



COLORADO WEST LAND TRUST

2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT



Conserving Land. Connecting People. Enriching Lives.

Dear friends and supporters of the Colorado West Land Trust...

Another year has flown by! 2019 has been a busy, fruitful year. We have to catch our breath occasionally as we list the projects the land trust has undertaken. Our commitments to a large geographic area, a variety of projects, and a host of conservation partners keep us both challenged and excited. We are proud of the land trust's success in continuing to conserve some of the most beautiful and valuable lands in Western Colorado.

Two of our newly conserved properties, one in Mesa County and one in Delta County, will protect 2,100 acres of farmland and wildlife habitat. A 42-acre orchard near Paonia adds to the 2,000 acres of fruit lands we've conserved in the adjoining counties. A 214-acre conserved farm on the Uncompahgre River in Montrose County also adds to the legacy we are leaving to future generations.

Along Monument Road in Grand Junction, the finishing touches are being put on the Lunch Loop Connector trail, a concrete path that will connect the community's most popular trailhead with downtown Grand Junction and the Riverfront Trail. The Land Trust secured land for the trail alignment and worked with the City to raise \$2.5M to build the trail. Further



up the road, we have acquired 16 acres at the corner of Monument Road and South Camp Road.

Thinking bigger yet, we've helped establish West Slope Conservation Partners, a collaboration of four western Colorado land trusts who understand that by working together we can protect even more of our beautiful and important landscapes.

We are driven to protect the character of Western Colorado and the agriculture, wildlife, and outdoor adventure it supports. We are grateful for all of you who support us as we turn our dreams for the future into reality. None of these achievements would have been possible without you.

Thank you!

Warm regards from the staff and the board of CWLT,

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Rob Bleiberg
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**Pictured on the cover: Uncompahgre River running through Menoken Farms, Montrose County. Photo by Robb Reece Photography.
Annual Report Design: Amy Nuernberg Marketing | Design | Web*

A photograph of a horse grazing in a field with large trees in autumn. The horse is brown and white, standing in a grassy field. The trees are large and have yellow and orange leaves. The sky is blue with some clouds.

Conserved: A horse farm on the banks of the Uncompahgre

Menoken Farms, Montrose County.
Photo by Robb Reece Photography.

In 220 acres in northern Montrose County sits Menoken Farms, a breeding and training facility for thoroughbred horses. Paddocks and hayfields separated by wooden rail fences form a loose patchwork of beautiful open space around the main home and stables. At the back of the property, over a mile of the Uncompahgre River winds through forested bottomland that serves as excellent habitat for wildlife (*see cover photo*).

Owner Linda Wood has lived here since 1976 and has worked hard to make their farm a haven for animals, both domestic and wild alike. “This isn’t a fancy place, but we take good care of it,” Linda explains. “Everyone is happy and healthy. If I’m ever having a bad day, I just walk out to see the horses. In that sense, they are kind of like having a big dog around — always glad to see you.”

There are currently 35 thoroughbred horses on the property, but during foaling and breeding season that number can soar to nearly 90. Linda considers her work with the horses as a labor of love, and views the busy-ness of farm life as well worth the effort. (*We shouldn’t fail to mention that she has been recognized as Colorado’s thoroughbred racehorse “Breeder of the Year” many times.*)

Wayne Goin, her partner, stays equally busy — he has planted over 8,000 trees and bushes with help from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in an area of the property that was damaged by fire in 2009. This forested land serves as a riparian buffer along the Uncompahgre, a popular resting spot for waterfowl during their seasonal migrations.

As Linda recounts the early years at Menoken Farms, she explains that there were others who have loved the land that she and Wayne now own. In the late 1970s, a man named Clarence owned a parcel of property that is now part of Menoken Farms.

“Clarence was the ranch manager for the Mocks, who willed the property to him,” explains Linda. “He was well into his 70s when he inherited it, and he still worked the land the old way, by hand. He would tell me, ‘Don’t ever let anyone cut down these trees!’”

After Clarence passed, Linda’s parents, Wilbur and Helen Wood, bought the parcel. According to Linda and her sister, Mary, their mother loved the outdoors and enjoyed watching her family ride horses on the farm.

In appreciation for all the land has given them — and with a nod to Helen and Wilbur, the Mocks, and Mr. Clarence — Linda, Wayne, Mary and her husband, John, decided to protect Menoken Farms with Colorado West Land Trust.

