A True and Lasting Legacy on the Land

Dave Jenner: Rancher, Philanthropist, Renaissance Man

Dave was a quiet man, reserved, and yet very generous. It was a most pleasant surprise one day in 2007 when the land trust received his personal note, in which he simply said he was interested in exploring a conservation easement on his ranch, the W Diamond in Skull Valley.

After more than a few ‘cups of tea’, Dave and his second wife, Kay, donated a conservation easement to the Central Arizona Land Trust on 4,296 acres of the privately-owned land on the W Diamond Ranch, along with a stewardship endowment of over $135,000. The stewardship endowment, held in trust with the Arizona Community Foundation, funds annual monitoring to assure the conditions of the easement are being upheld.

The W Diamond Ranch is unique in its lush, sub-irrigated bottom land, which provides rich feed year-round for raising cattle. The ranch has a colorful history, as part was originally owned by Jake Miller and Van Dickson. Both Miller’s and Dickson’s fathers were with the Walker Party, which in 1863 discovered gold in the Prescott area.

After Kay’s death in 2014, Dave sold the ranch to the Haverfield Family Trust. Vern Haverfield and his daughter, Claudette Haverfield Johnson, continue running the ranch as a cattle operation today as the Seven Spears Ranch.

During his life in Yavapai County, Dave served on the board of the Triangle Natural Resources Conservation District, the Skull Valley School Board, the Yavapai Planning and Zoning Commission, and volunteered for many years as a “big” for Yavapai Big Brothers and Sisters.

Dave Jenner passed away in June of this year, leaving his daughter Callie Hernandez and husband Chris, as well as a large extended family of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

CALT thanks Mona McCroskey for providing her interview with Dave Jenner, 2007.

Working with willing land owners, CALT holds donated conservation easements on thousands of acres of scenic, riparian, and agricultural lands throughout central and northern Arizona.
President’s Message

Dear CALT Supporter,

It was a warm day in early June, as the board gathered at the Highlands Center for Natural History, in the Kieckhefer Ramada. Just the fact we were gathering was cause for celebration, after so many months of meetings via Zoom.

Board retreats are not known for being joyous social occasions but we are a bunch who truly enjoy each other and work well together even when there are differences of perspective.

The Board of Directors of your local land trust is made up of three ranchers, one retired child advocate, an accountant, a retired music engineer and river runner, a retired investment advisor, and a very busy non-profit executive.

It didn’t take much deliberation before a couple of “big, hairy, audacious goals” emerged...

In spite of the many challenges that come with a global pandemic, the Central Arizona Land Trust could claim a number of accomplishments during the past year: election of three new board members, securing a new conservation easement on 254 acres of scenic wetlands within sight of the San Francisco Peaks, partnering with the Arizona Land and Water Trust to permanently protect almost 900 acres of the historic Orme Ranch, submitting Farm Bill funding applications for 11,000 acres of Yavapai County ranchlands, engaging with The Nature Conservancy and local stakeholders to protect flows of the Upper Verde River and last, but not least, hiring a new conservation specialist, Sharma Torrens, to take over for our retiring marvel Jeanne Trupiano.

It was a very good year, made possible by the substantial support of you and our many generous donors!

But that June day was not just about looking back, proud as we are of recent milestones. It was all about what the Central Arizona Land Trust could reach for in 2022 and beyond.

It didn’t take much deliberation before a couple of “big, hairy, audacious goals” emerged:

- adding 10,000 acres to our permanently protected conservation properties
- achieving our second five-year accreditation from the national Land Trust Alliance
- raising $250,000 for the Blue Ribbon fund which supports initial, strategic land protection transaction costs
- and hiring an executive director

Whew! All by New Year’s Day of 2023! We will keep you updated on our progress in future issues of For Lands’ Sakes, our semi-annual newsletter.

Yours in conservation,
Becky Ruffner, President

Central Arizona Land Trust
Conservation Easements Explained

As you might already be aware, CALT works with private landowners to develop conservation easements that protect, in perpetuity, open space, wildlife habitat, scenic views, and preserve agricultural operations. Understandably, unless you work for a land trust, or you have placed one on your land, you might not fully understand exactly what makes up a conservation easement.

