

COLORADO OPEN LANDSCAPES

A NEWSLETTER OF COLORADO OPEN LANDS



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe, landowner Louis Bacon, Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar and COL President Dan Pike sign the documents that help establish the 558th National Wildlife Refuge.

Trinchera-Blanca Ranch Spurs Major Conservation Designation

The history of the Southern Sangre de Cristo Mountains entered a new era on Friday, September 14th with the announcement by Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar of the establishment of the new U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Sangre de Cristo Conservation Area, encompassing the Sangre de Cristo Mountains from just below the Great Sand Dunes National Park into northern New Mexico.

The landscape is known for its rich history and culture, as well as unique natural resources. The new designation is intended to provide federal habitat protection for wildlife species as diverse as the Rio Grande cutthroat trout and the Canada lynx, as well as protect a major north-south migration corridor.

The centerpiece of the Conservation Area is the 170,000-acre Trinchera Blanca Ranch, owned by conservationist Louis Bacon. The Trinchera Blanca Ranch is the largest contiguous, privately owned ranch in Colorado and features breathtaking vistas of high desert shrubs and mountain grasslands, combined with alpine forest and alpine tundra.

The ranch stretches to the top of one of the highest peaks in Colorado, Blanca Peak, at 14,345 feet above sea level. It falls in the center of the Sangre de Cristo mountain range, the longest mountain chain in the United States, and borders the Sangre de Cristo Wilderness near Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve.

In 2004, the Forbes family, owners of the Ranch at the time, placed a conservation easement on the 81,400-acre Trinchera portion of the property with Colorado Open Lands. The integrity of the Ranch was subsequently threatened by a proposed 150-mile, 345-megawatt transmission line through the Ranch and over La Veta Pass. After a highly publicized battle in both the public arena and before the Public Utilities Commission, Bacon, owner of the Ranch by then, prevailed when the transmission line proponents withdrew their application.

Mr. Bacon decided to convey a protective easement over the Trinchera Ranch to

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“We are too quickly losing important landscapes in this country to development—and I worry that if we do not act to protect them now, future generations will grow up in a profoundly different world,” said Louis Bacon. “This motivates me and is why I am proud to place Trinchera Ranch, Blanca’s adjoining ranch, into a conservation easement forever...”

Trinchera-Blanca Ranch *Continued*

the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (overlaying the original Colorado Open Lands easement), and has pledged to donate a conservation easement on the Blanca Ranch to the Service as well. Besides bringing the resources and expertise of the Fish and Wildlife Service to this spectacular landscape, the easements will now eliminate the potential for condemnation.

“Following in the footsteps of our greatest conservationists, Louis Bacon’s generosity and passion for the great outdoors is helping us establish an extraordinary conservation area in one of our nation’s most beautiful places,” Secretary Salazar said. *“This newest treasure in our National Wildlife Refuge System links together a diverse mosaic of public and private lands, protects working landscapes and water quality, and creates a landscape corridor for fish and wildlife unlike any place in the world.”*

Colorado Open Lands, Trinchera Ranch, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have entered into a joint agreement to cooperate on the monitoring and management of Trinchera. *“This partnership represents a new relationship for the Fish and Wildlife Service and a private land trust,”* said Dan Pike, President of Colorado Open Lands, *“and one which we all look forward to developing.”*

Historical Background of the Sangres

The mountains were given their name, Sangre de Cristo, which means Blood of Christ, by the early Spaniards for their blood-red brilliance in the glow of the setting sun. Though claimed by Spain in 1598, it was nearly one hundred years before any Spaniard set foot on the land.

After Mexican independence from Spain, title to much of the range was granted to a French-Canadian fur trapper, Charles Beaubien, who had settled in Taos and become politically influential. The Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, granted to Beaubien in 1844 and totaling 1,038,000 acres, was his second land grant, following a 1,750,000-acre grant east of Taos. In exchange for the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, Beaubien paid the required \$30 fee.

After the Mexican War of 1846, the area became U.S. territory. In 1853, Beaubien began parceling the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant to his relatives and friends. The Ranch would later be re-assembled by Col. William Gilpin, the first

Territorial Governor of Colorado, for an average price of four cents per acre. During this era, protection of the ranch was provided from nearby Fort Garland, and its commandant, Kit Carson. Gilpin subsequently brought in numerous investors, including Denver Mayor George Clark, and banker David Moffat, as well as English and Dutch partners.

Reassembling the Trinchera Ranch

Eventually these partners divided the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant into two pieces. Over the years, the properties continued to be sold and divided. Owners of the Trinchera included some of Colorado’s most prominent individuals, including W. J. Palmer, the founder of Colorado Springs.

In 1938, the Trinchera Ranch was purchased by Ruth and Albert Simms of Albuquerque, both former legislators. In a quiet title action at the time, nearly 400 people were identified as potential claimants to title, including former Presidents McKinley and Buchanan, and the son of President Chester Arthur.

