

# Crested Butte Land Trust

**Strong communities decide the future.**

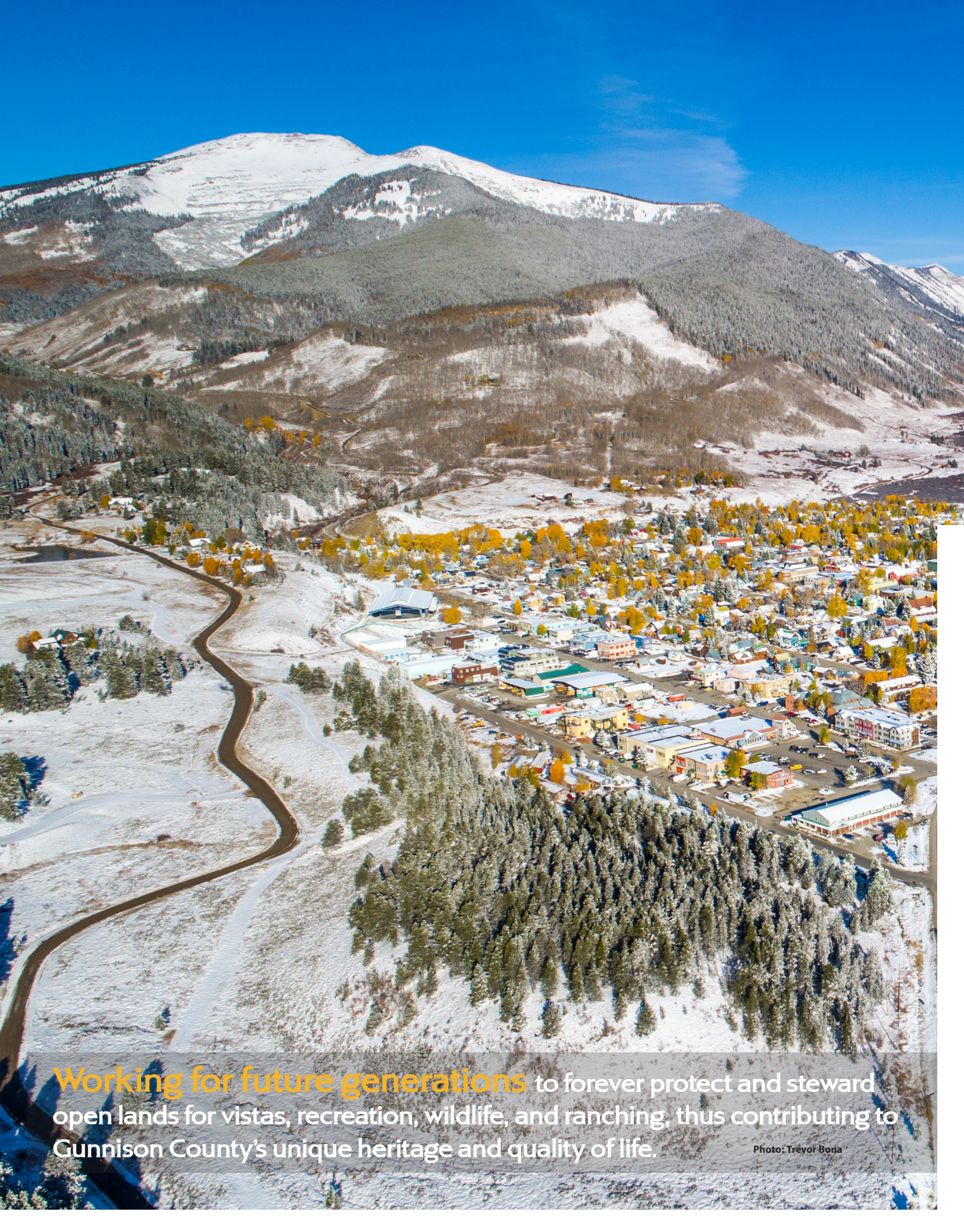
**Let's fight for the land we love.**

**Think Forward. Act Now.**



**2018  
FALL  
NEWSLETTER**





**Working for future generations** to forever protect and steward open lands for vistas, recreation, wildlife, and ranching, thus contributing to Gunnison County's unique heritage and quality of life.

Photo: Trevor Bona



# The Future of Conservation is Community

When we all invest in the future of our community, land protection is easy.



