

**2015 Environmental Stewardship Award Nomination  
Maggie Creek Ranch**



**ELKO, NV**

**Individuals to be recognized:**

Searle family (Owners) and Jon Griggs (Ranch Manager)

**Primary Contact/Address:**

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Elko, NV 89803

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*Bringing the cows home. Photo credit – Maggie Creek Ranch*

# 2015 Environmental Stewardship Award Nomination

## Maggie Creek Ranch

### Section I

#### Location

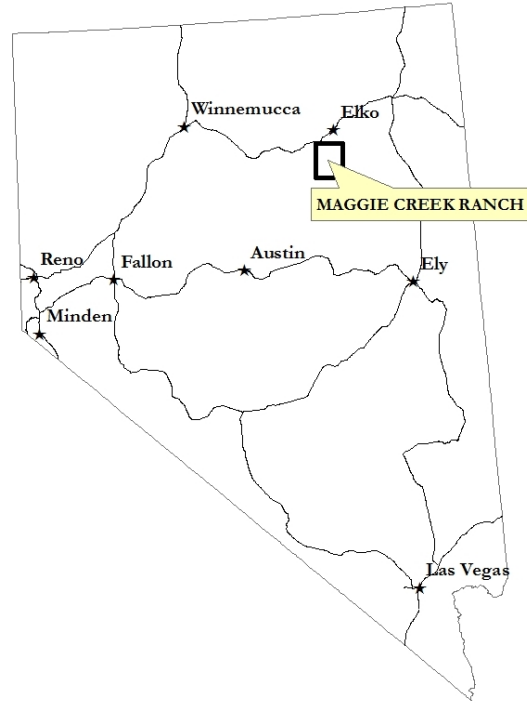
Located in the high desert of Elko County, Nevada, Maggie Creek Ranch runs forty miles north to south and twenty miles wide along Maggie Creek outside of Elko, Nevada and also includes a number of smaller ranches in the operation. Interstate 80 bisects the ranch, and it neighbors the communities of Elko, Carlin, and Lamoille.

#### Description of the Operation

Maggie Creek Ranch (MCR) is in the business of producing high quality beef marketed across multiple segments of the industry while conserving and improving public and private lands; and furthering their standing in the communities they interact with to enhance the value of the Ranch as an asset. Their goal is to be the best possible stewards of their resources (natural, financial, and human) while feeding the world through production agriculture. MCR is a traditional operation in the sense that it employs a full-time buckaroo crew and does all cow work on horseback.



Cow country. Photo credit – Maggie Creek Ranch



Maggie Creek Ranch's headquarters unit is known as the Hunter Ranch and was started in the early 1900's by George Hunter and George Banks. Several neighboring ranches were added in later years by various owners -most notably Charlie Howard of Seabiscuit fame- before it was purchased by the Searle family in 1975.

MCR is a beef cow-calf and summer-stocker operation that grows cattle on the hoof, locker beef, and beef for retail seasonally. Annually, MCR manages 2,000 brood cows and 1,500 stocker cattle. Jon Griggs is manager of the 200,000-acre ranch, a third of which is permitted grazing on public lands.

The operation consists of approximately 198,000 acres of owned (deeded) and leased (public land grazing permit) land. Hunter (Headquarters unit) is 137,000 deeded acres with an associated 50,000 acres of public land (BLM) grazing allotment. The Lamoille

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operation includes 2,500 deeded acres and an 8,100 acre BLM grazing allotment.

There have been occasional oil/mineral explorations on MCR but in most years, income is solely derived from cattle/beef sales. Grasses and forbs harvested by cattle are the only natural resources that significantly contribute to revenue.



*The next generation shipping cows from Maggie Creek Ranch before going to school. Photo credit – Maggie Creek Ranch*

MCR's unique approach is that they acknowledge the need to create/improve habitat for humans on the ranch too. MCR creates a positive working environment with a fair wage for the employee, and a good living condition for his/her family as well. MCR has 34 people living on the ranch and only 1/3 of them are employed by the ranch. This helps Ranch sustainability by allowing them to attract and maintain great employees

and is proven in MCR's longer than average tenure of employees.

MCR encourages the ranching family tradition by allowing children to be involved and learn about sustainable agriculture, and helping them to be a positive voice for the cattle industry in the future. The ranch family participates in the local 4-H and FFA and encourages kids to learn more about land stewardship whenever possible.

### Ecological Description of the Land

The ranch is located in the Great Basin in northeastern Nevada and includes two major tributaries of the South Fork of the Humboldt River: Susie Creek and Maggie Creek.