In 1950, the Simms sold the 90,000-acre portion of the Ranch north of highway 160, which would become known as the Blanca Ranch. Upon Albert Simms’ death in 1964, it became apparent to his heirs they would also have to sell the Trinchera Ranch to pay estate taxes.

Legend has it, and perhaps that’s all it is, that Malcolm Forbes first saw the Ranch on a cross-country motorcycle trip that took him over La Veta Pass. In any event, Forbes purchased Trinchera in 1969, and subsequently reunited it with the Blanca Ranch that he purchased several years later. By the late 1970s, Forbes had committed both ranches to wildlife, including becoming the pilot for the Colorado Division of Wildlife’s Ranching for Wildlife program.

The Forbes family, and now the Bacons, have reunited the heart of Beaubien’s Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, and protected this portion of the original land grant in perpetuity. The new, federally-declared Sangre de Cristo Conservation Area ushers in a new era for the Land Grant—one that recognizes the significance of the Sangres, and affords the opportunity to keep this magnificent landscape intact forever. Colorado Open Lands is proud to be a partner in this unique endeavor. □



President's Letter

The Audacity of Conservation

It appears that conservation in 2012, at least for Colorado Open Lands, is on the upswing.

We will likely protect more land this year, with a smaller staff, than we have in the last three. That's good news for us, but there's still a lot of gloom out there. Economic struggles, nervous landowners, jittery legislators and regulators, all cast a level of doubt over the industry. Nothing so bad, I'm relieved to report, that a fly rod or mountain trail doesn't seem to fix. Nevertheless, the conservation world shares many of the uncertainties as most everyone else today. But there is a difference.

The other day I conducted a deeply scientific poll in which I Googled "environmental quotes" at the BrainyQuotes website. Of the 71 quotes listed, 39 were negative, 12 were positive, and the other 20 were neither. Most were observations about what we're doing to the planet, and what will happen if we don't stop. That's a big, although probably not surprising, dose of negative when thinking about the environment.

Then I Googled "conservation quotes." If you ignore the 17 quotes dealing with energy, there are a total of 42 quotes. Nine are negative, 22 positive, and 11 are neither. The quotes about "conservation" were along the lines of why conservation is good, and the negative vs. positive connotation was almost the reverse of the "environmental" quotes.

Why does "conservation" appear to appeal to more positive instincts than "environmental?" Well, there's the obvious. These days, "environmental" is associated with more confrontational and lightning-rod issues. "Conservation" typically is apolitical and win-win. "Environmental" now often involves opposing, stopping, or reversing something. "Conservation" is usually saving something and keeping it the same. "Environmental"

often polarizes. "Conservation" unites. "Environmental" issues are often broad and hard to define, and battles are fought over and over. "Conservation" results are easily definable.

But I think it goes beyond that. By its nature, conservation is optimistic. It can be an urgent message, but it's nevertheless a positive message. We're protecting something of value – something that has worth. And we're not just protecting it for us. We're protecting it for itself. And we're protecting it for future generations. The concept of perpetuity is a concept of optimism. It's a statement that says the future will be worth it – and we're helping make sure it is.

So while we're unfortunately leaving our kids and grandkids some big bills to pay and a lot to clean up, we're also leaving them parks and trails, productive agricultural land, fresh water, bald eagles and some scenery that's unchanged for centuries. Perpetual conservation is our generation saying "This is cool. We thought you'd like it, and we saved it for you" to successive generations. It beats an iPod in a time capsule.

Perpetual conservation is unique in that regard. What else in society is intended to be forever? Think about that. What else do we do as a society that is essentially, from the start, intended to last forever? It's an audacious concept. But it's one that is taken seriously. It's one that people and organizations think about, work at, and constantly refine to make possible. It's about as optimistic as it gets. I'd like to think, after nearly 230 years, if Benjamin Franklin were around today, his famous quote would be "the only things certain in life are death, taxes and conserved land."



Daniel E. Pike, President

Joe Shoemaker was one of a kind. Recipient of the 2nd annual George E. Cranmer Award in 1993, Joe was recognized for his work in restoring the South Platte River as it ran through metropolitan Denver. As a former Denver Manager of Public Works, a long-time State Senator, and head of the famed and feared Legislative Joint Budget Committee for many years, he knew and loved Denver. Appointed in 1974 by **Mayor William McNichols** to head the Platte River Development Committee to bring about the river's improvement, Joe eventually formed the **Greenway Foundation** which undertook this monumental task. Joe was honored by his countless friends at a memorial service on August 28th at Confluence Park, a fitting location to see the fruits of Joe's many years of service to the people of Denver.