In 1990, Crested Butte citizens felt the strains of a changing community as their backyard playground continued to be hemmed in by fences and new “no trespassing” signs. They watched Trappers Crossing, at the time their local nordic ski trails, be bought by a developer and changed forever.

Quickly the community rallied to protect the land they love. The citizens of Crested Butte voted to tax themselves and formed the Land Trust as the entity to carry out their vision. The community considered it their duty to protect this special place.

Reinstating access to the Lower Loop, also in the town’s backyard, was one of the first projects tackled by the Land Trust. It took a true community effort to raise the funds to buy the land, clean up Peanut Mine, and build trails. Since that project, the Land Trust has worked with the ambitious community of Crested Butte to safeguard land across the Gunnison Valley to protect scenic views, wildlife habitat, ranching heritage, and trail access.

This past August, the Crested Butte Land Trust hosted seven Colorado land trusts to discuss the future of conservation. We all agreed it starts with our communities.

Together, we realized the importance of shared values and community driven conservation, both trends currently sweeping the national conservation movement. Aspen Valley Land Trust hiked over West Maroon Pass while others drove from Grand Junction, Del Norte, Cortez and the Front Range to our little town at the end of the road to

share our passion for community conservation.

Over the course of two days, we told success stories from our respective communities and discussed the importance of working from a position of community first and not just pursuing the next transaction. This is the future of land conservation. As a result, Crested Butte Land Trust staff realized that community conservation is inherently what we do here in the Gunnison Valley. It is our way of life.

From the Lower Loop to Snodgrass and now Long Lake, our community rallies to protect and manage the lands we love, integrating partnerships across interests to ensure conserved lands thrive in our valley and continue to play a prominent role in shaping our community values.

During the conference, our guests bicycled out Peanut Lake Road to the Lower Loop Trail head. We showcased the wide path, the Story Walk, and Gunsight Bridge, highlighting only a few results of our community efforts. Beyond swapping ideas, the other land trusts were impressed with our community’s ability to protect the land we love and safeguard our values for future generations. The Crested Butte Land Trust is proud of our community and the work we do here in the Gunnison Valley, together.

**So thank you. Thank you for showing up, for your hard work, for valuing the land, and for not taking our natural places for granted. Together, we decide the future of our valley. Think Forward. Act Now.**



## Working Shoulder to Shoulder to Get the Job Done

On a dark and cold late March morning, as I drive north on 135, I can feel gusts of wind pushing my truck towards the shoulder of the road. I'm heading to my first 6 am calf check at the Allen Ranch. It has been a year since my wife, Erin and I moved to the Gunnison Valley. We left a small farm in northwest Georgia where we were caretakers for horses, sheep, and chickens while also pursuing our careers in land conservation and natural resources as our day jobs.

It's 5:57 and Bruce Allen is waiting by his battered truck. As we head into the first field, Bruce hands me a spotlight and tells me, "be on the lookout for new calves, when you see one let me know." I spot my first newborn calf, huddled as its mother finishes licking it clean. We hop out of the truck, and Bruce instructs me to hold the calf so he can tag it and give it its first vaccination. I struggle to gently hold the squirming calf as Bruce finishes tagging its ear to pair it with its mother. Bruce pulls out his cell phone and enters the calf into their database which tracks each cow's birthing characteristics, an elegant use of modern technology in what is a timeless craft of animal husbandry.

For the next 7 weeks I spent many mornings joining the Allen's on those 6 am calf checks, working shoulder to shoulder with 5th generation ranchers, reveling in each moment that connected me more deeply with the people and land of this valley. From time to time, I would look up in awe of the Anthracites and Flattop covered in snow and think how lucky I am to be part of a long standing tradition in a magnificent place. These mornings were filled with intention, and I felt an appreciation of this place embed itself deeper in who I am.

Beyond its beauty, community is what makes this place unique. Being able to share these mornings with Bruce and Rob, people I might not have crossed paths with everyday, shows the depth and diversity of this community. Working shoulder to shoulder with the Allens forged friendships that have allowed me to see firsthand their personal motivations to care of the land and the animals in their stead and why they chose to return to Crested Butte to build a livelihood off the land.



Not every valley is committed to multi generation ranch families, and I am grateful for each moment I am able to spend with such a rooted part of our community. This shared experience with the Allens gives me a deeper appreciation of this community and the motivation to protect the lands we love. We have something special here and I am committed to protecting what we have for future generations.

