

Land Lines

*A Newsletter of the
Black Canyon Regional Land Trust*



A Quarterly Newsletter Winter 2011 - 2012

**Meet the
New BCRLT
Executive
Director**
BCRLT



welcomed its new ED in April. Read Sue's invitation to you to become more active and resolved to protect our natural and cultural legacies.

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**BCRLT Checks
Into the 21st
Century With A
New Website**

Yes it is true. A new website! Not just that, we have a new logo and some new staff and offices as well. You better read this.

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**LeValley Ranch Receives
Statewide Stewardship
Award**

BCRLT Conservation Easement donors Mark and Robbie Baird LeValley have received Colorado's Rangeland Conservation Award. We are proud of these guys.

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BCRLT Project Report



As usual, BCRLT has a healthy load of new conservation easements in the works and some exciting donations already in the bag. Get the update here.

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**The Norman and Dorothy
Kehmeier Family's
Monument To Conservation**

"1894 - As long as grass grows, spring wind blows and water flows the land will nurture us and we will nurture the land. ..."

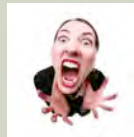
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We Need Your Email Address!

Excuse us for being just a bit blunt about this, but it is true. We need your email address. It is pretty obvious that we have your snail mail address but who uses that these days? Not Black Canyon Regional Land Trust, that's for sure (large round of applause from the forest!). The next **LAND LINES** could be delivered to you via the world wide web. How cool is that?

Unfortunately, through an exhaustive peer reviewed research project, we have determined that we have virtually nobody's email address. We have put together what we have and you could fit it in a thimble. So help us out so we can give you **LAND LINES** and other



Julie, BCRLT Office Manager, stressing out. "How do you expect me to do my job without email addresses? What planet are you people from?"

good stuff having to do with conservation in our western Colorado communities.

We have made it so ridiculously easy and fun to give us your email address you will definitely not want to pass up the chance. All you have to do is visit our brand new BCRLT website conveniently located at www.BCRLT.org and you will immediately discover an invitation to leave your email

address. Fill that in and send it to us before you have any further fun.

Now you can take a moment and look around our new website. We have much more planned for this little baby but we are glad to bring it to you now so you can watch it grow too. Thank you very much for your help.

LTA RALLY!

BCRLT Land Steward Dan Murphy and I traveled to represent BCRLT at this year's Land Trust Alliance national conference in Milwaukee, WI. Imagine one location with hundreds of conservation professionals where we could discuss, share, and learn about all things land trust related!

We Have Moved Our Headquarters To Ridgway! Come visit.



We met with folks from all over Colorado and the nation. Dan and I collectively attended eleven different workshops regarding conservation easement acquisitions, transactions, and stewardship. I was also fortunate to co-present two workshops and a seminar. One of my workshops highlighted my master's

thesis research on how to prioritize conservation efforts within a large geographic region. It was a great conference and we look forward to attending next year's conference in Salt Lake City with the rest of the BCRLT crew!

-Olivia Bartlett, BCRLT Stewardship Director



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to a new chapter at Black Canyon Regional Land Trust. I am pleased to report that while carefully

preserving all that has been great about BCRLT, this organization has come alive in ways that might not have been foretold this time last year.

When I came on as Executive Director in April, our Board Vice President Bill Bottomly instructed me that he intended BCRLT to become a "world class" land trust. Bill, we are well on our way.

We have a new HQ and it is filled with an outstanding staff each with unparalleled passion for conserving open land and the traditional western Colorado ways of life. We are proud to say that BCRLT Stewardship Director Olivia Bartlett was asked to give three presentations at the 2011 Land Trust Alliance Rally, our industry's annual national gathering and workshop.

You will want to visit our new website (BCRLT.org) and FaceBook page often to keep up with conservation matters that affect the BCRLT service area.

We are delighted to have an extremely impressive array of energetic new and prospective Board members supporting the mission of our organization and lending a hand to the Board veterans who continue to provide experience and background to our work.

