

**COLORADO**Colorado Water  
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

## Colorado Water Conservation Board

**Water Plan****Water Project Summary**

Name of Applicant	Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust
Name of Water Project	Rusk Ranch's Beckwith Parcel Conservation Easement Project
Grant Request Amount	<b>\$250,000.00</b>
Primary Category	\$250,000.00
<i>Agricultural Projects</i>	
Total Applicant Match	<b>\$87,950.00</b>
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	\$57,950.00
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	\$30,000.00
Total Other Sources of Funding	<b>\$87,950.00</b>
<i>Keep It Colorado</i>	\$50,000.00
<i>Wendy and Tate Rusk</i>	\$7,950.00
<i>Wendy and Tate Rusk</i>	\$30,000.00
Total Project Cost	<b>\$425,900.00</b>

**Applicant & Grantee Information**

Name of Grantee: Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust

Mailing Address: PO Box 16088 Denver CO 80216

Organization Contact: Erin Quinn

Position/Title: Senior Conservation Manager

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Organization Contact - Alternate: Brendan Boepple

Position/Title: Director of Additive Conservation

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Grant Management Contact: Erin Quinn

Position/Title: Senior Conservation Manager

Phone: 970-556-4827

Email: erin@ccalt.org

Grant Management Contact - Alternate: Erin Quinn

Position/Title: Senior Conservation Manager

Phone: 970-556-4827

Email: erin@ccalt.org

**Description of Grantee/Applicant**

Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) located in CO. For more than 27 years, CCALT has partnered with landowners across Colorado to protect productive agricultural land, while conserving the natural resources that make Colorado such a special place to live and visit.

**Type of Eligible Entity**

- ☐ Public (Government)
- ☐ Public (District)
- ☐ Public (Municipality)
- ☐ Ditch Company
- ☐ Private Incorporated
- ☐ Private Individual, Partnership, or Sole Proprietor
- ☒ Non-governmental Organization
- ☐ Covered Entity
- ☐ Other

### Category of Water Project

- ☒ Agricultural Projects  
*Developing communications materials that specifically work with and educate the agricultural community on headwater restoration, identifying the state of the science of this type of work to assist agricultural users among others.*
- ☐ Conservation & Land Use Planning  
*Activities and projects that implement long-term strategies for conservation, land use, and drought planning.*
- ☐ Engagement & Innovation Activities  
*Activities and projects that support water education, outreach, and innovation efforts. Please fill out the Supplemental Application on the website.*
- ☐ Watershed Restoration & Recreation  
*Projects that promote watershed health, environmental health, and recreation.*
- ☐ Water Storage & Supply  
*Projects that facilitate the development of additional storage, artificial aquifer recharge, and dredging existing reservoirs to restore the reservoirs' full decreed capacity and Multi-beneficial projects and those projects identified in basin implementation plans to address the water supply and demand gap.*

### Location of Water Project

Latitude 38.185700  
 Longitude -105.529800  
 Lat Long Flag Precise coordinates: Project coordinates are readily definable and precisely define the location of the project  
 Water Source Swift Creek  
 Freer, Beckwith & Kennicott Ditch  
 Basins Arkansas  
 Counties Custer  
 Districts 13-Wet Mountain Valley

### Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type Agricultural  
 Type of Water Project Planning  
 Scheduled Start Date - Design 6/1/2025  
 Scheduled Start Date - Construction  
 Description  
 With this proposal, Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) is seeking a perpetual conservation easement on Rusk Ranch's 'Beckwith Parcel', a 1,184 acre ranch supporting cattle grazing and hay production, priority water rights, and water dependent wildlife habitat. This project is based on a voluntary conservation

easement (CE) between the landowner and CCALT to conserve the land and encumber its associated water rights:

- 4/9 interest in and to the Freer, Beckwith & Kennicott Ditch No. 104, Priority No. 118 for 9.99 cfs out of Swift Creek.
- 100% interest in Shauner Lake and the Amelia Ponds in Case Nos. 85CW69 and 85CW70 Water Division No. 2, State of Colorado.
- Additional decreed well and spring rights.

Rusk Ranch's Beckwith Parcel encompasses significant wildlife habitat, is nestled among a quilt of protected land in the Wet Mountain Valley and hosts approximately 1.75 miles of Swift Creek. This project will forever protect this land and the water, in support of the region's long-term land and water resource resiliency.

CWCB's support for this project will help ensure this important cog in the region's water wheel will forever be protected.

### Measurable Results

	New Storage Created (acre-feet)
	New Annual Water Supplies Developed or Conserved (acre-feet), Consumptive or Nonconsumptive
	Existing Storage Preserved or Enhanced (acre-feet)
	New Storage Created (acre-feet)
9,250	Length of Stream Restored or Protected (linear feet)
	Length of Pipe, Canal Built or Improved (linear feet)
	Efficiency Savings (dollars/year)
	Efficiency Savings (acre-feet/year)
1,184	Area of Restored or Preserved Habitat (acres)
	Quantity of Water Shared through Alternative Transfer Mechanisms or water sharing agreement (acre-feet)
	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Incorporating Water-Saving Actions into Land Use Planning
	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity
Other	
This is a conservation easement project. Indirectly, all Coloradoans will be effected with each cfs of water that is protected. Protecting this ranch's water will further restore the land.	

### Water Project Justification

With this proposal, Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) is seeking a perpetual conservation easement on Rusk Ranch's 'Beckwith Parcel', a 1,184 acre ranch supporting cattle grazing and hay production, priority water rights, and water dependent wildlife habitat. This project is based on a voluntary conservation easement (CE) between the landowner and CCALT to conserve the land and encumber its associated water rights:

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This project will support Arkansas Basin Implementation Plan's Agricultural goals including:

1. Support projects within and outside the Basin that will help meet the Arkansas Basin Agriculture water supply gap, maintain existing supplies, better manage vulnerable supplies, and maximize utilization of water users' entitlements.
2. Sustain a productive agricultural economy in the Basin that sustains viable rural, agricultural based communities.

This project will support Arkansas Basin Implementation Plan's Environment and Recreation goals including:

1. Support projects and programs within and outside the Basin that protect Arkansas Basin E&R water supply needs and collaborate with municipal and ag users to enhance E&R values.
2. Maintain or improve native fish populations, restore habitat for fish species, and maintain or improve recreational fishing opportunities.
3. Maintain or improve aquatic, riparian, and avian habitat (including wetlands) that would support environmental features and recreational opportunities.

#### Related Studies

Rusk Ranch is in the Upper Arkansas River Basin, directly contributing to the headwaters of the Arkansas, Grape Creek, and Swift Creek. The property hosts over 620 acres of emergent, herbaceous, continuously saturated land via its ditches and ~5 acres of flooded stream bed. The property hosts a 1.3-acre pond and 989 acres of emergent wetlands. The property has senior water rights and provides habitat for numerous wildlife species, including several designated as Tier 1 Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Colorado State Wildlife Action Plan including The Townsend's Big-eared bat, Dwarf Shrew, Colorado Checkered Whiptail, Wahatoya Creek Larkspur, Degener Beardtongue, Prairie Violet., Cutthroat Trout, Golden and Bald Eagle, Plains and Northern Leopard Frog, Sandhill Crane, American Yellow Lady's-slipper, Rocky Mountain Gay-Feather and New England Aster. See attached CODEX report for a full species list.

#### Taxpayer Bill of Rights

None