

EVLLT *communiqué*

A newsletter for friends of Estes Valley Land Trust
December 2013

REFLECTIONS ON A FLOOD: A BROAD VIEW OF A NATURAL DISASTER

What we call a “natural” disaster occurred in September. The Board of Directors and Staff of EVLT are saddened by the destruction this powerful event caused in the lives of our valley’s residents. Not only did the tragedy rearrange human life, it changed the landscape, it moved the rivers, and it even altered the expansive views of the distant horizon.

For conservationists, the disaster presents a unique challenge. EVLT, along with its 160 public and private owners of conserved land, works to protect open space, valleys, wildlife habitat, wetlands, and streams. Having set aside almost 10,000 acres in the Estes Valley, EVLT’s mission is to guard those lands “in perpetuity” from development and change.

But after a natural disaster, what once was a pristine mountainside now must have access for a public road. What once was lovely meadow and wildlife habitat is now a lake or a new riverbed. The riverbed has broadened, carelessly depositing rock and debris at random on the forest floor. The gorgeous private nook, where fish always lingered and time stood still, is gone forever.

The dilemma of preservation goes even further than a parcel of land. It goes to the heart of who we are as Coloradoans.



Art French stands in the driveway of his conservation easement property.

We live in one of the most spectacularly beautiful areas of the country. Colorado’s greatest appeal is the natural splendor that blesses the state. From the vast plains to the rugged mountains, residents and tourists alike take advantage of all the outdoors offers—hiking, climbing, skiing, photography, mountain biking, river rafting and more. Everywhere in the state are constant reminders of nature’s grandeur: the deep canyons, the valleys filled with lush meadows and meandering streams, the soaring mountain peaks.

Within that gorgeous scenery, however, are many signs of nature’s tremendous power and destructive forces at work for millions of years, well beyond human control. The clues of devastation are not always obvious. They are hidden under

moss and trees, coded in geologic history, and easily mistaken as permanent topography.

In our short lifetime, what catches our eye is the beauty of the moment. We see an “untouched” vista without registering the preceding demolition. However, the recent flood was a geologic event that, unlike most such events, occurred quite rapidly. It was one episode of thousands over the eons that have shaped Colorado, resulting in the scenery and wildlife habitat that draw so many to this area.

This can be seen through a closer look at our mountains. EVLT Director Art French and a fellow retired geologist hiked above one of the numerous mudslides that occurred with this flood. What they discovered is not surprising. They found clear evidence of at least two other larger mudslides in the same area in the past few millennia.

These are the mudslides that built the lush meadows and gorgeous resort areas that have been enjoyed during the last century.

As conservationists who love the untouched wilderness, recent floods remind us of the broader view. Nature’s timetable and agenda are different than our own. The need for change, flushing the meadow, sending the river to a clear, cobblestone-lined state of grace in a new location, bringing the mountains’ rich sediment to the valley, are all part of the “natural” process.

We would do well to accept this natural process with the improvement of habitat that it brings. We would also do well, in the course of rebuilding, to recognize the ever-occurring force of nature which will surely trump any future human effort to contain it. The Board and Staff of EVLT, along with its many other conservation-minded members and friends, will be working with town and county officials in the future to ensure this broader perspective is considered during reconstruction and recovery.



Watch for announcements about volunteer clean-up opportunities at conservation easement properties like Opal Land & Cattle Ranch.

WHAT'S NEW AT EVLT?

In spite of the 2013 flood disaster in the Estes Valley, which affected numerous conservation easement properties, EVLT has advanced many new projects:



Enhanced website — Check out our beautiful, improved website. Visit us at www.evlandtrust.org to stay up-to-date on EVLT's happenings, read our newsletter online, renew your membership, make a year-end donation, learn about the steps to donate a conservation easement, and much more. Enjoy the beautiful photography, including conservation easement photographs that were taken by James Frank to honor EVLT's 25th anniversary. We promise to change out the photos regularly so you will have good motivation to revisit the site often!

Conservation easements signs — You may have already begun to see conservation easement properties in the Estes Valley marked with signs declaring that the property's natural beauty is forever protected. Thanks to generous donations to the Wendell and Nancy Amos Fund, the first sign for each conservation easement is free, and additional signs may be purchased at a reduced cost of \$10. Not only is this a wonderful way for landowners to inform the public of their efforts to preserve the area's scenic beauty and natural habitats,

the signs will also help people to slow down and recognize what it is that makes the Estes Valley such an attractive place to live, work and play.