The landscape is primarily annual and perennial grasses, forbs, and sagebrush which covers vast areas that are interspersed with creeks and their associated riparian areas as well as natural springs and wet meadows.

In addition to the stream environment, MCR has an 80 acre reservoir formed from an old gravel pit that provides habitat and breeding grounds to numerous species of migrating waterfowl, including ducks, geese, and pelicans. The reservoir and the wetlands off of its outflow serve as a filter for water feeding in from irrigated meadows.

MCR is home to numerous upland bird and raptor species as well as big game such as mule deer, elk and pronghorn. Predator species include bobcat, mountain lion and coyotes.

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### Section II

#### Regulatory Context/Setting

Maggie Creek and Susie Creek are perennial streams that cross public and private land within the operation. They are occupied by Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) which is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

In addition, the ranch provides important habitat for many other wildlife species including the Columbia spotted frog and Greater sage-grouse, both of which are currently being considered for listing under the ESA.

#### Challenges and Opportunities

Since the early 1990's, 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 reestablishing LCT. Rather than being constrained by harboring an ESA listed species, Maggie Creek Ranch has embraced the opportunity to create and improve habitat for LCT which, in turn, is good for the cattle business. Regulatory assurances are provided to the ranch through a Safe Harbor Agreement which is a voluntary agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (represented here by NDOW) and cooperating non-federal landowners. The agreement is designed to benefit federally endangered and threatened species by giving landowners assurances that at no future time would the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service impose restrictions on their land as a result of conservation actions on their part.



*Jon Griggs looks over a 400-acre area that was reseeded after a recent fire. Photo credit: Brian Vander Brug/Los Angeles Times*

Wildfire and invasive plant species are the largest threats to the sagebrush ecosystem in the Great Basin and, in turn, threaten the viability of livestock grazing operations. Maggie Creek Ranch has been at the epicenter of many of Elko County, Nevada's fires. In response to wildfires that have burned tens of thousands of acres across the operation, Maggie Creek Ranch has implemented fire rehabilitation strategies and has actively reseeded rangeland with native grasses and forbs. Rehabilitation activities included replacing damaged irrigation diversion structures using a fish passage friendly design to allow LCT access to upstream portions of the Maggie Creek subbasin.

Fire managers in the Elko area have recognized that Initial Attack on small fires is crucial in keeping them from becoming large, catastrophic fires. MCR has helped by providing trained wildland volunteer firefighters and housing an engine on the ranch as well as providing other firefighting equipment.

When fires have gotten large, Griggs has been a leader in the community and played a

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major role in bridging the gap between fire managers and local interests. He has presented information at many of the 'in-briefing' of fire teams coming into the region to help with suppressing of large fires. Griggs was at the forefront in the development of the Rancher Liaison Program that was born after the 1999 fire season. The program is a model for all rural areas of the Western States and thanks to Jon and many others, provides a realistic expectation while emphasizing local interests in stopping large wildfires.



*Irrigation diversion on Maggie Creek Ranch designed to allow for fish passage and provide for irrigation needs of the ranch. Photo credit – Bureau of Land Management*

### Environmental, Economic and Resource Management Goals

The main goal of the ranch is to keep the land productive for future generations. In order to do so, they recognize that they must use proper stocking rates and grazing practices in order to have more grass this year than they did last year. Being in the high desert, MCR must also be prepared for years of lower than average rainfall, and have feed and pasture set aside for such occasions. MCR has portions of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) ground in their grazing rotations, but treat it the same as their private land (because there are no

fences). MCR sees the BLM as partners in their operation.

Water plays a vital role in the operation due to the scarcity of it. The ranch works very hard to protect riparian areas as well as natural springs. When possible, exclosures are constructed in order to protect sensitive, wet ground from hoof action as much as is possible. As the ranch develops new solar wells and water distribution, the wildlife on the ranch thrive in those areas. MCR is also proactive in controlling invasive plant species that are not native to Nevada; some of which are poisonous to livestock and wildlife. In order to control invasive plants, locations are documented and herbicide may be applied to select areas. In addition to herbicides and targeted cattle grazing, goats have been used to help with vegetation management, as they can intensively graze weeds that cattle don't find palatable.

MCR has the goal of improving ranch productivity for the profit and enjoyment of themselves and future generations. They recognize that to further this goal they must implement grazing practices that keep rangelands, pastures and riparian areas on an upward trend using cattle adapted to their environment and herded with minimal stress to cattle (or handler). They further recognize that they must not only carry out conservation efforts to better the land but also manage the political aspect of ranching on public lands with multiple agency partners and user groups.

