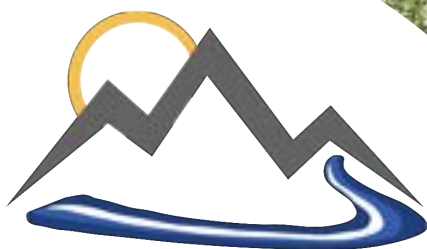


Estes Valley Land Trust

Spring 2025 Newsletter



Estes Valley Land Trust

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Nationally Recognized – Again!



Estes Valley Land Trust

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Alec MacDonell

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

WELCOME ALEC MACDONELL



EVLTL's new Stewardship Intern Alec MacDonell.

Thanks to our partnership with the Student Conservation Association, the Estes Valley Land Trust has some extra help this summer as we move into the conservation easement monitoring season. Alec MacDonell has been hired as the land trust's Stewardship Intern.

"I'm excited to connect with and learn from the residents of the Estes Valley," said Alec. **"It's a beautiful place, and I'm looking forward to contributing to conservation efforts in the valley."** Alec has an Environmental Studies degree from the University of Cincinnati and is pursuing a master's degree in Conservation Leadership from Colorado State University. His professional experience includes groundwater and air quality sampling throughout the West and trail building right here in Estes Park.

If you are a conservation easement monitor, you're bound to see him this summer as you return your monitoring binders, and he's also excited to meet our members at our summer breakfasts and other events. Be sure to introduce yourself and welcome Alec to the Estes Valley Land Trust.

JOIN US AT UPCOMING SUMMER BREAKFASTS



Camp Nizhoni, affiliated with Lincoln Hills, has offered an outdoor camp for African American girls for nearly 100 years.
Photo from Denver Public Library.

TWO MOUNTAIN RETREATS: ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK AND LINCOLN HILLS

When & Where:

Eagle Rock School
Saturday, July 19 @ 8 AM

Cost:

\$20/person

Speakers:

**Dr. Jeannette Patterson
& Judge Gary Jackson**
Lincoln Hills Cares

Dr. Ruth Alexander

Author of *Democracy's Mountain*



Wolverines may reclaim some of their native territory in Colorado, thanks to Colorado Parks and Wildlife efforts.
Photo from Britannica.

WOLVERINE REINTRODUCTION PLAN: RETURN OF THE LARGEST LAND WEASEL

When & Where:

Hermit Park Open Space
Saturday, August 16 @ 8 AM

Cost:

\$20/person

Speaker:

Dr. Bob Inman
Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Reservations are required for each breakfast.

Breakfast will be catered by Big Horn Restaurant and will include eggs, bacon, fresh fruit, pastries and coffee. Visit evlandtrust.org/RSVP to register. All events are located outdoors with limited or no seating. Please bring a chair, jacket, hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.

BREAKFASTS DRAW EXPERTS TO ESTES PARK

Summer breakfasts remain the Estes Valley Land Trust's most popular events. There's nothing like spending a summer morning on a beautiful conserved property near Estes Park, with about 100 of your friends, while sharing a hearty breakfast and learning something new.

This year we've teamed up with our friends at Lincoln Hills Cares, the author of a book about the National Park Service called *Democracy's Mountain*, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife to discuss the Rocky Mountains as a retreat for people and a refuge for reintroduced wildlife.

Rocky Mountain National Park and Lincoln Hills – The Story of Two Mountain Retreats

We've all heard the saying "the mountains are calling and I must go", which was immortalized by John Muir in a letter to his sister in 1873. Mountains have a magnetic allure, provide opportunities for reflection, connection with nature, and a sense of awe and wonder, potentially leading to healing and a deeper understanding of oneself and the world. In short, the mountains are good for the soul.

Our July breakfast at Eagle Rock School will highlight two examples of mountain retreats that were formed to commune with nature. The first example is obvious. Rocky Mountain National Park was established in 1915, one year before the National Park Service. Dr. Ruth Alexander, Professor Emerita of History at Colorado State University, will discuss how the National Park Service contended with the three fundamental obligations of its enabling legislation – to manage national parks as sites for visitor enjoyment and resource preservation and as sites for democratic freedom and equality.

