



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Reno Fish and Wildlife Office
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Reno, Nevada 89502

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March 6, 2015

National Cattlemen's Foundation
Environmental Stewardship Award
9110 E. Nichols Ave., Suite 300
Centennial, CO 80112

To the Members of the Selection Committee:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Reno Fish and Wildlife Office is pleased to present this nomination of Maggie Creek Ranch for the 2015 Environmental Stewardship Award. The Service recognizes that maintaining healthy, viable, locally managed private rangelands and ranching operations is integral to achieving our conservation mission. We consider Maggie Creek Ranch exceptional stewards of the land and admire their leadership in the livestock industry in Nevada.

The Reno Fish and Wildlife Office has a successful partnership with Maggie Creek Ranch. The ranch has worked closely with Service biologists to develop and implement projects that have enhanced habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife including Columbia spotted frog, Lahontan cutthroat trout, and Greater sage-grouse. While some may consider these species to carry a 'regulatory burden' for private landowners, Maggie Creek Ranch has embraced their presence and have proactively worked to improve conditions for these species. They have recognized and articulated to their peers that improved habitat conditions for fish and wildlife is also beneficial to their cattle operation.

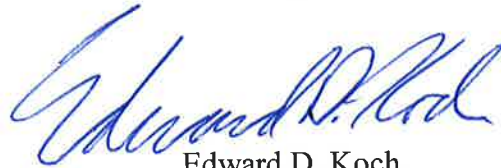
In addition to working with the Service, "Maggie Creek Ranch has been instrumental in promoting conservation measures within Elko County, Nevada. They have been working collaboratively with Federal, State, and local agencies and non-profit groups to promote sustainable agriculture on private and public lands in northeastern Nevada. The Ranch has served as an outdoor classroom for many educational trainings and scientific investigations within the community" (Jaime Jasmine, District Conservationist – Natural Resources Conservation Service, Elko, NV).

The challenges faced by cattle producers and conservation practitioners in Nevada are many. With continuing drought and pressures on the land from fire and invasive plant species, good management is more important than ever if we are going to maintain a working landscape for future generations. Maggie Creek Ranch and their ranch manager, Jon Griggs, continually

demonstrate how working together we can achieve outcomes on the ground to benefit cattle production and natural resources.

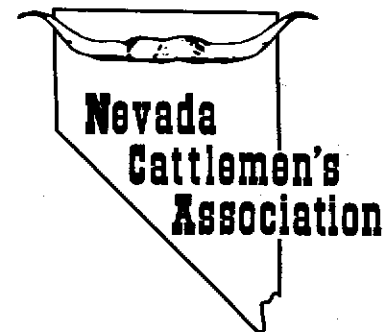
We worked closely with the Nevada Cattlemen's Association in preparation of this nomination and are proud to present to you the good work and leadership of Maggie Creek Ranch. Thank you for your consideration of Maggie Creek Ranch for this prestigious award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Edward D. Koch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Edward" being the most prominent part.

Edward D. Koch
Field Supervisor

National Cattlemen's Foundation
Environmental Stewardship Award
9119 E. Nichols Ave., Suite 300
Centennial, CO 80112



To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Nevada Cattlemen's Association (NCA) and the Nevada Livestock Industry, it is with steadfast support and regard that I submit this letter of recommendation for consideration of Maggie Creek Ranch of Elko, Nevada for the 2015 Environmental Stewardship Award. There are none more deserving than Maggie Creek Ranch for recognition of their land stewardship, conservation and sustainability efforts.

Maggie Creek Ranch is managed under the leadership of Jon Griggs, the 2014 NCA Cattleman of the Year recipient. "Cattleman of the Year" is the most prestigious award and form of recognition NCA bestows upon one of its own. It was established to recognize NCA members who have made significant contributions to NCA, as well as their community, the land and the beef industry in Nevada. These are many of the same qualities the sponsors of the Environmental Stewardship Award look for in selecting a winner for their recognition program.

With the recent proposal and efforts to list the Greater Regional Sage-Grouse and past efforts to list the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout as endangered, livestock operations in Nevada are under great pressure to improve habitat on private and federal lands for protection of these and other wildlife species. It has been Maggie Creek Ranch's position to make challenges such as these opportunities to collaborate with outside entities for improvement of range and riparian areas. Maggie Creek Ranch has done so with Sage Grouse, Lahontan Cutthroat Trout and the Columbia Spotted Frog.

