

**CASE STUDIES:  
RANCHES IN UTAH EXEMPLIFYING  
SUSTAINABLE LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION  
AND RANGE MANAGEMENT**

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## INTRODUCTION

Sustainable livestock production and range management integrate three primary objectives – environmental health, economic profitability, and social responsibility. Engaging in environmental stewardship, cultivating more profitable industries, and encouraging stable, prosperous families and communities are the core principles of sustainable agriculture. In the livestock industry, these objectives can be achieved using a variety of methods, such as rotational grazing, soil conservation, water conservation, nutrient management, habitat improvement, integrated weed management, alternative marketing, and enterprise diversification (USDA SARE Program, n.d.).

According to the Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable (SRR), rangeland sustainability refers to the capacity of rangelands to maintain health, productivity, diversity, and overall integrity from generation to generation, in the context of ecological, social, and economic systems (SRR, 2005). The Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable has identified a set of five criteria embodying social, economic, and ecological factors for assessing rangeland sustainability. The five core criteria include (1) conservation and maintenance of soil and water resources, (2) maintenance and conservation of plant and animal resources on rangelands, (3) maintenance of productive capacity on rangelands, (4) maintenance and enhancement of multiple economic and social benefits to current and future generations; and (5) development and promotion of legal, institutional, and economic frameworks for rangeland conservation and sustainable management (SRR, 2005).

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Utah Department of Natural Resources, the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, The Nature Conservancy, the Utah Quality Growth Commission, the Trust for Public Land, and the Sand County Foundation are some agencies and organizations that have coordinated with ranchers to help improve rangeland sustainability by preserving and advancing livestock production systems that are more profitable and environmentally sensitive. Utah Partners for Conservation and Development, the Utah Farm Bureau Federation, and the Utah Cattlemen’s Association are some local organizations that support the local agricultural industry and endorse the adoption of good livestock production practices.

### **Natural Resources Conservation Service Programs**

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers several technical assistance, incentive-based, and easement programs to ranchers, including the Conservation of Private Grazing Land Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Agricultural Management Assistance program, and the Farm

and Ranch Lands Protection Program. The Conservation of Private Grazing Land (CPGL) Program is a voluntary program whereby the Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical assistance to owners and managers of private grazing land. Although the program does not provide financial or cost-share assistance, the program offers opportunities to maintain and improve private grazing land by implementing grazing land management technologies that protect and improve water quality, maintain and improve wildlife and fish habitat, enhance recreational opportunities, encourage diversification, and promote the use of sustainable grazing systems (USDA NRCS, 2003).

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program that encourages the improvement of high-quality wildlife habitat on private property. The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical and financial assistance to landowners that enhance upland, wetland, riparian, and/or aquatic habitats on private property. Through the program, the Natural Resources Conservation Service works with participants to develop a wildlife habitat plan. The plan becomes the basis of the cost-share agreement between the agency and the landowner (USDA NRCS, 2004a).

The Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) program provides cost-share assistance and incentive payments to agricultural producers who voluntarily address issues, such as water quality and soil erosion control, by incorporating conservation practices into their operations. The Agricultural Management Assistance program is available in 15 states, including Utah. Under the program, the Natural Resources Conservation Service works with landowners to develop conservation plans. The conservation plans provide the foundation for the contract between the agency and the landowner (USDA NRCS, 2007).

The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) is a voluntary program that provides matching funds to organizations with existing farm and ranch land protection programs to purchase development rights and conservation easements to preserve productive farm and ranchland (USDA NRCS, 2004b). Conservation easements are legal agreements between a private landowner and a land trust or government agency that prohibits development on the land in order to protect the ecological or cultural value. The conservation easement is either voluntarily donated or sold by the landowner. The property remains in the possession of the original landowner and most private property rights are retained. The easement is held by a land trust, such as The Nature Conservancy, or a government agency, such as the Utah Department of Natural Resources or Utah Department of Agriculture and Food. The easement holder extinguishes the development rights in order to protect the valuable resources on the property (UGOPB, 2008).

## **Utah Department of Natural Resources Programs**

The Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) is a voluntary program managed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR). The program provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners for the protection and management of habitat to benefit federally listed, proposed, candidate, or other at-risk species on private lands. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources has identified two primary areas of focus for the Landowner Incentive Program in Utah – (1) sagebrush steppe uplands supporting sage grouse species, sharp-tailed grouse, neotropical migratory bird

species, pygmy rabbit, and prairie dog species, and (2) low- to mid- elevation riparian corridors and wetlands supporting various trout species and at-risk neotropical migratory bird species (USDA NRCS, 2005).

The Forest Legacy Program (FLP) is a conservation easement program operated by the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands (UDFFSL) and funded by the United States Forest Service (USFS). The program is designed to protect environmentally important forests and to prevent future conversions of forest land and resources. Conservation easements are used to achieve the objectives of protecting and enhancing water quality; protecting wildlife habitat and maintaining habitat connectivity; maintaining and restoring riparian areas; maintaining forest sustainability; and sustaining the cultural and economic vitality of rural communities. Accompanied with the conservation easement is a management plan or stewardship plan. The plans are specifically tailored to each property and are written to encourage long-term stewardship (UDFFSL, 2008; USDA FS, 2006).

### **Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program**

Since 1988, the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program has helped advance farming and ranching systems that are more sustainable by administering competitive research and education grant programs. The grants are offered through four regions, including North Central, Northeast, South, and West, under the direction of councils that consist of farmers, ranchers, representatives from universities, government agencies, agribusinesses, and non-profit organizations. The grants are used to increase knowledge about sustainable agricultural practices and to help farmers and ranchers adopt innovative systems. The Western SARE program, hosted by Utah State University, administers grants in several categories, such as Research and Education grants, Farmer/Rancher grants, Professional/Producer grants, and Professional Development grants (USDA SARE, 2008).

### **Utah Department of Agriculture and Food**

The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food is a state agency that promotes and protects the interests and products of agriculture and related industries. The agency oversees the Division of Grazing Improvement and administers the Utah Grazing Improvement Program (UGIP). The Utah Grazing Improvement Program is a broad-based, voluntary program, led by range specialists and assisted by policy analysts and rangeland scientists, focused on improving the productivity and sustainability of Utah rangelands and watersheds. Cost-share grants are awarded to applicants in five different regions (northeast, northwest, central, southeast, and southwest) in Utah to improve grazing management practices and rangeland resource health on private and public land. The Utah Grazing Improvement Program has approved funds to increase livestock water supplies, improve grass species that benefit livestock and wildlife, combat forage-damaging insects, and rehabilitate rangeland damaged by wildfire (UDAF, 2007).

The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food also supervises the Utah Conservation Commission (UCC). The Utah Conservation Commission, authorized under the Utah Conservation Commission Act and comprised of a 16 person board, aspires to preserve the soil and water resources in Utah. The Commission, since 1937, has been actively involved in planning and cultivating programs that ensure the development and

utilization of soil and water resources, while protecting them from the adverse effects of wind and water erosion and sediment related pollutants (UDAF, 2009).

