

## ROOM TO ROAM - PARTNERSHIP PERMANENTLY PROTECTS HISTORIC BLUE-RIDGE BERRYESSA RANCH

The California Rangeland Trust is pleased to announce the permanent conservation of the 1,275-acre Running Deer Ranch, owned by John and Judy Ahmann in Napa County. The Rangeland Trust worked with the California Department of Conservation, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP), and the Napa Land Trust to place an agricultural conservation easement on the property, ensuring that it will remain a natural, working landscape in perpetuity.

Running Deer Ranch is one of the oldest continuously operating cattle ranches in the state, and was a part of the Las Putas Rancho that the Berryessa Brothers acquired in 1843.

"The conservation of the Running Deer Ranch is a success for open space in the Bay Area, the Ahmann family, and our partners," said Scott Stone, California Rangeland Trust Vice Chairman.

"Our mission is to protect rangelands and ranching culture," said Stone, "but intact ranchlands contribute so much to the Bay Area economy and quality of life." According to the Bay Area Open Space Council, there are 1.28 million acres of private ranchlands still remaining in the Bay Area that play a critical role in supporting local food production, tourist-enticing vistas, and "ecological services" like migration corridors and wildlife habitat.

"As we watched development edge closer to the ranch, we knew we had to do something to protect the natural resources and history of this land," said Judy Ahmann. "From the Native Americans to the vast land grants to the American pioneers- they all had a place here. We feel we have done the best we can to maintain the part of the Blue Ridge Berryessa area under our care."

Running Deer Ranch is located about 22 miles north of



John Ahmann, owner of Running Deer Ranch, overlooks his property to Lake Berryessa.

the city of Napa, and extends from the gentle gradient of the Berryessa Valley to the steep slopes of Blue Ridge. It is a critical "connector" property, one that helps keep the wilderness values of the region whole and unfragmented. The ranch showcases many of the areas' distinctive ecosystems – grassland, oak savannah, hardwood forest and chamise chaparral. For over 150 years the ranch's cattle operation has shared habitat with bald eagle, foothill yellow-legged frog, golden eagle, blue oak and interior live oak.

The Ahmann family has owned the property since 1986, and managed it for both high quality cattle and to improve the ecological processes of the landscape by promoting grassland and forest health. They generously provided a half mile of

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# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

## Outreach Outlook for 2011



BY K. MARK NELSON, BOARD MEMBER AND CHAIR, OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

I joined the board of the California Rangeland Trust because I believe in our mission: To protect the open space, natural habitat and stewardship of California's ranches. As a Rangeland Trust Board Member, former President of the California Cattlemen's Association and a rancher myself, I have seen firsthand what our organization can do for those ranchers who want to maintain their property as a ranch forever.

There are several things I have always known about the benefits of ranching: properly grazed cattle help the environment, open space allows natural habitat to thrive and plant diversity to flourish and open grasslands capture water for cattle, wildlife and people- not to mention that clean, crisp air we get to enjoy. But the need to share this with others was never so clear until working with the Rangeland Trust.


I participate on the Outreach and Advocacy Committee to help us do just that. If we could tell our story to each and every citizen they would probably jump at the chance to support our cause. But there's that 'lingo' which gets in the way. Working landscapes, ranches, rangelands, grasslands, productive open space, species habitat, and a myriad of other terms that are often used interchangeably within our ranching and conservation circles that don't necessarily translate to the average California resident as something worth hearing about.

There are several ways in which we are actively working to spread the meaning of our mission and tell the stories of the ranchers who keep California thriving with clean air, fresh water and beautiful open spaces to the masses.

To start, in the New Year we will begin an in-depth project to revamp our social media presence. By social media I mean- we will have a new website that interacts with our Facebook page, a YouTube Channel, a new Rangeland Trust's ranchers' blog, and a picture sharing site. We will also be sending you monthly email newsletters so you can keep up with our work and learn how to stay involved. You will see new tools online and more ways to interact with us and get the information you want faster. A modern website is the most cost-effective way to reach the growing body of users who are looking to the internet as their number one source for information.