Of course the best news of all is that BCRLT continues to vigorously pursue its mission of helping private landowners conserve private land and the traditional cultures that are built on that land. Together with our partner landowners, BCRLT hopes to conserve over 1,000 acres of high quality agricultural land and wildlife habitat during FY 2011 - 2012.

We look forward to finalizing work on a new cutting edge approach to land conservation prioritization and focus that will help guide our work in upcoming years to be even more effective in meeting our mission.

We monitored 130 of our conservation easements from the air this year, in the first year of our aerial monitoring program. Big thanks go out to Bill Patterson for use of his sweet aircraft, his piloting skill, a bit of petrol and Bill's own time, good humor and patience.

Of course, each year our inventory of conservation easements grows and that means that each year the burden of administering and defending the conservation values on those easements expands as well. This year we have begun to address the plans of Oxbow Mining LLC to explore the federal coal reserves that underlie four of our conservation easements on Oak Mesa in the North Fork area. Keeping up with this coal exploration and mining business will be difficult but essential work. You can read our most recent comments to the BLM on the Oxbow exploration proposal at BCRLT.org.

Finally, BCRLT is implementing a renewed commitment as an active and helpful member of the rural communities we serve. Our new Outreach and Education initiatives mean you will see much more of us at local festivals and planning commission meetings and town meetings and everywhere we can add the perspective and dimension of land conservation to the community discussion and debate.

All of this means that we on the BCRLT staff have just spent the last six months taking on a whole lot of new work for ourselves. We are passionate about what we do and we are likely to keep taking on more work and to happily go about meeting important goals that must be met.

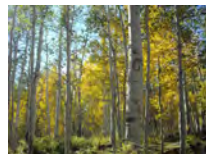
Of course, we can always use your help. If you too are passionate about land conservation, we invite you to join us in all this work and fun.

There are many ways you can help - financial support and volunteer hours are two of the best. Send us a little love in that envelope that fell out of this thing when you opened it. Or call us and ask how you can volunteer. And don't forget - we appreciate it! Keep in touch and keep us in mind.

- Susan L. McIntosh, Executive Director

New BCRLT Website Hits The Streets

Check it out: www.BCRLT.org. Then, if you are a FaceBook fan (even if you aren't) you will want to check in often at the new BCRLT FaceBook page: Like us all day long.



We must thank Lynn Padgett for her outstanding work on our prior website. It saw us through hundreds of Conservation Easements over thousands of acres and many years. There is so much new happening at BCRLT, we felt that it was time to update our digital look. Thank You Lynn! You are a rock star.

Visitors will already find a fun little website but much more is on tap for the new BCRLT site. We will be adding new sections to do things like give

the existing and proposed coal and gas development up on Oak Mesa the attention it deserves.

We will also debut an exciting new BCRLT program called *Black Canyon Outings*. Beginning this spring, knowledgeable leaders and guides will offer full and half day hikes and bike rides for members of the public to visit really swell places in the BCRLT service area - for FREE! The outings will be listed on the BCRLT website and in local newspapers. The point is to make sure no one has an excuse to stay inside on the weekends.

So please visit us often online at www.BCRLT.org and make sure you follow along with our conservation and non-conservation adventures on Facebook. You can catch up with BCRLT Stewardship Director Olivia Bartlett and the Alaskan grizzly bears right now. You really ought to do that.

BCRLT Conservation Project Update

The future generations of Delta, Montrose and Ouray Counties have received some awesome gifts from the present generation. More are on the way. We expect to close on about ten great conservation easements this fiscal year. Here are a few of the highlights:

North Fork Town Buffer. We are delighted to tell you about the protection of a key 'urban' buffer in the North Fork valley. In August BCRLT accepted the donation of an easement of over 200 acres of prime agricultural land that immediately borders the Town of Hotchkiss. The conserved property lies between the town boundary and the North Fork of the Gunnison River. It is a stunning piece of property that holds a rich historical and agricultural heritage that is now preserved in perpetuity.

