

THIS IS **YOUR PLACE**

2023 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Message from the Executive Director
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Protecting High Country Inholdings
Supporter Spotlight

photo: Trevor Bona



A MESSAGE

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

photo: John Holder

I always get excited as summer begins to emerge at 9,000 feet above sea level. After a winter of plentiful snowfall, exceptional skiing, and a robust mountain snowpack, we can't wait to see the conversion of a white, frozen landscape into a kaleidoscope of natural colors and creatures. Thriving in the mountains during a "big winter" means a lot of extra effort just to meet basic needs such as getting to work and school, fetching groceries, and navigating a sometimes fierce natural environment. I've always seen that extra work during periods of high snowfall as "putting money in the bank" for the summer months when the wildflowers are exploding, forage for game and cattle is abundant, trails are smooth under our feet, and rivers are full of cold water all season long. While you are waiting for the alpine to open up, your local favorite trails

and open spaces, all protected by the Crested Butte Land Trust, like the Lupine Trail, Lower Loop and the Mt. CB Rec Path will be here to welcome you back to summer in the Gunnison Valley.

Life in the mountains at the end of the road means living with extremes. The cold is bitter, and the high altitude sun is intense. Scarcity and abundance. Drought and flood. Smoky skies and monsoon rains. The shoulder seasons are quiet, and the winters and summers are busy. Booms and busts. Extremes are normal, and some of our durability as a community comes from adapting to these swings.

The Crested Butte Land Trust is dedicated to strengthening our natural environment and community through land protection in the Gunnison Valley. We can be certain that the future will

have ups and downs. There will be good years with 300+ inches of snow and bad years with barely enough to open the resort. The Land Trust will be here through those triumphs and challenges, because land conservation is forever. This newsletter showcases some of the recent work of the Land Trust protecting the future of the Gunnison Valley. With your support, land conservation is an investment in the future of our community, economy, water, and heritage. I hope you enjoy reading about how your support has helped catalyze conservation in the Gunnison Valley as we work together to protect the present for the future.


Jake Jones
Executive Director

CRESTED BUTTE LAND TRUST

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

"The Land Trust's commitment to responsible land protection makes this place unique. I am proud to sit at the table with colleagues who consider community needs, honor stakeholder interests, and wrestle with difficult decisions in our valley.

This is my home. Whether you live here or visit to take advantage of the natural, rugged beauty, I encourage you to actively support the work of the Land Trust now and for future generations."

-Laura Tomlinson, Vice President

John Simmons
President

Laura Tomlinson
Vice President

Jerry Clark
Treasurer

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SCHUTT CONSERVATION EASEMENT: SAVING THE SLATE RIVER CORRIDOR ONE PARCEL AT A TIME

For over 30 years, the Crested Butte Land Trust has focused much of its conservation efforts on protecting riparian areas along the Slate River. This unique corridor's scenic views, wildlife habitat, ranching, and recreational opportunities are invaluable assets to the entire Gunnison Valley.

Protecting the Slate River corridor is one of the Crested Butte Land Trust's greatest legacies. From our first acquisition of 55 acres at the confluence of Coal Creek and the Slate River to the many acquisitions and conservation easements between Gunsight Bridge to the north and the Riverbend neighborhood to the south, conservation work within the Slate River corridor is a critical component of our mission to protect land for people, wildlife, and ranching.

Earlier this year, efforts to safeguard another vital section of the Slate River wetlands came to fruition. The Crested Butte Land Trust was honored to work with Suzanne and Bob Schutt to create a conservation easement that protects 107 acres of the Slate River wetlands southeast of Crested Butte. The conservation easement now prohibits further development on the property, offers future opportunities for land restoration, provides seasonal recreation access, and ensures this valuable parcel is protected forever.

