

Backgrounder

Ducks Unlimited Canada is pleased to work with the OH Ranch and the Seaman family to preserve a vast tract of native, southern Alberta grassland ecosystems for future generations by securing conservation easements on their Dorothy and Bassano properties.

What are conservation easements?

A conservation easement (CE) is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a qualified conservation organization such as Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) that provides an opportunity to conserve an area of land in perpetuity. Under a CE agreement, the landowner continues to own the designated land, while at the same time committing to preserving the natural character of the land, and its ecological integrity, scenic values and/or scientific and educational potential. This protects the natural features of the land and supports the growth of both native plants and wildlife. These agreements have been recognized legally and financially since 1995 under the federal government's Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (EPEA). This Act is supported by the Ecological Gifts Program within Environment Canada.

The OH Ranch is working with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Southern Alberta Land Trust Society on conservation easements for their Longview and Pekisko ranch lands, and with Ducks Unlimited on easements for the Dorothy and Bassano ranch lands. The easements will be registered against the land title, ensuring that current and future owners manage the land according to terms of the easements.

Why are the OH Ranch conservation easements important?

The OH Ranch is one of the oldest ranches in Alberta – with a 125-year legacy of grazing and environmental stewardship. The donated conservation easements on this private land will preserve the wetlands and associated ecosystems of this important southern Alberta landscape.

The conservation easements on OH Ranch Dorothy and OH Ranch Bassano will help protect more than 11,250 acres (45.5 square kilometres) of prime southern Alberta native grassland.

What are eco-gifts?

Since 1995, Environment Canada's Ecological Gifts Program has enabled individual and corporate landowners to protect their cherished pieces of nature forever by donating ecologically sensitive lands to environmental charities or government bodies. An "eco-gift" can be a donation of land or a partial interest in land - such as a conservation easement, covenant or servitude. In addition to the peace of mind of knowing that the land will be managed by the recipient according to mutually agreed-upon conservation goals and objectives, donors are also eligible to receive income tax benefits for their donations.

Generally speaking, ecologically sensitive lands are areas or sites that currently, or could in the future significantly contribute to the conservation of Canada's biodiversity and environmental heritage. Eco-gifts are as varied as the Canadian landscape - ranging from wetlands, shores and boreal forests, to prairie grasslands and rocky cliffs.

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC)

DUC is a national, private, non-profit organization committed to conserving wetlands and their associated habitats for North America's waterfowl, other wildlife and people. From coast to coast, DUC is on the front lines of wetland conservation. For more than 70 years, DUC has 6 million acres and positively influenced nearly 47 million acres of habitat across the country. For more information visit www.ducks.ca. Contact: Anh Hoang, P: 403-827-8762 E: a_hoang@ducks.ca

OH Ranch

OH Ranch is one of the oldest ranches in Alberta, with a 125-year legacy of grazing and stewardship. The ranch is committed to providing top quality, high performance stock and genetics suitable for any cattle operation while maintaining and preserving environmental sustainability and the unique history and traditions of ranching in Western Canada. OH Ranch has four cattle operations in Alberta; OH Longview, OH Pekisko, OH Bassano and OH Dorothy and one in Hungary (Rio Alto Ranch). The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and the Southern Alberta Land Trust Society (SALTS) are the conservation associations chosen by OH Ranch to be the holders of the conservation easements placed on its Longview and Pekisko ranch lands. The Alberta ranches run a combined total of 2,000 head of Angus and Angus cross cattle. For more information visit www.ohranch.com or contact Jim Smith P: 403 556-8684 C: 403 507-0311 E: smithj@mancroft.ca.

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Conserving Canada's Wetlands

Active by nature.