



# THE LEGACY



Newsletter of the Gunnison Ranchland Conservation Legacy  
Fall 2017

## MISSION

CONSERVE RANGLANDS. PRESERVE RANCHING.

### **CSU Study Reports Significant Return on Public Investment in Conservation**

A 2017 study by Colorado State University analyzed the public investment in Colorado conservation easements and found that each dollar invested for these easements produced benefits of between \$4 and \$12 for Coloradans. Public benefits include clean water and air, scenic views, local farm and ranch products, and wildlife habitat: all things that contribute to a high quality of life in the state. Researchers said these data show that easements are conserving land that is important for wildlife, agriculture, tourism and outdoor recreation for Colorado's visitors and residents alike.

Since 1995, conservation easements have helped to protect more than 2.1 million acres of Colorado lands, using public funds from a state tax credit program and/or grants from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), which is funded by profits from the state lottery. CSU researchers calculated the annual value of each easement's per-acre ecosystem services such as water filtration and purification, wildlife habitat protection, and soil retention to calculate overall economic benefits. "Easements are the primary tool in Colorado for conserving these many benefits while still maintaining land in private ownership – often as working farms and ranches," said Drew Bennett, study coauthor and a postdoctoral fellow at CSU. Because each conservation easement is a one-time permanent investment, these benefits are expected to continue to accrue and increase over time on a per-acre basis -- especially as the state's population continues to increase and the supply of open lands decreases.

*"There is a substantial return to the Colorado taxpayer on investments in programs designed to conserve the features of the Colorado landscape that are so dear to all of us."*

-Andrew Seidl, CSU Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

As we move into the winter and reflect on the last year, there has never been a better time to think about conservation. This summer brought record real estate sales in the Gunnison Valley, more visitors than ever before, and a 40% increase in building permits since 2012. In a county that is more than 80% public lands, private lands are important for sustaining our landscapes and agricultural economy, providing wildlife habitat, and keeping water connected to the land. We are fortunate that so many landowners are willing to consider permanent conservation and that our local community supports their commitment into the future.

Collaboration with our partners and funders has been outstanding this year. Our partners at The Trust for Public Land have made landscape-scale conservation possible with Trampe Ranch. Sage Grouse Initiative funding, made possible through our friends at NRCS, has given incentive to many landowners in our valley as they already manage their lands with sustainable principles that benefit the Gunnison Sage-grouse. Protecting habitat forever from fragmentation meets scientific and community goals. We also deeply value our funding partners at the Gunnison Valley Land Preservation Fund, Great Outdoors Colorado, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife as they continue to provide grants to make conservation easement projects possible.

As Colorado continues to grow and change, we must take the time to consider the effects of these changes on the lands we love and the lands that feed our families. We hope you will continue to support our mission and we promise to keep working hard to benefit the Gunnison Valley for future generations.

- Stacy McPhail  
*Executive Director*



## CONSERVATION

### Trampe Ranches

With our partners at The Trust for Public Land, the Trampe family closed two of the three easements that will protect all of the ranch's property from north of Gunnison to Gothic.



#### Home Place

The Home Place easement permanently protected 1,417 acres of the historic headquarters of Trampe Ranch north of Gunnison. The Trampe family wishes their land to be forever available for agriculture. The project was partially funded by Natural Resources Conservation Service and Great Outdoors Colorado. The Trampe family donated the remainder easement value. The easement is held by The Nature Conservancy.



#### Jack's Cabin

The Trampe family completed the second of three easements with our partners at Trust for Public Land. The 284-acre easement will forever protect irrigated meadows along Highway 135 that are an integral part of the ranch's hay production and seasonal grazing. The easement is held by The Nature Conservancy.

## NEWS



### Lawmakers Hear About Why Landowners Choose Conservation

In April, Legacy hosted a luncheon for state legislators at the Capitol with Senator Kerry Donovan. Landowners Burt and Sandy Guerrieri and Rick Nelson spoke about their conservation easements. With new legislators joining the House and Senate every year, insight on why landowners choose conservation is helpful for lawmakers to make informed policy decisions. Burt and Sandy Guerrieri, pictured left, talked about how conservation easements have made it possible to grow their commercial cow/calf operation. Rick Nelson spoke of his desire to honor his son's memory by conserving the lands upon which they hunted and built a business together. Legacy could not do our work without the help and support of landowners. A big thank you to Burt and Sandy Guerrieri and Rick Nelson for making the trip to Denver!

### International Conservation Delegates Visit Gunnison Ranches

The International Land Conservation Network, a project of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in Cambridge, Mass., visited Gunnison while on a week-long visit to Colorado for the national Land Trust Alliance conference in Denver. Gunnison Legacy hosted a tour of Trampe Ranch (Upper East River) and Allen Ranch (Jack's Cabin) to discuss private land conservation. The delegation included conservation professionals and environmental planners from Germany, Italy, Romania, Croatia, Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal and Spain. The purpose of the study tour was to introduce the delegates to conservation tools and techniques that are not yet widely applied in the European Union (EU) and to discuss the potential of their transferability with private land conservation practitioners from the US. Many of the pilot actions in the European conservation network deal with working agricultural and forest lands; therefore, Colorado's history of protecting working lands and engaging in large landscape conservation was highly relevant to EU participants.



*"I was extreme positively surprised to hear how ranchers were concerned and committed, not only about conserving their land for farming and biodiversity, but also about conserving the knowledge that is needed to manage this land in a responsible way for the next generations. Coming from a grass roots organization that is locally embedded in all of our villages, I was also heartened by the emphasis on the importance of the entire local community in this effort."*

- Chris Steenwegen, Natuurpunt, Flanders, Belgium



### Sage Grouse Initiative: Sharing a Mission to Maintain Working Landscapes for Future Generations.

Legacy was invited to present to more than 170 partners and national Sage-grouse Initiative (SGI) field staff at their 7th annual conference on how ranching and conservation work together for the benefit of the Gunnison Sage grouse. Launched in 2010, the SGI, led by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), is a partnership of ranchers, agencies, universities, nonprofit groups and businesses that embrace a common vision: wildlife conservation through sustainable ranching. SGI applies the power of the Farm Bill to target lands where habitats are intact and sage grouse numbers are highest. To date, SGI has partnered with 1,474 ranchers to conserve 5.6 million acres across 11 western states. In the Gunnison Valley, SGI has been a crucial funding source for conservation easement projects. More than \$12 million in funding has been secured for 9,900+ acres of habitat conservation on working ranchlands in the Gunnison Valley. By working with SGI and our funding partners at NRCS, we are passing on our western heritage of productive rangelands and room to roam for people, livestock, and wildlife.



Gunnison Ranchland  
Conservation Legacy

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**Engage your passion for the Gunnison Valley and make your tax-deductible gift go farther on ColoradoGives Day December 5th**

This year ColoradoGives Day is Tuesday, December 5, and features a \$1 million Incentive Fund. Every nonprofit receiving a donation on Colorado Gives Day will receive a portion of the fund, increasing the value of every dollar donated. Colorado Gives Day has grown to be the state's largest one-day online giving event, raising more than \$200 million since it began in 2010.



Support Gunnison Legacy on  
Colorado Gives Day December 5th  
[www.coloradogives.org](http://www.coloradogives.org)

Online giving is easy everyday at  
[www.gunnisonlegacy.org](http://www.gunnisonlegacy.org)