With the addition of the **Crested Butte Land Trust** and the **Mountain Area Land Trust**, Colorado is proud to have 14, count 'em 14(!), accredited land trusts. This is no small feat, by the way. As the national **Land Trust Accreditation Commission** says *"The accreditation seal is a mark of distinction in land conservation. It recognizes organizations for meeting national standards for excellence, upholding the public trust and ensuring that conservation efforts are permanent."* To learn more about what it means for a land trust to go through accreditation, look up www.landtrustaccreditation.org.

A lot is going on at **Great Outdoors Colorado**. **Kathleen Staks** is now managing GOCO's relationship with the **Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife**. According to boss, **Lise Aangeenbrug**, *"Kathleen did an excellent job managing GOCO's Open Space grant program and building strong relationships with our non-profit and local government land conservation partners over the last five years."* Why aren't we surprised? **Josh Tenneson** will take over Kathleen's responsibilities in managing the Open Space grant program, working with **Chris Yuan-Farrell** (former COL Land Protection Fellow) on due diligence review.

Meantime, **Dale Craker** will spend his time on the overall management of GOCO's competitive grant programs—Local Government, Open Space, special initiatives, and reviewing policies and procedures with stakeholders and the Board. Sheesh, Dale, good luck! And finally, sadly, **Lynn Lochrie** will leave GOCO to go work with **Melinda Beck** in the law firm of **Ducker, Montgomery, Lewis & Bess, P.C.** Lynn, you couldn't find a better colleague to work with and learn from than Melinda.

After three wonderful years with the **Colorado Conservation Trust**, **Patrick Holmes** has moved on to serve as a special assistant to the Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment at **USDA**. While CCT looks to fill the new programs director post, please direct all program inquiries to executive director **Brian Ross**, bross@coct.org. You may reach Patrick at his personal email patholmes3@gmail.com.

You missed a sell-out event on September 8th! **The Aspen Valley Land Trust** held their 9th annual 'Save the Land' Dance, a 'cozy' sit-down dinner for 325 people held in a barn on the spectacular Tybar Angus Ranch—which just so happens to be one of AVLT's conserved properties. AVLT is also happy about their new Stewardship Director **Connor Coleman**! We'll forgive him for hailing from the east (he used to be the stewardship manager of the Land Trust for Central North Carolina) and congratulate him for coming west to work first on the **Medano-Zapata Ranch** in

the San Luis Valley before making his way up north to join the good folks at AVLT. Welcome to land conservation western-style, Connor!

There are new folks at CCT. **Bethany Gravell** is the new Development Director. Previously she was the former executive director of **Rocky Mountain Wild**, an account executive with CRL Associates and Denver City Councilwoman Peggy Lehman's successful campaign in 2003. Joining Bethany is **Jordan Vana** as CCT's new Program Director. Previously Jordan was Director of Conservation for the **Wyoming Land Trust** and an attorney in Billings, MT. Jordan, we Colorado 'Greenies' welcome you! Finally, CCT has a new home. They've moved into the newly rehabilitated Emerson School at 1420 Ogden Street, Suite 104, Denver, CO 80218. CCT will be in good company as the **Colorado Water Trust**, **Historic Denver**, and the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** also have offices in the School.

Mark your calendars! The next 'Brews, Boots, and Bucks' fundraiser for the **Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts** will be held on November 9th from 5:30 to 8 pm at the Wynkoop Brewing Company at 1634 18th Street in Denver. **Tawnya Ernst**, formerly a CCT fellow with the **Colorado Cattleman's Agricultural Land Trust** has changed counties. She leaves a job as real estate specialist at **Jefferson County Open Space** and is now a real estate specialist for the **City of Fort Collins**.

Did you miss CCLT's First Annual Colorado Land Appreciation Week, August 23-26? A grand total of 18 conservation organizations took part offering hundreds of people a chance to visit a working ranch, restore trails, remove seed pods from teasel on an urban farm, learn about wildlife, and toast Colorado's open spaces with a Colorado brew and a local brat. **Amanda Barker**, Project Manager for CCLT's Center of Excellence and manager of this successful effort, praised **Alecia Phillips**, CCLT's Communications Coordinator, for the great press coverage the Week received.



Volunteers cut teasel on Five Fridges Farm.

Many thanks to the following for their participation: Boulder County Parks & Open Space, City of Fort Collins, Colorado Open Lands, Colorado Youth Corps Association, Continental Divide Land Trust, Douglas Land Conservancy, Estes Valley Land Trust, Greater Arkansas River Nature Association, Gunnison Ranchlands Conservation Legacy, Jefferson County Open Space, Land Trust of the Upper Arkansas, Larimer County Open Lands Program, Legacy Land Trust, Palmer Land Trust, Pitkin County Open Space & Trails, Roaring Fork Conservancy, San Isabel Land Protection Trust, and Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado.



Russell Caldwell

Russell Caldwell

Although he was raised in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina, Russell always had a desire to move west. That opportunity presented itself in 1976 when Governor Lamm's administration selected him to take over the Division of Commerce and Development. The uniqueness of that job permitted Russell to travel extensively throughout the State working hand in hand with local governments, agriculture and tourism interest.