Strategic conservation — EVLT has developed a geographical information (GIS) data system that helps identify high-priority conservation parcels within the Estes Valley. This information is useful for EVLT whenever a landowner makes an initial inquiry regarding their property. Also it provides a foundation for a more proactive approach to conservation, as EVLT begins to contact the owners of high-priority parcels to suggest possible conservation options. Using a variety of mapped data layers and digital overlay technologies, staff can easily identify the wildlife corridors, the waterways, adjacent conservation easements, park boundaries, etc., that make a property extremely important for protection. This tool also serves as a crucial guide as we work with public and private entities toward finding best solutions for future development. EVLT's voice in community development can now be accompanied by an evaluation of the conservation values of all property within the Estes Valley.

New technology for monitoring — This year we adopted iPad technology that combines GPS and GIS mapping with digital photography to better document current conditions on our conservation easements. We are beginning to train volunteer monitors in the technology and are using it to update baseline reports of the easements. The result is a more accurate, detailed picture of the conservation values of the properties. We are pleased to be working with this cutting-edge technology and introducing it to other land trusts around the state.



Accreditation renewal — EVLT is in the final stages of our first accreditation renewal, which will provide another five years of official recognition of our organization's dedication to the high standards set by the Land Trust Alliance. EVLT was in the first group of 39 (of 1,700 land trusts) to achieve accreditation. Accreditation means that we meet national quality standards, uphold the public trust, and ensure that our conservation efforts are permanent. We hope to have official news of our renewal by March.

EARTH, WIND, WATER, AND FIRE

“Earth, Wind, Water, and Fire,” the theme of this year’s summer breakfast series, was aptly named—even more than we realized! Each breakfast was held in a beautiful location with gorgeous scenery. At the June event, held at Upper Beaver Meadows in Rocky Mountain National Park, a panel of four local experts discussed fire management while the wildfire on the Park’s west side burned. RMNP Superintendent Vaughn Baker described efforts to control that fire and the previous year’s Fern



Lake Fire. Roosevelt National Forest Fire Management Officer Dave Hamrick discussed the Forest Service’s role in managing fires. Larimer County Emergency Services Specialist Tony Simons and Estes Valley Fire Protection District Fire Chief Scott Dorman rounded out the panel, describing how decisions to evacuate residences are made and recommending strategies for fire preparedness by the public.

In July we visited Ravencrest Chalet on Pole Hill where Bill Hay, author of the book *Experimenting on a Small Planet*, gave



a fascinating and, at times, alarming presentation. Bill discussed in layman’s terms how the climate system works and some possible future outcomes. He

explained why the weather is becoming increasingly chaotic as our planet warms at a rate far faster than at any time in its geologic past. Our members-only annual meeting was held in August at Barbara and Herb Hoovers’ stunning H Bar H Ranch, with Longs Peak as the backdrop. Charlie Reynar, Fire Operations Specialist at RMNP, and Doug Watry, Fuels Specialist at RMNP, explained fire ecology and methods used by the Park to mitigate the risk of fire to the public and to Park lands.



We offer our sincere thanks to our excellent speakers. Thanks also go to Linda Guzzi and her crew from Catering for All Occasions, who once again prepared and cheerfully served the delicious breakfasts. And, of course, we are always grateful to our hosts at each of the event sites. Spending time on conserved properties is a special treat!

The Educational Events Committee is the team of creative, energetic volunteers who dream up, plan, and staff these entertaining and informative events that regularly attract over 100 people at each program.

We are very appreciative of all their hard work that makes the summer breakfasts so successful.

The 2013 committee was chaired by Kent Keller and included Gil Anderson, Libby and Dennis Bryan, Janet Keller, Roy and Frances Marvin, Bob and Judy Taphorn, Jerry Thorson-Boudreaux, Mary Banken, Amy Schwarzbach, and Jan Swaney. Art French served as the Board liaison. This was the final year for the committee leadership by Kent Keller, who has chaired this committee since 2008. Many thanks to Kent for his stellar service to our EVLT community.

He

We know that in this newsletter there are gaps in the people mentioned and the reasons for the thanks that we are including... but certainly thanks must also go out to Mark Riffle, Randy Davis, Steve and Irene Little, Susan Harris, Conservation Resource Center, Rex Poggenpohl, Rebecca Urquhart, Tax Credit Connection, Chuck Levine, Hobert Office Services, Staff of Larimer County Department of Natural Resources, Ken Oldham, Jim White, Peter Sartucci, James Frank and Tamara Jarolimek, Staff of Town of Estes Park, Conservation Tax Credit Transfer, Millennium Group, Allan Beezley, and a host of others who have supported us in so many ways!



