

# FOREVER

## Crested Butte Land Trust

Protecting the land and water that  
shape the unique spirit of the Gunnison Valley

photo: **dusty demerson**

Crested Butte  
**LAND  
TRUST**



### 2019 Summer Newsletter

Message from Executive Director

Saving Long Lake

Remembering a Conservation Icon

Bringing Your Community Together

Summer Event Calendar





Jerry Clark

**A**s I look out my office at a snow-laden Mount Crested Butte, I can't help but anticipate the wildflowers and flowing streams that come after the snowfall like Crested Butte had this winter!

Watching the snow start to melt and the waters surge under the Gothic Road bridge takes me back to afternoon ski excursions last winter in the Slate River Valley to check on our new Gunsight Bridge. Your support in replacing this bridge brings new life to the Slate River as it is now able to flow freely and replenish the wetland home of our valley's wildlife.

While standing on the bridge and looking out on this peaceful valley, I contemplated what the river volume and velocity this summer would bring, as well as our new approach to river recreation management with the Slate River Working Group. "It has been inspiring to work with community ranchers, private landowners, river users, land managers, and wildlife advocates in addressing shared values, areas of concern, and the development of a 2019 management plan to protect the Slate River Valley. This type of group collaboration is a testament to the moments we all have experienced in this valley that spurred us to invest in this place and to carry the torch of protecting what we know is unique to these lands.

In *A Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold wrote in 1949, "There are two things that interest me: the relation of people to each other, and the relation of people to land." In a world where we find ourselves

more disconnected from the natural world with every passing day, sharing experiences outside matter not just to us personally, but also to the natural world that sustains us. We all need personal moments in nature; they provide perspective on how we fit into this world. They give us the clarity to see that we must take personal action to protect a future for people and for the wild that inspires us.

Your personal action is making a difference to protect Long Lake, add new public land to the Gunnison National Forest, and support the working families in need of affordable housing in our community. We're rapidly closing in on our goal for our most ambitious land acquisition project to date. We've just surpassed 80% of our \$3,200,000 goal, with over \$750,000

raised in the last eight weeks! The more I learn about the Gunnison Valley, the more I understand how the legacy of personal action and community collaboration have protected these wild lands and sustain natural world experiences for those engaging in this captivating valley.

I hope you'll find the enclosed stories of legacy, generosity, and innovation in the face of change as inspiring as I do, and that you can find inspiration from the land you have protected.

Respectfully,

**Noel Durant**, Executive Director



## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**"We all  
need  
personal  
moments  
in nature."**





# SAVING LONG LAKE

Unlike its name, the campaign to save Long Lake has been relatively short. With your help we can cross the finish line to save this much-loved community amenity.

The Crested Butte Land Trust stepped up to protect Long Lake 10 months ago. Since that time, nearly every facet of the Gunnison Valley community has come forward to support the effort. Affordable housing, public lands management and access to the lake now all stand to win as we approach our fundraising goal of an additional \$750,000 to make this \$3.2 million-project complete.

## Doing What is Best for the Gunnison Valley

Thanks to the broad coalition we have built around preserving public access to this beautiful body of water near Washington Gulch, doing what is best for Long Lake means doing what is best for the Gunnison Valley as a whole. The Crested Butte Land Trust has negotiated a land exchange with the United States Forest Service, which currently manages 120 acres of public land on Long Lake, but intended to sell the land because it is a small isolated property with a high maintenance burden. Through the exchange, the Land Trust will swap nearly 630 acres of private property within the National Forest for ownership of the Long Lake acreage. In doing so, the Land Trust will preserve public access to Long Lake while the private property will become public for everyone to enjoy.

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John Holder

John Holder





# SAVING LONG LAKE

David Dieckhaus

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## The deal gets even better

Affordable housing in the Gunnison Valley will get a \$2.5 million boost from funds generated by the land exchange with the Forest Service. These proceeds will go to the Valley Housing Fund and will help construct and finance affordable housing for working families throughout the Gunnison Valley.

