

The LandReport Newsletter

LANDREPORT.COM

A Monthly Report for the American Landowner

November 2020



FIELD
notes



One of the key takeaways from this year's **Investing Issue** is a behind-the-scenes look at Virginia's **Home Track Farm**. Corinne Garcia's in-depth profile of its acquisition and renaissance is a case study in how to identify, invest, and improve a glorious estate. As you'll see in our fall issue, the picturesque property not only benefits from its gorgeous setting in the Virginia Piedmont, but it also happens to be situated just minutes from the campus of the University of Virginia.

In addition, the story of Bob and Suzanne Fanch and the legacy that they have created at **Devil's Thumb Ranch** is nothing short of inspiring. From Bob's 40-acre purchase more than 40 years ago to a 6,500-acre resort in the heart of the Colorado Rockies — it's a

dream-come-true. I, for one, love the fact that both Bob and Suzanne readily admit that they winged it. "I'd like to say we had a master plan, but we clearly didn't. We kind of made it up as we went along," says Bob. Consider visiting **Devil's Thumb Ranch** (as I did) or **buying there** (as I'd like to!).

National and regional news stories follow.

ERIC O'KEEFE
editor@landreport.com

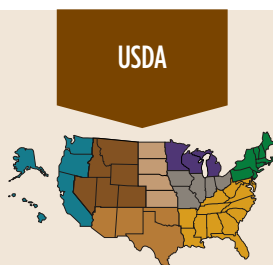
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NATIONAL

FEDERAL LAND IDLING PROGRAM AT LOWEST LEVEL SINCE 1988.

The program includes the voluntary Conservation Reserve, which gives landowners annual rent payments for fragile farmland that has idled for a decade or more. A 2018 expansion hasn't caught on with landowners according to Successful Farming, which estimates a net decline of nearly 2 million acres. Enrollment for the October 1 start of fiscal 2021 dipped to about 20 million acres. Lawmakers, who blame the fact that USDA's payments are set at 85% of the local average for area land, are seeking incentives as a way to spur interest. As the largest land idling program in the US, the Conservation Reserve seeks to reduce soil erosion, protect water quality, and improve wildlife habitats. Read more [HERE](#).



PACIFIC

CONSERVATION

California Timberland

COLLINS-MODOC REFORESTATION

PROJECT ANNOUNCED. In partnership with RenewWest, Collins will plant two million trees on 10,000 acres of the Modoc Plateau in Northern California, becoming the

largest single-site carbon-focused reforestation project in US history. The goal is to improve land that hasn't yet recovered from the Barry Point Fire, which burned nearly 93,000 acres of federal, state, and private lands in 2012. The project should re-create a working, sustainable forest and carbon sink, capturing and sequestering several hundred thousand metric tons of carbon dioxide. At the same time, it paves the way for sustainable timber harvests, bolstering the local economy and recreational opportunities. The plan represents another example of the Collins family's commitment to sustainable forestry. Based in Oregon and now the largest landowners in Pennsylvania, the Collinses ranked N^o. 33 on the 2019 Land Report 100. Stay tuned for this year's list coming up in our winter issue! Read more [HERE](#).



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AGRICULTURE

Sustainability

LEADING HARVEST RECEIVES WALTON FAMILY FOUNDATION GRANT.

The award supports a pilot program in the Upper Mississippi River Watershed with the goal of removing barriers, accelerating sustainability

certification, and jumpstarting market opportunities for producers.

The funding advances Leading Harvest's Farm Management Standard

program, which addresses everything from climate change and

biodiversity to water quality. Off the bat, the program will audit and

certify sustainability practices on family farms situated on the 50 million acres of cropland in the upper basin of the Mississippi River Watershed.

Participating producers will receive an independent sustainability

certification. Leading Harvest has plans for versions of the program across

other regions. "We find that the people closest to big environmental

challenges are also closest to solutions," says Moira McDonald, director

of the Walton Family Foundation's Environment Program. "Leading

Harvest's innovative agriculture sustainability effort embodies our mission

to advance conservation solutions that benefit nature, people, and our

waterways." Read more [HERE](#).


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PRODUCTIVE SOILS. Nine tracts

ranging from 40 to 260 acres in Saline

County, Illinois, hit the block at 10:00 in the

morning on Tuesday, November 17. The highly tillable cropland near Harrisburg in the southern portion of the Prairie State is known for favorable soil types like Harco Silt Loam and Patton Silty Clay Loam.

One tenant has managed the farmland for more than three decades.

“For that area of Illinois, these are some of the highest quality tracts that have been available in a long time with soils that have higher productive indexes than a lot of surrounding areas,” says Peoples Company land analyst Jaxon Goedken. The Saline County auction marks Peoples Company’s first foray into this region of Illinois.

Goedken says he and his colleagues expect this to be a well-attended event thanks to interest from the local farming community in and around Southern Illinois. Read more [HERE](#).