Almost three years in the making, this landmark project serves as the southern bookend of the Crested Butte Land Trust's efforts to protect the wetland habitat, water attenuation, scenic vistas, cattle grazing, and recreation along the Slate River. The parcel is situated between Town Ranch, McCormick Ranch, and Riverbend and includes 1.2 miles of the meandering Slate River and high-quality wetlands. Abundant with wet meadows, ponds, and water resources, this open space is an integral part of the watershed and serves as a critical wildlife habitat and migratory corridor.

The Schutt's property, which they affectionately call "The Meadow," is also familiar to many in the community for its iconic views and cross country ski trail access. The conservation easement ensures the public will have access to the winter trail connecting the Town Ranch

trails to Riverbend, summer access to float on the Slate River, and access to a portion of the Deli Trail which connects the town to neighborhoods and trails to the south. The property will also continue to be available for cattle grazing.

Suzanne and Bob Schutt have owned the property for nearly 40 years, and the Crested Butte Land Trust is grateful for their commitment to protecting this iconic piece of the north valley. "My family and I have always felt The Meadow is a magical, beautiful place in the valley. It's an extraordinary place," says Suzanne. "I feel that it's a beautiful gift that everyone will be able to gaze across that valley as we do now and find such natural beauty and undisturbed property so close to the town. It's a wonderful oasis and wildlife refuge. Our family has so many beautiful memories of Crested Butte and The Meadow. We enjoy the Nordic trails, and one of our biggest delights is watching the elk come

down every year. We've shared times down there that will be precious to us as long as we live. We're pleased everyone will be able to look over and see this beautiful valley forever."

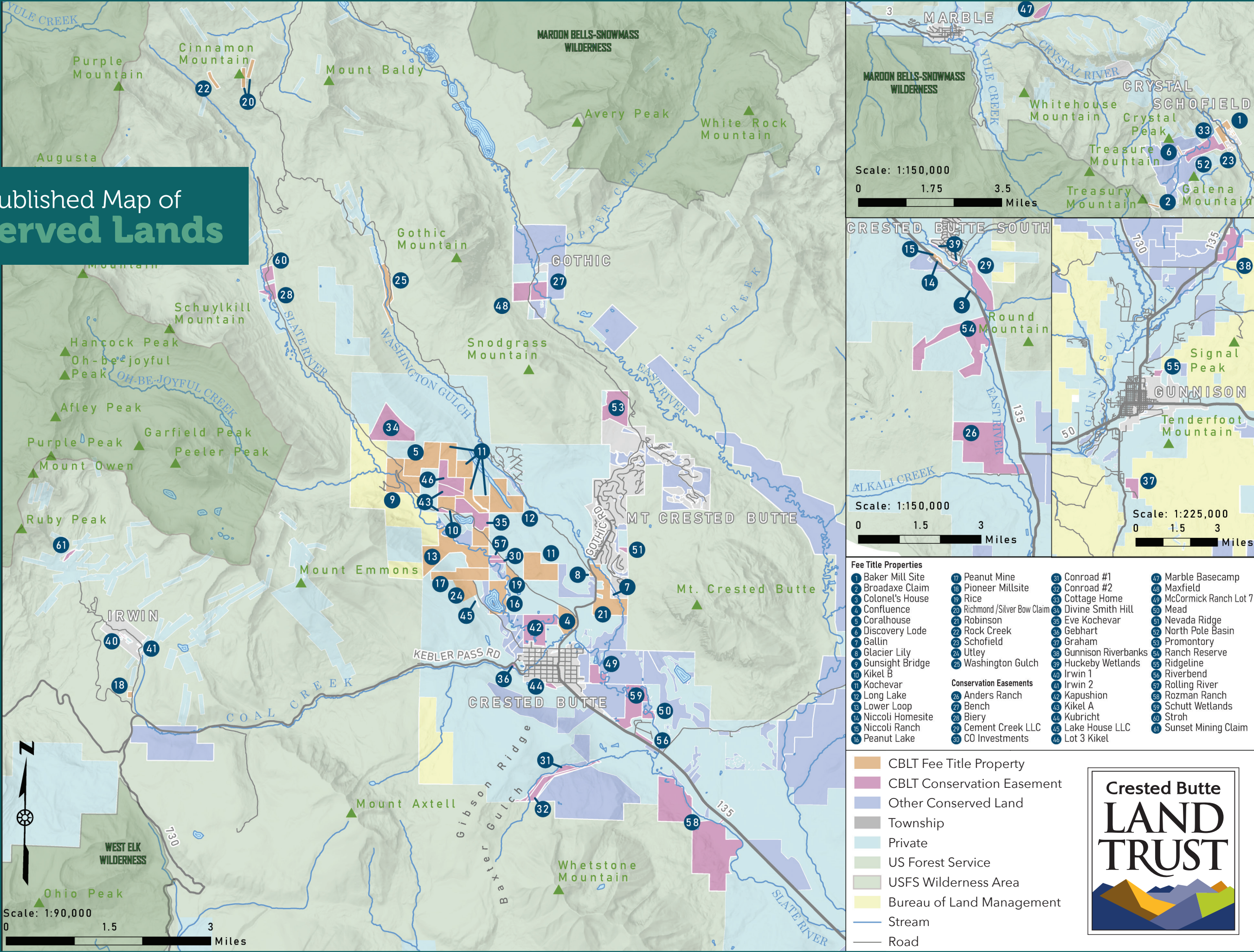
This conservation easement, worth \$3 million, fulfills not only the Crested Butte Land Trust's mission but the missions of our collaborative partners, beginning with the Schutts who donated half of the value of the easement.

