow their operation and sustain the area's open spaces.

"All around us we were seeing ranches being bought up, cut up, and developed," Franziska explained. "We just couldn't bare to see any more property go to [development]."

Over the next 15 years, the Schabrams purchased a total of ten different parcels that connect to the original ranch totaling roughly 740 acres of rangeland.

Feeling a deep responsibility to continue ranching traditions and protect the land for the critters that call it home, the Schabrams approached the California Rangeland Trust with dreams to conserve the land. Because their daughters do not have any interest in taking over ranch management once they retire, Roland and Franziska were determined to find a way to safeguard what they had built and ensure the land would remain for future generations.

"Finding the Rangeland Trust was the best-case scenario," Franziska said. "Ranching in California has become increasingly difficult, and with [its] help, we are ensuring that it will be a working ranch forever and ever."

In 2022, the Schabrams completed conservation on the first 42 acres of the ranch. Funding was provided by CalTrans and the County of Calaveras to mitigate for potential habitat disturbances to the California red-legged frog resulting from efforts to realign California State Route 4. In a way, it is serendipitous that the same frog that serves as the ranch's namesake is helping the family conserve the property, along with its own habitat, in perpetuity.

As part of the agreement, construction has started on a seasonal pond and riparian area to provide a safe and suitable breeding ground for the frogs. They are also working to recreate the historic oak woodlands that were removed in the early 20th century by planting approximately 400 native oak trees on the hillside



The California red-legged frog finds refuge on the Rana Ranch in Calaveras County.

around the area. This project stands to benefit a variety of wildlife in the area and help ensure that the California red-legged frog can continue its reign over Calaveras County.

Meanwhile, the Schabrams are continuing to work with the Rangeland Trust to conserve the rest of the ranch and are looking forward to its imminent closing.

"We embrace the presence of the California red-legged frog; how lucky are we to have them on our ranch," Franziska exclaimed. "The work that we are able to do to protect them stands to protect the ranch, our livestock, and all the other wildlife on the ranch."

Over 150 years ago, Mark Twain put the jumping frogs of Calaveras County on the map. But today, the stewardship and conservation ethic of dedicated ranchers, like the Schabrams, are ensuring the story of the region's sacred amphibians will live on forever. ☺

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