We will also be expanding our work with the *California Cattleman Magazine* and running more in-depth stories on conservation issues in our regular "Rangeland Trust Talk" columns. Our targeted conservation program in the Bay Area continues to grow and we are aggressively reaching out to Bay Area residents through events such as Cow Palace, stakeholder meetings, foundation partnerships, and collaborative work with the Bay Area Open Space Council among others. It is using the collective resources of an influential region such as this and building successful models of outreach that will ultimately help us protect the 500,000 acres of rangeland that we could save immediately if the funds were available.

If the down turn in the economy has taught us anything over the last couple years it's that the people will be the ones to move mountains and make CHANGE. It is 'the people' that we are trying to reach who can join us and help keep ranchers ranching.

As we approach 2011 we are building our vision of a California that collectively supports rangeland conservation because working ranches equal clean water, fresh air and open space for every one of us. Thank you for your support of the California Rangeland Trust, please continue your support as the end of the year draws near and we gear up for 2011. 



Enjoying the evening at A Western Affair 2010 (L to R): Mark Nelson, California Rangeland Trust Board Member, Matt Byrne, California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) Executive Director, and Marden Wilber, CCA Member.

## A Day on Cowboy Island

By Nita Vail and Will Woolley

In early October the Vail and Vickers families, along with the California Rangeland Trust, hosted over 125 guests on Santa Rosa Island, home of the Vail & Vickers ranching operation for nearly 100 years. Guests reveled in the windy island weather as they toured the ranch headquarters and listened to the past and future fate of this family's ranching roots as 2011 approaches. Cousins, Nita Vail, Tim Vail and Will Woolley thanked guests for attending in spite of challenging and changing weather conditions (not as typical in the late fall) and shared stories about the island ranch and the importance of keeping ranches preserved in California including environmental, economic and cultural resource benefits. Will Woolley shared with guests their family's history and what lies ahead:

*"In 1980 the Channel Islands National Park was created, signed into existence by President Jimmy Carter. Funds were appropriated in 1986 to purchase Santa Rosa Island. At this point Vail and Vickers had a tough decision in front of them. There was no question that the island had to be sold to the government. The question was how could Vail and Vickers retain their livelihood and extend their heritage on the island. If one were to ask any member of the Vail or Vickers*

*family in 1986 if they wanted to sell the island the answer would have been a resounding NO! They simply had to make the best of a situation that was not optimum.*

*Under the terms of the agreement that sold the island to the government Vail & Vickers was allowed to continue its ranching and hunting operation for twenty five years. Unfortunately this agreement did not hold up in court when an environmental group challenged the original agreement. The settlement of that lawsuit shut down the cattle operation in 1998 ending the 109 years of the ranching partnership between Vail and Vickers. The last 97 years of this partnership took place on Santa Rosa Island. The hunting operation was allowed to continue until 2011 at which point both the deer and the elk will have to be removed due to park service mandates.*

*As 2011 approaches the Vail and Vickers era on Santa Rosa Island draws to a close. For the members of the families involved in the island over the last several decades the loss of Santa Rosa and the subsequent shutdown of the ranch has been devastating. It is like losing a very close member of the family as well as a close knit community all at the same time. Our connection to the land and the pride we took*

*in its stewardship over the generations has been something that has proved to be very hard to walk away from. It is our hope that our stories about and our knowledge of the land we love so dearly will continue on through future generations."*

It is a heartbreaking ending of a ranching family's legacy like this that compels the California Rangeland Trust to continue our work to assist ranch families who want to keep their property in ranching forever. Had Vail & Vickers had an option to secure a conservation easement on the island back in the 60's maybe their story would have ended differently. We ask you to continue your support of our mission-driven work and help us protect California's open space, natural habitat and the stewardship of ranchers. Visit our website to see how you can support us and to view more pictures from A Day on Cowboy Island at [www.rangelandtrust.org](http://www.rangelandtrust.org).