We love to work alongside one another to shoulder burdens together, from the spring brandings to summer trail days this is a valley of shared work and that builds strong communities. I am grateful to be a part of this place.

Noel Durant  
Executive Director



# You Did It! Now the river will run free, forever.

## The replacement of Gunsight Bridge is in the home stretch.

It has been a long time coming, but finally, we began the installation of the new Gunsight Bridge at the beginning of September. We are excited to see the river health improve and the wetlands replenished downstream.

The process began in 2011 when the Land Trust partnered with Coal Creek Watershed Coalition, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, and private landowners to complete a visionary plan for the Upper Slate River Watershed to ensure clean water, healthy wildlife habitat, and recreation could all thrive in the river valley.

In collaboration with our partners, we completed consecutive studies that illuminated the stress of the existing Gunsight Bridge on the Slate River and the downstream wetlands.

To alleviate the stressors on the river, the new bridge span will be lengthened, the current in stream piers will be removed, and a culvert will be installed under the railroad grade (southwest of the bridge) to allow water to flow through the floodplain more naturally.

## Thanks to You.

The downstream wetlands will be restored and in turn will provide habitat for calving elk and moose as they move down valley in the fall. In addition, we will now be able to float under the bridge on our stand up paddle boards. Parking at the Oh Be Joyful Campground will be the best option and provide a longer float. Balancing recreation and wildlife, the new bridge will allow the Slate River Valley to continue to flourish and embody the spirit of our community.

We could not install this unique steel suspension bridge without the passion of our community for restoring and protecting our natural places. Thank you for bringing this project across the finish line. Our next generation will be able to safely ride their bikes or nordic ski across the bridge knowing that the Slate River and its habitat is healthy and supporting wildlife as it should.



Photo: Constance Mahoney





**Want to protect Long Lake, forever?** Donate today to ensure clean water, affordable housing, pristine wildlife habitat, and recreational access to Long Lake, forever. #longlivelonglake

Photo: Ron Baker





# Long Live Long Lake

## A WIN WIN WIN PROJECT

On a hot summer day in the middle of July, after the afternoon rain has passed, perhaps you long for a quick escape from town to cool off as the sun sits low in the sky. After a bike ride on Lupine, a hike in the alpine, or a walk on the Lower Loop, you hop in your car, drive up Washington Gulch, and the next thing you know, you are strolling along the shores of a shimmering, pristine lake.

Maybe this is where you learned to swim or fish with your family. Maybe you kayak or paddle board on the tranquil water with friends.

Does it bring back memories of the aspen leaves turning, mule deer sharing the water with you or hawks circling overhead?

Whatever your connection, we all have created memories at Long Lake. Now, it's time to come together to protect Long Lake for future generations who will create their own memories.

### **Why now? This is urgent.**

The Long Lake property is in the cross hairs of the public lands debate because the US Forest Service (USFS) can't properly care for this land and meet the needs of our community. Fortunately, local USFS staff approached the Crested Butte Land Trust with the opportunity to manage this 120 acre tract of land sandwiched between private property and ranch land. The Land Trust is committed to being a hands-on, responsive neighbor at a critical time of change in our valley.

Public recreation on Long Lake isn't guaranteed. This community gem could be sold to a developer and therefore the current marriage of recreation, wildlife habitat, and ranching would be lost forever. **The stakes have never been higher.**

Wildlife habitat. Sustainable ranching. Recreational access. Clean water. Together, we

have an opportunity for each of these priorities to flourish here in Crested Butte by protecting Long Lake. The Long Lake Exchange is a perfect example of how it is possible to balance our conservation values. The completion of this project will ensure our access to the lake, wildlife habitat, clean water, and recreation will remain intact now and into the future. In addition, the Land Trust will continue to lease 44-acres of the Long Lake property to the Allen Ranch for grazing, allowing ranching to thrive in our valley.

### **The plan.**

It's a bit complicated, so bear with us. To own and protect community access to the eastern shore of Long Lake, the Land Trust will conduct a land exchange with the USFS. This is how it will work:

1. The Land Trust will purchase 613 acres on the western slope of Fossil Ridge, accessible via Lost Canyon Road, from the Trust for Public Land (TPL).

*Continued on the next page.*

## **What can YOU make happen?**

- Protected access to Long Lake.
- 613 acres added to the Gunnison National Forest.
- \$2.5 million donated to the Gunnison Valley Housing Foundation.



