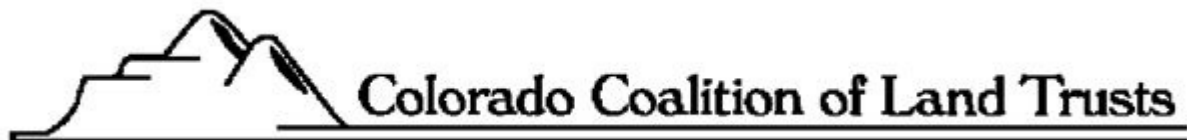


From: Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts <kstaks@cclt.org>
Subject: Conservation News Volume 4
Reply: kstaks@cclt.org



Conservation News

Volume 4

June 2007

In This Issue

2007 Legislative Session in Review
HB 1361 Signed into Law!
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And More!!

Conservation in the News

CCLT's Jill Ozarski on Colorado Public Radio

Jill Ozarski spoke with Colorado Public Radio's Ryan Warner for Colorado Matters on June 12, 2007 about conservation easements in Colorado. You can listen to the interview by clicking on the link under June 12 on [this website](#).

Greenhouse Goes Green
June 11, 2007
Glenwood Springs Post Independent
[Click here](#)

Top 100 Colorado Nonprofits
[Click here](#)
Nonprofit Giant: Health Care
[Click here](#)
Colorado Open Lands Soars Because of Easement Values
[Click here](#)
June 9, 2007
Rocky Mountain News

Hawke Brings Love of the Job to Black Canyon Land Trust
June 7, 2007
Montrose Daily Press
[Click here](#)

Easement Prevents Homes, but Drilling Still a Threat
May 30, 2007
Aspen Daily News
[Click here](#)

2007 Legislative Session in Review: Success for Conservation!

2007 marked the most pro-conservation legislative session in our state's history. Elected leaders from both chambers, from both parties, and from the governor's office took bold action for Colorado's environment. The 65th General Assembly made Colorado a true leader in renewable energy, water quality, and protection of parks, open spaces, and Colorado's spectacular landscapes.

Of particular note for land conservation, Senate Bill 98 and House Bill 1361 were signed into law during this session. Senate Bill 98, the Open Space Sales Tax Exemption, allows counties to invite voters to approve up to a half-cent sales and use tax to fund open space programs that preserve and maintain natural areas, water quality, wildlife habitat, open spaces and working farms and ranches. This legislation will be a critical new resource for financially constrained county governments who recognize the need to create effective conservation programs. Several counties will be taking advantage of this new legislation as early as this November. For more information about SB 98, [click here](#). For more information about HB 1361, see below.



HB 1361 Signed into Law!

CCLT is excited to announce that Governor Ritter signed House Bill 1361 into law on May 24, 2007! This law increases the accountability and transparency of the conservation easement tax credit. The ease with which this bill passed through the legislature would not have been possible without the help of so many people and organizations. Thanks to the whole conservation community for recognizing the need for these important changes and for your thoughts, comments, suggestions and support throughout this entire process. [Click here](#) for more information and the text of the bill.

Federal Policy News

Senator Allard Signs on to Bill to Expand Federal Conservation Easement Tax Incentives

Senator Allard has joined 13 other Senators including Senator Salazar as a co-sponsor of S.469, a bill that would make permanent the federal conservation easement tax incentive

Mineral Rights Complicate Conservation Easements
May 30, 2007
Aspen Daily News
[Click here](#)

Great Birds Enjoy Local Friendly Skies
May 12, 2007
Glenwood Springs Post Independent
[Click here](#)

County Uniting to Seek a Legacy Grant
May 9, 2007
The Denver Post
[Click here](#)

Rancher Uses Easements in Land Fight
April 29, 2007
The Pueblo Chieftan
[Click here](#)

Eagle County Preserves Cattle Ranch
April 25, 2007
The Aspen Times
[Click here](#)

Open Wide: Everything You Need to Know About Some of El Paso County's Wildest Natural Treasures
April 19-25, 2007
CSIndy
[Click here](#)

Tell us more!

We're proud of the conservation work done in Colorado and we want to showcase it. Send us your stories, newspaper clippings, events, job postings and pictures so we can include them in the next newsletter!

Email kstaks@cclt.org

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Andy Spielman
Vice-President
Dan Pike
Treasurer
Kevin Shea
Directors
K-Lynn Cameron
Brian McPeck
Ken Mirr

currently in effect under the Pension Protection Act of 2006. The tax incentive for conservation easement donations is currently set to expire at the end of 2007, so major efforts are underway to extend this important incentive for Colorado landowners to preserve their land.

A similar bill in the House, H.1576, currently has 69 co-sponsors including Representatives Mark Udall and John Salazar from Colorado. Encourage your representatives to join as a co-sponsor if they haven't already! [Click here](#) for more information about S.469, H.1576, and how you can help!

IRS Guidance on Federal Tax Incentives

In early 2007, the Land Trust Alliance submitted questions to the IRS and requested guidance on several questions regarding interpretation of the conservation easement tax incentive in the Pension Protection Act. The IRS published 12 pages of guidance in response. [Click here](#) for the document and more information.

