

What's in Season: Cherries, Peaches & Apricots

Available on Conserved Properties in Mesa and Delta County

Fruit lovers rejoice! Orchards on the Western Slope are doing well this year, thanks to favorable weather and hardworking farmers. Join us as we celebrate this summer's bountiful harvest by visiting the farmers' market to grab the last of the cherries and the first round of beautiful peaches. Better yet, buy some fruit for your neighbor, too.

Colorado West Land Trust has focused on preserving fruitland for

the simple reason that orchards and vineyards are an incredible asset to our communities. To date, over 2,000 acres of prime fruit-growing farmland has been conserved by the Land Trust in Delta and Mesa counties, guaranteeing that future generations will also have the opportunity to grow fresh fruit and vegetables. Coming soon, we will have a webpage displaying landowner products on our website.

Glade Park Landowners Continue Native Grass Seed Project

Ladder Canyon Ranch on Glade Park retains a silent, primeval quality that seems characteristic of mature wildlife habitat—hillsides of oak brush, cedar and pinyon-juniper trees open to meadows of grass and sagebrush before plunging into rugged sandstone canyons.

The untrained eye would never notice that this 1,600-acre conserved property was once seeded with a non-native grass in the mistaken belief that it would be good for feeding cattle. Unfortunately, neither cattle nor wildlife like it much, so landowners Bert Nieslanik and Mercedes Cameron decided to start reseeded their fields with native grasses in 2017.

As it turns out, many other landowners in the Glade Park area are interested in restoring native plants and wildlife habitat on their properties as well, so Bert and Merce partnered with Colorado West Land Trust to develop a native grass nursery to produce seeds for



Volunteers prepare to flag native grasses on Ladder Canyon Ranch



Indian Ricegrass

other landowners with conserved property. We are grateful for their immense effort over the past couple years to restore valuable forage for wildlife, and look forward to making further progress with the grass seed nursery this coming fall.

If you would like to join our group of dedicated volunteers who have helped make this project possible, contact Libby Collins at libby@cowestlandtrust.org or (970) 263-5443.

Welcome to the Land Trust, Brad and Nicole!

Brad Banulis, Board Member



Brad grew up in Wyoming, Arizona, and Colorado. He obtained his Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Biology from Colorado State University and attended the University of Wyoming for graduate school. An opportunity opened up in Montrose, Colorado for Brad to work as a Private Lands Wild-

life Biologist between the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Colorado Watershed Network and the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) in 2003, and he has resided in the Uncompahgre Valley ever since. As a Private Lands Biologist, Brad worked with landowners to enhance wildlife habitat through Farm Bill programs and provided technical assistance. Since 2004, Brad has been a Wildlife Biologist for CDOW (now Colorado Parks and Wildlife) working to monitor, study and manage a diversity of game and non-game wildlife populations across parts of Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Mesa, Montrose, Ouray, and San Miguel counties. Brad, his wife Tanya (also a wildlife biologist), and their two young children spend their spare time outdoors at youth sporting activities or fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, and traveling whenever possible.

Nicole Reed, Conservation Fellow



Nicole recently started with the Land Trust as the Conservation Fellow, and will work to update the organization's conservation plan and develop GIS-based maps for use during stewardship activities. She is a Wyoming native who received her B.S. in Wildlife Biology and Management and her M.S. in Rangeland Ecology and Water-

shed Management, as well as Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Wyoming. Between her time at the University, Nicole worked with wildlife biologists in different organizations to help with everything from sportsmen access on public and private lands to conservation of eagles on wind farms. In her time outside of work, she can be found camping, hiking, skiing, fishing, or helping fundraise for the Shriner's Hospitals for Children.



Harry Talbott, founding member of the Land Trust and owner of Talbott Farms, proudly displays his land trust sign at one of his orchards in Palisade, CO.

If you are interested in having one of our new signs installed at the entrance to your conserved property, contact Dillon Robertson at dillon@cowestlandtrust.org or (970) 263-5443.

2019 Upcoming Field Club Events

- **Tues, Sept. 17:** Fall Colorado Tour—Plateau Valley
- **Thurs, Oct. 17:** Shavano Rock Art Tour—Montrose

For more information, visit: www.cowestlandtrust.org



Considering Colorado West Land Trust in your will or estate plan is a wonderful way to invest in the future and create a personal conservation legacy.

By remembering the Land Trust in this extraordinary way, you help ensure that future generations will benefit from our efforts to conserve the character and quality of life that we love about this region.

If you would like to schedule a visit to discuss a possible planned gift, please contact Mary Hughes at (970) 263-5443, or mary@cowestlandtrust.org. If you have already decided to include the Land Trust in your estate plans, please let us know so we can thank you and add your name to our Legacy Society.



The Lunch Loop Connector Trail is Under Construction!

If you've driven along Monument Road recently, you may have noticed what looks like highway construction in the Three Sisters and Lunch Loop area. Fear not, for a beautiful paved trail is being built to connect the Riverfront Trail with the Lunch Loop Trailhead. This project represents years of hard work by Colorado West Land Trust, the City of Grand Junction, Mesa County, and the Bureau of Land Management to turn a community vision into reality.

Soon, outdoor enthusiasts of all ages and abilities will enjoy a safe and almost seamless outdoor linear park that connects the Lunch Loop and Three Sisters open space area with Las Colonias, Dos Rios, the Audubon Trail, Connected Lakes, and downtown Grand Junction. Thanks to THRILL supporters (Trailhead Redesign and Improvements at Lunch Loop), we have raised the funds needed to construct three shade

shelters at the trailhead. You can find a list of those donors on our website at www.cowestlandtrust.org.

We look forward to completing these additions soon! A ribbon cutting to celebrate the end of the project is expected for late October or early November. Until then, we apologize for any inconvenience and urge all visitors to respect the posted trail closures.

There will be plenty of volunteer opportunities to restore native vegetation after construction is completed. If you are interested in participating, contact Libby Collins by email at libby@cowestlandtrust.org or call (970) 263-5443.

Stay safe on the trails, and we'll see you at the celebration!



Connecting Landowners with Resources To Improve Wildlife Habitat

For over a century, open ditch irrigation has been vital to sustaining western Colorado's beautiful, productive ag lands. The banks along these ditches—which drain into local rivers—have permitted the growth of cottonwoods, willows and other vegetation, and have created important wildlife habitat in the midst of working farms and ranches. However, these open ditches also have a downside: they deposit substantial amounts of salt and selenium into the Colorado River.

To protect the quality of the Colorado River, ditch companies routinely install irrigation pipes to replace old, open ditches. But doing so often results in lost wildlife habitat. Under the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act, ditch companies are

required to offset losses with habitat replacement projects. Often, they struggle to identify suitable locations for replacement projects, which is where the Land Trust comes in.

Colorado West Land Trust will play the unique role of match-maker, linking ditch companies seeking to implement habitat replacement projects with willing landowners and public land managers looking to enhance wildlife habitat on their property.

It's a win-win solution that will enhance wildlife habitat in the region, while also benefitting ditch companies and landowners alike!



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Monument Road

Inside: Connector trail construction underway.
Shade shelter construction to begin after successful THRILL campaign!

To donate or learn more, visit our website at cowestlandtrust.org



Photo courtesy of Alpine Bank