"We're very grateful for Suzanne and Bob's partnership," said Crested Butte Land Trust Executive Director Jake Jones. "Not only did they work with the Land Trust to protect the land through conservation, but their significant financial contribution made the deal a reality. Now thanks to their willingness and generosity, the important wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, historic grazing area, and fantastic recreation on this property are forever protected."

Additionally, the Town of Crested Butte invested \$750,000, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) provided \$127,000, 1% for Open Space contributed \$125,000, and Gunnison County Land Preservation Fund added \$125,000. Finally, the Crested Butte Land Trust contributed \$535,000 from our Opportunity Fund, which is funded exclusively through gifts from our donors. We are grateful for the substantial funding contributions that made this significant conservation project possible.

"In the end, we will conserve only what we love," says Suzanne, quoting Baba Dioum. "That's so true, and if we can expose people to real beauty and unique and breathtaking moments that touch their hearts, they'll want more of that. It's so wonderful that we have entities like the Crested Butte Land Trust that help preserve beautiful places in the world. We're ecstatic to protect this beautiful place and keep it this way for the future."

Newly Published Map of
Conserved Lands



UNINTERRUPTED BACKCOUNTRY:

PROTECTING HIGH COUNTRY INHOLDINGS

photo: Jerry Clark

In the high country, outside the developed footprint of the upper valley, lies a pristine alpine and subalpine region of public National Forest and Wilderness areas. These areas are the backdrop of our iconic views, and they support grazing for Gunnison Valley ranchers, diverse wildlife, and endless public recreation. However, even deep in the backcountry, there remain pockets of mining claims and private land scattered between federal lands that could be developed in the future.

Over the past thirty years, the Crested Butte Land Trust has worked with private landowners to acquire these mining claims and backcountry parcels to provide undisturbed, continuous landscapes in the high country. The Crested Butte Land Trust owns 189 acres of backcountry inholdings, with an additional 502 acres held in conservation easements. These parcels are

surrounded by public lands, have seasonal access, or are entirely isolated from roads.

