

Strangs want to split up their ranch

Proposal would preserve 80 percent in conservation easement

AUGUST, 2 2011

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The Strang Ranch on Missouri Heights may soon be split into a total of 10 residential lots and a large "remainder ranch" that will stay in agricultural use.

The family of one-time U.S. Congressman Mike Strang and his wife, Kit, has applied to Garfield County for what is known as a "rural land development exemption," under which 80 percent of the 451-acre ranch property is placed in a conservation easement, and the other 20 percent can be developed.

The Strangs have owned the ranch, located east of Carbondale on Catherine Store Road (County Road 100), since 1965. It is an equestrian business and produces sod for commercial sale.

The ranch has hosted two sheepdog trials in recent years, and will be the site of the 2011 National Sheep Dog Finals, Sept. 13-20.

A hearing on the development proposal was to have occurred Monday before the Garfield Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), but was postponed to Sept. 6 due to problems with the required public notice of the hearing, according to Garfield County planner Kathy Eastley.

The development plan calls for nine new residential parcels of two to four acres apiece, and retains an existing two-acre lot containing the cabin of the late Lathrop Strang, who died in a backcountry skiing accident in 2008, Eastley said.

The rest of the ranch, she reported, will become a 424-acre conservation easement held by the Aspen Valley Land Trust.

Six of the 10 lots, as laid out in a map provided by Eastley, are contained in two clusters of three homesites each, while the remaining sites either sit by themselves or close to another lot on different parts of the property.

The existing ranch house is to become the ranch headquarters, held as part of the remainder parcel under the conservation easement.

Eastley said the family has not made its precise plans known concerning how the lots will be disposed of.

"To a large degree, the parcels that are created will remain in the family," she said.

Eastley explained that the proposal, because it involves fewer than 10 lots, will not be reviewed by the county's planning and zoning commission.

The BOCC will hold one public hearing on the proposal, at its meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 6 (Sept. 5 being Memorial Day).

That meeting is to be held at the county administration building, 108 8th Street, Room 100, Glenwood Springs.

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