“I think the Land Trust is just wonderful, and the people I’ve worked with have been great. I think we’ve established a good partnership,” explains Linda. “Hopefully one of my relatives takes over. If not, somebody who has a respect and appreciation for this place.”

With their land in a conservation easement, the Woods can rest assured that the land will remain in agriculture, protected by the Land Trust for generations to come. 📍

For more than 20 years, the Land Trust has worked with Glade Park landowners to conserve the area's ranching and wildlife heritage. In collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Great Outdoors Colorado, and others, the Land Trust has partnered with dozens of families to conserve more than 44,000 acres of important habitat, productive ranchland, and red rock vistas in this priority landscape.



Protection of the Twenty-Eight Hole Ranch advances conservation of a spectacular Mesa County landscape

In late 2018, the Aubert and Hawks family protected a 720-acre parcel of their Twenty-Eight Hole Ranch on Glade Park. This historic ranch, which was acquired by August (Augie) and Maxine Aubert, in the mid-1950's, is now operated by their daughter, Chele, and her husband, Dave Hawks. They steward the land as part of their larger ranching operation, growing hay and wintering their cattle on this lower elevation portion of the ranch.

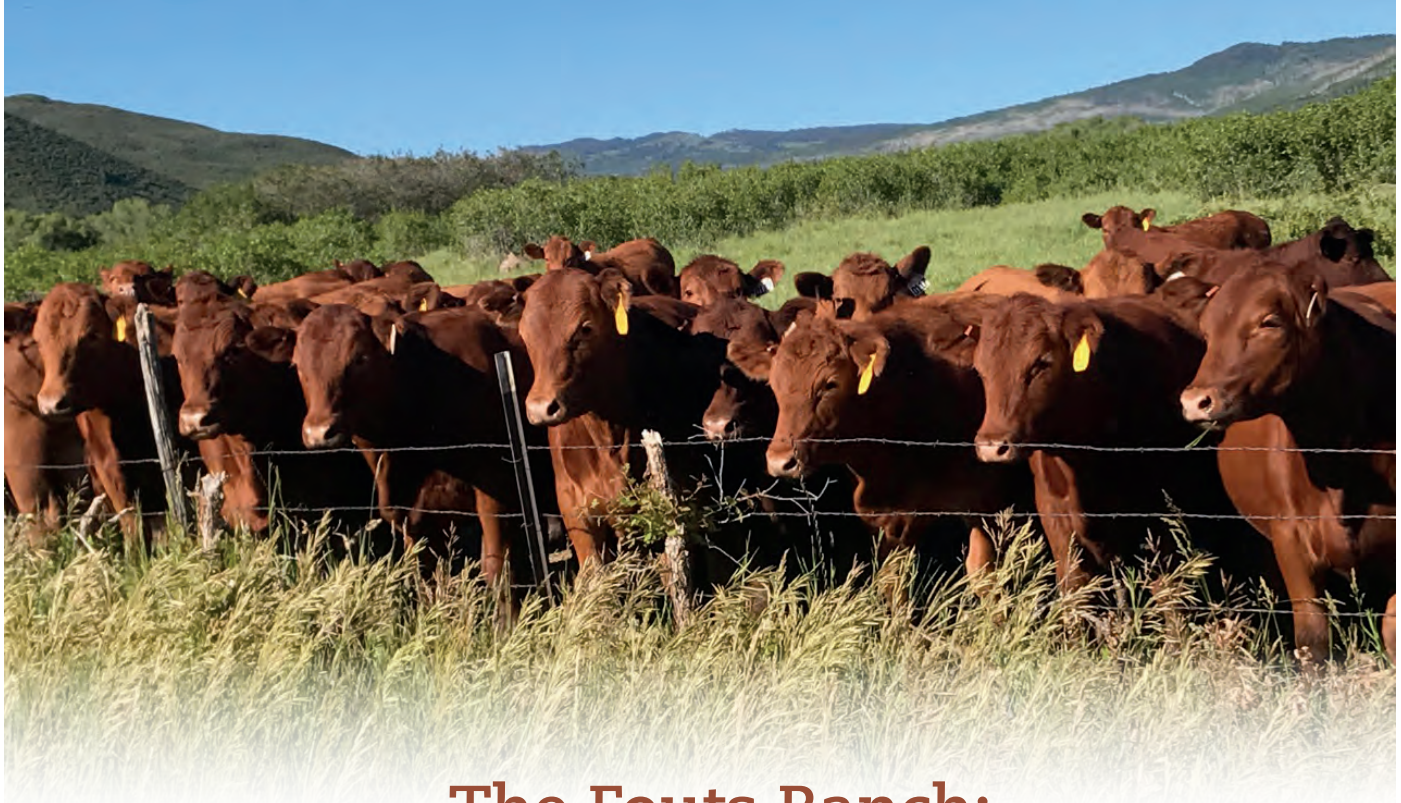
Situated in a beautiful corridor of rugged sandstone canyons, the Twenty-Eight Hole Ranch is one of the last remaining intact ranches on the northern end of Glade Park. The property is adjacent to both the Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness and the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area, and is near the Colorado National Monument, as well as other conserved private ranchland. The extensive sage brush parks on the Twenty-Eight Hole property, combined with areas of rolling pinyon-juniper, provide critical wildlife habitat for big game and bird species that migrate through the area.