Russell marvels about the stark differences of western lands and how often western interests are not appreciated back east, especially water rights. *"I grew up in a riparian water rights system and played in forests so thick you could hardly walk through them. I fell in love with Colorado and its powerful mountains and lush valleys. Fortunately for me several people expanded my views of this place. I was co-located at 1313 Sherman Street with Harris Sherman, Chips Berry and Tony Sabatini. All three of these fellows were focused on natural resources. Those relationships led me to Don Walker, Elizabeth Richardson and Tim Schultz, all working at Colorado Open Lands at the time."*

"My first real experience with Colorado Open Lands was in Delta County after I had left five years of service in state government and returned to the municipal finance industry. My client, Delta County, was in an uproar over an out of state property owner who was shutting off historic public access to fishing in the North Fork of the Gunnison River. I brought

Don Walker in and got that resolved to the public's favor. Not long after that, Elizabeth Richardson asked me (and my staff economist) to devise a methodology for figuring out up-front payments to support easement monitoring. Then Tim Schultz asked me to help at the board level."

Prior to relocating in Colorado, Russell was Executive Director of a regional parks development authority in North Georgia. This parks and finance experience aided him in structuring new ways under Colorado law to finance parks and open space.

Starting in the 1980s, he helped Boulder County craft a General Fund Revenue Bond structure that has now raised \$400 million for the County Open Space program. Russell brought unique structures to other local governments for financing land. He assisted Grand Junction with financing Matchett Regional Park and the Town of Snowmass Village with preserving the 500-acre Drosete ranch along the entry way to Snowmass.

"My passion has been focused on ideas and institutions that, while small organizationally, can make a tremendous difference. COL is that kind of place with its dedicated staff and talented board." In addition to conservation as a passion, Russell has opened the financial markets for Energy Efficiency Bonds with Boulder County and perfected models to finance public charter schools.

Russell has been a team player on our Board. There is rarely a valley, a stream or a rural community that comes up on COL's agenda that he doesn't know about in great detail. His statewide knowledge of communities, their economics, and their values is an important mix within our Board. He has also never lost his Carolina accent which brings some entertainment to our meetings!

A Salute to our Summer Interns

Colorado Open Lands is fortunate to attract the best and brightest, and we pride ourselves on our ability to provide an engaging training environment. In return, we benefit tremendously from the energy and enthusiasm that our interns and volunteers bring to the office. This summer was no exception.

Vermont Law School M.S. and J.D. candidate Brian Tweedie spent his summer as an intern with Colorado Open Lands, focusing on regulatory compliance, water rights issues, and assisting staff with conservation projects. With an eye toward Colorado residency following graduation, Brian is spending his Fall semester as a legal intern with The Nature Conservancy's Western Regional Office in Boulder where his work is focused on managing oil and gas exploration and development on protected lands.

Colorado Open Lands gets lucky sometimes when highly qualified folk walk in the door and volunteer to help us out. One such talent is Greg Stavish, currently our land stewardship

intern. Born, raised, and educated in New Jersey (with a BA from Rutgers), Greg worked for three years doing environmental remediation cleaning up underground heating-oil storage tanks. Greg moved here in June and is now enrolled in the Natural Resources Management Program at the University of Denver where he is working on his Master's Degree.

The dedication of our interns and volunteers is remarkable and Allison Hamm is a true example of this. For six months this past spring, Allison diligently reviewed title work on over 200 of our properties as we prepare for our Land Trust Accreditation renewal in 2013. Allison brought to us a wealth of experience from her time at the Great Plains Nature Center and a strong commitment to conservation. She is currently working as a Project Consultant with a Parks and Recreation Master Planning Consultant, GreenPlay LLC.

We would like to extend a special Thank You to Brian, Greg and Allison for all their hard work on behalf of Colorado Open Lands and land conservation!



Amanda Weaver

Five Fridges Farm

The Five Fridges Farm at the Williams Wildlife Preserve is a 13-acre property in Wheat Ridge whose mission is to test and explore sustainable urban agricultural practices. Everyone from community members to university students participate in classes, research, and various agricultural models, from community supported agriculture to cooperative animal share programs.

The farm was originally known as Red Wing Ranch. Ernestine and Walt Williams owned this acreage from the 1930s to the mid-1990s and raised cattle, hogs, chickens, and later goats. After the death of her husband and seeing the encroaching development around the farm, Ernestine wanted to save the land for agricultural use. She made this wish a reality by creating the Williams Wildlife Preserve conservation easement, and donating the easement to Colorado Open Lands.

Long-time Wheat Ridge resident and farm neighbor, Louise Turner, later owned the farm and continued to raise generations of milk goats from Ernestine’s original herd until her death earlier this year. Currently, the land is owned by Amanda Weaver.