Support for this project has come from municipalities, the State of Colorado, national foundations, fellow non-profits and individual givers. We've seen these groups take novel approaches to raise funds. The following are a few examples.

- / A group of homeowners auctioned a week's stay at their homes, resulting in \$20,000 in donations.
- / Shannon and Chip Fudge and Kirsten Tollefson and Jeff Serra have made challenge gifts for Oklahoma and Texas, the states in which they live.
- / CB Nordic gave their participants in the Alley Loop a chance to support the Land Trust, which has resulted in 46 individual supporters donating to our project.
- / CBMBA contributed some of their hard earned funds to support Long Lake as a community project.
- / The Town of Crested Butte has shown its support for Long Lake through both grant support and trade land purchase from the Land Trust.
- / The Town of Mount Crested Butte and the City of Gunnison have committed funds and the potential for multi-year support of the Long Lake project.
- / From the Conservation Alliance to the Gates Family Foundation, the refrain from large philanthropic groups is the same; they want to support this innovative approach to land conservation.

As we close the gap on funding this project, **your support will protect Long Lake for generations to come** while supporting our community fabric of working families. **Rarely do we have an opportunity to help so many people while protecting such a beautiful place. Help us make it happen.**

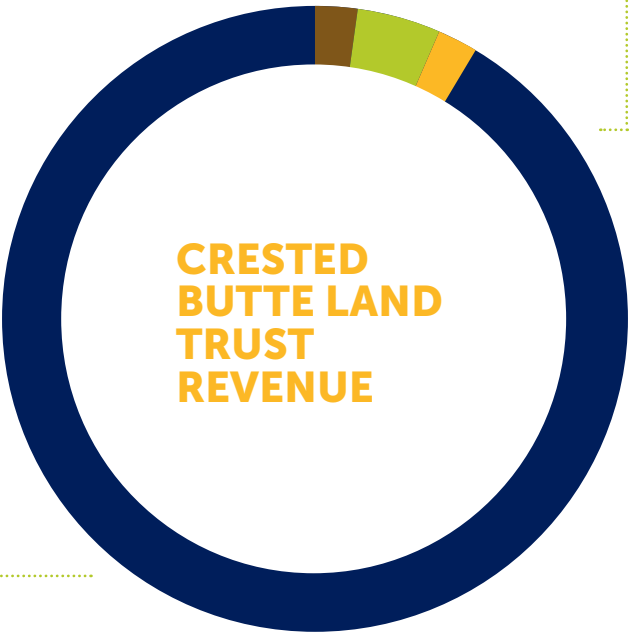
## Long Live Long Lake!



**YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS TO THE  
GUNNISON VALLEY.**  
SEE THE CRESTED BUTTE LAND TRUST'S  
IMPACT IN NUMBERS...



- Individual Contributions **91%**
- In Kind Donations **2%**
- Special Events & Retail **5%**
- Grants **2%**



- / 15% increase in acres treated for noxious weeds
- / 47 states in the United States with donors supporting land conservation and stewardship in the Gunnison Valley
- / 100% increase in conservation landowner engagement
- / 200+ miles walked monitoring conserved lands
- / 220+ hours working alongside landowners and agricultural operators
- / 750 acres of land protection announced in the Long Lake Land Exchange, our largest land acquisition project ever!
- / 15,000 pounds of structural steel, 1,200 feet of micro pile deep foundations, 300 feet of cable, and 50 cubic yards of concrete capable of holding down 500,000 pounds in our new Gunsight Bridge!



- Land Protection and Stewardship **88%**
- Administrative **8%**
- Fundraising **4%**



# THE SLATE RIVER WORKING GROUP: BRINGING YOUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER

## Protecting the Great Blue Heron

**W**ithout the enormous birds in their branches, the two stands of spruce trees that make up the Slate River blue heron rookery don't look like much. But each spring, as the herons return from their winter habitats at lower elevations, the trees host elaborate courtship dances and serve as homes for heron chicks. Male herons return first to the rookery to spruce up and defend established nests. Females follow about a week later, and would-be couples fence with their long, yellow bills. Males eventually invite females to their nests where they hand off sticks to one another in a ritual that seals the nesting deal.