### **The Nature Conservancy**

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has helped to protect nearly 900,000 acres of at-risk habitat in Utah, including lands owned by private ranchers. The Nature Conservancy uses a science-based approach and pursues non-confrontational, pragmatic solutions to conservation challenges. The Nature Conservancy is a leading conservation organization who partners with communities, businesses, government agencies, multilateral institutions, and non-profit entities to protect ecologically and culturally important landscapes. The Nature Conservancy, in coordination with other organizations, has been instrumental in purchasing conservation easements on valuable private ranchland (TNC, 2008a).

### **Utah Quality Growth Commission**

The Utah Quality Growth Commission (UQGC) was established in 1999 by the Quality Growth Act in order to address the challenges and opportunities associated with population growth. The Commission has three primary responsibilities – to provide local governments with planning assistance, to recommend principles of quality growth and advise the legislature on growth management issues, and to administer the LeRay McAllister Critical Land Conservation Fund. The LeRay McAllister Critical Land Conservation Fund is an incentive program that provides grants and loans to preserve or restore critical lands, such as agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, and culturally and historically significant landscapes (UGOPB, 2008; UQGC, 2008a).

The program has been influential in preserving large expanses of private ranchland via the purchase of conservation easements. The LeRay McAllister Fund provides up to 50 percent of the project cost, but applicants must provide the remaining 50 percent or more of matching funds. Matching funds typically come from private citizens, conservation foundations, government agencies, the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, the Utah Department of Natural Resources, and/or the Natural Resources Conservation Service Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (UGOPB, 2008; UQGC, 2008a).

### **The Trust for Public Land**

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national non-profit land conservation organization that strives to preserve culturally, historically, and ecologically important lands as open space. The Trust for Public Land assists communities and government agencies in identifying lands for protection, develops strategies for acquiring targeted lands, identifies sources of public and private funding for conservation, and mobilizes public support for land protection. Since 1972, the Trust for Public Land has worked with willing landowners, community groups, and national, state, and local agencies to complete more than 3,500 land conservation projects, protecting 2.5 million acres (TPL, 2008).

## **Sand County Foundation**

The Sand County Foundation (SCF) is a private, non-profit conservation group dedicated to working with private ranchers to improve habitat on land. The mission of the Sand County Foundation is to advance the use of ethical and scientifically sound land management practices to benefit people and rural landscapes (SCF, 2006a). Since 2003, the Sand County Foundation has bestowed the competitive Leopold Conservation Award to landowners who have demonstrated outstanding stewardship and achievement. The Leopold Conservation Award, a \$10,000 award, is presented to ranchers in honor of the famed conservationist Aldo Leopold in recognition of extraordinary accomplishment in voluntary conservation. The award is presented annually in seven states, including California, Colorado, Nebraska, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin, and Wyoming (SCF, 2006b).

## **Utah Partners for Conservation and Development**

Utah Partners for Conservation and Development (UPCD) is a unique partnership of natural resource oriented state and federal agencies and organizations committed to providing solutions to conservation issues. The core values of the coalition are to protect Utah's biological diversity, preserve water quality and quantity for municipal, agricultural, and natural resource uses, promote sustainable agriculture through working and productive farms and ranches, and support outdoor recreation opportunities, access, and quality. The premise of the partnership is to foster collaboration in order to increase the effectiveness of sustainable conservation solutions at local levels (UPCD, 2009).

## **Utah Farm Bureau Federation**

The Utah Farm Bureau Federation (UFBF), a subsidiary of the American Farm Bureau Federation, is the largest general farm and ranch organization in Utah and is comprised of 28 county Farm Bureaus and more than 21,000 member families. The mission of the Utah Farm Bureau Federation is to improve net income of farmers and ranchers; to represent, protect, and promote the agricultural interests throughout the State of Utah; and to maintain and enhance the quality of life for all Utah residents. The Utah Farm Bureau Federation seeks to find solutions through political action, education, and informational means. The Farm Bureau strives to protect and improve agricultural production through responsible stewardship of resources. The organization has implemented several voluntary, incentive-driven, and/or cooperative-based programs to improve water quality, enhance habitat of sensitive species, and enrich rural health (UFBF, 2005).

## **Utah Cattlemen's Association**

The Utah Cattlemen's Association (UCA) is a livestock industry, member driven, organization that promotes and protects the business of raising beef cattle in the State of Utah. The Association is governed by eight objectives encompassing the encouragement of legislation designed to improve the cattle business, the production of high-quality cattle and beef, and the adoption of good principles of raising and marketing cattle while accounting for livestock and land health (UCA, 2008).

## CASE STUDIES

### B & B Ranch

B & B Ranch, a 4,000-acre ranch located in Morgan County, Utah, is owned and managed by Frank Bohman. Frank Bohman inherited 2,000 acres of ranchland in Weber Valley from his family during the 1930's after his father passed away. In the early 1950s, Frank bought into 6,000 acres of high elevation rangeland with two neighbors. However, in 1954, his partners sold their portions of the ranch, leaving Frank with a little more than 2,000 of the original 6,000 acres. The two parcels of land allowed him to conduct a livestock operation on 4,000 acres of both lowland and upland pasture (MacKenzie, 1996; Mudd, 2005).

When Frank partnered with other ranchers in the early 1950s, he began to realize the extent of rangeland degradation. The pastures, once dominated by native grasses, had been converted to sagebrush and scrub oak communities, the soil erosion was severe, natural springs had disappeared, and wildlife populations were rapidly declining as a result of decades of improper grazing by sheep and cattle. The 6,000 acres of high elevation rangeland were scarcely supporting 300 cattle from May to early September. The degraded pastures required supplemental feeding from late fall to early spring, and the profitability of the livestock operation had diminished (Mudd, 2005).

After his partners sold out in 1954, Frank vowed to restore the pastures to pre-settlement condition by reintroducing native, drought-resistant grasses (Mudd, 2005). With technical assistance from the Soil Conservation Service (presently known as the Natural Resources Conservation Service), Frank Bohman developed a long-range conservation plan to achieve the goals of restoring grasslands and streams, while staying in the business of livestock production (MacKenzie, 1996).

An inventory of the property resources was conducted, a comprehensive soil survey was completed, and potential stock pond sites were identified. After weighing the costs and benefits of various management strategies, the Soil Conservation Service recommended sagebrush and scrub timber removal by means of fire to stimulate native grasses and to prepare the seedbed for planting different varieties of grasses. In the fall season of 1955, Frank constructed a fireguard and burned the first area and reseeded it in 1956. Each subsequent year, Frank burned and reseeded more rangeland with grasses adapted to the area, including intermediate wheatgrass, with alternating rows of alfalfa to increase nitrogen levels in the soil. Frank also implemented a rotational grazing system to prevent overgrazing and to allow pastures to rest and regrow between periods of grazing (MacKenzie, 1996).

