



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Permanent protection for a family ranch and wildlife

Wildlife conservation through sustainable ranching in Douglas County

WENATCHEE — As Earth Day approaches, the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust (CDLT) is pleased to announce another permanent conservation win for wildlife habitat and working lands in Douglas County. CDLT and fourth generation rancher Vernon Breiler have entered into an agricultural conservation easement on 2,480 acres on Badger Mountain, about 10 miles from Wenatchee. Breiler raises dryland crops, usually winter wheat every other year, and maintains over half the property in shrub-steppe – a community of native grasses, forbs and sagebrush. With the conservation easement, the rancher, CDLT and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will work in partnership to see that best practices are used to manage grazing of cattle with habitat conservation, in perpetuity.

The Breiler Ranch provides habitat for a diverse group of wildlife including mule deer and countless birds, including the threatened Greater sage-grouse. Once plentiful in Washington State, the sage-grouse has lost over 90% of its habitat in Washington to development and fragmentation. The remaining population is primarily in Douglas County, and mostly on privately-owned lands. When property is developed and broken into non-contiguous pieces, wildlife struggle to survive.

“It was important to us to keep the land natural for wildlife. And we’ll be able to keep working the land, just like it’s been for the last hundred years,” said Breiler. “It’s been great working with CDLT and the good people down there.”

Voluntary conservation agreements with private landowners are the key to survival of the Greater sage-grouse, Sharp-tailed grouse, pygmy rabbit, and Washington ground squirrel, all of which are populations at risk. The Breiler Ranch is contiguous to another working lands conservation easement completed by CDLT in 2019 on the 6,723-acre Keane Ranch. This work is endorsed by the Sage-Grouse Initiative, NRCS, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Douglas County Commission, and has been praised by Rep. Dan Newhouse.

The conservation easement was funded by grants from NRCS and the State of Washington’s Farmland Preservation program, as well as generous donations by the Scull, Sorom and Griffin families to the Tina Scull Opportunity Fund. CDLT extends its thanks to landowner Vernon Breiler and the many people who have helped bring this project to fruition. Conservation projects involve many agencies and offices, but it is the determination of passionate individuals who care about the land that gets the work done.

The Breiler Ranch remains private property and does not have public access.

For more information about Washington’s shrub-steppe habitat and conservation efforts, visit [Working Lands for Wildlife](#) on the NRCS website.

The Chelan-Douglas Land Trust is a local non-profit working to conserve our land, our water, and our way of life. The Land Trust has a 35-year record of working collaboratively with property owners and communities to identify and protect the region's most important natural landscapes forever. For more information: www.cdlandtrust.org

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Shrub-steppe habitat next to agricultural fields.