The second example is less well known: Lincoln Hills. Lincoln Hills was founded in 1922 by E.C. Regnier and Roger Ewalt to serve as a resort community by Black Americans for Black Americans. Located about 50 miles south of Estes Park, Lincoln Hills was the only Black resort in the Mountain West, during a time when the fight against segregation was a constant battle and when the Ku Klux Klan was at its peak.



Gary Jackson, a retired Denver judge and great grandson of one of the original Lincoln Hills landowners, will discuss the history and preservation efforts of this retreat center. Dr. Jeannette Patterson, the Executive Director of Lincoln Hills Cares, will talk about the outdoor education/recreation and college/career readiness programs that are currently offered to youth. After more than 100 years of the founding of the National Park Service and Lincoln Hills, the desire to return to the mountains and commune with nature remains strong.

Our summer breakfasts are a fun way to reconnect with friends.
Photo by Charlie Johnson.

The Plan for Wolverine Reintroduction

Wolverines are a native species to Colorado but were extirpated from the state in the 1900s due to unregulated harvest and poisoning. It's very unlikely to see a wolverine in the contiguous United States and only about 400 inhabit Washington, Montana, Idaho and Wyoming.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife biologists estimate that the state has enough suitable terrain to support approximately 100-180 animals. Spotting a Colorado wolverine may be possible in the future, but do you really want to encounter a wild wolverine, which is known as one of the most vicious predators in North America?

Join the Estes Valley Land Trust and Dr. Bob Inman with Colorado Parks and Wildlife to learn more about the state's Wolverine Reintroduction Plan and whether you should add the largest land weasel to your life list!

JOIN US ON A SUMMER HIKE

Hiking is one of the best ways to see the benefits of land conservation and this year the Estes Valley Land Trust is teaming up with partners to showcase protected lands that are seldom seen. The three hikes vary in difficulty and will include a free picnic lunch.

Ramsay-Shockey Open Space – June 18

This moderate loop hike of about 4 miles includes sections of the Shoshone and Besant Point trails, located west of Carter Lake. Combined, the trails have about 500 feet of elevation gain and provide great views of Pinewood Reservoir, osprey nests, large ponderosa pines and rock outcrops.

En route to Ramsay-Shockey Open Space, participants will stop at Canyon Edge Open Space for a sneak-peek of this new 1,547-acre natural area recently purchased by Larimer County. This park is tentatively set to open in 2030. Larimer County staff will provide a special presentation about the future of this new open space.

Crosier Mountain Trail – July 16

This is a strenuous approximately 8-mile hike with about 2,100 feet of elevation gain. The hike will start at the Rainbow Trailhead and end at the Garden Gate Trailhead, both located on County Road 43. The hike will not include summiting Crosier Mountain, but will be a difficult and rewarding hike on a trail that is rarely used. This may become a go-to hike for those who are seeking a challenge and solitude.

Childers Conservation Easement – August 6

This moderate 3-4 mile hike will highlight a conserved property located near the Long's Peak Trailhead. The adventure will include some off-trail hiking through forests, meadows and maybe a creek crossing or two! Mary Childers, the current owner of the property and family member who donated the conservation easement, will meet us at the end of the hike for a picnic lunch.

Note: Each hike is limited to 10-15 participants and registration information will be shared via email a few weeks before the planned trip. Our member hikes are very popular. Please limit registration to one hike so that other members can attend.



Gear up for a land trust hike. Leashed dogs are welcome on the Crosier Mountain Trail.

LOCAL YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS ANNOUNCED

Thanks to the generosity of Bird & Jim restaurant and anonymous donors, the Estes Valley Land Trust recently awarded \$8,000 in scholarships to Estes Park High School and Eagle Rock School students. The land trust's mission is to conserve land for current and future generations and an investment in the education of local students has been a land trust priority for many years.



Seven students from Estes Park High School and Eagle Rock School participated in the land trust's film festival. Photo by Elizabeth Courtney.

"This is the first time I've attended the Student Environmental Film Festival," said Pat Begley, member of the Estes Valley Land Trust's Board of Directors. **"Watching these student films and listening to them discuss their passion for the environment gives me hope for the future."**

The films can be viewed at the Estes Valley Land Trust's YouTube page. This year's scholarship winners were Anthony Saunders, Jr. from Eagle Rock School (1st Place) and EP High School students Jerilyn Fischer (2nd Place) and Ella Oberan (3rd Place).

