



Final Victory in Knight State Land Case

Phoenix, AZ, January 21, 2014 – The Arizona Cattlemen’s Association proudly stands with the Knight family in celebration of the ruling from the Arizona Supreme Court in *WildEarth Guardians v. Baier/Knight*.

The justices upheld an appellate court ruling rejecting a challenge to the legality of the procedures used by the State Land Department to determine who gets to lease state land. This decision upholds the Land Department’s previous ruling that the equities in favor of the Knights outweighed the WildEarth Guardians offer of additional rent.

This ruling will benefit all State Land Leasees as environmental groups and others cannot demand a lease based on an offering of higher rent. “For eight years our family lived under the threat of losing half of our grazing lands, which would have made our ranch unable to be managed effectively or economically,” said Galyn Knight in the family’s statement. “Ranching is our life. We have always loved and cared for the land and all the animals on it, wild and domestic. The Guardians’ stated purpose is to do away with all cattle grazing, which makes no sense to us. Sustainable ranching helps feed our nation. We are so relieved and thankful to all the good folks who have supported us through this long and expensive ordeal. Now we can get back to caring for the land and our cattle again, without a huge shadow hanging over us.”

The Arizona Cattle Growers’ Association joined the Knight Family in defending their history of stewardship and right to the lease. “It has been a long eight years for the Knight family but it is rewarding to see their decades of stewardship and honesty be rightly awarded with their lease renewal,” stated Dan Bell, President of the Arizona Cattle Growers’ Association.

Arizona’s ranch families manage a majority of State Trust land through grazing leases. This is a mutually beneficial practice that allows proper management of undeveloped trust land while providing millions of dollars to the agency. The Arizona Legislature does not provide any funding for the Land Department to institute any agency initiated management practices on State Trust rangeland. The Land Department relies on its grazing lessees to expend their own money to initiate management practices on their leases.

The Arizona Cattle Growers’ and Knight family have spent over \$100,000 defending these proven practices for the future generations of Arizonans. Douglas E. Brown of Brown & Brown Law Offices P.C., a law firm in Apache County, defended the Knight family.

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