*Continued from the previous page.*

2. The money raised to purchase the Fossil Ridge property will be transferred to the Gunnison Valley Housing Foundation (GVHF) to ensure our valley can be affordable for all.
3. The Land Trust will trade the newly purchased Fossil Ridge property along with the 15 acres protected on Copley Lake, near the townsite of Irwin, for full ownership of 120 acres on Long Lake.
4. The USFS will own and manage 15 acres on Copley Lake and the 613 acres on Fossil Ridge (both fully surrounded by USFS land).

**This is more than just a land transaction. Let's keep our valley affordable.**

This project embodies the heart and soul of our valley. The Fossil Ridge acreage was donated by longtime local Butch Clark who, with great foresight, included a future-sale stipulation that all proceeds from the sale of Fossil Ridge directly support the need for affordable housing in the Gunnison Valley. Therefore, the money raised to purchase Fossil Ridge property will go directly to the GVHF.

Currently, we all feel the toll that the lack of affordable housing is taking on our community. Restaurants can't find enough workers, Western Colorado University can't hire enough professors, and even our local post office closes for an hour in the middle of the day. Together, we have the opportunity to improve this AND conserve a vital piece of land. Over \$2.5 million will be donated to the GVHF to ensure our community can afford to live in this special valley now and in the future. This is truly a win win win situation because the money we raise will stay right here in the valley.

**You can be a part of the solution.**

Your gift today protects Long Lake. You will ensure that we continue to be a vibrant community where people from all walks of life can live comfortably. And, you will help keep these funds in the Gunnison Valley, further bolstering our healthy local economy. What's not to love?

**Think Forward. Act Now. #longlivelonglake**

To learn more visit [www.cblandtrust.org/long-lake](http://www.cblandtrust.org/long-lake) or give Noel a call at 970-349-1206.

