

Crested Butte Land Trust

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



2017
HIGHLIGHTS
& 2018
SUMMER
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.



Working Together To Conserve Water

A RANCHER'S STORY FOR WATER CONSERVATION

As our population continues to grow across the western United States, the strain on our water systems from municipal use, ranching, and recreation is posing great challenges today and in the future.

The combination of development pressure and the erratic and sometimes extreme weather we have experienced in the past years, including low snowfall/high temperatures, is making people in our community more aware of the importance of caring for our streams and rivers. However, ranchers have long cared for their water systems because how integral water is to their livelihood.

Rudy Rozman, a native Crested Butte and long-time rancher, is one of those ranchers. Rudy takes care of the Robinson Meadows, a property between the towns of Mt. Crested Butte and Crested Butte owned by the Crested Butte Land Trust. This swath of land balances, recreation, ranching, and wildlife habitat needs. To irrigate this land, water is transported by a ditch nearly a mile from Washington Gulch to the Robinson Meadows.

This Rozich Ditch has been in continuous use since it was built by Rudy's step-grandfather in the early 1900s. The majority of the water from this ditch feeds the Robinson Meadows—providing the pastureland and hayfields you see when you drive by on Gothic Road on your way to Mt. Crested Butte or walk on the Rec Path between the valley floor and the mountain. Over the years, the diversion of water back into Washington Gulch has taken its toll on the ditch. Heavy water runoff from Washington Gulch, like last year, often flows past the headgate used to close the ditch when not in use, undermining the integrity of the ditch and wasting water.

That's now about to change.

Thanks to your support, we will be working in partnership with Rudy to upgrade the Rozich Ditch and replace the hand-built stone diversion structure with an easier to manage system. This upgrade will make irrigating the Robinson Meadows more efficient and effective—conserving water and saving time. Once Rudy has used the water allocated to this land, he will then be able to easily divert the remaining water back into Washington Gulch.

This improvement means better pasture and stream management. Rudy and the Land Trust aren't alone in focusing on this type of improvement. However, as a community-supported conservation organization, it's your contributions that make these management changes a reality. Thank you. And Thank you Rozmans.



Rudy and Lois Rozman, Crested Butte Land Trust 2018 Volunteers of the Year, are committed to water conservation. Rudy's family has ranched for over four generations.

THE DIFFERENCE YOU ARE MAKING THIS YEAR

When We all Care for the River, Partnerships Flourish


Since the inception of the Crested Butte Land Trust, the Slate River Valley has served as a conservation focal point. Its presence in the heart of Paradise Divide is one of the most prominent characteristics of the Upper Gunnison Basin, defining Crested Butte as an exceptional place to live, work, and play.

Through a variety of partnerships with local families and landowners, and growing community support, we have saved over 1,000 acres in the Slate River Valley. These conserved lands protect wetlands for wildlife habitat, maintain a connected valley floor for agricultural use, and facilitate recreational access to the beloved open spaces that frame the view of Paradise Divide.

Over the past several summers, recreational river use on the upper Slate River has increased in popularity, especially between Gunsight Bridge and the Skyland pedestrian bridge. This has sparked concern about respect for wildlife habitat, protection of private property, and how to best handle the increased usage of the river. Management of these issues are compounded by the patchwork of landowners and managers along the banks of the Slate River.

Together, with the Town of Crested Butte, we are overseeing the creation of a collaborative working group comprised of ranchers, recreationalists, wildlife managers, water conservation organizations, federal land managers, and local landowners. We seek to create a management plan that will balance the interests of those who love and care for the Slate River. This kind of collective vision and partnership is what conserves special places like Crested Butte, forever.



A Great Blue Heron stands in a wetland, surrounded by tall green grass and numerous yellow wildflowers. The heron has a long, sharp beak and a distinctive blue-grey head and neck. Its body is covered in grey and white feathers, with some reddish-brown feathers visible on its wings. The background is a soft-focus field of yellow flowers.

DON'T BE SCARIN' THE HERONS!

How are We Affecting the Heron Rookery on the Slate River?

The wetlands in the Slate River Valley are home to an abundance of wildlife, including the highest elevation rookery (nesting site) of Great Blue Herons in Colorado.

With increasing recreational use of the Slate River there is growing concern that the amplified noise of river use could negatively impact the herons' nesting season, and they might abandon their nests. That's because herons are considered to be shy birds that usually require privacy when raising their young.

Thanks to your ongoing support, we are initiating a research project in collaboration with Western State Colorado University and the Coal Creek Watershed Coalition to better understand how the herons behave along the Slate River and how they may be responding to increased public use.

The information collected will allow us to develop management practices to protect the herons' habitat so they can continue to flourish here in the valley for generations to come.

Interested in volunteering? We would love your help taking observations of the heron activity at the rookery. **Please contact Hedda at hedda@cblandtrust.org for more information.**

WHY REPLACE GUNSIGHT BRIDGE?

Do You Remember What Happened Last Summer?



Or the Summer Before...