Similar ceremonies happen at thousands of rookeries across North America each year. But the Slate River rookery is unique in several respects. First, it's at an unusually high elevation. Second, herons typically do not nest in conifers, like spruce. Third, it's the only

rookery in the watershed and so provides biodiversity that might otherwise be lacking in the Upper Gunnison River Valley.

## A Fine Balance

As nondescript as those spruce trees might be, they have become focal points over the last two years as the Crested Butte Land Trust and 17 other parties have come together as the Slate River Working Group to find compromises that balance habitat protection and river recreation. Your support enabled the Land Trust to step forward and convene this collaborative process. In doing so, the Land Trust honored its multifaceted mission and extended its stewardship beyond the acreage it owns alongside the Slate River.

"The goal," said Hedda Peterson, the Land Trust's Stewardship Director, "is to inform a new river ethic for users of the Slate River. Compromise was, at first, not easy to find."

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# BRINGING YOUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER

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"We knew we could not solve this unilaterally," Peterson said. "But at the same time we realized that our mission hit on each of the core areas of this challenge, putting us in the driver's seat to convene this group."

The working group strove to find consensus-based solutions, and a professional, discussion leader helped to facilitate talks. Early this year, the collection of stakeholders presented its proposals. One of the most significant was a voluntary no-float period from the start of spring runoff through July 15, the period in which herons at the rookery mate, nest and raise their chicks.

**"We were able to bring the working group together through our broad, non-advocacy role."**

**- NOEL DURANT,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

A scientific study of the Slate River herons, the first wildlife-specific study conducted on Land Trust property, informed the working group of its proposal to create a voluntary no-float period. The Land Trust commissioned Western Colorado University wildlife biologist Patrick Magee and his students to carry out a study of the rookery in 2018. Magee and his team found that herons occupied the nesting site from mid-March through mid-August, when all chicks left the nests and all adults consequently left the rookery, too. With all nests still occupied through the first week of July, the study showed that the spring and early summer seasons were the most critical to protecting the site from disturbance. A July 15 end date for the voluntary no-float period would ameliorate human impacts on the birds for 123 days of the 140-day nesting season, according to study data.



Along with the voluntary no-float period, the working group also proposed an educational campaign that would include new signage along the river, outreach to partners with consistent river use information, and the hiring of an intern paid by the Crested Butte Land Trust and Town of Crested Butte to offer recreational users information about appropriate river usage.

"We were able to bring the working group together through our broad, non-advocacy role. The real stake we have in the future of the Slate River also makes us a key partner," said Noel Durant, the Land Trust's Executive Director.

The management strategies put forward by the working group are neither permanent nor unchanging. Rather, the Land Trust and its partners see the strategies as adaptive, responding to feedback and to measures of whether the voluntary no-float period and the educational campaign are working as intended. This summer will be a big test for the working group's proposals, but it won't be a pass-fail exam. Rather, the group will look for ways to improve management of the river. And the result, all stakeholders hope, will allow herons to nest along the Slate River for many more years to come.



# REMEMBERING A CONSERVATION ICON

## ROSIE GEBHART'S GIFT IN MEMORY OF JIM

**T**oday, we take for granted that mountain bikes share trails with cattle, that birdwatchers share rivers with anglers, and that seasonal closures balance human access with wildlife needs. But this was not always the case. Unilateral protection rather than collaborative management was formerly viewed as the best way to conserve land.

But longtime Crested Butte resident and realtor Jim Gebhart and his wife Rosie saw that this model was not sustainable. Rather than restrict development entirely, Jim advocated for the Crested Butte Land Trust to balance development with preservation in such a way that more land could be conserved in more places and for the benefit of more people.

"Jim got the Land Trust to move from buying all land outright to instead use private-public partnerships, where you can sell off some of the land so you can afford to protect the areas of highest conservation value," said Rosie.

