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LARGE NEW MEXICO CATTLE RANCH WILL FOREVER REMAIN A RANCH
Conservation Easement on 30,800 Acres and Innovative Land Use Plan for Montosa Ranch
in Socorro County Guarantees Future Generations Can Carry on Family Ranching Tradition

MAGDALENA, N.M. --A scenic 30,800 acre property in western New Mexico will be protected forever as a working cattle ranch through a conservation easement placed on it by the ranch's owners and an innovative limited development.

The Montosa Ranch, which is adjacent to both the world-renowned Very Large Array astronomy observatory and the Cibola National Forest, is noted as prime habitat for elk and other wildlife and for its scenic beauty. It is located along U.S. Highway 60 on the edge of the fabled San Augustin Plains, 15 miles west of the Socorro County village of Magdalena and 70 miles southwest of Albuquerque.

The ranch preservation effort was led by Conservation Design Partners, an Albuquerque group that specializes in using environmentally sensitive land use planning techniques and conservation easements in real estate projects. The New Mexico Land Conservancy, a statewide non profit land trust based in Santa Fe, will hold and monitor the conservation easement.

Under the ranch preservation plan, Montosa Ranch retains the right to sell seven home sites that look out on pristine vistas that stretch across the vastness of the ranch to the National Forest and beyond that to the Magdalena and San Mateo mountains. The plan provides that the owner of each of the 640-acre home sites can build only within a prescribed 10-acre area. The rest of the home site remains unfenced and available to the ranch for agricultural activities. (See www.montosaranch.com)

"My wife Billie and I love this ranch, and we want it always to be a cattle ranch," said B.W. Cox, a lifelong New Mexico and Arizona rancher, who is a partner in RCF Properties, L.P., the ranch's owner. "We want the ranch to be protected so that it looks like this for the next fifty generations and beyond. We want the land left as it is. We want people to see that nature can be managed for the future, and that it doesn't have to be abused."

The Montosa Ranch conservation easement, which runs with the land in perpetuity and cannot be revoked, specifies that after the seven single-family residences have been built

there can be no further subdivision, ever. New structures necessary to support the cattle ranching and other agricultural activities are permitted, however. The easement runs with the land forever, even as the ownership of the property changes in the future. The New Mexico Land Conservancy (NMLC) has accepted the responsibility for monitoring and enforcing the terms of the easement. The Southern Rockies Agricultural Land Trust provided assistance at the beginning of the project.

U.S. Highway 60 runs alongside the conserved land, affording the public spectacular views of the pinyon-juniper grasslands of the Ranch, the Gallinas Mountains and Tres Montosas to the north. The ranch also supports a wide variety of other important wildlife species, including mountain lions, black bear, coyote, mule deer, pronghorn antelope and wild turkey. "We are grateful to the owners of Montosa Ranch for protecting their spectacular property for all time," said Clare C. Swanger, NMLC president. "As New Mexico continues to develop, it becomes ever more important that the state's land heritage is conserved to insure a reservoir of agricultural and scenic lands, wildlife habitat and the continuity of culture." Homeowners and their families will have access to the ranch for recreational uses provided for in the covenants and deed restrictions to the Montosa home sites. They will also be able to enter the Cibola National Forest at several points along the ranch's boundary with the forest. Montosa Ranch Estates was approved in August, 2003 by the Socorro County Commission.

Land use planning for the Montosa Ranch project was done by Anthony Anella, a principal in Conservation Design Partners and the head of Anthony Anella Architect, AIA, an Albuquerque architectural firm. The design received a 2003 Citation Award from the six-state Western Mountain Region of the American Institute of Architects. "This project is about protecting the conservation values of the land," Anella said. "It's also about helping the landowners realize their financial and estate-planning goals." Anella employed "sieve mapping" as a design process to identify the land on the ranch that should not be developed, such as wildlife habitat, drainage areas, hilltops, ridge lines, cattle grazing areas and other sensitive areas. Those portions of the ranch that fall through this design "sieve" of protected land were then further investigated as potential home sites. "The first step of the sieve-mapping design process is to decide where you should not develop," Anella said. "You do this by systematically identifying the conservation areas to be protected."

One of the core design criteria applied to the Montosa Ranch Estates home sites was that no homesite will be visible from any of the neighboring homesites or from U.S. Highway 60, the major public road in the area. To accomplish this, Anella tethered helium-filled balloons at each proposed home site to make sure that no structure at one site would be visible from any other site.

Unlike many real estate projects, the home sites are not placed on the top of hills or ridges to maximize views. Instead, they hug the terrain so as to minimize their visual encroachment on the ranch. At the same time, however, they are positioned to afford homeowners spectacular views of the adjacent Cibola National Forest and the distant mountain ranges.