Amanda is an urban agricultural researcher and instructor of geography at UC Denver who started working with Louise and the goats in early 2010. She is currently living in the newly renovated farm home. Amanda’s vision for the farm builds on

its history, while also re-imagining it as an urban agricultural learning center. In only two years, she has re-opened the chicken coop, begun growing garlic, grapevines and raspberry bushes, and opened her farm to hops growers, an apiary, and a vegetable CSA.

Amanda adopted the new name “Five Fridges Farm” after being warned by Louise that milking and milk goats “require a lot of refrigeration.” As warned, refrigerators of all ages and sizes were removed from the house during the renovation and became the inspiration for the name.

Since Ernestine’s time at the farm, the city has grown up around it, creating a truly unique opportunity for “urban agriculture.” The property has a pond, a year-round creek, and pasture with beautiful views of the mountains. Ernestine called it her “heaven on earth.” There is healthy space for animals to graze, plants to grow, water to run, and wildlife to roam and fly.

Yet, the farm is also surrounded on all sides by apartments, duplexes, condos, single family housing, and a school. So while there are plenty of rural agricultural issues such as agricultural ditch water, invasive weeds, grazing, fencing, and animal management, there are also challenges of urban infrastructure, zoning restrictions, and trespassing across the entire property.

Nonetheless, as a result of Amanda’s vision and dedication, the farm has become a great opportunity for students and stewards of conservation and urban sustainability. *Colorado Open Lands salutes Amanda Weaver for continuing the legacy that Ernestine worked so hard to protect!*



Greg Stavish



Brian Tweedie (center)



Allison Hamm

Honoring

SUE ANSCHUTZ-RODGERS

2012 CRANMER AWARD RECIPIENT



Every year since 1992, Colorado Open Lands has awarded the George E. Cranmer Award to people who have distinguished themselves in open space preservation. Award recipients are individuals who have gone above and beyond what others have done and often get things completed through determination and force of personality. They leave behind a legacy that will be valued and enjoyed for generations to come. Sue Anschutz-Rodgers is just such a person.

Sue Anschutz-Rodgers serves as chair and president, and trustee of the Anschutz Family Foundation, which supports Colorado nonprofit organizations that assist people to help themselves while nurturing and preserving their self-respect. The Foundation also encourages endeavors that strengthen families and communities.

According to Ben Duke, one of the Chairs of this year's Cranmer event, *"Sue is a quiet but effective advocate for land conservation throughout Colorado and the West. She never seeks the limelight, but her steadfast approach to common-sense land preservation, particularly agricultural land preservation, has helped preserve thousands of threatened acres throughout the State. Her generosity has helped promote the ethics of responsible stewardship of our lands, and she strives to help Colorado's ranching and farming families stay on the land, passing it along to future family generations."*

Ms. Anschutz-Rodgers grew up in Kansas with rich traditional American rural values that included a family ranching background. She is a graduate of the University of Kansas. She owns and operates Crystal River Ranch, which is a prominent cattle ranch. Her upbringing in rural America, as well as her interest in ranching, has fostered a strong interest in land conservation. She has also dedicated a good portion of her life to charitable work with nonprofit boards.

Currently, Sue serves on the Advisory Board of the Boy Scouts of America - Denver Area Council, and has served on or is serving on the boards of the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust, Crow Canyon Archeological Center,



COL celebrates the 20th anniversary of the George E. Cranmer Award by honoring Sue Anschutz-Rodgers, pictured here with co-chair Ben Duke.

Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Denver Police Foundation, Jane Goodall Institute, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy of Kenya, and the National Stroke Association.

"Sue has been a strong and generous supporter of land conservation, not only in Colorado, but throughout the west and as far away as Africa," says Cranmer co-chair,

Luanne Sinclair, *"She has been a tremendous asset to the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust Board, and I have been privileged to serve with her these past years. Her practical and pragmatic approach to Board issues has been invaluable, and her ability to do so succinctly and explicitly, with a light touch, has been an example to all."*

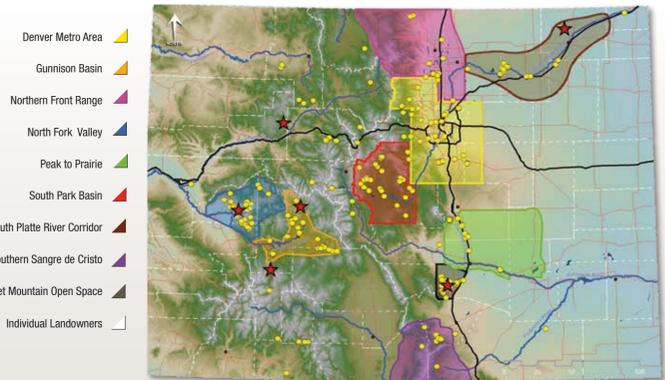
Sue has received many awards, including the Citizen of the West award (an annual award given to individuals who embody the spirit and determination of the western pioneer, and who are committed to perpetuating the West's agricultural heritage and ideals). Not only was Sue the first woman to win the Citizen of the West award, she was also the first woman to be appointed to the nine-member executive committee of the National Western Stock Show where she currently serves as 1st Vice President.