Jim passed suddenly in 2005. Rosie, who had been married to Jim since 1980 and with him raised their daughter, Cady, in Crested Butte, began to look for ways to memorialize his legacy.

"His real estate clients called him 'The Honorable Jim Gebhart,'" Rosie said. "He was very ethical and he believed in the principle of preserving open space."

That principle stemmed from Jim's travels around the world, the rapid development he saw happening in other Colorado ski towns, and his passion for the outdoors.

Rosie considered multiple options for creating a memorial to Jim in the Upper Gunnison River Valley. But it wasn't until she connected with Land Trust Executive Director Noel Durant that she identified the Robinson Parcel as the right location to honor Jim's memory and his approach to land conservation.

"The parcel links ranchlands conserved by the Gunnison Ranchland Conservation Legacy with acreage held in conservation easements by the Land Trust, just as Jim was

himself a link between the two organizations," Rosie said.

The Rec Path between Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte traverses much of the Robinson Parcel. The working hay meadows you enjoy when riding the Rec Path are a visible link to Jim's history of service to protect ranching and his leadership with the Gunnison Ranchland Conservation Legacy. Exemplifying Jim's public-private approach, the Land Trust sold

part of the parcel as a residential property to enable the purchase of the hay meadows that are a key component of the grazing patterns in the valley.

Through a generous gift by Rosie, three benches will be placed on the Robinson Parcel at the Jim Gebhart Memorial Overlook this summer along with a plaque describing Jim's legacy. The benches, arranged in a "U", are meant to foster conversation among people who might not otherwise sit down and talk.

"Creating a place to be social is what Jim would have wanted. I don't think he alienated anyone which was amazing in a small

town like Crested Butte. Everyone just really loved him. He was about getting together socially, talking and just hanging out," Rosie said.

Limited naming opportunities exist for each protected property owned by the Land Trust. A named gift provides you and supporters with the opportunity to deepen connections with the protected lands of the Gunnison Valley while making a critical investment to protect the land you love. If you are interested in a naming opportunity to help protect open space in the Gunnison Valley, please contact Director of Development, Cynthia Wolff at [cynthia@cblandtrust.org](mailto:cynthia@cblandtrust.org).

When visitors and residents take time to sit on the Jim Gebhart Memorial Overlook benches, they will have a place to converse and to enjoy Crested Butte's open spaces, and they'll have Rosie and Jim Gebhart to thank.



© courtesy of Rosie Gebhart



# STORY WALK

## FOSTERING LEARNING ABOUT THE NATURAL WORLD



Something new sprouted beside the Lower Loop Trail three years ago. In mid-June, small signs appeared, thirteen in all, each decked with pages from a children's book. It was the first StoryWalk® in the Gunnison Valley, and it expanded the roles of the Crested Butte Land Trust, the Gunnison County Library District and children's imaginations throughout the summer.

But not everything about the StoryWalk® is fun. Creating it requires a librarian to carry out a seemingly sacrilegious act—dissecting a book.

"I have two copies in case I mess it up, but I still don't like the idea of using an X-acto knife on a book," said Maria Fenerty, who runs youth services at the Crested Butte Library's location in the historic Old Rock building.

For this year's StoryWalk®, Fenerty selected *Bird Watch* by Christie Matheson. The story, illustrated with bright watercolors, takes children through a forest filled with birds they're likely to see along the Lower Loop Trail: wrens, hummingbirds, doves and bluebirds. But the page about banana slugs, the six-inch-long, bright yellow inhabitants of forests on the West Coast, betrays the author's California roots.

Banana slugs don't stand a chance of surviving in the cold, dry climate of the Gunnison Valley, but that dissonance is a chance to get children thinking about what makes Crested Butte unique, said Fenerty. Plus, Fenerty is partial to the slugs as a former field biology student in Santa Cruz.

"My first thought is to skip those pages because the slug is so obscure. But it's an opportunity to put in a blurb about 'What is this?' and 'Why don't we have that?'" she said.