Photo: Trevor Bona

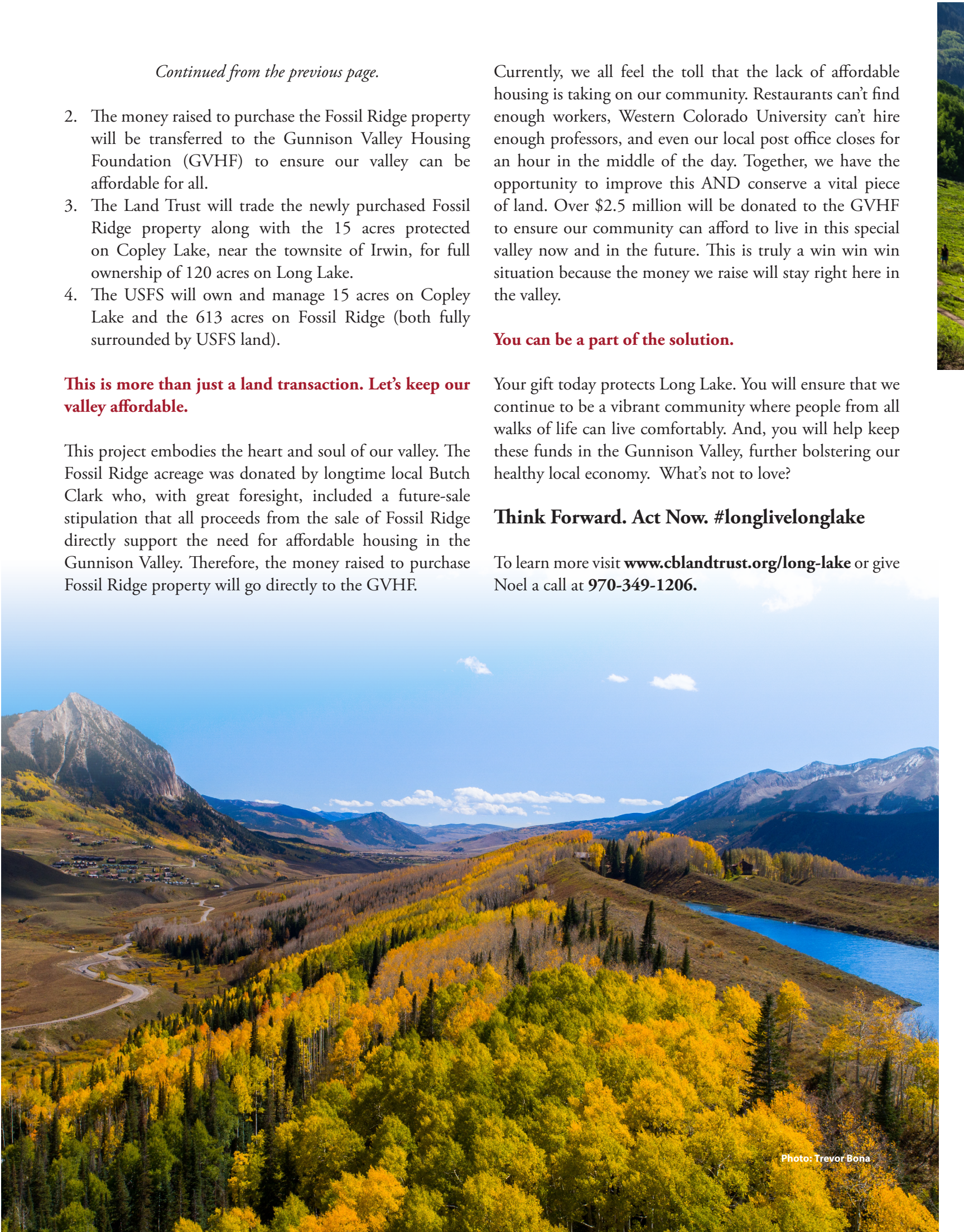






Photo: John Holder

## COLLABORATION. TOGETHER WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

### 18 Stakeholders. 6 Months. 1 Cohesive Plan.

We all love to play. We all love to explore the lands and rivers of our precious valley. The wide open spaces, wildlife, and breathtaking vistas lure us back again and again. Recently, however, the ever growing number of people in search of play and exploration is negatively impacting our lands, rivers, and wildlife.

Are we loving our lands and rivers to death? With increased usage, how do we manage these special places to ensure critical wildlife habitat, ranching, and recreation not only coexist but also thrive in our valley?

This is a difficult task. Beloved by all, the Slate River has seen a significant increase in use over the past couple of years, especially by stand up paddle boarders and other recreational floaters. Facilitating a community conversation to address recreational impacts on the Slate River is the first step towards achieving a healthy balance.

**If we don't act now, we could lose what makes our valley special - proximity to wildlife, national park worthy views, and amazing access to trails.**

In response to the increased number of recreationalists, degradation of wildlife habitat, and trespassing on private property, the Slate River Working Group (SRWG) was convened by the Land Trust and the Town of Crested Butte.

Comprised of 18 stakeholders, the SRWG developed the 2019 Slate River Floating Management Plan, focused on adaptable approaches to uphold the ecological integrity of the Upper Slate River. Together, we are acting now for the future of our valley.

This plan includes recommendations to increase signage, conduct a comprehensive river study of recreational use, improve cattle fences across the river, restore river banks, and implement a voluntary no-float period on the river to lessen the disturbance to the Great Blue Heron Rookery during their sensitive nesting period. The next step is to identify funding sources to ensure implementation of the plan over the coming years.

This will not only be a win for our community, but also a model for how our community can rally to protect what we love - our beautiful river valley and the blue herons.

Wildlife, conservation values, ranching and recreationalists can coexist on the same land and water. The issues are complex, the conversations are difficult, and the compromises include sacrifice. However, our community members have shown respect for one another through this visionary process. We are acting now to protect the future of the Slate River Valley.



Visit [cblandtrust.org/project/slate-river-working-group/](https://cblandtrust.org/project/slate-river-working-group/) to read the entire management plan.



# PROTECT THE LAND YOU LOVE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION TO ENJOY.



Photos: Lydia Stern.

## What impact do you want to leave on this world? Leave a legacy to ensure future generations can enjoy the land we all love.

By adding a gift to the Crested Butte Land Trust in your estate plan, you are protecting the land and water that shape the character and spirit of the Gunnison Valley. Your gift will safeguard majestic vistas and recreational access to our favorite places, as well as allow our ranching heritage and wildlife to thrive in the Gunnison Valley.

*Your legacy will live on, forever.*

A special thank you to those who have already included the Crested Butte Land Trust in their estate planning:

Anonymous (3), L.E. and R. Becker, Frank Brookins, Liz Cameron, Mike Gould, Denis Hall, Jeff Hermanson, Karen Hickey, Jane Martindell, Margaret Mead, Melanie Rees, Phil Roy, John Simmons, Mary Lou Skinner and Richard Kimball, Becky and Joe Williams, Gretchen Wil-







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COVER PHOTO: Matt Burt



[director@cblandtrust.org](mailto:director@cblandtrust.org)

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970.349.1206



PHOTO: Jerry Clark









Photo: Katie Stjrenholm

# We are hitting the road!

We will bring a piece of Crested Butte to your hometown this November.