Other interests include wildlife habitat and animal welfare, and international issues. She enjoys the outdoors, reading, travel and spending time with her three daughters and nine grandchildren.

On being told that she was this year's recipient, Sue stated, *"I am very honored to have been chosen to receive the Cranmer Award. I am following in some very big footsteps, and hope I am worthy of doing so."*

Cranmer Co-Chairs Mr. H. Ben Duke, III and Mrs. William Sinclair invite you to join us at the History Colorado Center in the Mountain View Event Room on the 4th floor on November 26th from 5:30-7:30 pm and enjoy hors d'oeuvres and drinks while we toast the accomplishments of Sue Anschutz-Rodgers.

Colorado Open Lands is honored to present this year's George E. Cranmer Award to Sue Anschutz-Rodgers.



2012

Land Conservation Projects Completed To Date

While most of our projects are completed in the last three months of the year, this year has been particularly busy. In addition to the 6 we have completed to date, and 1 transfer of a conservation easement from another land trust, we are working on closing an additional 11 projects by year-end. We are extremely grateful to all the wonderful landowners with whom we work and hope you will join us in congratulating them on helping to protect Colorado's unique heritage!



Cold Spring Ranch, Gunnison County

Colorado's spectacular beauty inspires a love of wide-open places, from grassy fields to aspen and pine forests running up the sides of the Rocky Mountains. With population growth exceeding 10% per year, it is becoming more and more critical to conserve the characteristics that make Colorado such a desirable place to live. Colorado Open Lands is proud to assist dedicated landowners in this effort!



The North Sterling Outlet Canal subirrigates hundreds of acres of wetlands on the Yahn Ranch in Logan County.



Rancho La Humerosa, Delta County



Rancho La Humerosa, Delta County



Brown Ranch, Pueblo County



Windance Ranch, Garfield County



Congratulations to the Whinnery family, who have been steadily protecting their ranch holdings over the past decade. (Gunnison County)



Denver-Metro Area
Protecting open space in a quickly growing urban area is always a challenge. To date, we have protected 11,202 acres through 40 projects in Denver and the surrounding six counties. We expect to complete 3 more projects by year-end.

Gunnison Basin
This area contains some of Colorado's quintessentially beautiful mountain valleys, and Colorado Open Lands and its partners have proudly protected 14,039 acres of privately owned working ranches through 43 projects to date.

Cold Spring Ranch
Crested Butte, 190 acres
Partners: Myrtle and Michele Veltri, Trust for Public Land, Great Outdoors Colorado, Town of Crested Butte, Gunnison Valley Land Preservation Board, and 1% for Open Space

Conservation Values: The Cold Spring Ranch is, in a word, stunning. The family's conservation easement now ensures the protection of prime grazing land, very senior water rights, breathtaking views of the Upper East River Valley as seen by State Highway 135 and County Road 738, and wetlands, sagebrush meadows, and aspen forests. The Ranch supports many species, including the Gunnison Sage Grouse, Canada Lynx, ptarmigan, elk, deer, mountain lion and black bear.

In addition, the conservation easement complements significant protected land right next door, since it is



bordered to the east and west by the Gunnison National Forest and is adjacent to another ranch already protected by Colorado Open Lands. As a bridge between two portions of the Gunnison National Forest, protection of the Cold Spring Ranch now ensures habitat connectivity across the East River. And lucky for residents and visitors, the conservation easement also provides for public access to the Strand Hill trail.

Whinnery Homestead Ranch 2012
Gunnison, 160 acres
Partners: Helen Whinnery

Conservation Values: The Whinnery family has been steadily protecting their ranch holdings over the past decade. The most recently protected portion of the ranch abuts the 680-acre 2008 Whinnery Homestead easement, creating a continuous block of 840 privately protected acres. Currently used for agricultural purposes, the Ranch contains subalpine coniferous forest, native grass meadows, sagebrush uplands and several high-gradient stream courses.

The subalpine riparian shrub habitat provides food, shelter, breeding grounds, and migration corridors for several wildlife species, including big game. Bald eagles can be seen foraging for rodents and carrion in the area during the winter. The Ranch also provides suitable habitat for the northern leopard frog, the greater sandhill crane and the ferruginous hawk, all State of Colorado Species of Concern. And with a large portion of the ranch visible from CO State Highway 149, a state-designated scenic by-way, and nearby and adjacent public lands, the Whinnery Homestead Ranch is a scenic gem for the public's eye as well.