The StoryWalk® collaboration is one of many ways that the Gunnison County Library District is changing to become more than a community resource bounded by brick and mortar

walls. But the StoryWalk®, located on one of the Crested Butte Land Trust's most impactful properties and alongside one of the town's busiest trails, is the innovative library service that will likely touch many of you this summer.

"Through our partnership with the Crested Butte Land Trust, the library is fortunate to be able to spread its mission of learning, discovery, and a love of reading beyond the doors of the Old Rock," said Gunnison County Libraries Director Drew Brookhart.

The appeal of the StoryWalk® is also the sort of small incentive that local families need to get outside together, Fenerty said.

"Even though we're an amazing valley, people need a little fish on a hook to get outside sometimes. Especially for busy families with little kids, for them to go out on a 10-minute walk and to get a piece of that world for 10 minutes is super valuable."

### Meeting Community Needs

The StoryWalk® exemplifies how your support enables the Land Trust to foster learning about the natural world. The site of the literary journey, the Lower Loop Trail, is also a clear illustration of how the Land Trust steps up to meet community needs. The Land Trust began working in 1991 to restore and maintain public access to the Slate River Valley via what is now the Lower Loop Trail. Access had been lost by the early 1990s when property between Crested Butte and the Slate River Valley was sold. After six years of fundraising and negotiations, the Crested Butte Land Trust purchased key parcels and restored access in 1998. Today, the Lower Loop Trail is the busiest trail in Crested Butte, seeing more than 100,000 visitors annually. Its proximity to town and the easy terrain make it a great place for children and families to explore.

This summer's StoryWalk® will kick off June 17, but you can expect to see small signs and small birdwatchers along the Lower Loop Trail all summer long.





# THANK YOU

## FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT

### **Gunsight Bridge Replacement**

1% for Open Space, Inc.  
Debbie and Bruce Alpern  
Anonymous  
Joe Banta  
Bill Brandt  
Charla Brown and Rob Burnett  
Chris Mikesell Foundation  
Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley  
Susan and Reggie Coon  
Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association

Crested Butte Music Festival  
Crested Butte Nordic  
Irwin Guides  
Laura Jane Musser Fund  
Ellen and Jim Martin  
Sandy McNamara and Neil Watko  
Honeydew Murray  
Kathy and Scott King  
New Belgium Brewing  
New Pig Corporation  
Lotte and Kevin Roache  
Robbie Robinson, Jr.  
Ruth H. Brown Foundation

James Schmidt  
Peggy and Kurt Schrammel  
Daphne and Jay Shipowitz  
Suzanne and John Simmons  
Laura and Charlie Tomlinson  
Town of Crested Butte  
Upper Gunnison River Water  
Conservancy District  
Western Spirit Cycling  
Chris Wirth  
Katalin and Jon Wolff  
Susan and Bob Youker

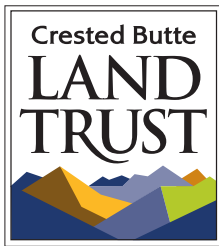
### **Long Lake Land Exchange**

1% for Open Space, Inc.  
Carmen and Craig Alexander  
Debbie and Jim Alsup  
Sandra Anderson  
Barb Becker  
Kathy and Clif Barnhart  
Allan Beezley  
Jackie Bird and William Hamilton  
Ken Bolich  
Charla Brown and Rob Burnett  
Deborah and Russell Brown  
Cathy Buchanan  
Lenni and Bill Burke  
Cassia and Ryan Cadenhead  
Casady Henry  
Chris Mikesell Foundation  
Christopher Hansen-Murray  
City of Gunnison  
The Conservation Alliance  
Susie and Reggie Coon  
Shirley and Gene Cordes  
Anda and Win Craven  
Eva and Richard Critchfield  
Cat Cummins  
Rachel Dankof  
Cathy and Peter Dea  
Eleven and Irwin Guides  
EpicPromise  
John Erwin  
Lisa and David Flesher  
Jan and Joe Foerch  
Shannon and Chip Fudge  
Gates Family Foundation  
Marilyn and Rob Gentry

