

A Legacy Of Conservation

Protected in Perpetuity

Bruce and Roma Orvis are committed to preserving their 2,563-acre ranch where four generations have run cattle, and where early Californians camped seasonally. On March 31, 2006, the Orvis' entered into a conservation easement agreement with the California Rangeland Trust that ensures the land will forever remain the same.

The California Rangeland Trust worked with the Trust for Public Land in assembling funds from the State of California Department of Conservation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Great Valley Center to purchase the conservation easement. The Ranch is now ready for the next four generations of Californians to continue its rich historic and cultural legacy.

Earliest Vet Breeds Herefords

Born in Wisconsin in 1858, Charles Bruce Orvis went to veterinary school in Chicago. He traveled west to start his career. After exploring Los Angeles and San Francisco, he ultimately established his veterinary practice in Stockton and was issued one of the first veterinary licenses in California in 1893. Orvis conducted research, pioneered innovative surgical techniques and was known as one of the state's leading livestock specialists and inspectors.

Orvis married Mary Ada Snow in 1891, the only daughter of William Snow. William had established the Snow Ranch in 1873,



Bill Orvis photo

Four generations of the Orvis family: Charles Bruce Orvis (back, right) and his son William Snow Orvis (back, left). Bruce (front, right) with his son Bill and James (front, left) with his son, Jim.

twenty three miles east of Stockton in Stanislaus and Calaveras Counties. Orvis sold his practice in 1896, bought the Snow homestead and began breeding purebred Hereford cattle. His son, William, carried on the operation.

William married Grace Harper in 1917, and made their home at the Ranch with their children, Bill, Jim, Bruce and Betty. Today, Bruce and his wife, Roma, continue Hereford breeding on the Ranch that Bruce's grandfather passed down to him. Jim and his wife, Maryanne, also breed Herefords nearby.

Orvis Scientists

Bill Orvis admires his family's ingenuity, not only with ranching but with daily pursuits. His grandfather stored supplies in what was termed the "radio house"... "It is where my grandfather built radios. He used to build them and then give them away to a neighbor and build another one. He and I also built a lot of radios together."

Bill also recounts how his grandfather installed electricity in the original ranch house before anyone in the area. "He put model-T automobile generators on top of poles with a propeller and a tail. The generators charged car batteries which were used to light the house at night with 12 Volt lights."

The Orvis' creativity extends into space. In 1967, as part of a high school club, the Orvis children started flying model rockets on the Ranch. Beginning in 2004, the Ranch has hosted the LUNAR Model Rocketry Club, the



Barn at Orvis Ranch with Orvis family brand.

LEGACY, CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

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largest National Association of Rocketry section in the United States.

As many as 80 cars come from as far away as Fresno and Sacramento to launch rockets and view the spectacle. It became a family event, as many would hike in the country and play by the creek while the rockets flew. "Many of these people had never been in wild country before and were constantly coming to me to point out buzzards, coyotes, rabbits, and squirrels," recalled Bill.

This is the history of the Orvis Ranch and family. But thousands of years ago, the prehistory of the area was quite different.

Early California Artists

The first Californians had a great diversity of native communities. Miwoks and Yokuts occupied present-day Stanislaus County, and some groups camped every spring and fall in the area as they traveled to their summer camp in the mountains. The Central Californian culture group practiced hunter-gatherer subsistence, and possessed a mastery of basket making.



Bill Orvis photo
Petroglyphs on Orvis Ranch

They were composed of loosely related groups of villages. Shamanism, magic, and various religious observances were important to them, thus affecting their activities. One such activity was carving petroglyphs.

Thousands of years ago, Native Americans etched petroglyphs into rock surfaces in the Central Valley. Groove and pit designs were cut into the back wall of a small rock shelter on the Orvis Ranch.

It is believed that petroglyphs had a role in magic-religious aspects of prehistoric culture and may have served a purpose in the cultural context of game hunting, tribal boundary markers and fertility. Rock shelters and caves were often used as living spaces, storage areas, and burial places. Bedrock mortars on the Orvis Ranch indicate an abundant Native American population. The area where the present-day Orvis Ranch is located once served as a seasonal camping site for Native Americans.

Bruce Orvis recalls finding Native American artifacts.

"Tools and arrowheads were along the creek and further up the creek are the petroglyphs." Bill was a young child when archaeological research took place, but remembers local universities examining the remains. "It was exciting to be in an area where the stuff of museums is right there."

The Orvis Ranch can claim a legacy of rich cultural heritage that can be traced to prehistoric times. Thanks to the conservation easement held with CRT, the history and their ranching heritage will be protected in perpetuity. ✓

~ Elizabeth Valdovinos



Bill Orvis photo
Bedrock Mortars on Orvis Ranch

Recent e-mail sent to Bruce Orvis...

"Dear Owners,
I was driving through Calaveras County this weekend on my way to Bear Valley and I passed by your ranch. I just wanted to say thanks for providing cattle the old way ... on the land ... It was such a relief to see all your cows out there on the land and I thought, thank God there are still ranchers. So thanks. Thanks a lot.

Sincerely, Page"

California Rangeland Trust welcomes new board member, **Dan O'Connell** of Colusa. Dan has been Colusa County Assessor since January 1, 1982, and brings a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and professionalism to the CRT Board.

Dan is very active in the ranching community as a long time member of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, California Cattlemen's Association and serving as the current vice president of the Glenn-Colusa Cattlemen's Association. In addition, Dan has worked many years with farm youth groups including 4-H, FFA and the junior livestock committee among other things. Most notably, he was appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger to the Colusa County Fair Board and was instrumental in establishing the Williamson Act on the valley floor in Colusa County.

With his experience and commitment to the cattle industry Dan will be a tremendous asset to the CRT Board. As Dan looks to retire December 30, 2006, he is anxious to live out his life long dream of ranching full time. Dan and his wife, Barbara, live on their ranch in Colusa County where they raise Black Angus cattle, tree fruit and rice. ✓