AN ANNUAL THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Our sincere thanks from EVLT to the following individuals and businesses that have provided membership and other forms of financial support during 2013. Because of these contributions, scenic lands have been conserved and monitored to ensure that conservation agreements have been maintained, and potential new land conservation tracts have been identified. We can't thank you enough for your continued support!

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Conservation Easement Landowners are very special people! Because of the commitments they make to the preservation of natural landscapes and habitat, we all benefit... and we are grateful. Some of them take their generosity one step further and sponsor hiking events on their properties. Thanks to Laura and Gary Emerson, Brendan and Annemarie Chenoweth, Herb and Barbara Hoover, Wells and Gail Johnson, Debbie Hughes and Leo Weber for hosting these groups!

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EVLTL pleased to announce that for the first time we are participating this year in Colorado Gives Day on December 10, and accepting donations through the ColoradoGives website on Colorado Gives Day or any other day of the year. Go to www.coloradogives.org and search for Estes Valley Land Trust. You can preschedule your end-of-year donation to be effective on December 10... or you can wait and make your donation on December 10th – the official Colorado Gives Day. On that day, 100% of your donation goes to EVLTL, plus a FirstBank Incentive Fund has been established that increases the value of every donated dollar. Your donation is 100% tax-deductible. What a great way to increase the funds that will help EVLTL to keep the Estes Valley beautiful!

We cherish our memories of longtime supporters who passed away during 2013, including David Krumme, Al Persons, Madeline Wrobley, Dorothy Retrum, and Bob Quick.



Memorial benches — EVLTL has installed two new decorative benches along the Riverwalk in downtown Estes Park to memorialize Wendell Amos and Bob Quick, thanks to gracious donations from their families. Sit a while to enjoy the contributions of these two gentlemen to their beloved Estes Park!

THANKS TO OUR MONITORS

As was experienced throughout the Estes Valley, many of our monitors faced extra challenges this year. Numerous conservation easement properties became inaccessible after the heavy rains washed out access roads. Some of our monitors were forced to leave their own homes for significant time periods as their crawl spaces and lower levels, road access and utilities underwent emergency repairs. And some of our lucky monitors had the opportunity to be challenged by our new iPad technologies as they completed their fieldwork according to our heightened standards. This year 99 monitors donated their time to check over 15 square miles of conservation easement properties. Yes, it's quite fun to hike around on EVLT's beautiful conservation easements...but we certainly couldn't do it all without the following group of outstanding volunteers who kindly give their time and energy.

Gil Anderson	Paula Edwards	Ellis and Pat Laitala	Bill Pinkham	Marcia and David Tavel
Craig Axtell	Becky Elrod	Bill Lamm	Anita Prinzmetal	Corinne Thomas
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Dan and Linda Dilts	Carmen and Bruce Johnson	Hugh and Sonja McTeague	John and Sally Stevenson	Marsha Yelick and Bruce Nickels
Joe Dodds	Wells Johnson	Ken Oldham	Maurita Stueck	
Nancy Dunavan	Charlie Johnson	Sally and Wayne Park	Mark Tabb	
	Bob Joseph			

Annual Monitor Training & Appreciation Luncheon at the Rock Inn



WELCOME TO ERICA GOAD

Estes Valley Land Trust is pleased to welcome Erica Goad as the organization's first full-time Stewardship Coordinator. She began her position on Monday, December 2nd, and has a very busy agenda ahead.

When EVLT accepts the donation of a conservation easement on a property, it makes a commitment to ensure that the property will be sustained forever in the manner specified by the terms of the Deed of Conservation Easement. Reporting to Executive Director Mary Banken, Erica's primary responsibilities are the execution and oversight of all the activities required to meet these land stewardship obligations.

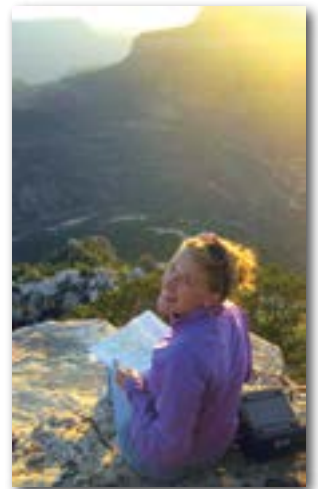
Her tasks include working with 100 volunteer monitors to ensure the completion of annual monitoring, developing and maintaining baseline documentation of conservation values, and working with landowners of the conserved properties.

Erica comes to EVLT with an impressive educational background and applicable work experience. She completed extensive coursework in Namibia, Africa, graduating cum laude from Whitman College, Walla Walla, Washington, with an undergraduate degree in Biology and Environmental Studies. She received a Master's degree in Ecology from Colorado State University in August 2013. Most recently she was a Conservation

Coordinator for the Colorado office of The Nature Conservancy, responsible for easement monitoring site visits. Erica's experience also includes work and research in environmental conservation, wildlife research, renewable electricity standards, mountain pine beetle research, riparian restoration, and climate study. She held a year-long position in the National Park Service, was a Colorado Truman Scholar, and has extensive mapping and documentation experience with GPS and GIS systems technology.

