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Rancher honored for preservation

FROM STAFF REPORTS

SUNOL -- Rancher Tim Koopmann has been recognized by a Colorado- based conservation organization for preserving his family's ranch while new homes spring up around it.

The Society for Range Management selected Koopmann as a recipient of its "Excellence in Range Management Award."

The Society for Range Management is made up of land managers, scientists, ranchers and conservationists who study and conserve rangeland.

Koopmann was nominated for the award by the Alameda County Resource Conservation District.

Karen Sweet, the district's executive officer, said ranching is a challenge everywhere in California.

Sweet said Koopmann Ranch presents a particular challenge because it's next door to urban development and is home to protected species.

Koopmann manages his cattle herd to help plants thrive and to create habitat for endangered Callippe silverspot butterflies, California tiger salamanders and red-legged frogs, Sweet said.

He has worked with environmental regulators and government agencies to obtain grant money and earn income from easements. That demonstrates to other landowners the benefits of working cooperatively with agencies, Sweet said.

Koopmann has allowed developer Ponderosa Homes and the city of Pleasanton purchase easements on his property to compensate for development projects that destroyed wildlife habitat.

The easements -- including a \$1.1 million purchase by the city of Pleasanton to protect 107 acres -- prohibit the land from being developed, and establish monitoring programs to ensure their continued value as wildlife habitat.

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