By 1960, the Soil Conservation Service considered B & B Ranch a success, and in 1975, the Farm Bureau agreed. The return in rangeland fertility led to increases in both the availability and the nutritional value of grasses. In 1975, Frank was managing 200 cows on his property, with ample forage, and calves were being weaned one hundred pounds heavier than in 1955 (MacKenzie, 1996). Presently, Frank Bohman manages a 160 Hereford cow/calf herd using management-intensive grazing techniques. The cattle graze intensively on the lowland pastures in the early spring and are moved to the upland pastures after the snow



has melted. The livestock remain in the upland pastures until late fall, while the lowland pastures produce mixed-grass hay and alfalfa for winter feeding (Mudd, 2005).

Frank Bohman's efforts to return and maintain native grasses and to implement sustainable management practices has increased profitability and reduced winter feeding bills. His reclamation efforts have enhanced wildlife habitat. Deer, elk, moose, bobcats, foxes, coyote, cougars, sandhill cranes, bald eagles, Canadian geese, herons, and ducks have returned. Watershed values have significantly improved at the B & B Ranch. The renewed ability to retain water on the pastures has eliminated soil erosion and the development of gullies. Natural springs have returned, and various semi-aquatic species, such as beaver, are present in streams and ponds. Perennial grasses on rangeland and in pastures have helped return a balance of nutrients and minerals to the soil, which has precluded the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and fungicides (Mudd, 2005; MacKenzie, 1996).

Since Frank Bohman has implemented his plan, he has been recognized with various awards. In 1989, the former Bush Administration awarded Frank with the Conservationist of the Nation Award (UFBF, 2004). In 1994, he was the recipient of the \$10,000 Earle A. Chiles Award from the High Desert Museum in Oregon. The Chiles Award was established by the High Desert Museum to recognize individuals for outstanding contributions in natural and cultural resource management in high desert regions of the western United States (CJCLDS, 1995). Frank Bohman was also named an Outstanding Conservationist Rancher in 1994 by the National Endowment for Soil and Water Conservation (Mudd, 2005). In 1996, he received the Renew America Environmental Achievement Award (MacKenzie, 1996).

### **Boulder Creek Canyon Ranch**

Boulder Creek Canyon Ranch is a 298-acre ranch located in the town of Boulder, Garfield County, Utah. The ranch is owned and managed by John Austin and Jacqui Smalley (TNC, 2006). Boulder Creek Canyon Ranch was homesteaded around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century by Mormon pioneers. The ranch was originally called Redwing Ranch, and it was primarily used as a thoroughbred horse ranch. During the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the ranch was converted to a cattle ranch. Presently, John Austin and Jacqui Smalley run a cattle operation with approximately 100 head of Black Angus, while growing alfalfa, pasture grass, and other crops using organic agricultural practices. Boulder Creek Canyon Ranch is also operating as the first Chilean horse breeding center in the United States (BCCR, 2008).

The Boulder region is a gateway to some of the state's most spectacular landscapes, from the Aquarius Plateau to Box Death Hollow, the Circle Cliffs, the Straight Cliffs, and the Waterpocket Fold. The region provides important watershed values, critical wildlife and migratory bird habitat, and areas of productive agricultural soils. The Boulder Creek Canyon Ranch encompasses a segment of Boulder Creek, which supports a range of neotropical migratory birds and rare fish species (TNC, 2008b). Boulder residents, such as John Austin and Jacqui Smalley, are partnering with The Nature Conservancy, the Utah Quality Growth Commission, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food to acquire conservation easements to preserve the cultural and ecological values of the region. The

collaborative efforts between the Boulder residents and various organizations and agencies have protected wildlife habitat, secured scenic viewsheds, and preserved historic agricultural landscapes (TNC, 2008b).

The value of the conservation easement on Boulder Creek Canyon Ranch was appraised at \$1,883,000. John Austin and Jacqui Smalley donated \$295,000 of the appraised value; the NRCS Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program and the Utah Quality Growth Commission's LeRay McAllister Fund each donated \$400,000; and the Cumming Foundation contributed \$250,000 in private funding for the acquisition of the easement. Through the conservation easement, which is held by the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, John Austin and Jacqui Smalley have continued to graze cattle, grow organic crops, and operate the first Chilean horse breeding center in the United States using sustainable techniques (TNC, 2006). The Nature Conservancy, the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are working with the owners of Boulder Creek Canyon Ranch to establish a long-term farm protection and management plan, which includes the restoration of riparian areas, the removal of invasive plants, the improvement of soil condition, and the enhancement of native vegetation (TNC, 2008b).

### **Deseret Land and Livestock Ranch**

Deseret Land and Livestock Ranch (previously Deseret Live Stock Company and Deseret Livestock Ltd.) is a 201,000-acre ranch located in Rich, Morgan, Weber, and Summit Counties, Utah and Uinta County, Wyoming. The ranch was established in 1891 for sheep grazing by a group of prominent Mormon pioneer families, including the Hatches, Mosses, and Moyles. By 1903, land holdings had grown and the sheep herd had increased to 60,000 ewes. By 1924, the sheep herd decreased to 45,000 head, but management had increased the cattle herd to 3,000 head. World War II (1939-1945) stimulated livestock prices and brought economic prosperity for Deseret Land and Livestock. By the early 1950s, it is estimated that the ranch company owned more than 350,000 acres of property in Utah, Wyoming, and Nevada with sheep numbers exceeding 65,000 head and cattle numbers near 5,000 head (DLL, 2008).

In 1953, Deseret Land and Livestock was purchased by three Utah entrepreneurs – Ken Garff, David Freed, and David Robinson. Under new ownership and management, the cattle herd was increased and the sheep herd was decreased. Livestock grazing at Deseret Land and Livestock was based on a continuous grazing system, and range management practices, such as range reseeding, sagebrush spraying, stock water development, and fence construction, were implemented. Peak livestock numbers under the Garff, Freed, and Robinson management period consisted of 29,000 sheep and 6,000 cattle (DLL, 2008).

In 1974, Joseph Hotung, a businessman from Hong Kong, purchased 201,000 acres of Deseret Land and Livestock on the eastern portion of the ranch, along with 4,000 cattle and 10,000 sheep, from the previous owners. Deseret Land and Livestock, under the direction of Joseph Hotung, hired a professional management company from Denver to develop and implement new management strategies. During the period from 1974 to 1983, sheep numbers were reduced until they were gone and cattle numbers declined to 2,600 head. An entirely different management scheme had been employed, which entailed a rotational grazing system that accounted for wildlife (DLL, 2008).

In 1983, Joseph Hotung sold Deseret Land and Livestock Ranch to the Farm Management Company of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The acquisition was significant, as Deseret Land and Livestock was the largest contiguous block of private land in the State of Utah and had noteworthy historic and cultural connections to pioneer settlement. Under the management of the Farm Management Company, some of the management techniques that were implemented by Joseph Hotung were continued, including a continuation and expansion of a wildlife program. A revived emphasis was placed on expanding the cattle enterprise, while achieving profitability (DLL, 2008). Presently, Deseret Land and Livestock is widely recognized as one of the best managed ranches in the United States, marked by conscientious business practices, strategic planning, cost control, increased production, accountability, and holistic management (SRM, 2006).