For the Hawks family, conservation of the property not only benefits their cattle, but also serves as an important connection for wildlife in the area — deer and elk migrate down from high-elevation Pinyon Mesa during the winter and desert bighorn sheep depend on the water from Mee Canyon, which flows out from the conserved ranch. The property also lies near Gunnison sage grouse habitat, and the cliffs provide nesting habitat for local ravens, red-tailed hawks, and golden eagles.

The Aubert-Hawks conservation work was made possible through funding from the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and the Gates Family Foundation. 📍

"As development continues its never-ending march and whittles away at ranches and open space, it is a great source of satisfaction to know that whatever the future might bring, this property will exist as it does today," says Dave Hawks.





The Fouts Ranch: Conservation as part of a plan

Landowners Jeremy and Candice Fouts successfully conserved their 1,707-acre ranch with Colorado West Land Trust in late December of 2018.

This beautiful property in Delta County boasts significant conservation, as Jeremy explains: “Anything you’d be looking for in a property, it has to offer. There are two creeks with phenomenal trout fishing, scrub oak from around 7,500 to 9,800 feet in elevation, 400 acres of aspens, and beautiful bottom land with over 450 acres of irrigated land that we can use for hay crops and to provide wintering ground for game.” Their property also adjoins Bureau of Land Management and National Forest land, which provides forage, cover, breeding grounds, and migration corridors for a diversity of wildlife, including many big game species.

The Fouts have over 200 red Angus cattle, which keeps them busy most days. And they have worked closely with Ashley Jackson-Baillie from the Montrose Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office to make their land as productive as possible, both for their livestock and the surrounding wildlife.

The harmony between productivity and preservation on the ranch was cultivated through careful planning by the whole family. “When we first bought this land, I thought it was pretty

sad to look to the east and see subdivisions going in,” says Jeremy. “I don’t want to fault anyone for wanting to get an acre in the mountains of Colorado, but it made me think about the future of this place.”

To organize their goals, Jeremy and Candice decided to develop a 5-year plan. After considering all that they hoped for the future of their ranch, they decided that it should be conserved so that it cannot be subdivided in the future.

“We looked for the best land trust around, which we found in Colorado West Land Trust,” says Jeremy. “I want to say thank you to Julie Barger and Ilana Moir — they have been extremely diligent in teaching me the process and ensuring that everything happened smoothly. It’s a lengthy process, but the bottom line is that anyone considering a conservation easement should know that it was the best decision that I have made. It was truly worth the effort.”

Colorado West Land Trust is grateful for landowners, like the Fouts, who understand the importance

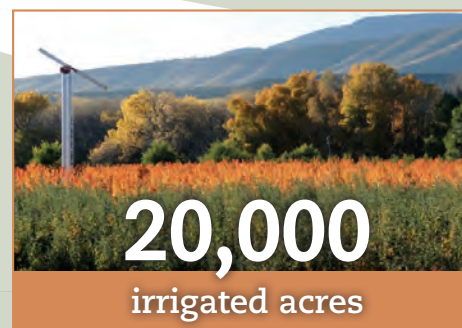
of protecting their land for future generations. With a conservation easement in place, their ranch will continue to serve as productive ag land and wildlife habitat in accordance with their wishes. 📍