Will Woolley, Nita Vail, and Tim Vail welcome guests to the main ranch house on Santa Rosa Island.

## Welcome New Staff

The California Rangeland Trust would like to welcome Michael Delbar, Chief Operating Officer, and Marshall Cook, Transaction Director to the Rangeland Trust staff team.



Michael oversees day-to-day operations and provides landowner outreach and legislative support to the organization. Most recently, he was elected and served three consecutive terms as the First District Supervisor for the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors and was Second Vice President of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC).



Marshall manages the conservation easement transactions that preserve rangelands throughout California and serves as principal legal staff working with landowners, funders, and conservation partners. He earned an undergraduate degree in marketing from Westminster College in Salt Lake City, UT, and a law degree from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento. Meet them both! Visit [www.rangelandtrust.org](http://www.rangelandtrust.org).



# CONSERVATION CORNER

## Bay Area Efforts Gain Support and Momentum

The California Rangeland Trust's Bay Area Program has received generous support from the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation, the San Francisco Foundation, the Firedoll Foundation and other donors to continue our work to preserve the remaining 1.28 million acres of private rangeland in the San Francisco Bay Area. We are currently working on conservation easement projects in Santa Clara, Alameda, Solano, and Napa Counties. Our partners include local land trusts, Resource Conservation Districts (RCD), Natural Resource Conservation Districts (NRCS), and Water Districts. In addition, we are partnering with the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition to research the feasibility of establishing markets for ecosystem services on Bay Area rangelands.

## Next Generation Ranchers and Range Ecology Students Conduct a Survey for Rangeland Trust at the Cow Palace's Grand National Rodeo about Attitudes Towards Ranching and Land Conservation in the Bay Area

As a supporter of the California Rangeland Trust, have you ever felt that a lot more people would help us save the ranching way of life if they just knew about us? We have too. That's why on October 22 at the Grand National Rodeo at the Cow Palace we worked with Lynn Huntsinger, a well-known range ecologist and professor and others to conduct a survey at the Cow Palace's Grand National Rodeo. We asked questions and sought comments from over eighty participants, including California's Secretary of Agriculture, about what they thought. Stay tuned for more details! And a big cowboy tip of the hat to the Cow Palace's Seth Doulton, and surveyors Lynn Huntsinger, Gareth and Maura Fisher, "Next Generation" rancher Cari Koopman, and the many people who gave us so much thoughtful insight.

Additionally, we partnered with the California Beef Council and California Cattlemen's Association to produce a three and half minute video showcasing ranchers' stewardship of the land – a picture of the families and faces that keep California open and thriving. This video aired prior to the rodeo each night in the main arena. Look for this video on our website very soon.

## Rangeland Climate Watch: Protecting Bay Area Ranches Emerges as Key Priority

Ranchers who want to protect their way of life for future generations may receive a boost from an unexpected constituency – urban folks who care about climate change.

The morning of the day that the Giants won the World Series, the Bay Area Open Space Council convened a group of ninety scientists, land trusts, academics, land managers and county planners that met at the Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation to discuss new scientific findings about climate change in the Bay Area, and what they might mean.

Regardless of whether you believe or don't believe in climate change, it's becoming clear that there may be benefits for ranch



Cow Palace Surveyors: Cari Koopmann and Maura and Gareth Fisher.

ers as an outcome of the Climate Change dialogue. For example, one clear finding was that conservation goals, and climate adaptation goals, are the same. Well-managed rangelands hold water, sequester carbon, and provide animals with ways to move around in response to temperature changes. This means that, as one working group emphasized, stabilization of land tenure of ranchers is an important goal because ranchers steward much of the last natural private landscapes in the Bay Area. Watch for more coverage of this developing science and collaborative work in the coming months on our website, [www.rangelandtrust.org](http://www.rangelandtrust.org).