Although Deseret Land and Livestock Ranch is presently renowned for sustainable livestock production and range management, historic grazing practices and livestock diseases had a considerable impact on range condition and wildlife populations during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Improper grazing by livestock resulted in higher shrub densities, reduced herbaceous forage, and increased bare ground. Livestock diseases impacted populations of bison, bighorn sheep, elk, pronghorn, and mule deer. However, management of Deseret Land and Livestock by Garff, Freed, and Robinson during the 1950s yielded the beginnings of decreased livestock densities and improved range condition. By the 1960s, mule deer and sage grouse populations began to increase, and by the late 1900s, range and wildlife conservation practices allowed populations of elk, moose, and pronghorn to thrive (DLL, 2008).

As populations of big game species began to increase, ranch managers began to encourage mule deer hunting as a means of reducing depredation and providing supplementary revenue. The wildlife management philosophy at Deseret Land and Livestock was adopted and managers began to conserve and enhance wildlife habitat using creative techniques, including livestock grazing, fire, technology, and hunting. Deseret Land and Livestock currently manages grassland and woodland habitats to achieve desired plant successional conditions. Fire, mechanical and chemical brush removal, and timber harvest have been used to reduce the amount of woody vegetation and increase the amount of herbaceous vegetation (DLL, 2008). Managers at Deseret Land and Livestock, in conjunction with the Forest Service, have used controlled burning to address encroachment of sub-alpine fir, to encourage natural regeneration of aspen, to reduce the risk of stand-replacing fires, to improve watershed health, and to increase the overall productivity of ecosystems (Wharff, 1999).

Since 1979, Deseret Land and Livestock has utilized time-controlled livestock grazing to increase herbaceous cover on rangelands, to slow the rate of sagebrush encroachment, and to enhance the abundance and diversity of native wildlife species. Time-controlled grazing involves the use of a few large herds of cattle and sheep that intermittently graze pastures. Grazing occurs on pastures for short periods of time when forage is rapidly growing from May to July, and grazing occurs on pastures for longer periods of time when forage is dormant or slow growing. The season of grazing varies between years, and pastures receive periodic rest for a full growing season. The time-controlled grazing system instituted at Deseret Land and Livestock recognizes the importance of healthy plants, soils, and watershed function (Danvir, n.d.; DLL, 2008).

Research and monitoring data at Deseret Land and Livestock have indicated that livestock and wildlife management strategies have sustained or increased populations of native wildlife species. In addition to supporting 5,000 cattle and 3,000 sheep annually, the pastures at Deseret Land and Livestock provide habitat for nearly 2,500 elk, 3,500 mule deer, 600 pronghorn, 150 moose, and 2,000 sage grouse. In fact, sage grouse populations are increasing on the ranch, although they are dropping elsewhere (Jensen, 2001). Deseret Land and Livestock has experienced an increase in sage grouse populations and associated courting and breeding grounds by implementing time-controlled grazing, planting forbs, conducting mechanical treatments, modifying fences, installing ramps in water troughs, and identifying sagebrush stands for protection (WGFD, 2005). Additionally, over 272 bird species have been identified at Deseret Land and Livestock (Jensen, 2001). For this reason, the ranch is listed as a Utah Important Bird Area (IBA) by the National Audubon Society and Birdlife International. Self-sustaining populations of cutthroat trout and rainbow trout inhabit miles of healthy stream habitat (DLL, 2008).

While revenue from the production of domestic livestock is the foundation of the ranch, income generated from wildlife-based recreation, such as big game hunting, waterfowl hunting, bird watching, and fishing, accounts for as much as 30 to 40 percent of the yearly income. Consequently, there is an incentive to maintain healthy populations of big game species and other wildlife (Jensen, 2001). Hunting is the principal tool used by Deseret Land and Livestock to maintain big game herds at population levels in balance with the range resources. Approximately ten percent of elk, mule deer, pronghorn, and moose populations are harvested annually. Deseret Land and Livestock is also participating with the State of Utah in the Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit program. The broad diversity of habitats provides birders with the opportunity to observe a variety of avian species on streams, ponds, and lakes, as well as upland birds in aspen and conifer forests. Fishery resources have the opportunity to provide high-quality fly-fishing experiences. Guided fly-fishing tours are available on the ranch from April until October (DLL, 2008).

Deseret Land and Livestock has received recognition for employing holistic resource management. The management strategies implemented at the ranch have engaged researchers and educators from academic institutions and professional foundations (DLL, 2008). The management techniques developed at the ranch are being applied on other ranches throughout the western United States. Managers and scientists from the ranch are actively involved in outreach to inform the livestock industry about the opportunities for and benefits of improved rangeland management (SRM, 2006; DLL, 2008). The success of Deseret Land and Livestock was recently commended at the 59<sup>th</sup> Society for Range Management Annual Meeting in 2006 whereby Gregg Simonds, manager of Deseret Land and Livestock from 1981 to 1990, and Rick Danvir, wildlife biologist at Deseret Land and Livestock since 1983, accepted the W. R. Chapline Land Stewardship Award on behalf of the ranch employees, volunteers, and owner. The W. R. Chapline Land Stewardship Award is the highest award presented by the Society for Range Management and gives special recognition to members for exceptional accomplishments and contributions to the art and science of range management (SRM, 2006).

## **Ensign Ranches of Utah**

Ensign Ranches of Utah is a cattle and wildlife operation that collaborates with landowners, livestock companies, and ranchers who are dedicated to promoting profitable businesses and improving land stewardship (Simonds, 2002). Ensign Ranches of Utah currently owns and manages a livestock operation on lands owned by Skull Valley Company and Castle Rock Land and Livestock. Skull Valley Company owns 26,000 acres in Summit County and 30,000 acres in Tooele County. Castle Rock Land and Livestock owns 47,000 acres in Summit County and 30,000 acres in Tooele County. Ensign Ranches of Utah utilizes the private property in Summit County for grazing from April/May to September/October. In November, the cattle are transported to Skull Valley in Tooele County and released onto a mix of private pastures and public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service (J. Young, personal communication, 2009).

The property owned by Skull Valley Company was previously operated by Deseret Land and Livestock. Heiner Creek Canyon Ranch in Echo Canyon and several farms, feedlots, and rangeland in Skull Valley remained under ownership of the Robinson and Freed families after Joseph Hotung purchased the eastern portion of Deseret Land and Livestock in 1974. The landholding entity was reorganized by the Robinson-Freed partnership and entitled Skull Valley Company (J. Young, personal communication, 2009; G. Simonds, personal communication, 2009).