A conservation easement (“CE”) is a voluntary agreement where landowners sell or donate their development rights from their land so that the conservation values (e.g., farm or ranch, wildlife habitat, open space, cultural values, etc.) of the property can be protected. Property rights are like a bundle of sticks and when landowners place a CE on their land, they release one of these sticks. The landowner still owns the land and continues to use the land in the manner agreed upon in the CE.

A qualified appraiser values the development rights (one of the sticks). When a landowner donates these rights, they could receive a federal tax deduction; when these are sold, the landowner receives payment. Even though the land cannot be subdivided, other buildings can be negotiated into the easement. In the case of farmland, it remains in production and continues providing food for local communities. The goal is to allow flexibility for the landowner.

One major challenge is identifying the funding source. Agencies provide the funding for CEs (e.g., Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Forest Service, etc.). Funders are looking to protect properties that expand the open space adjacent to forestlands, wilderness areas, or that are prime agricultural lands. Funders have required the CEs they fund to be perpetual in nature; however, Arizona state law does not require this.

Land trusts, like CALT, play a vital role in that they act as the intermediary between the funding source and the landowner by negotiating the terms of easement, conducting due diligence steps, working with the title company and more. Additionally, land trusts become the holder of the development rights, meaning they conduct site visits annually, with the landowner’s permission, to monitor the property. Being a holder of these development rights also requires land trusts to not only monitor and enforce the conservation easement, but to also legally defend it in court when necessary.

This is a general overview of a conservation easement, but every situation is unique. Essentially, conservation easements are a tool in the landowner’s toolbelt that can be used for lasting land stewardship and protection of their legacy. If you or anyone you know might be interested in exploring placing a CE on your land, please contact us at calt@centralazlandtrust.org or 928-445-7790.

Debunking Myths About Conservation Easements

What a Conservation Easement IS:
• Grants the land trust the ability to protect specific conservation values through a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and the land trust.
• Provides for the permanent protection of significant open space, wildlife habitat, scenic views, along with working farms and ranches.
• Retains land in private ownership and on the tax rolls.
• An effective tool for conserving private land.

What a Conservation Easement IS NOT:
• Not a management plan.
• Does not prevent transfer of ownership to heirs.
• Not a one-size fits all—each conservation easement is tailored based on the conservation values and existing uses of the land, such as agricultural production.
CALT has partnered with The Nature Conservancy and local conservation organizations that make up the Upper Verde River Stakeholders Group. With support from the Nina Mason Pulliam Trust, the stakeholders group works to develop collaborative strategies to protect the flow of the river, one of the last free-flowing rivers in Arizona.

The Verde springs from the ground near Paulden, southwest of Flagstaff and is one of Arizona’s only federally designated Wild and Scenic Rivers. It meanders southeastward 195 miles through private, federal, state and tribal land before reaching its confluence with the Salt River near Phoenix. The Verde is vital to wildlife and recreation in Arizona communities and also essential to the ranching and farming lands that make up its watershed. The nature of land ownership and competing demands means it will take strong private and public partnerships to keep this river flowing.

One of the strategies the Upper Verde Stakeholders group has identified as vital to protecting continued flow of the Verde is conservation easements on agricultural lands on and around the headwaters of the Verde. CALT is the only local organization qualified to hold conservation easements, which are one tool to protect flows in the river. Working with willing landowners of farms and ranches in the Williamson Valley, Big Chino and Little Chino sub-basins, CALT hopes to play a key role in protecting the flows of the Verde River for future generations.

A Brief Overview of the History and Laws Governing Conservation Easements

The concept of conservation easements has existed in the U.S. for approximately 90 years. Back in the 1930s and 1940s, the National Park Service began to purchase easements to protect scenic values, but the government discontinued this use in the 1950s. Then, in 1964, an Internal Revenue Ruling authorized a federal charitable income tax deduction for the donation of a conservation easement for the purpose of conserving scenic land next to a federal highway.

The next year, in 1965, the Federal Highway Beautification Act was enacted to encourage states (with federal funds) to put forth legislation to facilitate the use of scenic highway easements. It wasn’t until 1980 that Congress made the conservation easement deduction a permanent part of the Internal Revenue Code. Landowners that donate their development rights to land trusts could qualify for a federal tax deduction per Internal Revenue Code §170.