Gunsight Bridge is a community gem. More than a bridge, it is a beloved bike trail, a coveted wedding location, a favorite spot to fish, and a great location for family fun. However, over the years, the bridge has started to deteriorate and confine the river. We have reached the point where we need to take action to conserve the river and our community's safety.

Why Replace the Bridge?

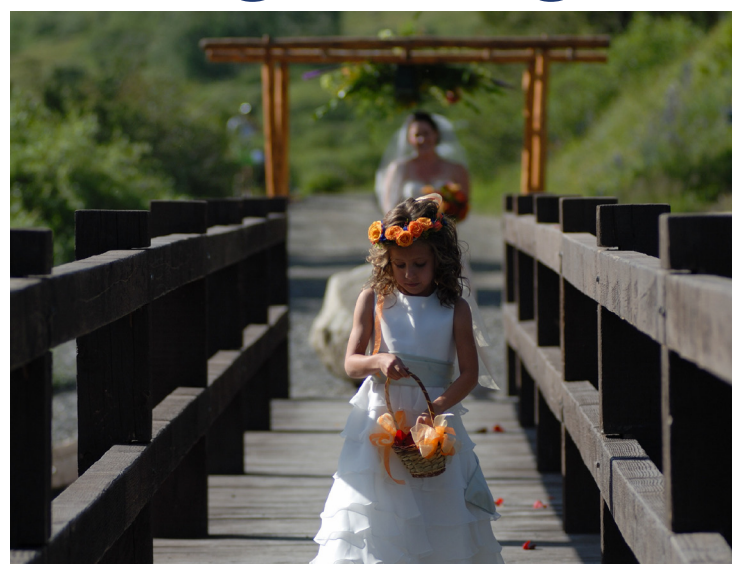
There are a couple reasons we plan to replace Gunsight Bridge. First, the current wooden piers catch natural and unnatural debris from the Slate River causing a backup of water upstream. Secondly, the current bridge's span across the river is too narrow, and constrains the river channel. This prevents the river from freely flowing across its natural floodplain and results in erosion of the bridge structure and the river.

How Will the New Bridge Help?

To alleviate these stressors on the river, the new structure will be 20 feet longer, and a full-span suspension bridge. This will allow the river to re-establish its natural flow ensuring a healthy river and a safe crossing for the next generation to enjoy as much as we do. The new bridge design will also address erosion issues and replenish the adjacent wetlands, which provide critical habitat for calving elk, great blue heron, and a myriad of other wildlife species.



Why Do You Love Gunsight Bridge?

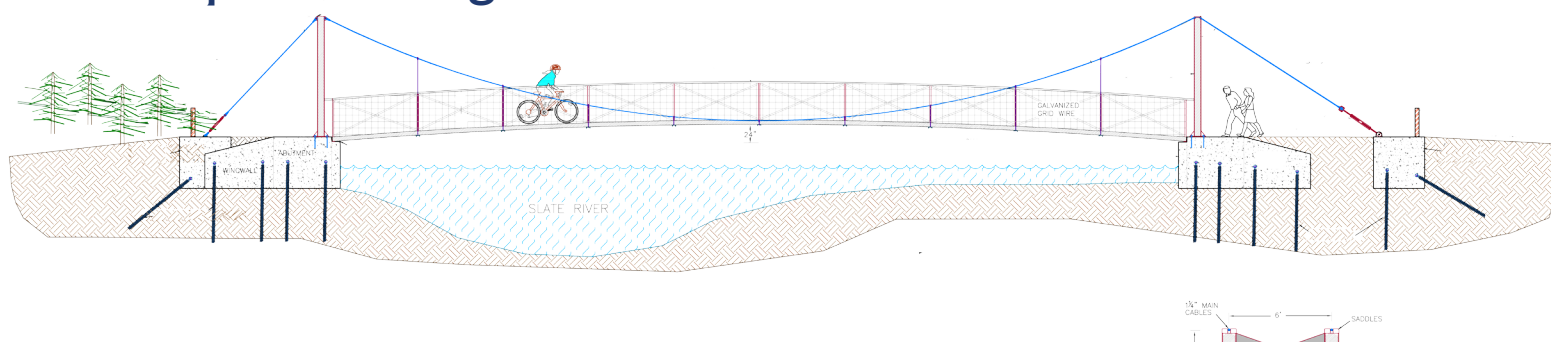


Good News: Construction Starts this September.

We are delighted to announce that construction of the new bridge will begin this fall. The designs for the new bridge (see below) have been approved and nearly 75% of the funding has been secured. Your gift today will help ensure that we can replace the bridge and maintain it well into the future. You, and our Land Trust's supporters, are instrumental in contributing the final \$100,000 to make this possible.

Looking for that distinct building material for a special project? We will be auctioning off the reclaimed lumber from the old bridge at the Summer Celebration Dinner on July 7th. You know the saying, "Home is where the heart is." You can take a bit home with you and all proceeds will go toward the new bridge and river restoration.

New Suspension Bridge:





DID YOU KNOW? SNOWPACK STUDIES HAPPEN RIGHT HERE IN OUR BACKYARD

Andrew Breibart is a hydrologist for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the Gunnison Valley and a longtime Land Trust supporter. He has dedicated his career to understanding water issues in the Gunnison Valley, especially as water becomes a scarce resource in the west.