Maggie Creek Ranch is well known for their cooperative nature with federal agencies. Elko BLM assistant district manager Tom Warren and Tuscarora BLM field office fisheries biologist Carol Evans have conveyed the positive cooperative nature of Maggie Creek Ranch with the BLM and the on-the-ground results of their good-working relationship. Most notably, Maggie Creek Ranch has been a key partner in a collaborative effort to restore the Susie Creek watershed on both public and private lands with the goal of re-establishing Lahontan Cutthroat Trout.

Connie Lee, Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) private lands coordinator, has worked with Maggie Creek Ranch on numerous habitat restoration projects throughout the last several years. These have included native plant reseeding after fire, retrofitting fences to wildlife friendly standards and most recently with funding from NDOW's Landowner Incentive Program (LIP). The LIP has protected and will continue to preserve and restore a spring and outflow aquatic system that provides important habitat for the Columbia Spotted Frog which is native to Nevada and is also a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

Trout Unlimited research scientist Helen Neville, Ph.D., credits much of their success with the re-establishment of the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout to the cooperative work done between Maggie Creek Ranch and their organization. "In short, we greatly appreciate the cooperation and support of Maggie Creek Ranch in helping us to restore one of the largest remaining populations of Lahontan Cutthroat Trout – our state fish and an important component of Nevada's natural heritage."

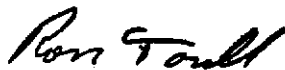
Nevada Division of Forestry commander, Tom Turk, and Dylan Rader, assistant fire management officer for Elko BLM District, praise Maggie Creek Ranch leadership in the Fire Liaison Program. "Maggie Creek Ranch manager Jon Griggs was instrumental and on the ground floor of establishing our local liaison program. Maggie Creek Ranch has been an integral part of the formation and evolution of the Liaison Program since its inception in 1999."

From a manager's standpoint, Jon Griggs works hard at keeping the land and natural resources of Maggie Creek Ranch in pristine condition with the belief that it is man's responsibility to ranch in an environmentally friendly and sustainable manner. Maggie Creek Ranch has been recognized numerous times for embracing the restorative work done by beavers in Suzie Creek and Maggie Creek. Maggie Creek Ranch has partnered with multiple agencies to conduct post-fire rehabilitative work that benefits wildlife as much as livestock. Maggie Creek Ranch continues to seek partnerships and innovative ways such as multi-species grazing to win the war on invasive species.

Maggie Creek Ranch is part of the Country Natural Beef Marketing Alliance program and more recently initiated a direct marketing program of Maggie Creek Ranch freezer beef. Maggie Creek Ranch maintains an aggressive genetic improvement program on ranch cattle which includes buying quality bulls as well as an artificial insemination program on replacement heifers. Maggie Creek Ranch, owned by the Searle family, contributes extensively to numerous community events and activities including Great Basin College, the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, the Elko County Fair, the California Trail Interpretive Center, Ag in the Classroom, Boy Scouts of America, and the Boys and Girls Club.

As leader of the Nevada Cattlemen's Association it is my honor and privilege to write this letter of support for Maggie Creek Ranch's application for the 2015 National Cattlemen's Foundation Environmental Stewardship Award.

Sincerely,



Ron Torell
President, Nevada Cattlemen's Association



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Elko, Nevada 89801

http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/elko_field_office.html

In Reply Refer To:
In Reply Refer To:
6843(NVE-0200)

Edward D. Koch
Field Office Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Reno Fish and Wildlife Office
1340 Financial Blvd., Suite 234
Reno, NV 89502

Dear Mr. Koch;

Please accept this letter or recommendation in support of your nomination of the Maggie Creek Ranch for the 2015 Environmental Stewardship Award sponsored by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and the National Cattlemen's Foundation. Maggie Creek Ranch, managed by Jon Griggs, has been a key partner in our efforts to restore and improve public lands on the Elko District, Bureau of Land Management for more than two decades. These efforts, which demonstrate sustainability as well as collaboration and cooperation, are summarized below.

Since the early 1990's, Maggie Creek Ranch has worked with the Elko District and other partners to restore the Susie Creek watershed on both public and private lands with the goal of re-establishing Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT), a federally listed threatened species. Over 25 miles of Susie Creek and its tributary streams have been improved through a combination of fencing and application of prescriptive grazing practices. Recovery is to the point where cutthroat trout could be released in the near future. Perhaps more significant is the development of extensive wetlands and beaver dam complexes in response to prescriptive grazing practices and the re-establishment of healthy riparian plant communities. These restored wetlands have demonstrated a remarkable ability to capture and store water during record drought conditions, a phenomenon that has captured national attention. In recent months, this story has been featured on PBS Nature, in the local newspaper, and in the form of posters and talks at professional conferences. From the ranch perspective, the restored riparian area provides needed water and forage during drought as well as an additional pasture in support of rotational grazing practices and livestock husbandry.