Many of the parcels the Crested Butte Land Trust has acquired hold deep history in the area, including old homesites in the historic town of Schofield, mining claims on the summit of Cinnamon Mountain, and the Pioneer Mill near Irwin. A recent example of these high country inholdings includes the Crested Butte Land Trust's newly purchased 7.23-acre Broadaxe Lode mining claim in North Pole Basin near Treasury Mountain. This purchase is one more step toward protecting the High Elk Corridor between the Raggeds Wilderness and Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness areas. This corridor includes over 6,000 acres of wildlife habitats, migration paths, critical watersheds, recreational opportunities, and biological research of global importance.

"We were pleased to work with the former owner of the Broadaxe Lode, Brad Larson," says Crested Butte Land Trust Executive Director Jake Jones. "Like many owners of similar parcels, Brad saw the value of selling the land for conservation rather than development."

The Crested Butte Land Trust is fortunate to have partners with a mutual interest in protecting these high country parcels, including Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory (RMBL). As one of the country's most reputable and influential outdoor research laboratories, RMBL oversees many long term high alpine ecosystems studies. For RMBL, uninterrupted, continuous landscapes in the backcountry are critical to the success of these projects.

"From RMBL's perspective, it's so valuable to see conservation and management that protects these

ecosystems," says RMBL Executive Director Ian Billick. "A lot of our research happens in these high country areas, and our scientists come here because it's an amazing, largely intact ecosystem. The conservation efforts and protection of these backcountry properties help maintain these unimpacted ecosystems. We are very fortunate to have the Crested Butte Land Trust helping leverage land protection and making this impact in the high country. They provide local knowledge and consolidate the conservation efforts of statewide and national entities to preserve these landscapes."

The Crested Butte Land Trust is grateful for the opportunities to add these critical backcountry parcels to our portfolio of conservation efforts and help protect these uninterrupted landscapes for natural wildlife habitat, recreational activities, long-term biological research, and historic landscape preservation.

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT: ROCKY KIMBALL & MARY LOU SKINNER

"I arise in the morning torn between a desire to save the world, and a desire to savor the world. This makes it hard to plan the day." —E.B. WHITE

For Richard (Rocky) Kimball and Mary Lou Skinner, the desire to both save and savor the world is reflected in their daily lives. "It's important every day to savor the world, but at the same time, we must protect the things most precious to us," says Rocky. "Living here, we're fortunate to experience both."

Rocky and Mary Lou's commitment to the Crested Butte community and its preservation is unwavering - from their support for various non-profits in the Gunnison Valley to their active involvement in fire mitigation and fighting noxious weeds in Red Mountain Ranch. They are strong champions of the Crested Butte Land Trust and our mission, and we are grateful for Rocky and Mary Lou's generous support over the years.

Rocky recalls wanting to live in Crested Butte in the '70s when he worked for the Outward Bound school in Marble. "We always ended with a final expedition, backpacking to Rustler's Gulch before heading back to Marble. I remember journaling and thinking about the future, and I wrote down that this is where I'd like to live."

Twenty-two years later, Rocky and Mary Lou finally made that dream a reality when they bought land here and built a cabin in Red Mountain Ranch in 1995. From alpine and Nordic skiing to hiking and mountaineering to rafting and rock climbing, Rocky says they have enjoyed many outdoor activities in the Gunnison Valley over the years.

Rocky is a social psychologist, consultant, and educator. As the co-founder of FRED Leadership, Rocky's distinguished track record includes working with Fortune 50 companies and teaching at major universities. He also founded the Santa Fe Mountain Center, an organization that provides experiential wilderness



adventure education programs that promote social change and personal discovery for youth and families. Rocky and Mary Lou founded Action Learning Associates, an international consulting firm dedicated to teaching organizations immersive leadership development and teamwork.

Their passion for making a difference, whether for CEOs or at-risk youth, crosses over seamlessly into their lives in Crested Butte, and their support for the Crested Butte Land Trust is just one example. "The natural world has always been a central

part of my life, and the Land Trust's mission to preserve and maintain the land for generations to come resonates with me," says Rocky. "The Land Trust is so central and intertwined with everything we do here. Their stewardship of the land reflects our shared values as a community."