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Great Basin College ag student working cattle at the ranch.  
Photo credit – Maggie Creek Ranch

### Partnerships, Strategies, Tactics & Practices

MCR leadership and staff have sought to build long-term, positive relationships with agency staff and user groups to create an atmosphere of collaboration on both public and private lands. They see a challenge such as an ESA listing as an opportunity for conservation projects for the betterment of the ranch.

The ranch has a demonstrated history of partnering with land management and other agencies to achieve mutual environmental objectives. Multiple projects have been completed in partnership with the following agencies and organizations: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Partners for Fish and Wildlife and Ecological Services programs), Bureau of Land Management, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Trout Unlimited,

Great Basin College, Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, and Local mining companies.

Tony Wasley, Director of the Nevada Department of Wildlife said, “Our agency derives immense benefit because of Jon’s [Maggie Creek Ranch’s] willingness to work collaboratively to demonstrate a shared vision for healthy Great Basin landscapes that benefit native wildlife species while also continuing the historic utilization of these landscapes by the ranching industry”.



Maggie Creek Ranch has a demonstrated history of partnering with a variety of entities.

MCR’s grazing target is to allow every plant to reach seed-head maturity. This means that cattle must be herded quite a bit during the growing season. Riparian fencing is also used to limit access to areas and provides pasture to gather into for brief periods such as branding time or weaning. Solar technology is used extensively to pump

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stock water to better aid in cattle disbursement.

The ranch has worked closely with the previously mentioned partner entities in the design, implementation (e.g., cost-share), and monitoring of habitat management and improvement projects. Conservation practices that have been implemented in cooperation with the above agencies have included

- irrigation/fish passage structures,
- enhancing wetlands for frog habitat,
- develop solar wells to help distribute water in dry areas of the ranch,
- constructed reservoir for waterfowl habitat and engineer sloughs downstream for sediment filtering,
- range improvement projects (i.e., seeding native grasses and forbs), and
- grazing management (e.g., fencing, grazing management plans to benefit riparian area habitat, stockwater development).

MCR partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to establish a wetlands area with low dikes and grass filter strips at the end of their irrigation system to ensure that water leaving the ranch is cleaner than water entering the system.

In addition, Maggie Creek Ranch has supported monitoring fish passage in cooperation with Trout Unlimited and the Nevada Department of Wildlife. The partnership between Griggs and Trout Unlimited began in 2001 upon the initiation of a long-term fish monitoring study to track the response of Lahontan cutthroat trout to planned restoration activities on public and private properties in Maggie Creek. Over the

years, MCR has graciously allowed access to their land for this work and has provided important on-the-ground insight and various forms of logistical support for Trout Unlimited field crews. Throughout the collaboration, now 13 years in the running, Griggs has consistently supported the goals of the collaborative restoration in Maggie Creek and has had a keen appreciation of how habitat improvements that benefit trout also benefit cattle and thus the ranch's bottom-line. "We greatly appreciate the cooperation and support of Jon Griggs in helping us restore one of the largest remaining populations of Lahontan cutthroat trout – our state fish and an important component of Nevada's natural heritage," commented Helen Neville, Ph.D. and Trout Unlimited research scientist.

### Outcomes & Accomplishments

Since the early 1990's, the 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 LCT. Over 25 miles of Susie Creek and its tributary streams have been improved through a combination of fencing and application of prescriptive grazing practices. Improvement of stream and riparian habitat conditions has been dramatic and recovery is to the point where cutthroat trout will be released into the system within the next few years.

In addition to riparian and upland rangeland improvement through improved grazing management, cooperative noxious weed treatment work between Maggie Creek Ranch and the Bureau of Land Management

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(BLM) has resulted in effective treatment of thousands of acres of scotch thistle and Russian knapweed. These efforts are ongoing and involve noxious weed treatments on public and private lands. Thanks to the cooperation of Griggs, the BLM continues to expand treatment efforts while maintaining existing treatment areas.



*Susie Creek 1991 – Degraded streambanks before implementation of prescriptive livestock grazing practices. Photo credit – Bureau of Land Management*



*Susie Creek 2008 - Changes in stream and riparian habitat conditions along Susie Creek as a response to prescriptive livestock grazing practices employed by Maggie Creek Ranch. Photo credit – Bureau of Land Management*

### Section III

#### Consumer Appeal

Consumers are depending on sustainable ranches to provide food and into the future. In addition, habitat conservation is important

to consumers and MCR has demonstrated that the two are very compatible. MCR's position that fisheries and wildlife habitat is also excellent cow habitat, along with their inclusive approach to conservation, appeals to consumers who take an interest in sustainability. MCR employs low-stress stockmanship in their operation which is also important to today's consumers.