This also spurred the creation of land trusts and by 1980, more than 400 land trusts had formed around the country. States have enacted their own governing laws to address CEs. Here in Arizona, CEs are governed by Arizona Revised Statute 33-271, et seq.

Conservation easements have been in existence for numerous years in the U.S. And their popularity continues to rise as landowners begin to appreciate the concept of maintaining open space.
We thank our generous donors for their support. All donors who made contributions to CALT from April to September, 2021 are acknowledged here with gratitude.*

STEWARDS: $500 AND ABOVE
Richard Ach
Anonymous
Judy Clapp
The Henry Dahlberg Foundation
DeBusk Family Making Smiles Foundation
Sam and Leigh Downing
James and Sandra Heuerman
Florence McCutcheon
Elisabeth F. Ruffner Memorial Fund
Linda and Joe Smith

TOP HANDS: $250-$499
Susan Byrne and Ann Tewksbury
Carol Russell and Daniel Wasserman

PARTNERS IN PROTECTION:
$100-$249
Rob and Mary Bricker
Sharee and Ted Brookhart

LAND LOVERS: $10-$99
Amazon Smiles
Anonymous (2)

SPECIAL DEDICATIONS
Richard Ach in memory of Nancy Currier
Sharee and Ted Brookhart in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Orme
Nancy Cook in memory of Elisabeth Ruffner
George Fornara in memory of Margaret Fornara
Sam and Leigh Downing in memory of Ron Hanscom
Florence McCutcheon in memory of Wm. “Buck” Hart
A.W. (Gus) and Sandra Scott in memory of Dick Spring
Linda and Joe Smith in memory of George Smith Sheats, November 1, 1947-May 2, 2021
Katherine Wingert in memory of Roger C. Wingert

* We regret the misspelling of Gary Stoke’s name in our Spring issue. If we acknowledged your gift incorrectly, please let us know at info@centralazlandtrust.org. Thanks!

Orme Ranch Forever—Conservation Easement Endowment Opportunity

The Central Arizona Land Trust is offering a naming opportunity for a gift of $50,000 to establish the Orme Ranch Forever Stewardship Endowment. This amount could be donated in honor of an individual or family, to the Central Arizona Land Trust Orme Ranch Forever fund, and may be tax deductible as CALT is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization.

The Orme Ranch Forever fund will support annual stewardship and monitoring required of the Central Arizona Land Trust, in order to hold a permanent conservation easement on more than 900 acres of the historic Orme Ranch. These funds will be invested at the Arizona Community Foundation and assure the terms of the easement are upheld in perpetuity.

For more information regarding the naming opportunity on the Orme Ranch Forever Stewardship Endowment, please contact Becky Ruffner, President, Central Arizona Land Trust: beckyruffner@gmail.com 928.925.5425

Orme Ranch School

central Arizona LAND TRUST
New Farmland Protection Effort to Begin Soon
CALT is expanding into Maricopa County and is involved in Farmland Preservation discussions with the City of Phoenix and local farmers. Stay tuned for more in the next few months as this exciting work gets off the ground.

Are you interested in learning more about protecting the special places in Arizona we all love?
Do you have experience in communications and/or non-profit management, and want to use your skills part time to make a difference?

The Central Arizona Land Trust might be looking for you!

We need a reliable, qualified person to manage our outreach and administration tasks 12 – 15 hours weekly.

Contact calt@centralarizonalandtrust.org and tell us more about yourself.

Please remember YOUR local land trust as you plan end-of-year giving!
We need your continued support to work with land owners who want to permanently protect their farms, ranches, and historic and scenic landscapes from development forever.

Federal Tax Deduction Continues:
The CARES ACT extends the charitable donation deduction through 2021, up to $300 of a taxpayer’s charitable contributions to qualify as an above-the-line deduction. It increases the amount to $600 for married couples filing joint returns.

Non-Profit Organization U.S. Postage PAID Permit No. 134 Prescott, AZ

PO Box 1050
Prescott, AZ 86302

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