IRS Audits of Conservation Easements

CCLT Creates Clearinghouse on IRS Audits of Conservation Easements

As many of you know, the IRS is conducting a systematic audit of conservation easements across the country. As one part of a strategy to ensure legitimate conservation easements are treated fairly, CCLT has created a Clearinghouse where folks associated with our organizational members can update one another on individual cases and share ideas. Depending on the availability of funding, we will convene a series of regular conference calls, a password-protected website, and a listserv.

Background: In 2004, the IRS issued a nationwide notice that they were aware of improper claims of charitable deductions involving conservation easements and were initiating a series of audits around the country. This unprecedented examination is having a significant impact on Colorado, where the CCLT has found that many easements held by our members are incorrectly included in this process. The conservation community firmly supports efforts by the IRS to identify and stop tax fraud and abuse but we are concerned that landowners who have done legitimate conservation easements with CCLT members are being treated unfairly. IRS and Colorado Department of Revenue actions against easement donors who followed industry best practices could not only be devastating to landowners, but also to our members and to future conservation across the state. Therefore, we are committed to providing long-term leadership as the issue unfolds.

In addition to the Clearinghouse, we are working with the IRS and the Colorado Department of Revenue and with Senators Salazar and Allard to encourage a fair resolution of this issue.

For more information about the IRS audits, [click here](#) or feel free to contact the CCLT at 303-271-1577.

Colorado's Senators Continue to Show Leadership on IRS Audit Issue

Both Senators are current and active on this issue and are planning additional inquiries with the IRS. Senator Allard presented the IRS with another set of questions about the guidance and practices it is using during this audit process at the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government on May 9, 2007. Below are some excerpts from his opening statement. The full statement and the list of questions will be available on our website soon.

"Recently, I had the pleasure of meeting with several constituents from Colorado. . . . In many of these meetings I heard how frustrating and intimidating it can be to deal with the IRS. American citizens should not live in fear of their government. Taxpayers have a right to expect honesty and integrity in their dealings with the IRS.

... It would appear that the IRS is attempting to dramatically narrow the number of legitimate conservation easements by applying a standard that has been struck down by federal courts two different times.

... While I support investigation and enforcement of legitimate fraud, we must not target honest taxpayers and Colorado's reputation should not be tarnished. There is a significant need for conservation easements in Colorado, and a few abuses should not end the charitable tax credit for everyone."

- Senator Wayne Allard, May 9, 2007

News Around Colorado

David Nichols
Melanie Ulle
Greg Vallin
Janis Whisman
Advisors
Larry Kueter
Bill Silberstein

Staff

Executive Director
Jill Ozarski
Deputy Director
Kathleen Staks

Colorado State Parks Updating the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Colorado State Parks, with guidance from 26 Steering Committee members, is currently updating the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), a five-year planning document which each state must produce to remain eligible for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) appropriations. Since 1965, over 59,000 acres in Colorado have been protected through nearly \$59 million in LWCF grants.

The primary goal of the 2008 SCORP is to assess outdoor recreation trends and issues in Colorado, as well as to develop a strategic plan to address these needs. The SCORP will also evaluate the demand for and supply of outdoor recreation resources, public lands, open spaces, and facilities statewide.

An integral part of the year-long planning process, the Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from local governments, state and federal agencies, community recreation and open space programs, volunteer organizations, youth corps groups, outdoor retailers, health advocates, and non-profit organizations (including Jill Ozarski of the CCLT!).

The SCORP is more than an assessment of recreation and tourism trends in Colorado; it is the primary tool for determining priorities for allocating LWCF grants to local governments.

When completed in October 2008, the SCORP will not only provide recreation stakeholders with a valuable planning tool, it will also help sustain Colorado's superior outdoor heritage. To learn more or to download the 2003 plan, [click here](#).

Colorado Land Trusts Participating in Second Round of Pilot Testing for Land Trust Accreditation

Two more Colorado land trusts are early applicants to the Land Trust Accreditation Pilot Program. Black Canyon Land Trust and Colorado Open Lands have joined the Eagle Valley Land Trust and the Wilderness Land Trust in the two pilot rounds designed to help the Land Trust Accreditation Commission increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the program before it opens to land trusts nationwide next year.

Accreditation is an important step to increase the accountability of land trusts nationwide. This independent, voluntary process provides the assurance of quality and permanence of land conservation the public is looking for and is essential for building public confidence in land trusts. The accreditation seal will recognize land conservation organizations that meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent. The CCLT expects all of its land trust members to go through the accreditation process in the next five years. For more information about accreditation, [click here](#).

Land trusts who would like to participate in the accreditation program in the next year may submit an Intent to Apply to enter into the lottery for 2008 at www.landtrustaccreditation.org/lottery/ by August 31, 2007.

Changing Faces

Farewell!

The CCLT would like to say farewell and thank you to three of our board members whose terms have ended: Rob Bleiberg from Mesa Land Trust, John Carney from the Colorado Water Trust, and Susan Dorsey from Yampa Valley Land Trust. We will miss having you on the board but we will always appreciate your input and support! Thank you!