FOREVER ESTES CIRCLE GROWS

The Estes Valley Land Trust welcomes new members to the Forever Estes Circle, our planned giving program. Planned gifts are important because they provide a long-term, reliable source of funding, allowing the land trust to plan for the future and address our community's conservation needs. They also offer donors a way to leave a legacy and make a positive and lasting impact beyond their lifetime.

Recently, Ann and Simon Turner, Jane and David McAfee and Sally Stevenson notified the Estes Valley Land Trust of their planned gift. **"We believe it's absolutely essential to preserve the beauty of the Estes Valley for future generations,"** said Jane and Dave McAfee.

The land trust schedules special Forever Estes Circle member events, such as a summer picnic and exclusive tour of conserved lands. To learn more about the Forever Estes Circle contact the office at 970-577-6837 or visit evlandtrust.org/donate.



Jane and Dave McAfee are some of the newest members of the Forever Estes Circle.

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION STATUS RENEWED

For the fourth time, the Estes Valley Land Trust has been accredited by the Land Trust Alliance, a national organization that serves a group of land trusts that have conserved more than 61 million acres of land. **“We’re part of a large network of successful land trusts that stretch from “sea to shining sea” and that’s made an incredible lasting impact in the US,”** said Jeffrey Boring, Executive Director. **“And we’re doing our part in Estes Park; I’m thrilled that the Estes Valley Land Trust continues to meet the highest standards and has received this national recognition for sixteen consecutive years.”**

The latest accreditation term was announced in 2024 and will expire in 2031. The Accreditation Seal is earned by demonstrating excellence in four organizational categories: responsible governance, sound finances, well-managed land transactions and lasting stewardship. The staff and board dedicated more than 100 hours towards accreditation renewal and improvements were made to better align with industry standards.



For example, the Estes Valley Land Trust’s annual plan and budget is approved by the Board of Directors each year but a 3-5 year strategic plan that guides our work and ensures that the organization is fulfilling our mission to conserve land forever has not been developed. That’s about to change.

In addition to receiving national accreditation, the Estes Valley Land Trust also received a grant to help cover the costs of a strategic plan. **“The Estes Valley Land Trust continues to impress me because they are focused on conserving land, serving the people that depend on it and finding new ways to engage more people that care about the environment,”** said Marcie Demmy Bidwell, the Southwest Senior Program Manager of Land Trust Alliance. **“I’m excited to see the new ideas the Estes Valley Land Trust hatches through their planning process.”**

A strategic plan is useless without secure financial resources and a reliable accounting and reporting system. While accounting may not be the most glamorous element of non-profit management, it is absolutely essential to sustaining a healthy organization. The Estes Valley Land Trust practices generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), provides quarterly financial documents to the Board of Directors, completes an externally prepared financial report and files a complete and accurate Form 990 to the IRS each year. These are all marks of sound financial management and required to earn national accreditation.

For many years, members of the Board of Directors with a strong financial background have developed the accounting policies and procedures needed to meet these rigorous requirements. Land trusts that manage their money well

and meet all the accreditation requirements generally outpace those organizations that are not accredited. Accredited land trusts have significantly bigger budgets, more staff and volunteers, and eight times more money invested to steward and defend their conservation lands than peers of similar size, based upon an independent external evaluation completed for the Land Trust Alliance Accreditation Commission.

Accredited land trusts also conserve three times more land than their unaccredited peers. **“We hope our members are proud that the land trust remains nationally recognized; it’s a sign of organization stability and success,”** said Boring.



Accredited land trusts conserve and defend more land than other organizations.



- Sound Finances
- Ethical Conduct
- Responsible Governance
- Lasting Stewardship

Accredited since
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\$25,000 IN GRANTS RECEIVED

Great news! The Estes Valley Land Trust recently received two grants, totaling \$25,000, from the Land Trust Alliance. The Alliance continues to recognize the land trust's focus on conservation transactions and sound financial management. The funds will be used to help conserve land that borders Rocky Mountain National Park and to improve operations by investing in new software and staff training.