Castle Rock Land and Livestock, owned by the Robinson family, purchased the property in Summit County from the Anschutz Corporation in 1994 (J. Young, personal communication, 2009). The Anschutz Corporation owned nine million acres of land along the Utah-Wyoming border in 1971. The property included the Overthrust Belt, a region of highly complex mountain-forming faults and thrusts containing large quantities of oil and natural gas. The oil found on Anschutz Ranch in the early 1980s represented the largest oil field discovery in the United States since Prudhoe Bay in Alaska in 1968 (UHE, 1994).

From 1953 to 1974, range management practices on the land presently owned by Skull Valley Company were identical to those implemented at Deseret Land and Livestock, as all property was managed under the Garff, Freed, and Robinson partnership. Livestock grazing was based on a continuous grazing system, and range management practices, such as range reseeding, sagebrush spraying, stock water development, and fence construction were implemented. Since 1974, range management practices have been modified and improved to support a large grass-fed cattle operation and healthy wildlife populations (DLL, 2008).

When Castle Rock Land and Livestock acquired the property in Summit County from the Anschutz Corporation in 1994, range conditions were poor and soil erosion had become a significant problem, particularly in the Rees Creek sub-watershed. Rees Creek, a major tributary of Echo Creek, contributed to substantial sediment loads transported by Echo Creek into the Weber River. Lower meadow areas adjacent to Rees Creek that were once cultivated for hay had reverted to pasture due to surplus sediment, water deficiency, and loss of irrigation diversion structures (Garfield, 2004). Although agriculture and livestock

grazing have been the primary land uses in the Rees Creek watershed, petroleum and natural gas extraction during the past few decades has also influenced the condition of the rangeland. Numerous oil and gas well sites and pumping stations exist in the upper portions of the watershed (UPCD, 2008).

Overall range condition on properties owned by Skull Valley Company and Castle Rock Land and Livestock has improved as a result of management changes employed by Ensign Ranches of Utah (Garfield, 2004). Ensign Ranches presently uses a combination of rotational, deferred, and rest-rotation grazing schemes. The 26,000 acres of land at Heiner Creek Canyon Ranch has been subdivided into 14 different pastures to promote annual recovery of herbaceous vegetation, to maintain healthy vegetation and soils, and to enhance watershed condition. The 5,000 to 6,000 head of cattle owned by Ensign Ranches of Utah are also separated into units of 1,000 to 1,500 head to encourage a more even distribution of grazing across the pastures (J. Young, personal communication, 2009).

Ensign Ranches of Utah has conducted controlled burns to suppress woody vegetation and to promote native grass growth. Offsite watering facilities with over 80 miles of pipeline have been installed to prevent livestock aggregation and subsequent soil erosion in steep canyons and riparian areas (J. Young, personal communication, 2009). Ensign Ranches of Utah, in cooperation with Castle Rock Land and Livestock, Summit Soil Conservation District, Utah Division of Water Quality, Weber Basin Water Conservancy District, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, has reduced sediment loads and improved hydrologic function in the Rees Creek sub-watershed. In 2004, seven sediment detention basins were constructed and approximately 8,000 feet of new stream channel connecting the basins was excavated to replace deeply eroded stream channels. In 2007, four additional sediment detention structures were constructed to reduce stream flow, catch sediment, and restore wet meadows in the lower watershed. Native willows have also been planted along Rees Creek to reestablish woody vegetation and to stabilize soils on streambanks (UPCD, 2008).

The management strategies implemented by Ensign Ranches of Utah on properties owned by Skull Valley Company and Castle Rock Land and Livestock have improved range condition, wildlife habitat, and watershed health. Overall production has increased, which allows better distribution of cattle and range use. Wildlife habitat has been enhanced, particularly in wetland and riparian habitats in the Rees Creek sub-watershed (UPCD, 2008; Garfield, 2004). The properties in Summit County provide habitat for an array of wildlife. The diverse habitats range from 5,900 feet to 9,200 feet and include montane and big sagebrush steppe, Gambel oak-mixed montane shrubland, aspen forest and woodland, juniper woodland, and montane-subalpine grassland. Elk, deer, and moose are present year-round, and eagles, falcons, hawks, sage grouse, wild turkeys, and numerous song birds have been identified. Additionally, several of the creeks, including Huff Creek, contain valuable habitat for Bonneville cutthroat trout. The ranches in Summit County, comprised of nearly 80,000 acres, currently function as a Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit. Ensign Ranches also offers hunting opportunities, ranch tours, and work study programs (UDWR, 2008).

## **G & E Ranch**

G & E Ranch is a 4,700-acre ranch located in the South Fork of Chalk Creek in Summit County, Utah. The ranch is presently owned by four siblings, Keith Blonquist, Belvon Blonquist, Lawrence Blonquist, and Valeen Blonquist Scovil. The ranch was established in 1915 when Alfred Blonquist purchased and amassed 9,303 acres of rangeland for a sheep operation. After Alfred passed away in 1929, without a will for the estate, his children quarreled over the property. Eventually, some of the children sold their shares of the property to siblings, and two ranches emerged. George Blonquist and his wife, Ethel, acquired 4,700 acres of the original ranch, and established the G & E (George and Ethel) Ranch (Cone, 2008; D. Blonquist, personal communication, 2009; Chalat-Noaker, 2009).

Decades later, the ranch was inherited by George and Ethel's four children, Keith, Belvon, Lawrence, and Valeen. Keith and Belvon have actively maintained the ranch for over a quarter of a century (Cone, 2008). However, rising age into their 80s prompted them to explore options to preserve the ranch from the encroaching development of Park City. In consultation with the Trust for Public Land and with funding from the Utah Quality Growth Commission, the Forest Legacy Program, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and the Summit County East Side Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Blonquist family placed a conservation easement on the G & E Ranch (Chalat-Noaker, 2009).

The four Blonquist siblings and nine of their children, as shareholders of the ranch, formed a limited liability corporation (LLC). Over a series of phases, the limited liability corporation donated fifty percent of the value of the development rights and the Trust for Public Land assisted the family in raising funds to purchase the remaining fifty percent. The rich bottomlands, hayfields, and cottonwood groves were the primary areas targeted for preservation, as they were the most developable portions of the ranch (Cone, 2008; Chalat-Noaker, 2009).

The conservation easement has enabled the Blonquist family to keep the ranch intact, while preserving the cultural and familial significance and reducing the property taxes. The endless cycle of fencing, haying, irrigating, calving, branding, and feeding at the G & E ranch has been preserved for future generations (Cone, 2008). A relative and neighbor of the Blonquist family, Colby Pace, has purchased the sheep and cattle and agreed to lease the land for his livestock operation. The sheep and cattle continue to graze on a rotational basis, and alfalfa and hay are grown in the lowland areas of the ranch (Chalat-Noaker, 2009; T. Hanson, personal communication, 2009).

