

Estes Valley Land Trust

Fall 2023 Newsletter



Inside:
Major Gift Received
New President Elected
Conservation Movement Underway



Estes Valley Land Trust

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Joanna Maggetti

Community Engagement
Coordinator
Alicia Rochambeau

**Our mission is to conserve land throughout
the Estes Valley and surrounding areas for
current and future generations.**



Above: A group of volunteers monitor a conserved property.

Photo by Charlie Johnson

MONITORING SEASON A SUCCESS!

Thanks to our hardy volunteers, the Estes Valley Land Trust completed another successful easement monitoring season! It was a wet spring and summer and while many volunteers marveled at the array of wildflowers, they also lamented the spread of weeds across the valley. Meadow Hawkweed, a plant on the Colorado Noxious Weed Watch List, was observed in the Tahosa Valley for the first time by a land trust monitor. Thanks to volunteer Susan Harris, the land trust notified the landowner and worked with the Larimer County Weed District to begin weed treatment and prevent further spread. Nice catch Susan!

In the spring, the land trust coordinated a Weed Symposium for landowners to learn more about weed control and native plant reestablishment. While the land trust does not manage conserved lands, we are committed to providing resources to landowners so they can use the best available science to increase biodiversity and provide excellent wildlife habitat.

Staff are finalizing their review of the monitoring reports and following up with landowners as needed. Thank you volunteers for your countless hours of hiking, photography, and reporting to preserve these beautiful lands!

Front Cover: A property recently donated to the land trust. Read more on page 5.

Photo by Charlie Johnson

LAND TRUST LOOKS AHEAD AS NEW BOARD PRESIDENT STEPS IN TO LEAD

Karla Henderson grew up on a Midwestern farm and learned early the importance of land conservation from the standpoint of farming. **“My parents engrained in me a stewardship ethic and since my formative years, my primary connection to land has been through outdoor recreation,”** said Karla, President of the Estes Valley Land Trust Board of Directors. **“I was familiar with the idea of land trusts, but it was not until I retired to Estes Park that I realized how essential they are for the quality of life we all share.”**

Karla’s philosophy of “thinking globally and acting locally” is a perfect match for the Estes Valley Land Trust and the Estes Park community. **“I often think about what climate change means to me in my daily life and how my actions and the organizations I support can make a difference. The Estes Valley Land Trust’s mission to conserve land is a natural solution to climate change. It makes a lot of sense.”**

The land trust has a history of strong Board leadership and for the organization’s first two decades, there were no staff. Board members dedicated hundreds of hours a year and conserved thousands of acres of land. Today, the land trust remains small, with just three staff members, and the Board of Directors continues to contribute countless hours to governing the land trust. **“I want to thank Don Smith for his excellent leadership over the last two years, while he served as our Board President,”** said Karla. **“The previous few years have been tumultuous for so many organizations as they managed COVID-19 and other operational challenges, yet Don helped keep the land trust strong and steady.”**

Karla’s election as the new President is not the only change to the land trust’s Board of Directors. Ryan Bross, Senior Vice President of Bank of Colorado, Estes Park Branch, joined the Board in August. Ryan serves on the land trust’s finance committee and provides accounting and financial expertise that serves the land trust well. **“The land trust has an easy mission to support, they help protect the things that motivated me to move here in the first place. And now I’m part of a community that cares deeply about the environment. The land trust is a perfect opportunity to apply myself to a cause that serves so many good people.”**

In addition to the changes with the Board of Directors, Alicia Rochambeau joined the staff as our Community Engagement Coordinator. **“I’m thrilled to work for such a dynamic organization,”** said Alicia. **“We are known for conserving nearly 10,000 acres of land around Estes Park and the legion of volunteers that help us monitor these properties, but we also give back to the community through our Student Environmental Film Festival and other innovative community-led projects.”** Alicia’s connections to local partners such as the school district will help the land trust continue to fulfill its mission.

Of course, the land trust would not be successful without the support of hundreds of community members that donate their time, energy, and money to support our mission. **“As a small way to thank our members for your generosity, I invite you to our Holiday Party that takes place on Thursday, December 7,”** said Karla. See the back cover for more details and instructions on how to register. In the meantime, we wish everyone an enjoyable holiday season!



A chickadee whispers good tidings to Board President Karla Henderson.

PROGRESS CONTINUES TOWARDS CONSERVATION GOALS

A new nationwide land conservation movement is underway and the Estes Valley Land Trust is participating to raise awareness about the role healthy land plays in our daily lives. Some of the benefits of land conservation are well understood, such as clean air and water or healthy food, while other benefits, such as improving mental health and creating social connections, may surprise you. The Estes Valley Land Trust continues to explore new land conservation opportunities that provide a variety of public benefits. And we're not alone.

This summer, the Estes Valley Land Trust hosted a breakfast with Colorado Open Lands and The Nature Conservancy, two of the largest land trusts in the state, as measured by acres conserved. In total, they protect more than one million acres in Colorado. The entire Colorado land trust community recently pledged to conserve another three million acres in the next 10 years.



Staff and volunteers discuss new conservation opportunities while hiking on a conserved property.
Photo by Marsha Hobert

“While keeping our focus on the Estes Valley, we’re part of both a national and statewide effort to create new incentives and educate landowners about the benefits of conservation,” said Director Jeffrey Boring. Locally, the Land Trust has identified properties that comprise important cultural values and critical wildlife habitat, or provide new sustainable recreation opportunities. The Estes Valley Land Trust aims to increase the acreage of locally conserved land by 50%, to a total of 15,000 acres, within 10 years.