Every year, beyond his work with the BLM, Andrew joins the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to collect snow samples to project water run off totals for the Gunnison Valley. This community research effort is essential to helping ranchers plan for spring and summer operations. The data collection for these projections happens right here in your backyard, on land you help protect.

Since 1936, the NRCS has been collecting snow samples every month at the same location on the Lower Loop, close to where the Magic Meadow Yurt now stands. These days most of the snow sampling is done by remote sensing, but there are still a few sites that rely on a community of volunteers, using the same methods for the last 70 years.

This past winter, Land Trust staff joined Andrew to measure the depth, density, and water capacity of the snow at one of six measurement sights across the Upper Gunnison Valley. From the data collected, Andrew and his team determined that our valley is at about 50% of the median snowpack over the last 30 years. The depth of the snow out at the Lower Loop was a mere 16 inches in this January (2018) compared to 60 inches during last January (2017).

Partnerships like these ensure that we have the science to document the changing weather patterns and to make appropriate decisions on how best to manage our impacts.



ENSURE YOUR VALUES LIVE ON. FOREVER.



Photo: Matt Burt

IS LAND CONSERVATION RIGHT FOR YOU? DO YOU HAVE A STRONG ATTACHMENT TO YOUR LAND?

“Once it’s gone, it’s gone forever...” We hear that a lot when we assist local families in conserving their land. For many, the land has been in their family for generations and it’s something they cherish. For others, they have fond memories of growing up on the land and want to ensure that their children have a place to roam, like they did.

Sometimes folks want to protect scenic views, while others look to maintain lush aspen and spruce forests – and the wildlife that live there. For many ranching families it’s part of their strategy to pass it on to the next generation. There may be income tax benefits to conserving their land too.

What about you? Are you interested in exploring if conservation is right for you? If you’d like to talk more about it, contact Noel at noel@cblandtrust.org. You can also check out additional information on our website: www.cblandtrust.org/land-conservation

THANK YOU!

EVERY GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE...

Because of you, special places in the Gunnison Valley are protected and cared for – now and for future generations. We are truly grateful for your support and involvement. For a complete list of donors and volunteers, including individuals, businesses, foundations, and community organizations from April 15th, 2017 - April 15th, 2018, please see our online 2018 Spring Newsletter at cblandtrust.org.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

May the blooming wildflowers serve as a tribute to our friends listed here, forever inspiring an appreciation for the beautiful landscapes of the Gunnison Valley.

Joanne Banta
Joe Banta
Rose-Marie Bollier
Peggy and John Baker
Beky Lollich
Julia Snyder
Allie Dewey
Susan Coe and Al Adams
Bridget Balbierz
Taylor Pringle
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Ben Louis Duran
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Georgia and Walter Garnsey
Cynthia Kahn
Buffy and Vernon Naake
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Three Affiliated Tribes
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Kristen Graf
Nancy Schoyer
Brian Smith

Leave a Legacy

By adding a gift to the Crested Butte Land Trust in your estate plans, you are protecting the land and water of the Gunnison Valley for the community and for future generations. Your legacy will live on, forever.



Many thanks 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 Wilson.

THANK YOU

to the following Crested Butte Land Trust supporters

for gifts received from April 15, 2017 to April 15, 2018. We sincerely appreciate our community's support of and involvement in the Gunnison Valley's local land trust. Also, thanks to our **Sustaining Members** in green and **Business Affiliates** in blue. If you are interested in becoming a Sustaining Member or Business Affiliate, please call Noel Durant at **970.349.1206**.

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(\$25,000 +)

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Jeff Hermanson

Anna Reilly and Matthew Cullinan

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Tips for the Trust with thanks to Crested Butte Mountain Resort Patrons

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The Boeing Company Gift Match with thanks to Phil Stranahan

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* deceased friend of the Land Trust

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You are Investing in Our Valley's Future.

It's because of you and over 620 other

individuals, businesses, and foundations that we are able to protect and take care of our lands year-round and do so as a fiscally responsible organization.

The following information reflects the operations of the Crested Butte Land Trust. The analysis is based on our 990 from 7/1/2016-6/30/2017. Copies of audited financial statements are available on our website at cblandtrust.org/financials.

We are incredibly grateful for your contributions to the annual fund and land conservation projects this past year.



SOURCE OF OPERATING REVENUE

Individual Donations	\$543,139
Events, Sales, & Other	\$19,294
Grants	\$9,500
<hr/>	
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$571,993</i>



USE OF OPERATING FUNDS

Land Protection Management	\$427,074
General Administration	\$52,096
Fundraising	\$23,600
<hr/>	
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$502,790</i>

WHAT HAVE YOU MADE POSSIBLE THIS YEAR?

14

miles of trail maintained in the Slate River Valley

160

students learned about land conservation

771

acres of land treated for noxious weeds

5120

people recreated on the Lupine Trails



Photo: Lydia Stern



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Join Us for 17th Annual Caddis Cup & Summer Celebration Dinner July 7th AT A NEW IN-TOWN LOCATION!

Register:

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