## Combined Federal Campaign - Support Us at Work

**50590** is the magic number! The Norcal Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is the annual fundraising drive on behalf of over 2,400 Local, National and International charities for the Military and Federal Employees within the Greater San Francisco and the Greater Sacramento Area.

As a non-profit, the California Rangeland Trust has been accepted by CFC as one of their listed charities. If you are a Northern California federal employee, we ask you to consider making California Rangeland Trust your chosen charity through CFC! If you want to learn more about this program or to learn how to start making your donations online through CFC please visit [www.norcal.com](http://www.norcal.com) and don't forget to use our number 50590!

## Media Usage and Its Impact in an Evolving West: How the culture of the West reaches out to enlist “civilians.”

By Bill Reynolds

The West holds hard to one of this country's true root-based cultures. The raising of protein within the ranching world is tied for many, to the image of stockman – the cowboy and his horse. It is that image that over the years has been utilized by many non-indigenous media – “civilian advertising” – to express certain qualities and “western values” the could ideally be tied to the products they were placed adjacent to. Honesty, hard work, self-reliance, a solid work ethic have all been associated with the image of the steadfast cowboy and ranching family. Does it work? Marlboro thought so, along with other diverse companies and brands. How and when did this evolution of such a directed task – that of tending cattle – become so visually important and ‘permission giving’ passed it's initial purpose? And more importantly, how can the cattle and ranching communities regain and re-purpose this important American image in these volatile times and changing political landscape? Let's first look at how we got here.

The West's true popular influence – in a broad demographic sense - came with the innovation of the moving picture. The invention did in a very short time, what Buffalo Bill tried to do with his Wild West Show. His show ran for 30 years, from 1883 until 1913, touring the United States and Europe. Yet the western movie – with the help of Thomas Edison – started the ball really rolling. And it kept rolling until the late 1930s – really until the start of the Second World War. The early 1900s brought other incredible technological changes that played havoc with tradition, changes commented on by Montana writer William Kittredge.

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The changes he saw came to his world, the MC Ranch in southeastern Oregon. In his essay, “Running Horses,” he wrote of the changes that altered the lives of the people he grew up with and admired as their world ran headlong into modern life in the early 1900s:

*“These people, they did the endless work, they took care, they were the people who invented our civilization, theirs was a tradition of civility. These men who came before,*

*the horseback artists who brought the rawhide reata and the Spanish silver sided bits, were quick handed men who never dreamed they could own much beyond a saddle and a bedroll and a good pocket knife. They were our nobility; I think they dreamed of capabilities and beauty. They knew better than to imagine you could own anything beyond a coherent self.*

*Those men, and the men I rode with on those deserts when I was a boy, lived in an ancient horseback world that is mostly gone. The nineteenth century lasted in our part of the universe until spring of 1946, when my grandfather traded off some two hundred matched teams for a fleet of John Deere tractors. Everybody thought it was a bold step into the future. We didn't*

*know what we were losing, our ancient proximity with animals, with running horses. The shadow of the clouds went on swiftly without us.”*

After World War II, we ran to the future. Leaving much of the past behind. No more “yucks and shucks.” People wanted “the modern.” Big cars. Dish washing machines. Electric things. It wasn't until the early 50s when everyone looked around and wondered where all the cowboys had gone. It was then the concept of the western-themed museum started to evolve, reminding us of our culture from the past. With television, the TV episodic western was born – from Sky King to Rin-Tin-Tin to Gunsmoke to Rawhide. The cowboy was king. Then the 60s. Bonanza, and a knock off of a James Bond movie with Robert Conrad in the Wild Wild West was all that really hung on. Fashion started changing. The election of President Kennedy was blamed with the end of the headwear business in this country - for the every man - as he was

the first president to not wear a hat. Remember pictures of President Eisenhower? He was never without a hat. The 60s also brought the end of the TV western. And culturally, the West went sort of “dark” from a populous perspective until 1978.