Photos courtesy of the Fouts Family

39 YEARS OF IMPACT

1980 ~ 2019

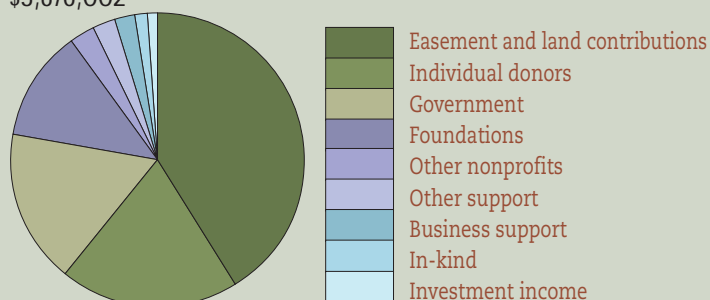


FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Figures from FYI 2018-2019 (audited)

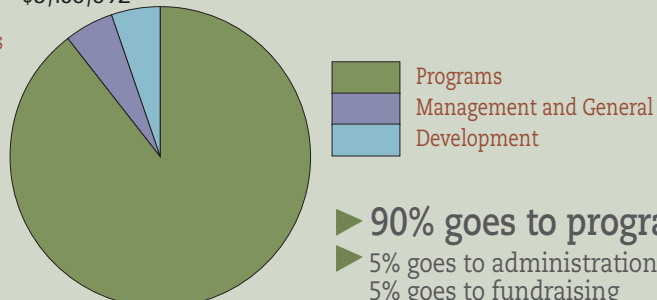
Income

\$3,876,002



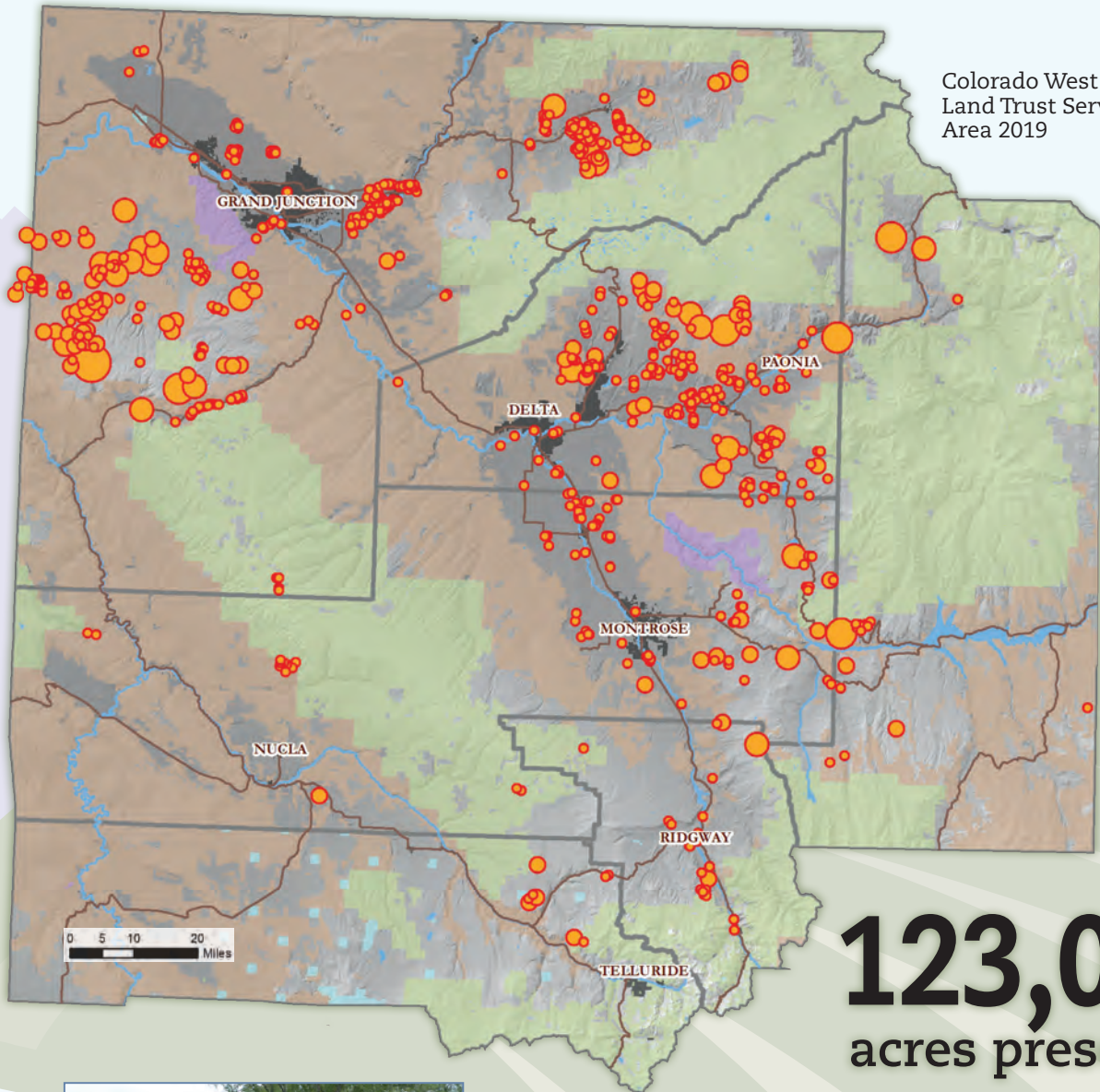
Expenses

\$3,185,592



- ▶ 90% goes to programs
- ▶ 5% goes to administration
- ▶ 5% goes to fundraising

Colorado West
Land Trust Service
Area 2019



123,000
acres preserved



560

conservation
agreements

Almost
\$88,000,000
in conservation easement value

*Ways to support
Colorado West Land Trust*

📍 **Donate today** 📍 **Leave a Legacy** 📍 **Volunteer**



**COLORADO WEST
LAND TRUST**

Conserving Land. Connecting People.
Enriching Lives.



WHERE PEOPLE GATHER



Monument Road conservation has led to opportunities to involve youth in recreation and stewardship activities.

Building community by enhancing access to the Monument Corridor

A short drive from downtown Grand Junction up Monument Road places you within a sanctuary of scenic recreational land, which feels far removed from the surrounding city. Colorado National Monument stands proudly above the Lunch Loop trails, which climb over hills of grassland, sagebrush and cedar trees, often hugging the rim of low-lying sandstone cliffs.

Since 2011, Colorado West Land Trust (CWLT) has conserved nearly 200 acres in the Lunch Loop area, Mesa County's busiest trailhead, with over 120,000 visits each year. This effort preserved the iconic Three Sisters, developed more family-friendly trails, and protected the magnificent views leading to the Colorado National Monument.

Now the Land Trust is expanding the network of open space parks to connect these lands with the community. CWLT recently purchased a highly visible 16-acre property located at the corner of South Camp and Monument Roads, which will be conserved and transferred to the City as a community park.

To connect the Lunch Loop area to neighborhoods, schools, and