In Erica's own words, she was attracted to the Stewardship Coordinator position at EVLT because, "I am committed to conservation in Colorado and see particular value in promoting private land conservation efforts, since private lands are often the most biologically productive landscapes and are crucial for promoting regional biodiversity and connectivity."

As we welcome Erica to the EVLT team, please stop by the office and personally introduce yourself. She is eager to meet you, and you will enjoy getting to know her.



HERMIT PARK OPEN SPACE EVENT

Hermit Park Open Space was the destination for 250 adventure-seeking people, including 70 children, one day in June when EVLT and Larimer County Department of Natural Resources co-sponsored an open house and treasure hunt at the park. Explorers of all ages visited the park free-of-charge and found treasures and activities throughout the park that promoted its offerings, including trails for hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking, RV and tent camping, cabin rentals, an equestrian campground, a pavilion that can be reserved for special events, ponderosa pine forests, wetland meadows, wildflowers, beautiful scenery, and abundant habitat for an impressive variety of mountain wildlife.

The open house was part of the Second Annual Colorado Land Conservation Appreciation Week, a celebration of all the excellent work done to protect Colorado's special treasures. The normal admission price of \$6 per vehicle (used for maintenance and upkeep) was waived during the open house. The Open Space event was such a success that plans are already underway for next year's open house.

As in all of our events, volunteers played an important role in the success of the day. Many thanks to Lynn and Susan Weissenrieder, Marsha Tavel, Ken Martin, Bill Pinkham, Rebecca Urquhart, Art and Marsha French, Gil Anderson,

Bob Kreycik, Carl Sorrentino, Kim and Joe Andrews, Hugh Templeton and Susan Kurzweil. Thanks also to Larimer County Department of Natural Resources staff Rob Novak, Zac Weibe, and Heather Young for hosting this event with us.

Hermit Park Open Space is a 1,362-acre natural area located two miles from Estes Park, on Highway 36 across from Pole Hill. The preservation of this stunning area was a joint effort in 2007 between Larimer County, Agilent Technologies, Estes Valley Land Trust, Great Outdoors Colorado, Town of Estes Park, City of Loveland, Erion Foundation, City of Fort Collins, McWhinney Foundation, Town of Berthoud, and many more contributors. Many EVLT members were instrumental in helping EVLT raise its share of the purchase price.

The property was originally privately owned, but after its purchase in 2007, it was opened to the public. Hermit Park Open Space is operated and maintained for public use by Larimer County Department of Natural Resources. EVLT holds the conservation easement on the property, restricting its development in perpetuity. This property is one of several conservation easements that allow public access and recreational use. Visit Hermit Park to enjoy a backcountry experience with the convenience of a neighborhood park. Hermit Park Open Space is truly one of Estes Park's treasures.



OFFICE SPACE FOR OPEN SPACE FUNDRAISING

Our Office Space for Open Space campaign began in 2011 and continues for the next five years as donors continue to meet their pledge commitments. To date, over \$58,000 has been received of the original pledge total of over \$80,000. Through this campaign, which was spearheaded by longtime EVLT champion Jim White, funding is provided for 10 years of office rent. Many thanks to these friends!

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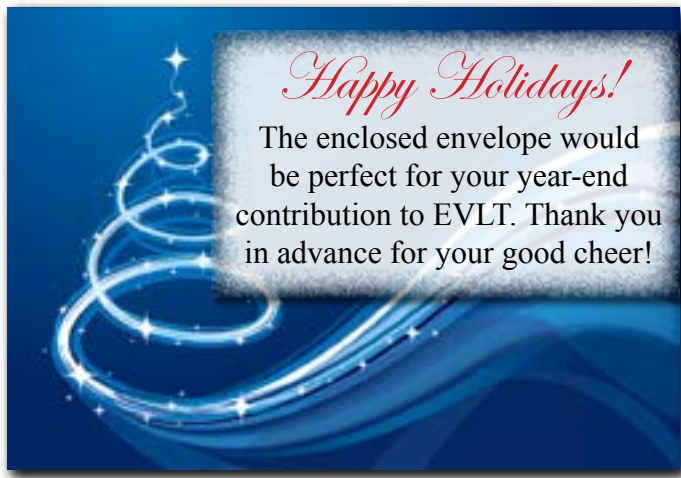
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