Mandy and Bob Gillie  
Liberty Godshall and Ed Zwick  
Susan and Jim Griffith  
Mary Ellen and Bill Gumerson  
Lash Hansborough  
Denise and Blake Hawk  
Betsy Heartfield  
Jeff Hermanson  
Adam Herrmann  
Lou Ann Hight  
Beth and Joe Hise  
Kathleen Hogan  
Irwin Brewing  
Karen Janssen and Xavi Fane  
Barbara and Bob Kauffman  
Wendy and Mavis Kelsey  
Cary Kinross-Wright and Mark Esposito  
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Peggy Kozal and Michael Bonifazi  
Becky Krone  
Lauren and Tim Kugler  
Margot Levy  
Lucky Penny Events  
Elizabeth and Richard Magann  
Karen and Charles Mangum  
Marina and Bruce Jefferis  
Diane Markowitz and Mark Reaman  
Marina McGehee and Russell Scanlon  
Lucky Penny Events  
Cathy and Chuck McGinnis  
Debby and Douglas McQueen  
Desiree and Dave Miller  
Monika Nevergold and Kathy Parker  
Carolyn and Henson Moore

Courtney Norman  
Crested Butte Nordic  
Kathryn Parker  
Nancy and John Parsley  
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Carolyn and Bill Reimber  
Linda and Gareth Roberts  
Anne and Bill Ronai  
Barbara Glazer Rosenblatt and Dr. Randall Lee Rosenblatt  
Emily and David Rothman  
Randi and Tony Stroh  
Gregory Sullivan  
The Pine Tree Foundation  
Kirsten Tollefson and Jeff Serra  
Laura and Charlie Tomlinson  
Town of Crested Butte  
Town of Mt. Crested Butte  
Lois and Ted Uihlein  
Nora Underwood and Brian Inouye  
Kim and Eric Upchurch  
Bob Valentine and Steve Bolton  
Vail Resorts  
Valley Housing Fund  
Lynne and Ralph Veerman  
Christopher Walton  
Jenny and James Ward  
Rebecca and Charles Wilkins  
Katalin and Jon Wolff  
Kim and Tom Zeiner





**P.O. Box 2224  
Crested Butte, CO 81224**

scenic views

wildlife

recreation

ranching

**970.349.1206**  
**cblandtrust.org**

## CRESTED BUTTE LAND TRUST 2019 **SUMMER SCHEDULE**

### **A Starry Evening with the Crested Butte Land Trust / July 6 / 6 p.m.**

132 Meadow Road at the top of Old Kebler Pass

Register at [www.cblandtrust.org/starryevening](http://www.cblandtrust.org/starryevening)

For more information, contact Cynthia Wolff at 970.349.1206 or [cynthia@cblandtrust.org](mailto:cynthia@cblandtrust.org)

### **Caddis Cup Fly Fishing Tournament / July 12-13**

[www.cblandtrust.org/caddiscup](http://www.cblandtrust.org/caddiscup)

For more information contact Cynthia Wolff at 970.349.1206 or [cynthia@cblandtrust.org](mailto:cynthia@cblandtrust.org)

### **Gebhart Memorial Overlook Ribbon Cutting / August 2 / 4 p.m.**

Visit [www.cblandtrust.org](http://www.cblandtrust.org) for further details

**Stewardship Education Days:** For additional details, please visit our website at: <https://www.cblandtrust.org/events>

**Riparian restoration on the Upper Slate River at the new Gunsight Bridge / June 15**

**The glacial history of the Upper Gunnison Valley and Meridian Lake (Long Lake) with Dr. Bruce Bartleson / July 20**

**A lesson in nature photography with John Holder / August 3**

**The intersection of trails and conservation with Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association / September 9**

**What it takes to keep working ranchlands working with Rudy Rozman / September 21**



Greta Starrett