

# THE ASPEN TIMES

## Praise for conservation

October 12, 2006

Dear Editor:

I read with great joy the announcement last week that the Grange ranch that borders Basalt is being conserved ("Score one for the cows," Oct. 6). I would like to thank all parties who played a part in securing the conservation easement. Most of all, thank you, Granges. Land doesn't get conserved unless ranchers choose conservation over development. And thanks to the town of Basalt, Pitkin County Open Space, Aspen Valley Land Trust, and Eagle County for working through the details and helping to finance the effort. It is a true testament to our community's well-placed priorities that we are willing to follow through on our common desire to see land conserved with the funds necessary to make it happen.

Conservation easements are a win-win proposition because they preserve a community asset (open space, wildlife corridors, etc.) without interfering with the free markets. Instead, they create value for the intangible asset of "conservation" so that agricultural landowners can capture increased economic value from their property without having to build it out.

Land conservation benefits the entire community in many ways, from preserving our area's agricultural heritage and giving our towns a strong sense of place to constraining suburban sprawl and providing wildlife habitat. I would encourage everyone to support actively the land conservation efforts going on throughout our valley. And thanks again to the Granges for their wonderful and enlightened choice to conserve their land.

David Cramer  
Basalt

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