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PACIFIC

CONSERVATION

Urban Development

SAN JOSE TO PRESERVE COYOTE VALLEY FOR WILDLIFE AND AG.

The city's General Plan Task Force voted to set aside portions of Coyote Valley for agricultural use, something the City Council first did back in 1976. More recently, concerned citizens urged task force members to preserve the valley, which runs between San Jose and Morgan Hill. These lands are also sacred to the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of Native Americans, a representative from which lobbied for safeguarding the area. Conserving the open space supports the city's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, in 2018, voters approved the allocation of \$50 million in bonds to improve flood protection areas that include Coyote Valley. One year ago – in November 2019 – the San Jose City Council unanimously approved the \$93 million purchase of 937 acres in Coyote Valley with the goal of safeguarding the land from all manner of development. Read more [HERE](#).

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DSC

2021

Reflections

Convention

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REFLECTIONS
DSC Convention & Sporting Expo



INTERNATIONAL

TREATY

Water Use

MEXICO FULFILLS WATER TREATY

OBLIGATIONS. Many doubted that Mexico would succeed in delivering enough water to the US after the long-running dispute came to a boil in September. Farmers, ranchers,

and other Mexicans seized the La Boquilla Dam in the northern state of Chihuahua, sparking deadly clashes with the Mexican National Guard. Mexico owed the water to the US by the October 24th deadline under the terms of a 76-year-old treaty but had fallen behind after last year's installments. The 1944 treaty stipulates that Mexico must deliver 350,000 acre-feet of water annually in five-year cycles. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador vowed to catch up, despite a decade-long drought in Chihuahua that made the situation dire for many Mexican farmers. Growers in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, meanwhile, depend on the water for crops. The recent tensions underscore problems with water overuse and depletion throughout the region. Read more [HERE](#).

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~ JAMES BEARD

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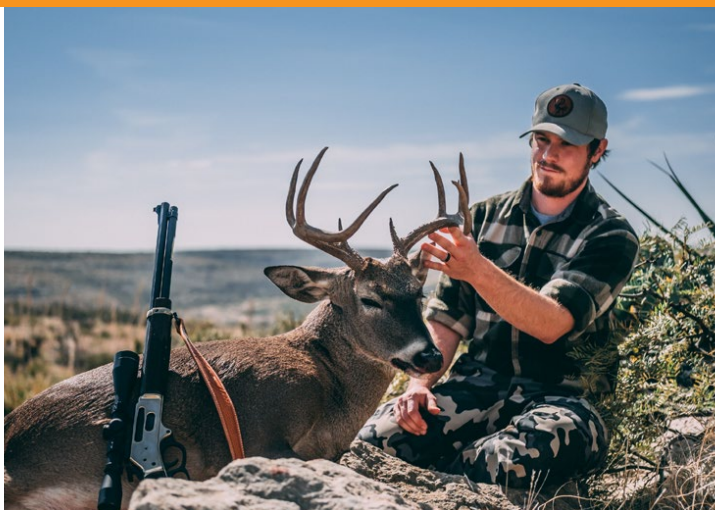
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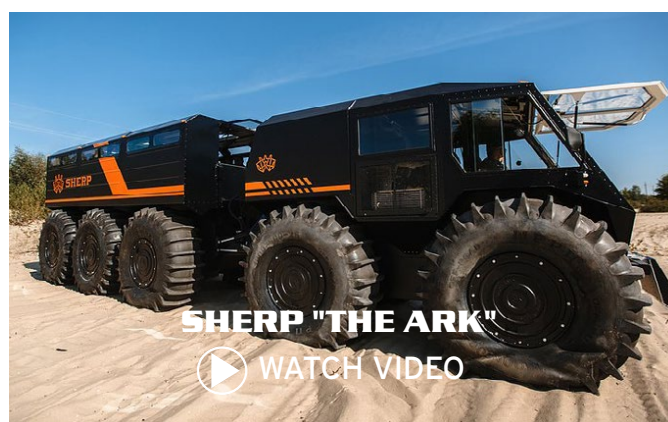
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LandReport **LIFESTYLE** Holiday Cranberry Salad

Michael Murphy, one-half of the Murphy brothers who run the successful Colorado land company M4 Ranch Group, opened his first restaurant when he was 16 – a Texas-style BBQ joint in Lake City, Colorado. When he turned 20, a close friend of his helped him secure an apprenticeship with master chef Guy Callaud from Nice, France. Guy had a three-star Michelin restaurant in Dallas, Texas, and Guy's great-grandmother was Napoleon Bonaparte's personal chef. Knowing this about Michael and being a die-hard foodie myself, I asked him if he would share a great recipe with us for the upcoming holiday, and that follows.