That year, writer Aaron Latham wrote about a dance club in Texas called Gilley's. Two years later, the film version of the

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# CONSERVATION WRAP UP

## Running Deer Ranch, cont.

their private land to help connect a 100 mile hiking trail that runs through the Blue Ridge Berryessa Natural Area. “The average private landowner does not have the resources to ensure their land remains in agriculture, open and healthy forever. Since we began the effort of this easement project, there has been fragmentation of property on our borders to build ranchettes,” said John Ahmann. “Without this conservation easement, our land would eventually go the way of development and this natural place and its history would be gone.”

“It is gratifying to work with people as dedicated to agriculture as the Ahmann family, and we congratulate them and the other partners involved in the creation of this easement,” former California Department of Conservation Director Bridgett Luther said. “Shielding the Running Deer Ranch from future development is an excellent example of our department’s mission -- managing California’s working lands.”

The Running Deer Ranch, located within the Blue Ridge Berryessa Natural Area (BRBNA), is a good example of regional collaboration where the Rangeland Trust is partnering, through the BRBNA Conservation Partnership, with local land trusts and government agencies to coordinate additional conservation activities in the region.

## Media- in an Evolving West, cont.

Latham story premiered, with Urban Cowboy, people from all walks of life were, as the song goes, “lookin for love in all the wrong places.” The film seemed to hit a nerve in this country. Suddenly a little known designer in NY named Ralph Lauren launched a line of western wear, stores like Billy Martin’s and the short-lived Cutter Bill Western World, served a new phenom – the high-end western customer. A term was coined – Western lifestyle. Now, think of when you first heard that term? It was, as what later would be described by culture historians, as a permission giver.

The early 80s also, saw two landmark books published that depicted the real faces of the contemporary west. Photographers Kurt Markus and Jay Dusard published After Barbed Wire and North American Cowboy, A portrait. The cow town of Elko, Nevada became a cultural center with cowboy narratives and poetry. Folk artist Ian Tyson released his cowboy album Old Corrals and Sagebrush. So just as Urban Cowboy had given every attorney in the country permission to learn the two-step and wear a \$14.00 hat, the true depiction of a living horse and cow culture of the - 1980s – and today, reminds folks of a culture still making a living horseback. Still tending cattle. Still growing food for a hungry nation - and beyond.

Those kinds of “line in the sand” media moments helped create a broader reach as “western life” became more accessible – and hopefully better appreciated by a larger demographic. In today’s immediate access, media world – challenges continue to evolve but the imagery of what is the West and its strength continue to be an important part in the telling of the ongoing story of the people and ways of the American West.



## Walk for Rangeland Conservation: Free iPhone Application to Support the Rangeland Trust

Do you love to hike, take walks or simply log foot mileage working the ranch? A new iPhone application can turn those steps into donations for California Rangeland Trust through Green Boot. Green Boot, a Media Company, supports and promotes nature conservation by delivering effective, interactive media exposure for charities committed to protecting our natural resources. By downloading their free iPhone application you can track your steps on a pedometer-like function. The more steps Rangeland Trust supporters rack up the more Green Boot will donate to us! Green Boot will give 15 percent of their annual profits to their member non-profits – so get out there and walk for rangeland conservation! Visit our website, [www.rangelandtrust.org](http://www.rangelandtrust.org), for a link to download this application to your phone. Use this unique code, 1071, to have each step you take registered to California Rangeland Trust.



**Find us on Facebook! Become a fan and get weekly updates on our conservation work throughout California.**

**Visit [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and type California Rangeland Trust into the search bar OR visit our website and link directly to our fan page, [www.rangelandtrust.org](http://www.rangelandtrust.org).**

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John and Dee Lacey in Honor of  
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