Coldwell Banker Legacy will handle sales of the home sites, five of which are being offered for sale in Phase One of the Montosa project. The remaining home sites will be offered for sale at a later date. A.C. Taylor, an experienced real estate broker who specializes in ranch properties throughout New Mexico, will lead the Coldwell Banker sales team.

Design and construction of the homes themselves will be closely controlled through restrictive covenants and an architectural review process so that the combination of site location and the design of the house and associated buildings cause the structures to disappear into the vastness of the ranch.

Montosa Ranch Estates homeowners will receive water from a proven central water system that pumps water from deep wells, stores it in large tanks and distributes it to the home sites. Homeowners will not have to drill wells.

Montosa Ranch, along with the Cibola National Forest and a neighboring ranch that is also under conservation easement, together provide several hundred thousand acres of contiguous habitat for elk and other species. Thus, the project contributes in an important way to the protection of a much larger landscape. "This is a great elk hunting area and I suspect some of our homeowners will want to take advantage of that," Cox said.

Homeowners at Montosa Ranch Estates will be able to obtain a Montosa Ranch elk permit in those years when the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish issue the ranch sufficient permits.

About the New Mexico Land Conservancy

The New Mexico Land Conservancy (NMLC), formerly the New Mexico Land Conservation Collaborative, is a statewide, non profit land conservation organization that works to conserve New Mexico's natural land heritage for the benefit of the state's people, ecosystems and economy. NMLC also serves as a statewide information resource for private landowners, professional advisers, government agencies and other interested parties on the techniques and benefits of private lands conservation; works on state and national public policy; and provides technical assistance in public and private land conservation.

NMLC is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors: Anthony L. Benson, Chair, Taos; Joseph R. Montoya, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, Santa Fe; Elizabeth H. Richardson, Denver, CO; Dr. John B. (Jack) Wright, Las Cruces and Missoula, MT; and Dave Johnson, Santa Fe. Clare C. Swanger, President, J. Scott Wilber, Director of Land Conservation, and Barrie Lisa Robbins, Administrator, staff the organization.

NMLC currently holds five conservation easements and expects to complete several more easements this year. NMLC produced New Mexico's first "Directory of Land Conservation Organizations Serving New Mexico," in early 2004 which is available free of charge. The organization also hosted three very well received workshops for other land trusts, and spoke about land conservation issues and techniques at conferences.

About Conservation Design Partners

Conservation Design Partners is an Albuquerque-based design and real estate development firm that specializes in evaluating land to determine its most important conservation values, and then, based on this evaluation, protecting these values while identifying a limited number of appropriately located house sites for development. This approach provides the land-rich and cash-poor landowner a way to realize equity while protecting the integrity of the land. Conservation Design Partners is dedicated to helping ranchers realize their financial goals while preserving the integrity of the land for future generations. The principals in Conservation Design Partners are Anthony Anella, George Clark and William Stockton.

Anthony Anella is a licensed architect and the principal of Anthony Anella Architect, AIA, an award-winning Albuquerque firm that specializes in site-sensitive design and planning. George Clark is a longtime New Mexico banker, now retired, who was president and chairman of the Bank of New Mexico in Albuquerque and, who most recently served as a member of the Board of Directors of New Mexico Bank and Trust. William Stockton is an entrepreneur and journalist and a fourth generation member of a New Mexico ranching family that settled in the Raton area in the 1860s. Conservation Design Partners can be reached at 505-265-8713 or anthony@anella.com. The website for the Montosa Ranch Project is: www.montosaranch.com <<http://www.montosaranch.com/>>.

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About A.C. Taylor

A. C. Taylor, a fourth generation southern New Mexico native, has 28 years experience in the brokerage of important New Mexico "out of town" properties. He has represented buyers and sellers in the acquisition and sale of major ranches, horse properties, homes, recreational tracts, and retreats. A.C.'s knowledge of the state of New Mexico is unsurpassed. A. C. Taylor represents buyers and sellers of "out of town" properties throughout New Mexico. A.C. is committed to providing knowledgeable, conscientious, and cordial representation for buyers and sellers of rural properties. A.C. is a Previews Property and Resort Property specialist, and is licensed in New Mexico and Colorado.

Coldwell Banker Legacy Realtors is New Mexico's largest, most successful real estate brokerage firm. Coldwell Banker Legacy was formed in August 2000 with the merger of two of Albuquerque's most respected firms: Coldwell Banker PARNEGG METRO and R.E.C.A. Better Homes and Gardens. A.C. Taylor maintains a web site -www.nmland.com - that displays New Mexico properties for sale.

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