North Fork Valley
Bisected by the North Fork of the Gunnison River, this valley consists primarily of public land, with a mosaic of private lands in small scale agriculture. Watercourses from high mesas cut through steep canyons and combine with numerous springs to provide lush vegetation and an unusually diverse biota for the high-desert environment. To date, we have protected 7,902 acres through 44 projects. We expect to close on an additional 2 projects by year-end.

Rancho La Humerosa
Delta, 95 acres
Partners: IV and Lissa Pabst, Conservation Assistance Program

Conservation Values: This "humorous" ranch provides some serious conservation values, including pinyon-juniper woodlands, irrigated pastures, hay fields, and Leroux Creek. The Creek provides forage, cover, breeding grounds, and migration corridors for several wildlife species considered threatened, endangered, or rare by the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

The ranch features locally important agricultural resources, including agricultural soils of unique importance recognized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and stock water resources. With visibility from several Delta County Roads, including 3250, 3300, L50 and L Roads, as well as from Colorado State Highway 92 to the south, and Gunnison National Forest to the north, the ranch also holds great scenic value.

Northern Front Range
Ironically, it is the counties with the richest agricultural soils that are experiencing the greatest growth pressures. To date, we have protected 2,924 acres through 19 projects in this rapidly developing part of Colorado.

Peak to Prairie
The vision of the Peak to Prairie project is to achieve landscape-scale conservation by knitting together a series of public and private protected lands to preserve one of the last remaining stretches of undeveloped prairie along Colorado's Front Range. This regional effort will benefit the local economy, preserve working ranches and critical habitats, and provide a critical link in the Colorado Front Range Trail. To date, we have protected 5,860 acres through 21 projects. We expect to close on 1 project by year-end.

South Park Basin
South Park is a 1,000-square mile grassland basin in the geographic center of Colorado that contains over 200 miles of stream and riparian habitat and a globally rare grassland community. Colorado Open Lands has protected a total of 27,488 acres, including nearly 30 miles of riparian stream corridor, through 49 projects to date in this landscape of state and national significance.

South Platte River Corridor
Encompassing a six-county area in the northeast part of the state, this area is comprised of a mosaic of cottonwood and willow forests, irrigated and dryland agricultural areas, and short-grass prairie. This area also supports an amazing abundance of migratory bird species. We have protected 15,730 acres through 23 projects to date.

Yahn Ranch
Logan County, 1,161 acres
Partners: Jim and Tracy Yahn, and Ducks Unlimited, with funding from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act
Conservation Values: The Yahn Ranch is a working cattle ranch and

irrigated farm that is located just to the east of North Sterling Reservoir and adjacent to North Sterling State Park. The property is comprised primarily of shortgrass prairie, but also contains more than 240 acres of herbaceous wetlands and 40 acres of open water associated with the North Sterling Outlet Canal and intermittent Cedar Creek. More than 90 acres of the property is irrigated for alfalfa, corn, and winter wheat, used mostly for supplemental cattle feed. This juxtaposition of land uses and cover types is ideal for a variety of wildlife species, particularly migratory waterfowl.

Jim Yahn is the Manager of the North Sterling Irrigation District and is heavily involved in the creation of the South Platte Co-Op, which is envisioned as vehicle for agricultural water users to lease their augmentation and surface water rights to other agricultural, municipal, or industrial water users to provide an alternative to buy-and-dry agricultural water sales. As such, Colorado Open Lands and the Yahns negotiated a unique provision in the conservation easement that allows for the long-term lease of a portion of their water rights for use off the property. This supply could be met by shortening the irrigation season, or by temporarily suspending irrigation of some of the cropland on the property. Jim said "Tracy and I wanted to preserve our own property, but we also hope that this type of water management flexibility will encourage other farmers and ranchers to consider conservation easements to preserve their agricultural operations as well."

Southern Sangre de Cristo
This area provides critical winter range for elk and deer, as well as year-round habitat for black bear, mountain lion, wild turkey, and other wildlife. Colorado Open Lands has protected 84,512 acres through 20 projects in the area.

Our Wish List!

As a community-based nonprofit, we are committed to operating as efficiently as possible and making the best use of any contributions we receive. Colorado Open Lands has saved thousands of conservation dollars through the donation of items on our Wish List by our generous donors.

Your support, whether financial or with the donation of the actual item, helps us keep our budget focused on our conservation projects.

Please contact us if you would like to help us acquire any of the following:

Android Tablet. The monitoring of our 270 conservation easements includes a site visit and report preparation. With an Android Tablet we wouldn't need to carry paper copies of the baseline and fieldbook data needed to monitor an easement. And we could complete our report onsite, rather than entering the data back in the office. This would significantly reduce the amount of paper used and time spent on reporting, allowing us to spend more time stewarding. Estimated cost: \$200

Refrigerator. Our office refrigerator is starting to wear down after 12 years of consistently storing our lunches and harboring the extra peach box or two and Cranmer leftovers. Our available space is 31"wide X 32.5" deep. Estimated cost: \$800

40 plastic legal size containers. Our archive materials are currently stored in cardboard boxes and we need something more sturdy and durable. Estimated cost: \$15 each.