Additionally, the Blonquist family, in partnership with foresters from the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands, has developed a Forest Stewardship Plan which was synchronized with the regional Coordinated Management Plan of Chalk Creek Basin. Long-term management objectives of the Forest Stewardship Plan incorporate livestock and timber resource production, wildlife habitat improvement, and extensive protection of the watershed. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources has recorded sensitive, threatened, and endangered species on the property, including peregrine falcon, bald eagle, northern goshawk,

and greater sage grouse. A partnership of landowners in the Chalk Creek area is working to reintroduce sage grouse to the area by improving habitat and establishing courting and breeding grounds (UDFFSL, 2007).

The Chalk Creek area, defined by a mix of aspen, conifer, maple, Gamble oak, and juniper, includes high priority winter range habitat for mule deer, elk, and moose; and provides habitat for cougar, coyote, bobcat, fox, wild turkey, chukar, sandhill crane, and snowshoe hare. The Chalk Creek drainage also encompasses the largest contiguous habitat and population of native Bonneville cutthroat trout. Consequently, extensive protection of the South Fork of Chalk Creek and numerous tributaries has been outlined in the management and stewardship plans (UDFFSL, 2007).

### **Harold Selman Ranch**

The Harold Selman Ranch is comprised of five properties in Cache and Box Elder Counties, Utah. The ranch properties total 40,000 acres and include the Home Ranch and the 6,700-acre Four Mile Ranch (Call et al., 2008; SCF, 2007). The Harold Selman Ranch is a fourth-generation ranch that was established in the 1940s when Harold and Dorthella Selman began ranching and farming in the Tremonton area. The ranch was founded on environmental stewardship. Fred Selman, son of Harold and Dorthella Selman, was raised on the ranch and was taught the importance of responsible ranching practices that would maintain the integrity of the land for future use. Fred embraced the ideals of sustainable ranching and he incorporated the land stewardship ethic when he began to manage the ranch operation. Presently Fred Selman along with his wife, Laura, and their son Bret, and his wife, Michelle, continue to manage the ranching operation with an emphasis on environmental sustainability and economic success (SCF, 2007).

Approximately 2,500 ewes and 125 head of stock cows are raised annually on the Selman Ranch (Western AgCredit, 2008). The Selman family does not use steroids or stimulants in their livestock operation, allowing them to market their beef and lamb as natural. The family grows corn, hay, and barley on the ranch, and they plant and maintain a four- to five-acre community vegetable garden (SCF, 2007). The Selman family has employed several conservation management practices, such as implementing a rotational grazing system to allow pastures to rest and regenerate, reseeding with native grasses and vegetation to improve forage for livestock and wildlife, developing alternate water sources, constructing cross fencing to protect critical riparian areas, planting windbreaks for livestock, wildlife, and birds, and enhancing habitat for rare wildlife species (SCF, 2007; Western AgCredit, 2008).

A variety of wildlife habitats exist on the Selman Ranch properties, including sagebrush steppe, old-growth Douglas fir, aspen, and mountain scrub. Deer, elk, moose, and numerous bird species, including goshawk, Brewer's sparrow, grasshopper sparrows, greater sage grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse are present on the ranch (TNC, 2008c; WCF, 2007). The ranch also supports critical riparian areas, which provide habitat for Bonneville cutthroat trout. The 6,700-acre Four Mile Ranch in the Little Bear River drainage of Cache County harbors breeding ground for the Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, a species that is in danger of being federally listed as an endangered species. It is estimated that 96 percent of Columbian sharp-tailed grouse historic habitat has been lost, destroyed, or degraded (TNC, 2008c). Consequently, the Selman



family has partnered with The Nature Conservancy, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to develop a long-term management plan that addresses habitat improvements, invasive species, and sustainable agriculture on the ranch (Utah Conservation Forum, 2006).

The Nature Conservancy, in collaboration with the Selman family, has partnered with the Utah Division of Wildlife, the Utah Quality Growth Commission, the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, the Natural Resources Conservation Services, and the Utah Association of Conservation Districts to purchase a conservation easement on the 6,700-acre Four Mile Ranch (TNC, 2008c). By purchasing a conservation easement on the Selman Ranch, the threat of development has been removed and the Selman family has been able to improve and expand their livestock operation (Western AgCredit, 2008). The public benefits of placing a conservation easement on the Selman Ranch include watershed protection, preservation of agricultural history, and habitat protection for state sensitive species, such as greater sage grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. Preservation of Columbian sharp-tailed grouse prime breeding habitat on the Selman Ranch will have a significant impact on the long-term survival of the bird (UCF, 2006; TNC, 2008c).

The Selman family represents a commitment to conservation, land stewardship, and public involvement. Fred Selman is Chairman of the Northern Utah Soil Conservation District; Bret Selman is involved in the Utah Farm Bureau, Bridgerland Audubon, and the Division of Wildlife Resources Advisory Committee; and Laura Selman has served on the Board of the Farm Service Agency and Northern Region Shrub-Steppe Working Group (SCF, 2007). Their exemplary ideals of living off the landscape while nurturing and enhancing its value for native wildlife have brought them recognition and honor. The Selman family received the 2007 Allen Stokes Conservation Award, the highest honor bestowed annually to people or organizations that have made substantial contributions toward conservation in Cache Valley and Northern Utah (WCF, 2007). The Selman family also received Utah's first Sand County Foundation Leopold Conservation Award in 2007 in recognition of modern conservation practices and model stewardship (SCF, 2007).

## **Johnson Ranch**

Johnson Ranch, owned and managed by Darrell Johnson, is a high desert ranch located in Rush Valley, Tooele County, Utah. The ranch currently runs 250 cows on nearly 5,000 acres of private land and 2,000 acres of leased federal and state land (NCBA, 2000). The Johnson Ranch, now a seventh-generation ranch, was established when Darrell Johnson's great grandfather settled on 40 acres of land in the Rush Valley Mining District in 1856. Darrell Johnson was born in 1942 and he grew up working on the ranch. In 1962, he started managing the ranch with his father, Orson Johnson. When Darrell Johnson partnered with his father, he began to acquire ranchland property from his uncles to expand the livestock operation (SCF, 2008a).

Large portions of the property were in poor condition due to decades of improper grazing and invasion by juniper. At that time, the ranch was stressed to support 50 animal unit months on 2,500 acres

(NCBA, 2000). The degraded rangeland and the lack of profitability prompted the Johnson family to begin restoring the land to early-settlement conditions (SCF, 2008a). Darrell Johnson has utilized photographs of the property from 1885 for reference. The images reveal healthier rangeland with lower densities of juniper on the mountainsides (Miley, 2008).

One of the first initiatives was to transform the land from a juniper-sagebrush community back to a grassland community. Through a combination of chaining, prescribed burning, and reseeding, dense stands of juniper were thinned and the amount of desirable herbaceous forage increased. Subsequent management techniques, such as fence construction, stock water pond development, and the employment of a rotational grazing system, have improved natural water flow in year-round streams, enhanced watershed condition and wildlife habitat, reduced soil erosion, and multiplied animal unit months (SCF, 2008a; NCBA, 2000). As opposed to 50 animal unit months on a 2,500 acre pasture in the early 1970s, the carrying capacity has increased to 660 animal unit months. The improved range condition has also reduced supplemental and winter feeding costs. Since the Johnson Ranch only irrigates 100 acres of hay to feed the livestock during calving and winter seasons, healthy rangeland is critical for fiscal survival (NCBA, 2000).