Welcome!

The CCLT would also like to welcome and congratulate our new board members! We're very excited about the experience these professionals bring to our board and we look forward to working with them in the future.

David Nichols has been the Co-Executive Director of the Montezuma Land Conservancy in Cortez, Colorado since 2001. He oversees land protection, easement stewardship, and administrative functions. Dave has a master's degree in political science as well as a Master of the Appraisal Institute and a real estate broker's license. Prior to working for MLC, Dave worked as a real estate and conservation easement appraiser for Love Appraisals. In this capacity Dave has appraised several conservation easements throughout southwestern Colorado. Dave helped found MLC in 1998 and served as the Board's first Treasurer. Dave has negotiated several conservation easements with landowners and is active in the community with Tri-City Soccer Association.

Greg Vallin is a shareholder at the law firm of Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck in Denver, Colorado. Greg's practice focuses on all aspects of real estate law, including development, leasing, lending and conservation work. Greg has been involved in the land trust community since 1996 when he joined the Board of the Mountain Area Land Trust (MALT) in Evergreen, Colorado. Greg was the President of MALT between 1998 and 2005. During that time period, Greg was instrumental in MALT's successful efforts to preserve the pristine 6,000 acre Beaver Brook Watershed, and in helping to

grow and evolve the organization to a point where it could maintain a full-time paid executive director, as well as other paid staff members. Greg has negotiated conservation easements on behalf of both landowners and land trusts, including the largest donated conservation easement in Colorado history, preserving 80,000 acres of the spectacular Forbes/Trinchera Ranch near Alamosa, Colorado.

Upcoming Events

June Breakfast-Program: "What's Happening at Rocky?"

Estes Valley Land Trust

June 15

Moraine Park Amphitheater in Rocky Mountain National Park

Make reservations by June 10

For more information, email clarkestes@msn.com

Field Guide to Life on Earth: a photographic exhibit

The International League of Conservation Photographers and The WILD Foundation

June 15

The Highland City Club Gallery, Boulder

For more information, email Emily Loose at emily@wild.org

Deadline for Public Comment on Great Outdoors Colorado Draft FY 2007-2008 Spending Plan

June 18

Contact Chris Leding at cleding@goco.org for more information.

2nd Annual "Community Connections" Open House Celebration

Middle Park Land Trust

June 24

Devil's Thumb Ranch and Resort, Grand County, Colorado

For more information, [click here](#)

July Breakfast-Program: "Residing on Landscapes"

Estes Valley Land Trust

July 14

Hermit Park

For more information, email clarkestes@msn.com

Legacy Land Trust Summer Picnic Celebration and Auction

July 28

Grant Family Organic Farm

Larimer County, Colorado

For more information, [click here](#)

20th Anniversary Celebration - Estes Valley Land Trust

August 12

Stanley Hotel, Estes Park

For more information, contact the Estes Valley Land Trust at 970-586-2825

Montezuma Land Conservancy Harvest Beer Festival

September 8

For more information, contact the Montezuma Land Conservancy at 970-565-1664

2007 COSA Conference

September 10-12

Steamboat Springs

For more information, [click here](#).

2007 TNC Ballot Training

The Nature Conservancy

September 18-20

Estes Park, Colorado

Contact Eleanor Morris at emorris@tnc.org or 703-254-8169.

Rally 2007: The National Land Conservation Conference New Frontiers of Conservation

October 3-6

Adams Mark Hotel

Denver, Colorado
For more information, [click here](#)

Colorado Outdoor Training Initiative Training Programs

See Training Calendar for Dates
For more information, [click here](#)

Job Postings

Mesa Land Trust

Development Officer

Position Description: The Development Officer will manage a growing fundraising program, focusing on individual giving, and will work with staff and the Board of Directors to cultivate major donors; grow annual membership; grant research, application preparation and reporting; and community outreach and marketing.
For more information, [click here](#).

Palmer Land Trust

Executive Director

Position Description: The Executive Director will be responsible for the overall leadership and management of the organization and its expanding staff, which will include conservation easement acquisition and stewardship professionals, an office manager, and fundraising and membership development staff.
For more information, [click here](#).

Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project

Half-time Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Assistant

Position Description: The GIS Assistant will assist the GIS Director in the Conservation GIS program, which provides data and mapping services to member groups of the Southern Rockies Conservation Alliance (SRCA).
For more information on SREP, [click here](#).
Email Connor Bailey for more information about the position at connor@restoretherockies.org

The Access Fund

Executive Director

Position Description: The Executive Director is responsible for strategic leadership, vision and goal setting and works with the Board of Directors to define and implement its mission and values. The ED is the spokesperson and public face of the premier national climbing advocacy organization whose mission is to keep climbing areas open and conserve the climbing environment.
For more information, [click here](#).

The Wilderness Society

Western Lands Campaign Associate

Position Description: The Western Lands Campaign Associate will work closely with grassroots partners and Wilderness Society staff to develop new, broader support for wilderness and public lands protection by bringing research, resources and relationship building expertise to make the connections between community growth and development, quality of life, and public land and wilderness protection.
For more information, [click here](#).

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