— Publisher, Eddie Lee Rider



Mamaw Murphy's Cranberry Salad

Ingredients:

Approximately 5 cups fresh cranberries
2 cups water
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¾ cup sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 teaspoon almond extract
Touch of parsley
2 envelopes Knox (or any brand) unflavored gelatin
(Note: Consistency will be soft. For a firmer salad, use a little more gelatin.)
1 medium orange
1 cup chopped pecans (everything during the holidays has pecans!)

In a small saucepan, place 2 cups water, ¾ cup cranberries, ½ teaspoon cinnamon, ½ teaspoon nutmeg, 2 teaspoons vanilla extract, and 1 teaspoon almond extract. Steep for 10 minutes, strain, and set aside.

In a food processor, place pecans, parsley, and remaining cranberries. Chop to the desired coarseness and place in a large mixing bowl.

Zest half the orange, juice the entire orange, and add to the cranberry and pecan mixture.

Bring the juice from the saucepan to a boil. Add the ¾ cup of sugar to create a simple syrup. Let cool for 10 minutes, then thoroughly mix in the plain gelatin.

Mix all the ingredients completely, place in a mold of your choice, and let set overnight in the refrigerator.

Enjoy! 🇺🇸

When we at M4 Ranch Group were asked to share a recipe for the holidays, we struggled with what to share. We thought about sharing our Green Peppercorn Elk Backstrap, our Wild Turkey Breast with Capers and White Wine, or our Lime Duck. Ultimately, we decided that going very traditional with our Mamaw Murphy's Cranberry Salad was the best choice. The recipe below has been served for generations at our family holiday tables. We have taken the liberty to make a few upgrades through the years, but this simple family recipe is steeped with holiday tradition. We at M4 hope your family enjoys it as much as ours has.

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LandReport VOICES

James “Jim” Sammons III Briggs-Freeman Sotheby’s

DALLAS, TEXAS

BY EDDIE LEE RIDER JR.

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INTERNATIONAL REALTY

Ranch and Land Division

Jim Sammons’s Texas roots date back six generations to 1835 when his family immigrated to the state of Texas-Coahuila. Both sides of the family have been in the ranching business in Texas ever since. Jim’s expertise in ranching and farming have been sharpened in Texas, South Dakota, Montana, New Mexico, and Mexico raising cattle, sheep, goats, and registered Quarter Horses as well as alfalfa and grain crops. Since 2001, Jim has been in the real estate business and is currently a broker in Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Missouri as well as working internationally. He served as a Director for the Greater El Paso Association, in addition to state and national real estate organizations. Jim has also served on the International Committee for the Texas Association of Realtors.

Eddie Lee: *Jim, you have some truly outstanding listings I know The Land Report audience would be keen on taking a look at. Tell us about a few, especially the Gearhart Ranch and Thompson Ranch. You also have a couple of crown jewels in Mexico and a fantastic listing in Missouri.*

Jim Sammons: Although in different states and countries, they all have a common denominator in that they attract discerning buyers for livestock/agriculture and hunting areas. All are revenue producing, working ranches with abundant recreational opportunities.

The Gearhart Ranch is located inside the scenic loop in the sky island ecosystem of the Davis Mountains in Far West Texas. Views of the mountains and from the mountains are equally majestic. The epic movie *Giant* was filmed nearby. And Marfa is just 40 minutes away.



Thompson Ranch is in the beautiful, scenic, rolling hills in Northeast Missouri. Lush grasses, timberland, a river, a constantly running creek, wildlife, and 40" average rainfall contribute to the high productivity, and it hasn’t reached its peak potential. This is an opportunity waiting to happen.

There are good ranching opportunities in Northern Mexico. **The Sukue** is near

Múzquiz, Coahuila, a well-known cattle producing and hunting area. There are two high-fenced areas on the ranch, one for producing exotics and the other for hunting exotics. **Palmar-Nogales Ranch** in Northern Chihuahua is situated right below the New Mexico bootheel. It’s a large cattle operation with irrigated farming opportunities in parts of the ranch.

ELR: *Seems like every land broker has seen some uptick in interest since the pandemic has hit. How has it affected your business, and where are you seeing buyer interest coming from?*

JS: You’re right. This has been a very productive year. Globally, the pandemic has brought about constraints and uncertainty that none of us could have imagined, much less experienced. It’s sparked some buying decisions and certainly increased interest but I think it accelerated a trend. Buyers are reevaluating how they invest and how and where they live. Whether living at a lake house with a few acres or a ranch with thousands of acres, they are more independent and less affected by the constraints in urban areas. Instead of heading to the ranch on the weekends and holidays, we’ve realized we actually can work from anywhere. Why not just stay at the ranch? Mix all that with more discretionary cash and low interest rates, and voilà, we realize we can stop and smell the roses!

ELR: *What’s the best way for folks to get in touch with you at the office?*

JS: Please contact me at (214) 701-1970, or you can email me at jsammons@briggsfreeman.com.

Website: <https://www.jamessammons.com> 🇺🇸

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