downtown Grand Junction, the Land Trust has partnered with the City and Mesa County to construct a two-mile multi-use concrete trail. The project links Lunch Loop with the Riverfront Trail and also features trailhead improvements, including shade shelters that were funded with support from over 80 generous donations from local individuals and businesses. An additional critical partner has been the BLM, which manages the incredible trail system that crosses City and federal land.

A grand opening celebration is being planned for January. And in the spring of 2020, volunteer partners of all ages will organize to restore and revegetate areas that were disturbed during trail construction and assure that it blends into the surrounding landscape.

Over the years, the Monument Road projects have also helped create a strong coalition of advocates for open space and outdoor recreation, including the Riverside Education Center (REC). By partnering with REC, the Land Trust is

helping to provide opportunities for local youth to experience the great outdoors and steward the wonderful landscapes that surround us.

With more people projected to move to the Western Slope in the coming years, it will take similar collaborations to ensure that our treasured landscapes remain open and available for our enjoyment. Together we have improved the Monument Corridor, and together we can continue to enhance these landscapes for the benefit of all.

Joy Hudak, executive director of Riverside Education Center, explained how these projects impact her organization:

*"We work to engage youth in outdoor programming — with this new opportunity to access a paved trail from the Riverside neighborhood, and with our new fleet of bikes, we are ready to **HIT THE DIRT** with kids from all over the Valley. Thank you, Colorado West Land Trust, for making this happen!"*



Create your Conservation Legacy

Do you live in Western Colorado or spend time here because you feel a connection to the beautiful, diverse landscapes that surround us? Perhaps our working farms and ranches, wildlife habitat, scenic natural lands, and trails provide a sense of connection to the land. If so, consider a bequest, also known as a planned gift, to Colorado West Land Trust. There is no better way to ensure conservation of our special landscapes for our use and enjoyment today and for generations to come.