Darrell Johnson has also collaborated with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources to select grass seed mixes that will improve mule deer and sage grouse habitat. He has planted clover in upland environments to lure deer away from cattle grazing areas and alfalfa fields. This strategy has been successful, as it has sustained forage for cattle and improved forage for deer (Dow AgroSciences, 2008). Along with deer, numerous species of birds are present on the ranch. The Audubon Society has held its annual spring outing on the Johnson Ranch, and two researchers studying ferruginous hawks have been hosted by Darrell Johnson (SCF, 2008a).

Darrell Johnson's philosophy of properly managing natural resources for long-term sustainability has contributed to the science of holistic range management and has served as a model for other ranchers in the region. Darrell Johnson has spoken to classes from Brigham Young University, University of Utah, and Utah State University about range management and environmental science. The Johnson family has cooperated with researchers from Utah State University and other organizations on projects examining climate change, soil fertility, and erosion control. Darrell Johnson is also a member of the local conservation district, and he has served as the chair on the Utah Grazingland Network and as a member of the State Grazing Advisory Board (SCF, 2008a).

Darrell Johnson's innovative practices, environmental stewardship, and community involvement have garnered him several prestigious awards, including the 2000 National Cattlemen's Beef Association Region VI Environmental Stewardship Award, the 2006 Lifetime Agriculture Resource Development Program Conservationist Award, and the 2008 Sand County Foundation Leopold Conservation Award. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association Environmental Stewardship Award is sponsored by Dow AgroSciences and is given annually to livestock producers who exhibit innovative environmental practices (NCBA, 2000). The Lifetime Agriculture Resource Development Program Conservationist Award is supported by the Utah

Department of Agriculture and Food and recognizes agricultural producers who remain in business, strengthen the rural economy of Utah, and improve the environment (UDAF, 2006). The Sand County Foundation Leopold Conservation Award, a \$10,000 reward, recognizes the extraordinary accomplishments in voluntary conservation (SCF, 2008a).

## **Peaceful Valley Ranch**

Peaceful Valley Ranch is a 7,300-acre ranch located in East Canyon, Morgan County, Utah between the developments of East Canyon Resort and Jeremy Ranch in Summit County. Peaceful Valley Ranch is owned by a partnership with over 50 shareholders, including members from the Macfarlane and Clayton families (UQGC, 2008b; Wagner and Christensen, 2007). Grant Macfarlane has performed an integral role in the management and preservation of the ranch, as he has served as Director and Officer of the Clayton-Macfarlane Company (WGA, 2002).

In 1913, Grant Macfarlane's grandfather, John Macfarlane, became a partner in the Clayton Land and Cattle Company, later known as the Clayton-Macfarlane Ranch, and began managing a livestock operation (Twyman, 2001; TNC, 2005). For nearly a century, the MacFarlane and Clayton families have shared ownership of the working ranch. However, by 1995, involvement and interest by the some of the shareholders in other states had waned. The proposal to sell Peaceful Valley Ranch was expressed due to advancing age of shareholders, declining livestock revenue, hefty operating expenses on the ranch, and development pressure (Mahler, 2002). However, Grant MacFarlane and his family vowed to preserve one of Utah's most beautiful and historically and ecologically significant ranches (Wagner and Christensen, 2007).

Peaceful Valley Ranch represents a classic western landscape with rolling hills covered with scrub oak and sagebrush, rich riparian areas with cottonwood trees and willows, lush valleys supporting large herds of elk and mule deer, and a historic homestead with a farmhouse, barn, and a restored Pony Express station. Peaceful Valley Ranch is also bisected by five historic long-distance trails, including the Mormon Pioneer Trail, the Donner-Reed Party Trail, the California Trail, Overland Stage Trail, and the Pony Express Trail. Landowners have also unearthed fortifications erected by the Mormon Militia during the Utah War of 1857 (UQGC, 2008).

Peaceful Valley Ranch contains a significant portion of the watershed for East Canyon Reservoir. The reservoir is a source of drinking water for seven counties in the Weber Basin Water District. Preservation of the watershed will help sustain in-stream flows, maintain critical cool-water habitat for a variety of trout, and assure that the tributaries and marshlands along East Canyon Creek continue to support an array of waterfowl species. Peaceful Valley Ranch contains critical wildlife habitat for elk, mule deer, moose, mountain lion, bobcat, red fox, bald eagle, golden eagle, American kestrel, beaver, and grouse. The ranch also functions as a Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit (UQGC, 2008).

In addition to the remarkable historical and ecological value of Peaceful Valley Ranch, the Clayton-Macfarlane Ranch has functioned as a traditional livestock operation for the past century. Sheep, cattle, and

horses are raised annually on the property and feed crops and grains are grown. The Macfarlane family has worked and managed the ranch through three generations, while nurturing and honoring the cultural, historical, and ecological elements of the landscape. As part of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resource Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit program, the management plan of the ranch provides for sustainable livestock grazing while improving wildlife habitat (Wagner and Christensen, 2007).

To circumvent the sale, subdivision, and development of the property and to facilitate the preservation of the ranch, the Macfarlane family engaged in a conservation easement. The Peaceful Valley conservation easement was valued at \$6.4 million. The complete donation of the easement was not possible, as it did not fulfill the objectives of shareholders interested in selling the property. Therefore, funds for \$2.5 million were raised, and the remaining \$3.9 million was donated by the enduring shareholders (Mahler, 2002).

In June 1999, the Utah Department of Natural Resources used \$900,000 from the Forest Legacy Program to secure an easement on 1,791 acres. Subsequently, the Macfarlane family began working with the Trust for Public Land and Utah Open Lands to acquire funds for the remaining 5,510 acres. The Utah Quality Growth Commission granted \$750,000 from the LeRay McAllister Critical Land Conservation Fund, and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation pledged \$100,000. In July 2000, the second conservation easement was completed (Mahler, 2002; UQGC, 2008).

At the time of the attainment of the first conservation easement on Peaceful Valley Ranch, the Macfarlane and Haynes families were involved in acquiring a conservation easement on the 8,890-acre ranch owned by Haynes Land and Livestock located near Chalk Creek in Summit County. Doug Haynes, Howard Haynes, and their sister, Shirley Macfarlane (married to Grant Macfarlane), had been managing the livestock ranch since their father passed away. The Haynes Land and Livestock Ranch conservation easement was valued at \$8.5 million, but the property owners were in a situation where they could donate the entire value of the easement to ensure the ranch would remain viable for future generations (Mahler, 2002; Dillon, 1999).