Join us for fun evenings to reconnect and meet new people who love Crested Butte as much as you do right in your hometown. Noel, our Executive Director, will speak about our current project, Long Lake, as well as update you on other land conservation efforts in the Gunnison Valley.

Visit our website for event details: [www.cblandtrust.org/events](http://www.cblandtrust.org/events)



**November 13** Oklahoma City, OK

**When:** 6:00-7:00 pm

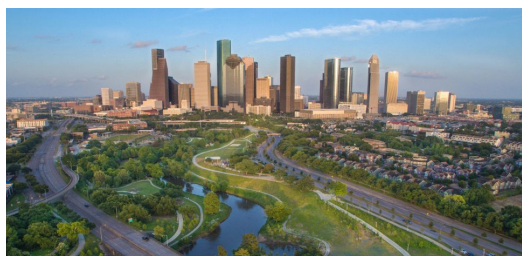
**Where:** At the home of Ruth and Chris Carey



**January 2019** Front Range, CO

**When:** 5:30 pm

**Where:** TBD

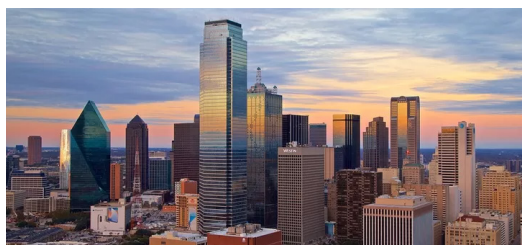


**November 14**

**Houston, TX**

**When:** 6:00-8:00 pm

**Where:** At the home of Jane and Jerry Clark

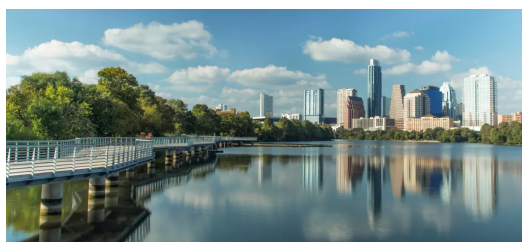


**November 15**

**Dallas, TX**

**When:** 6:30-8:30 pm

**Where:** Royal Oaks Country Club



**November 16**

**Austin, TX**

**When:** 5:30-7:30 pm

**Where:** At the home of Kristin Tollefson and Jeff Serra

For full details, please visit [cblandtrust.org/events](http://cblandtrust.org/events)  
or contact Arielle at [arielle@cblandtrust.org](mailto:arielle@cblandtrust.org) or 970-349-1206. We can't wait to see you around the country!





# COMMUNITY FIRST FOUNDATION GIVESDAY<sup>®</sup> 12.04.18

COLORADO

Photo: Barbara Kauffman

## Can't wait to see you there!

Save the date for Land Trust events around Crested Butte.

### WINTER EVENTS



#### Feb 21: Yurt Party-Volunteer Celebration

Bring your skis and stay for a drink. We want to celebrate you and all your hard work this year. Join us at the Magic Meadows Yurt on Mike's Mile to celebrate our wonderful volunteers.

### SUMMER EVENTS



#### Dec 28: Long Lake Holiday Party--Meridian Lakes

Celebrate the holidays with the Land Trust and support the Long Lake project. Remember, you can help conserve lands, make housing more affordable, and keep the money raised right here in the valley. It's a win win win. What's not to love?

Join us at the home of Beth and Joe Hise from 5-7 pm.



#### July 6: Summer Celebration Dinner

Celebrate conservation in the Gunnison Valley. An evening full of delicious food with a view, great company, and live music.

#### July 12 & 13: 18th Annual Caddis Cup

Another summer full of fantastic fishing awaits. Sign up for the 18th annual Caddis Cup Fishing Tournament to compete for the largest catch. A new date this year.

For full details, please visit [cblandtrust.org/events](http://cblandtrust.org/events)  
or contact Arielle at [arielle@cblandtrust.org](mailto:arielle@cblandtrust.org) or 970-349-1206. We can't wait to see you around!