Increasing the Pace of Conservation

Conserving land is a methodical process dictated by industry standards and both state and federal requirements. It also involves working with a variety of consultants, completing detailed reports and of course, two willing partners... a land trust and a landowner. Some of the biggest hurdles to increase the pace of conservation involve educating landowners about the benefits of conservation and expanding the pool of consultants that help complete easement transactions. **“As project bottlenecks that slow the pace of conservation are identified and we explore new ways to conserve land in Colorado, it’s important to work closely with industry professionals and look into training opportunities to grow this field,”** said Jeffrey Boring. **“Everyone wants to pick up the pace and reach the ambitious three million acre goal, but what will it actually take to get there?”**

Enhancing State Incentives

Colorado has one of the nation’s best financial incentives for landowners that donate a conservation easement: an income tax credit that can be spread across 20 years and/or can be sold to generate personal income. In 2026, elements of this tax credit program will expire. The land trust community is working closely with legislators across the state to expand this program and a bill is being drafted for the 2024 legislative session to make the tax credit program permanent.

The legislature currently sets aside \$45 million a year for conservation easement tax credits and with inflation and the increasing popularity of easements, the annual tax credit cap needs to increase to meet demand. A statewide initiative to raise the tax cap is underway and involves site tours with legislators, a public outreach campaign, and communication with the Governor’s Office. **“While we look forward to celebrating future conservation easements in the Estes Valley, we also have our eye on some big statewide goals,”** said Boring. **“And we’re building the alliances and support to get us there.”**

SUMMER EVENTS

A BIG HIT

It was another successful summer of educational breakfasts and member hikes hosted by the Estes Valley Land Trust. **“Our breakfasts are so much fun and it’s great to see and reconnect with our members each summer,”** said Joanna Maggetti, Estes Valley Land Trust Business Manager and the organizer of our summer breakfasts. **“We focused our July program on Colorado’s efforts to reintroduce wolves and it was such a popular event I was afraid we wouldn’t have room for everyone!”** Approximately 150 people attended the wolf breakfast, likely the largest educational breakfast the land trust has hosted in the organization’s 35-year history.

The land trust also hosted hikes to conserved lands in the Tahosa Valley and along the Bulwark Ridge Trail near Glen Haven. An emphasis was placed on getting new members on the land so they could better understand how the land trust operates and the goals it is trying to achieve. The land trust membership has grown over the years, thanks in part to new and popular events, and is now approaching 450 members. **“Our member events are really thoughtfully chosen, such as our tour to History Colorado this spring, and that resonates with our membership,”** said Maggetti. **“We hope our members will spread the word and encourage their friends to support the land trust... a membership makes a great holiday gift!”**

Gift memberships can be made online at www.evlandtrust.org/donate or call Joanna at **970-577-6837**.

MAJOR GIFT RECEIVED

In May, the Estes Valley Land Trust received a gift of real estate, likely one of the largest donations the land trust has received. The property is located in the Big Thompson Canyon, but the landowner has asked to remain anonymous. **“We worked closely with the landowner to structure the deal so he could continue to access the property even though the land trust now owns it,”** said Jeffrey Boring. **“This is an extremely generous gift and I’m honored to get to work with the donor to fulfill his wishes.”**

The land trust will continue to own the land during the donor’s lifetime and will sell the property, preserved by a conservation easement, when he passes or voluntarily gives up his right to use the property. This legal arrangement preserves the land, more than 50 acres in size, and the proceeds from the sale will be used to conserve additional land across the Estes Valley.

Donating land with a life estate is a great way to support the Estes Valley Land Trust and retain personal use of the property. If you own property in the Estes Valley and would like to learn more about this option, give Jeffrey a call at 970-577-6837.



Kids got in on the wolf recovery fun at the July breakfast.
Photo by Charlie Johnson



New property gifted to the Estes Valley Land Trust.
Photo by Charlie Johnson

Thank you to our donors!

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"As new members, we really enjoyed all of the events and activities hosted by the Land Trust this year!"

- Kate and Dave Arterburn

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**"Dad was a former Board member and supporter of the land trust for many years. Gifts to EVLT are a meaningful way for friends and family to honor his memory."
- Linda Barry, daughter of Marvin Gee**

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Bill Childers in honor of Chris Childers
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Marcia Tavel in memory of Dr. David Tavel
Rick and Janet Taylor in memory of Tom Hornbein
Abbie Todd Singer in memory of Marvin Gee
Leo Weber and Deborah Hughes in memory of Tom Hornbein
Joann Welton in memory of Art and Marsha French
Joanne White in memory of Jim White
Dennis and Michele Wolf in memory of Jack and Rosemary Wolf
Guy and Mary Zimmerman in memory of Tom Hornbein
Blake Waycaster in memory of Steve Judish
Joann Welton in honor of Art and Marsha French
Joanne White in honor of James V. White

Join us in remembering the members who passed away this year:

**Doris Byers
Chris Childers
Marjorie Dunmire
Margaret Gallup
Charlotte Gee and Marvin Gee
Pieter Hondius
Tom Hornbein
Robert Jackson
Arthur Kramer
Cora Petrocine
Gwenda Purdy
Janice Ricker
Jean Sutherland**

These pages include all gifts received from 11/1/2022 through 10/31/2023



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Estes Valley Land Trust

Holiday Party

Thursday, December 7th
4 - 6 pm
Skyview at Fall River Village

For more information and to RSVP visit
www.evlandtrust.org/RSVP



UNLOCK A MATCHING \$20,000 GIFT!

A generous donor pledged to donate \$20,000 to the land trust, but only if we can raise another \$20,000 to match their gift! With your help we can unlock this match and raise a total of \$40,000 for the land trust. Any gift made through ColoradoGives.org from November 1st through December 5th will be boosted by an additional donation from the Community First Foundation.

**To learn more and to donate, search for Estes Valley
Land Trust on ColoradoGives.org**