MCR is part of a beef cooperative that has built a reputation on family ranches that produce beef on healthy, productive land that is biologically diverse. MCR also markets beef directly to people and restaurants in their local community. This is appealing to individuals committed to supporting local businesses, like to know where their food was raised, and/or have an interest in bulk purchase of beef. Research conducted by the Beef Checkoff highlighted that the ability to buy in bulk is important to Millennials (the 80 million consumers born between 1980 - 2000).

In addition, Beef Checkoff research highlighted that online and mobile resources are a must-have to attract and retain Millennials' interest. MCR has close to 1,000 followers on its social media page where they provide an opportunity to form a personal connection to the ranch and the beef it produces.





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*Maggie Creek Ranch markets a portion of its natural beef directly to local consumers. Photo credit – Maggie Creek Ranch*

### **Section IV** Leadership in Conservation within the Community and the Industry

During the November 3-5, 2014 Nevada Cattlemen's Association (NCA) convention, Jon Griggs (Maggie Creek Ranch, Ranch Manager) was recognized as the recipient of the NCA/American AgCredit Cattleman of the Year. This award is the most prestigious award that NCA bestows upon one of its own. It was established to recognize NCA members who have made significant contributions to the NCA, their community, the land and the beef industry.

Along with having been in the officers' lineup for years, Jon Griggs, through his many hours of donation, has served on many NCA committees including bull sale sifting, by-laws and resolution committees and executive committees. Additionally he has represented the livestock industry on many outside committees and issues that affect the livelihood of livestock producers. Jon brings

calm and common sense to big issues with his pleasant way of communication and dry sense of humor. One of the reason Griggs was chosen for the award this year was to highlight successful collaborations with Government agencies and user groups in a time where Nevada has earned a lot of attention for its public lands issues.

MCR has hosted several documentaries on beaver and trout and the conservation benefits associated with both. MCR has been featured in television shows as well, most recently "pitchin' in" with Chef Lyn Crawford. MCR has hosted countless tours of the ranch including hosting the Ranch Tour in conjunction with the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering. Leadership and staff at MCR take every opportunity to further their positive message such as speaking to teachers at Ag in the Classroom events or a strong social media presence. MCR Manager Jon Griggs has used the recent spotlight on public lands issues as an opportunity to further the collaboration message, being interviewed by CNN and a Las Vegas T.V. station.

MCR has hosted seminars for area ranchers to attend in order for better collaboration with government and nonprofit entities and land owners. MCR leadership has hosted numerous workshops for fellow producers including BQA, riparian PFC workshops and low-stress livestock handling with Temple Grandin.

MCR has shown that 40 years' worth of environmental progress can make a ranch a better steward of the land, as well as more profitable and sustainable for future generations.



# United States Department of the Interior



## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Reno Fish and Wildlife Office  
1340 Financial Blvd., Suite 234  
Reno, Nevada 89502

Ph: (775) 861-6300 ~ Fax: (775) 861-6301

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.

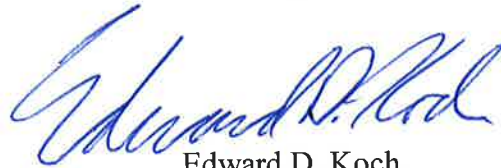
In addition to working with the Service, "Maggie Creek Ranch has been instrumental in promoting conservation measures within Elko County, Nevada. They have been working collaboratively with Federal, State, and local agencies and non-profit groups to promote sustainable agriculture on private and public 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.

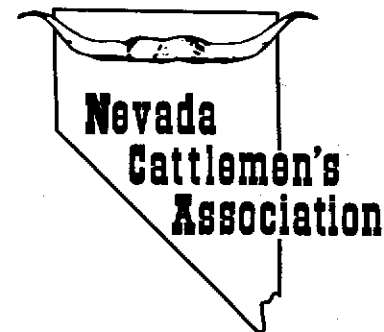
We worked closely with the Nevada Cattlemen's Association in preparation of this nomination and are proud to present to you the good work and leadership of Maggie Creek Ranch. Thank you for your consideration of Maggie Creek Ranch for this prestigious award.

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

Tuscarora Field Office  
3900 East Idaho Street  
Elko, Nevada 89801

[http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/elko\\_field\\_office.html](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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