Two roadside safety kits. Our monitoring staff travel long distances, to remote corners of the state. Roadside safety kits will help immensely in the event they run into problems. Kits need to contain at least safety cones, flashlight, jumper cables and air compressor (or insta-flat). Estimated cost: \$60 each.

Ceiling Projector Screen. We have a small office conference room that barely has room for the 8-12 bodies we typically host. A ceiling projector screen would free up floor space and allow people to concentrate on our message, rather than the elbow in their side. Estimated cost: \$500.

4x4 Vehicle. A lot of the land we preserve is only accessible through rough terrain and backcountry roads. With over 250 conservation easements to monitor a year, having our own 4x4 capable of going anywhere would save a lot of money in vehicle rentals. If you are interested in helping us with this, please call or email our Stewardship Director, Cheryl Cufre at ccufre@coloradoopenlands.org.

Did you know you can make a monthly donation toward any of our wish list items?

Call or email Cheryl Fox at cfox@coloradoopenlands.org to coordinate the details!

Wandance Ranch

Garfield County, 113.5 acres (227.5 total)
Partners: Shannon Burke and Rodney Marcy

Conservation Values: The second and final phase of the Wandance Ranch conservation easement closed in late June. The property is located near the White River National Forest, just a few miles from the Flat Tops Wilderness boundary. The easement protects a variety of habitats that comprise the ranch, including aspen forest, sagebrush steppe, and riparian shrubland. Historic water rights irrigate pasture and hay meadow and feed several small ponds. The protection of this property complements the first phase of the project, which was completed in 2011.



Wet Mountain Open Space Coalition

Through a landowner initiated effort, Colorado Open Lands has protected 18,408 acres through 44 conservation easements to date.

Brown Ranch, 2012
Pueblo County, 1,564 acres (2,664 total)
Partners: Reeves and Betsy Brown

Conservation Values: The Browns have been steadily protecting their ranch holdings over more than a decade. This conservation easement protects a portion of the 3R Ranch near Beulah, increasing the total protected area to 2,664 acres! In the last ten years, El Paso and Pueblo Counties have lost nearly 11% of their agricultural land. In this context of lost ground, the Brown's commitment to protect their productive ranching ground becomes even more important. The Browns serve as incredible stewards of the land and have been nationally recognized for their holistic resource management practices. Not only do they share their practices with other interested landowners, but last year, they shared them with a lucky classroom from Beulah!

Individual Landowners

In addition to our Community Conservation Areas, Colorado Open Lands responds to more than 100 inquiries each year from landowners seeking information on conservation options for their land around Colorado. Working with 55 landowners, conservation easements have been placed on 67,665 acres across Colorado to date. We expect to close on another 3 projects by year-end.



Charles Russell (Chairman)

C/A Russell Partners, Inc.

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Robert H. Deline

Monaghan Management Corp.

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If you know someone who cares about Colorado’s scenic heritage and should be on our mailing list, call us with their name and address at (303) 988-2373 or email us at info@coloradoopenlands.org.

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Your Support

Your support of Colorado Open Lands has helped to protect over 256,500 acres of Colorado’s spectacular vistas and rich agricultural heritage. For every \$1,000 raised, Colorado Open Lands can protect \$10,000 worth of land.

Please join Colorado Open Lands in protecting Colorado’s land and water legacy. You can support Colorado Open Lands in the following ways:

Donate Online: Your online gift will make a difference. With your support, we can continue to protect and preserve the great scenic lands and natural heritage of Colorado!

Gifts of Cash or Securities: Colorado Open Lands accepts personal and corporate checks and gifts of stock. By giving appreciated stock, you can avoid capital gains taxes and receive an income tax deduction. You can also recommend Colorado Open Lands through your Donor Advised Fund!

Community Shares: Community Shares is a nonprofit federation that raises funds for over 100 Colorado charities through workplace giving. Colorado Open Lands’ Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) number is 78031. Our Denver Employee Combined Campaign (DECC) number is 5021, and our Community Shares of Colorado (CSC) number is 5016.

Employer Matching Gifts: Check with your employer to see if they will match your gift. This can often double your contribution.

Leave a Legacy: It is as easy as including Colorado Open Lands in your will or living trust, naming Colorado Open Lands as a beneficiary of your IRA-qualified retirement plan, or adding a codicil to your current will that names Colorado Open Lands. Lifetime gifts like this will make a lasting impact on land conservation in Colorado!

Gifts of Real Estate: Colorado Open Lands can take excess real estate and turn it into capital for protecting endangered land around Colorado, while potentially giving the donor significant tax deductions.