### **Red Pine Land and Livestock Ranch**

Red Pine Land and Livestock, owned and managed by the Osguthorpe family, is a third-generation sheep and cattle ranch located in Snyderville Basin of Summit County, Utah. The working ranch and farm is adjacent to North America's fifth largest ski area, The Canyons Resort (Gordon, 2004). Red Pine Land and Livestock was established in 1947 when D. A. "Doc" Osguthorpe returned to Utah after graduating from veterinary school at Colorado State University. Doc Osguthorpe found a demand for his services treating mining livestock in the Park City area. He began to invest in land, and he eventually opened a dairy and began managing a sheep operation (Mendenhall, 2005a).

Over the years, Doc purchased additional land to expand the livestock and dairy operations. However, in the late 1980s when Park City began to develop, the 200 head dairy was taken through a process called private property condemnation to expand the highway, and an additional 40 acres was taken for a

middle school (Gordon, 2004; Mendenhall, 2005a). Eventually, the Osguthorpe family relocated their farm headquarters to Delta, Utah where they began to operate a feedlot for their cattle and Columbia-Rambouillet crossbred sheep during the winter months. In May, the livestock are transported to Summit County for summer grazing. From June to October, the Osguthorpe family manages approximately 3,000 head of sheep on 4,000 acres of private land in Snyderville Basin and several thousand acres of permitted federal land in the Wasatch-Cache National Forest (Gordon, 2004; Israelsen, 1993).

Despite some of the challenges faced by the Osguthorpe family, they have found sustainable solutions to multiple land-use issues (Gordon, 2004). The Osguthorpe family has a commitment to watershed management and water quality, while promoting profitable and compatible business enterprises (SCF, 2008b). Doc Osguthorpe's son, Steve Osguthorpe, who presently manages the livestock operation, has worked with developers to maintain the sheep operation and to make it compatible with the adjacent resort. In the mid-1990s, the Osguthorpes granted The Canyons Resort access to their property through an easement. The expansion of the ski resort and the placement of new ski runs brought concern for stream and water quality on Red Pine Land and Livestock Ranch. Consequently, Steve spent time monitoring construction activities, and he developed grass seed mixes that would quickly revegetate the slopes (Mendenhall, 2005a).

Steve Osguthorpe's reseeding process includes broadcasting a grass-alfalfa mix over an area after it has been disturbed. A two-inch deep mulch of straw is hand spread over the site, and sheep are trailed over the reseeded area to work the seed into the soil. Grazing is prevented the following spring to permit the growth and proliferation of native species. The reclamation efforts on disturbed sites have improved wildlife habitat, increased forage production and carrying capacity, and reduced the occurrence of Canadian thistle, an invasive plant that typically flourishes after soil disturbance (Gordon, 2004).

Although the Osguthorpe family has been primarily involved in sheep and dairy industries, they have expanded their enterprise by diversifying into timber harvesting and recreation to increase profitability. Timber harvesting was prompted by an infestation of spruce beetle. A management plan was developed for Red Pine Land and Livestock Ranch that included the removal of infested trees. The plan also entailed the thinning of forests to alleviate spruce beetle and fire danger and the reduction of conifers to promote growth of aspen stands. The timber harvest has provided numerous benefits, including increased forage production for livestock and wildlife, supplementary revenue from timber sales, and reduction in fire danger and spruce beetle populations. Additionally, the Osguthorpe family created Red Pine Adventures, a recreational company that offers horseback riding in the summer and snowmobile tours in the winter (Mendenhall, 2005a).

The Osguthorpe family has ideals based on conservation and land stewardship. They have fostered sustainable, profitable, compatible, and responsible land enterprises. The integration of sheep grazing, horseback riding, skiing, snowmobiling, and timber harvesting signifies that multiple land uses can co-exist with livestock grazing (Mendenhall, 2005a). Their practices and philosophy have brought them recognition,

as they were the recipient of the 2004 Utah Forest Landowner of the Year and acknowledged as a 2008 finalist for the Utah Leopold Conservation Award.

### **Six Feathers Ranch**

Six Feathers Ranch, owned and managed by Don Blonquist, is a 3,690-acre ranch located in the South Fork of Chalk Creek near Coalville, Summit County, Utah. The ranch was inherited by Don Blonquist when his aunt, Elsie Blonquist Oswald, passed away in 1999. Although Don Blonquist has been exclusively managing the ranch since 1999, he has cherished and been involved with the ranch since his childhood. He grew up working on the ranch building fences and assisting his aunt and uncle with the sheep operation (D. Blonquist, personal communication, 2009; Mendenhall, 2005b).

When Don Blonquist became heir to the property, he was confronted with probate court, capital gains taxes, appraisal fees, and inheritance taxes due to improper estate planning that occurred decades prior. In lieu of selling the property to pay off taxes and fees, Don Blonquist sold the development rights and placed a conservation easement on his property with the assistance of the Trust for Public Land and the Utah Forest Legacy Program. The conservation easement eliminated the financial burden, preserved the land as a tribute to his aunt, inhibited future commercial and residential development on the property, and conserved the scenic, cultural, and ecological value of the land (Mendenhall, 2005b).

The conservation easement has also enabled Don Blonquist to focus on aspects of land stewardship. With the assistance of foresters from the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands, Don Blonquist developed a Forest Stewardship Plan for his property. The plan entailed an inventory of resources on the land and the development of specific management objectives. The two primary management objectives for Six Feathers Ranch were to enhance the property for wildlife and to maintain the aesthetic qualities (Mendenhall, 2005b).

Since the conservation easement was placed on the property in 2005, Don Blonquist and his family, with the financial support of Utah Department of Natural Resources, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, have improved wildlife and range habitat. They have curtailed the spread of invasive plants by spraying, installed wildlife watering facilities, improved springs, seeded with native plants, and thinned forests to promote aspen regeneration and reduce wildfire risk (D. Blonquist, personal communication, 2009).

Not only does Six Feathers Ranch have an abundance of terrestrial wildlife, there is also a healthy native population of Bonneville cutthroat trout. Bonneville cutthroat trout, the state fish of Utah, is limited to isolated areas as a result of habitat loss and impacts from introduced fish species. Consequently, Don Blonquist has installed two bridges and fish ladders and removed traditional culverts that often impede fish movement to promote fish spawning in the South Fork drainage. Ponds and additional springs have been developed in an effort to reduce the impacts of cattle and wildlife on riparian areas on the property (D. Blonquist, personal communication, 2009; Mendenhall, 2005b).

Formerly, the ranch was used for sheep grazing, but in 2002 Don Blonquist replaced sheep with cattle. Presently, Don Blonquist leases his ranch during the summer grazing season for 130 pair of beef cattle. The Blonquist family has also diversified into guided hunts, private fishing tours, and private wildlife tours (D. Blonquist, personal communication, 2009). The progressive and innovative techniques implemented by Don Blonquist have substantially improved habitat and land health, as well as earned him the 2005 Forest Landowner of the Year Award presented by the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands (Mendenhall, 2005b).

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