Rocky and Mary Lou are also legacy donors to the Land Trust, having named the Crested Butte Land Trust as a charitable beneficiary in their will. Preparing a future gift to the Land Trust ensures that future generations will enjoy the same beautiful landscapes we have today. "We should all think about when we're gone and our legacy," says Rocky. "The land and how we interact with it is at the core of so many of our lives, and preserving this deep experience should be part of everybody's plan. It's important to savor these experiences and save this place for future generations."

Rocky encourages others to get involved, whether through donations or volunteer time. "There's a million ways to get out there and get dirty and work side by side with others. There are resources, like the Land Trust, to help us. When you show this place kindness and generosity, this community returns the favor right back."

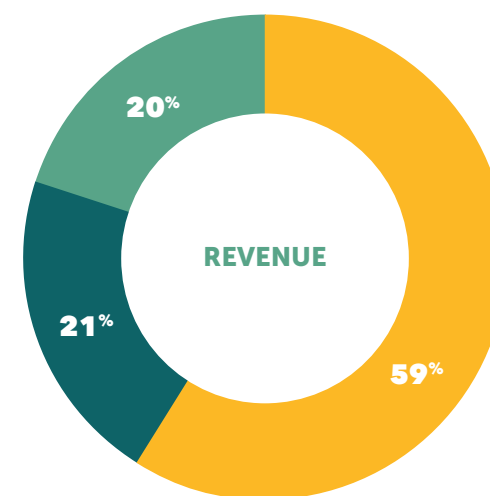
2022 by the numbers

STEWARDSHIP

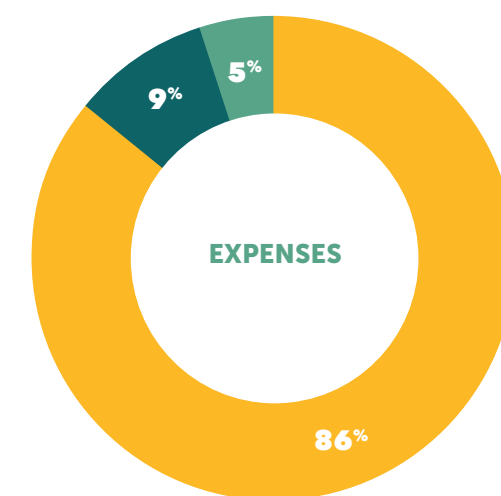
- / **120 ACRES** of newly conserved land
- / **5276 ACRES** of land monitored
- / **240 POUNDS** of noxious weeds pulled
- / **1869 RIVER AND LAND RECREATIONISTS** engaged by the Land Trust's Recreation and Conservation Ranger
- / **724 ACRES** surveyed for noxious weeds, with approximately 100 of those acres treated
- / **1.25 MILES** of new trail built at Long Lake in partnership with Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association and Adaptive Sports Center
- / **3 PARKING AREA ENCLOSURES** built at the Lower Loop and Slate River trailheads
- / **.5 MILES** of barbed wire & t-posts removed
- / **100+** community volunteers involved in CBLT stewardship projects



FINANCES



- Contributions
- Grants
- Events and Other Income



- Land Protection & Management
- General Administration
- Fundraising



photos:
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Marilyn Rodman



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GET INVOLVED!

EVENTS

We hope to see you this summer at the Starry Evening Gala, the Caddis Cup Fly Fishing Tournament, one of our field trips, and more!

DONATE OR VOLUNTEER

Invest in your community! There are lots of ways you can support your local land trust.

LEAVE A LEGACY

Please consider the Crested Butte Land Trust in your will or retirement plan.

Visit cblandtrust.org or contact Development Director Ashley UpChurch at ashley@cblandtrust.org or 970-349-1206 to learn more.

SCAN TO DONATE



Thank you to all the photographers who submitted photos for CBLT to use.
Unless otherwise noted, all articles are written by Kendra Walker.

photo: **Barbara Kauffman**