



Luther Ranch

4,374 acres conserved

*Bill continues to love the ranch
and his way of life.*



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When I met Bill Luther, he had just taken a hard fall from a ladder while working on his hayshed roof. At 84 years and with use of only one arm, the ultimatum from one of his two daughters of “no more ladder work” came as no surprise. But the accident also served as a stark reminder for Bill to get his estate in order if he were to keep his ranch intact going into the future.

Bill grew up and started ranching at an early age. He remembers working at age 11 on the Monte Prieto Ranch, a ranch NMLC was able to protect in 2019. At 14 years, Bill contracted polio that left him without the use of his right arm. As was the norm during that era, the impairment didn't slow him down. Bill did his ranch work, much of it on horseback, operated heavy equipment and "drove truck," and generally did whatever it took to make a living during some very tough economic times in New Mexico's ranching history of the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. When Bill and his wife, Sue, were able to fulfill their collective dream of buying their family ranch, nestled in the Chupadera Arroyo Valley, tragedy struck Bill again as Sue died of a heart attack just ten days after the purchase.

Bill continues to love the ranch and his way of life. He has seen a lot in his many years in New Mexico and knows the state and the ranching industry well. When I mentioned to Bill the site of our NMLC Santa Fe office, he remembered riding horses and moving cattle across that area of Santa Fe when it was undeveloped and known as the Jerrot Ranch.

Bill has seen a lot of ranches evaporate under subdivision and development during his lifetime. He has seen families torn apart over inheritance, and in turn, ranches torn apart as a result. It gives Bill and NMLC great pleasure to know that his 4,374-acre ranch, a remnant of a larger family ranch, will stay intact under the umbrella of an NMLC conservation easement.

—Ron Troy
NMLC Southern New Mexico Program Manager

Photos: Top: the Luther Ranch; Left: Bill Luther still branding cattle in his 80s. Pronghorn frequent the Luther Ranch.