



Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts E-Newsletter Public Policy Edition

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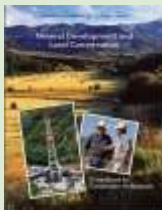
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Mineral Development and
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Handbook available for
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Ongoing Budget Debate

As many of you know, Colorado will once again be faced with a budget shortfall next year and many of the cash-funded programs that were tapped to make ends meet are now empty. The threat to critical tools in Colorado conservation, such as the conservation easement tax credit and the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund, has not passed. CCLT believes that programs that have examined how to be more affordable and predictable to the State in future years will be in a better position in budget debates. To this end, CCLT has begun researching proposals for various options that could reduce the overall cost of the tax credit program to the State.

As mentioned above, now is the time to foster a relationship with your legislators. It is due to the existing relationships between several of our member land trusts and local governments and legislators that we were able to avoid elimination or a moratorium this session. When the General Assembly convenes again in January 2010, we hope to have even more champions in the House and Senate ready to defend our program.

Long-Term Fiscal Stability Committee

The [interim committee](#) established to study the state's finances will begin meeting July 8, 2009 at 9:00am. There will be a discussion on tax credits and exemptions on the afternoon of July 8th and CCLT will be present at the hearing. We have continued our outreach to legislators to

discuss the importance of conservation funding in Colorado, whether it be the conservation easement tax credit or GOCO, and we will be sure to keep all of you updated with the information we receive.

HB08-1353 Implementation

There have been some recent activities on the HB08-1353 implementation front that we would like you to know about.

Land Trust Certification: Applications for state certification, a requirement for any land trust that wishes to hold easements for which a tax credit is claimed, were made available on January 1, 2009. Starting January 1, 2010, a land trust must be certified in order to accept any easements with tax credit implications. A list of the land trusts who have applied for state certification is available on the Colorado Division of Real Estate [website](#).

Cooperative Process with the Department of Revenue and Division of Real Estate: The Commission continues to work with these two agencies in order to create a process whereby landowners, depending on their situation, have options in how to proceed at the state level of review of easement transactions. CCLT has had productive meetings with the staff of both Revenue and Real Estate and will continue working with the Commission and the state government to advocate for a fair process.

Federal Tax Incentive

Thanks to the efforts of supporters of conservation throughout the country, the Conservation Easement Incentive Act (H.R. 1831) has to date over 120 cosponsors. We need a similar effort to encourage support for the Senate bill, the Rural Heritage Conservation Act (S. 812), which currently has 18 cosponsors.

For those who need a refresher, the federal tax incentive helps landowners by raising the maximum deduction a donor can take for donating a conservation easement from 30% of their adjusted gross income to 50%. It also allows qualified farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income and increases the number of years over which a donor can take deductions from six years to sixteen years.

Now is the time to contact your Representative and Senator to thank those who have already signed on and encourage those who have not to consider becoming a cosponsor for the legislation. The Land Trust Alliance has a very helpful website with links to sample talking points and letters, as well as fact sheets and information about the legislation. Click [here](#) to learn more about how you can help.

Additionally, CCLT has sent letters to each member of the Colorado delegation and we are happy to provide copies of those letters to anyone who would like to see a Colorado-specific example. Please contact Greg Yankee (greg.yankee@cclt.org, 303-

271-1577) for more information.

Water and Land Use Practices Survey

There is an opportunity for land trusts and open space programs to participate in a brief survey on land use planning and water demand. The survey is one component of a project for the Western States Water Council Symposium that will be held in Denver, September 28-30, 2009. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and no identifying information will be attached to your responses. The survey is accessible at [this site](#).

If you have any questions, please feel free to email or call Lyn Kathlene at lyn@csi-policy.org or 303-455-1740.

Funding Opportunities

Great Outdoors Colorado

Applications for the Fall 2009 Open Space grant cycle were made available on May 1, 2009. To download the application, and for more information, visit www.goco.org.

Please note that the Fall 2009 application has changed from previous cycles, so be sure to use the correct/current version. Applications will be due **July 3, 2009**. The GOCO Board will award grants on October 2, 2009.

Please contact Kathleen Staks at 303-226-4515 or kstaks@goco.org for more information about the Open Space grant application process.

Upcoming Events & Educational Opportunities

Private Land Conservation Law and Policy: A Short Course for Conservation Practitioners and Students

This four-day course provides focused learning experiences about property law, oil and gas and mineral estate and water law, conservation easement transactions, and land stewardship programs for private lands in Colorado.

Center for Collaborative Conservation at CSU
August 10-13, 2009

Colorado State University, Fort Collins - For more information contact Jeff Jones, 970-217-4414 or jeff@theconservationcooperative.org or visit [this website](#) for schedules and detailed conference information.

COSA's 10th Anniversary Conference

It's not too early to book your hotel. Call 800-525-2253 or [register online](#). Click on

Groups and Conventions, then enter the password OSA7WG to make your reservation at the COSA discounted rates. Make your reservation by August 20, 2009 to receive these special rates.

You can find information about COSA's [Blue Grama Award](#) on their website. This year's Blue Grama Awards will recognize outstanding management and programs offered by Colorado open space organizations, so if you have a nominee in mind, go to that page!

September 21-23, 2009

Beaver Run Resort & Conference Center

Breckenridge, Colorado

It's not too early to register! For more information, visit www.coloradoopenspace.org.