One of the simplest ways to leave a legacy gift is by designating Colorado West Land Trust as a beneficiary on your bank accounts, IRA, retirement plan, life insurance policy, stocks/ bonds, or annuity. In doing so, all or portion of these assets can be directed to the work of the Land Trust. You can also remember CWLT in your will or living trust.

To designate a gift to CWLT — the following language can be inserted into the document:

"I give to Mesa County Land Conservancy dba Colorado West Land Trust (or Mesa Land Trust), with its principal business office at 1006 Main St., Grand Junction, Colorado 81501, (insert written amount of gift, percentage of the estate or residuary of estate, or description of property.)"

For more information, contact Mary Hughes at CWLT, (970) 263-5443 or mary@cowestlandtrust.org

This information is not meant to advise. Please consult your own tax, financial or legal professional. 📍

It's Easy! Become a Monthly Sustaining Partner



"By donating monthly to Colorado West Land Trust, we are helping support the important work of the organization throughout the year. The Land Trust's efforts preserve the places we love here in western Colorado – the lands that produce local food and wine, the scenic open space and recreational areas, and the wildlife and riparian habitat that are the region's heritage. We encourage you to join us and become a Monthly Sustaining Partner." ~ George and Judy Callison

Monthly giving is easy! Your contribution to CWLT can be automatically and securely made using your credit card or bank account. **Visit our website at www.cowestlandtrust.org to get started.** 📍

In memory of those who have recently passed

These landowners took action to preserve their land for the future. Each of them leave a legacy of conserved land that will forever be a part of our western Colorado heritage.

Clair Chermak, 93. Hotchkiss
Harvey Lee Crawford, 79. Grand Junction
George James Distefano, 89. Palisade
Karen Elizabeth Etcheverry, 75. Palisade
John Groome, 76. Crawford
Margaret Hale, 89. Montrose
Rod Hall, 78. Hotchkiss
Dorothy Walker Hulbert, 85. Clifton
Robert Lomas, 70. Jupiter, FL
Benjamin Edward Nichols, 91. Collbran
Derelyse O'Brien, 88. Hotchkiss
Jerry Tensky, 79. Montrose
Lyman Monroe Wallace, 90. Palisade

In Memory of our Friend, Russ

Russell Don Walker, November 23, 1955 - February 18, 2019

Russ was a professor of environmental science at CMU who was devoted to his students and environmental causes in western Colorado. Russ served on the Land Trust Board of Directors, most recently as the chair of the lands committee where he was instrumental in helping oversee the conservation of thousands of acres of western Colorado's finest lands. The organization benefitted greatly from his sharp intellect and easy sense of humor. We thank Russ's family for designating donations to Colorado West Land Trust in his memory. 📍

Thank you to our generous supporters*

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Grand Junction Lions Club

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Grand Valley Youth Cycling
Stray Grass
Mesa Monument Striders

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Fruitlands Forever

Colorado West Land Trust (CWLT) was founded by Palisade farmers in 1980 as one of the nation's first agricultural land trusts. From the beginning, the preservation of western Colorado's fruit land has been an important focus for the organization.

Over 80% of the state's acreage suitable for producing peaches, wine grapes, apples, and other fruit is grown in a relatively small area – just over 4,200 acres – in Delta and Mesa Counties. Though partnerships with over 60 family farms, CWLT now stewards over 2,000 acres of land capable of growing these wonderful fruits that western Colorado is famous for.

This past summer, CWLT conserved an additional 44 acres in the North Fork of the Gunnison River near Paonia. This family operation grows plums, peaches, pears, grapes, nectarines, cherries, apricots, and apples that are sold at farmers' markets. With a permanent conservation agreement now in place, the property will forever help preserve the area's scenic rural landscape and remain available for agricultural use for generations to come. 📍

Because of their ability to grow large quantities of delicious stone fruit, apples, pears, and wine grapes, the fruit growing areas of Delta and Mesa Counties are recognized as priority landscapes.

These specialty ag lands are part of the Land Trust's Fruitlands Forever Initiative.

We recognize that these high-elevation fruit lands are part of the fabric of our communities – enhancing our local economy and adding immeasurably to our quality of life.



Thank you to Bio-Logic for underwriting this Annual Report