In 2005, the Maggie Creek Ranch in cooperation with the Elko District, Trout Unlimited and local mines worked to replace a problematic diversion structure with a new structure designed to provide for both upstream and downstream passage of fish including LCT while still allowing for the irrigation needs of the ranch. The Ranch also supported other components of the project including monitoring fish passage in cooperation with Trout Unlimited and the Nevada

Department of Wildlife. This project is significant to recovery of LCT since the diversion structure is located in habitat for one of the most important remaining metapopulations (interconnected populations) remaining in Nevada.

Maggie Creek Ranch has also been a key partner in the Elko District's effort to improve stream and riparian habitat conditions within the South Fork of the Humboldt River canyon. This effort has included construction of innovative livestock water gaps allowing for recovery of the river corridor while providing for continued grazing of adjacent uplands. Improved grazing practices within the South Fork Canyon are part of a larger effort to restore an entire riverine corridor for wildlife and for recreation use in one of the most scenic and popular areas on the Elko District.

In addition to riparian and upland rangeland improvement through improved grazing management, cooperative weed control efforts involving Maggie Creek Ranch and the Elko District have resulted in effective treatment of thousands of acres of scotch thistle and Russian knapweed on both public and private lands. Thanks to the cooperation of ranch manager, Jon Griggs, we continue to expand our treatment efforts while maintaining our existing treatment areas. This success of combining treatment efforts across land ownership boundaries gives us even more of an incentive to expand our treatments to adjacent areas.

Finally, the Maggie Creek Ranch, under the leadership of Jon Griggs, has improved our ability to manage wildland fires. The Elko District experiences a substantial number of annual fire events and improved management of wild fires has major implications for Sage-Grouse and other species of wildlife. Jon assisted in the development and implementation of the local liaison program to assist in the communication between the agency and local community. For example, if there was a wildland fire near Maggie Creek Ranch, Jon would be a liaison between the Field Manager, Incident Commander, and the ranches in the immediate area. As a liaison, Jon expedites communications between his neighbors and the suppression efforts. Jon provides local knowledge and issues to the Field Manager and Incident Commander while communicating strategies, tactics, and firefighting policies to his neighbors.

In summary, the Maggie Creek Ranch represents a model for sustainable ranching on public lands. Through collaboration and cooperation, the ranch had demonstrated that improvements in both public and private lands are compatible with a viable ranching operation. It is with pleasure that I recommend Jon Griggs and the Maggie Creek Ranch for this important award.

If you need more information or have questions concerning our work in the Field Office with Maggie Creek Ranch, please contact Tom Warren, Operations Manager, at (775) 753-0355 or Carol Evans, Fishery Biologist, at (775) 753-0349.

Sincerely,



Richard E. Adams
Field Manager
Tuscarora Field Office

cc: Ron Torell, Torell Livestock



Department of
Agriculture, Nutrition & Veterinary Sciences
University of Nevada, Reno

March 3, 2015


Dear Award Selection Committee:

As the agriculture instructor at Great Basin College from 2007-2014, I worked with Maggie Creek Ranch in a variety of capacities. Some of the courses I taught were livestock production, agriculture management, and rangeland management. Maggie Creek Ranch worked with us on several class projects over the years. Students in rangeland management visited rangelands managed by Maggie Creek and collected biomass data and other site characteristics. Students in livestock production were given numerous opportunities to learn about vaccinating cattle, pregnancy testing, estrus synchronization, and fecal sampling for nutritional status. Students also signed up for dates to work the night shift of calving season to watch for heifers and cows that may need assistance. Students attended numerous tours and had opportunities to interview ranch employees about ranch management and skills needed for successful livestock handling. Maggie Creek Ranch also hosted a tour for a "Cows Eat Weeds" Seminar that occurred at GBC.

Many of these student activities occurred at the Ranch Headquarters, but several also occurred at the Lamoille unit and were coordinated with the managers at that unit. One of the Maggie Creek Ranch employees, Jennifer Whitely, has served as an adjunct instructor at Great Basin College and has been instrumental in helping students further their knowledge of the beef industry. At least one student has completed a formal work-study program with Maggie Creek Ranch and was supervised under the Red House Unit manager.

Given the breadth of the opportunities afforded students to work with real cattle and real rangeland management issues at the ranch, I highly recommend Maggie Creek Ranch, with their commitment to the community, for this award. Each employee has made working with the Ranch an excellent learning experience for students and has opened their eyes to the challenges and opportunities that ranchers (both on public and private lands) have to improve the land and the cattle for long-lasting environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

Respectfully submitted,



Tracy Shane
Lecturer

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