Over A Mile Along The North Fork.

Conservation is in the air in Delta County it seems and BCRLT is honored to have been selected by a very generous conservation minded North Fork family to work with their team to conserve a large and historically and ecologically important working ranch. Although the project will take several years to complete, our aim is to begin the larger conservation project with about a mile and a half of North Fork river riparian ground together with several irrigated hay fields. A pretty good start.

Preserving An Ice Park. Most communities might only dream of being home to a world class ice park. Ouray, however, is just that, and BCRLT is working with the Town and with the National Forest Service to help find a way to put together the puzzle that preserves the ice park land and the park itself for public enjoyment forever.

look for BCRLT at the Ouray Ice Festival this year on January 5 - 8, 2012!



A North Fork Memorial To Land And People

“1894 - As long as grass grows, spring wind blows and water flows the land will nurture us and we will nurture the land. These acres are dedicated forever to conservation by the Norman Kehmeier family.”

The Norman and Dorothy Kehmeier Family celebrated quite a bit more on the Fourth of July this year than just the fact that America is still a great place to live.

With the words quoted above the Kehmeier Family and their friends with the Tongue Creek Conservation Project will leave a sturdy visual reminder of the 288 acres of productive agricultural land and wildlife habitat in the Tongue Creek drainage that have been preserved forever because the Kehmeiers understand the importance of conservation.

On July 4, 2011, when the Kehmeier Family gathered back on the family land from far flung corners of the world they dedicated a stone memorial with a plaque carrying the words quoted above. The Kehmeier land has been in the family for over a century (thus the reference to the year “1894” on the plaque - the earliest date of patent). Whoever stewards the land in the future will be reminded of Norman and Dorothy’s vision and determination.

In 2001 the Norman and Dorothy Kehmeier Family were the first family in Delta County to donate a conservation easement after the Colorado legislature adopted a transferable tax credit given in exchange for the donation of important conservation easements.

Through successive donations, the Kehmeiers now have a total of 288 acres under easement with BCRLT and have used the proceeds from the sale of Colorado state tax credits gained from the easement donation to purchase additional family lands and make ranch improvements.



BCRLT Welcomes Two New Board Members

We are delighted and very fortunate to welcome Tom McLeod and Steve Smith to the BCRLT Board of Directors. Tom and Steve happen to be neighbors on Black Mesa, living a stone’s throw from the Black Canyon National Park. Both Tom and Steve have placed conservation easements on their own remarkable lands and now are looking for ways to give even more to the future generations that will benefit from today’s land conservation and stewardship. Please visit www.BCRLT.org to read these gentlemen’s bios and check back to see who else has joined in the fun on the BCRLT Board of Directors.

BCRLT Board of Directors 2011 - 2012

- ◆ Elaine Brett, Hotchkiss, CO President
- ◆ Bill Bottomly, Montrose, CO Vice President and Treasurer
- ◆ Pete Hylton, Paonia, CO Secretary
- ◆ Ed Page, Ft. Pierce, FLA
- ◆ Tom McLeod, Black Mesa, CO
- ◆ Steve Smith, Black Mesa, CO

BCRLT Staff 2011 - 2012

- ◆ Sue McIntosh, Ridgway, CO Executive Director
- ◆ Julie Barger, Montrose, CO Office Manager
- ◆ Olivia Bartlett, Ridgway, CO Stewardship Director
- ◆ Dan Murphy, Ouray, CO Land Steward

LeValley Ranch Receives Statewide Excellence in Rangeland Conservation Award

BCRLT Conservation Easement Donors Mark and Robbie Baird LeValley accepted the 2010 Excellence in Rangeland Conservation Award on December 1, 2010. The award presentation was part of the annual meeting of the Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management (SRM).

Each year the Colorado Section of the SRM singles out a Colorado ranching operation that demonstrates “exceptional skill and knowledge in practicing sound management of rangelands” for SRM’s conservation ranching award.

The LeValley Ranch south of Hotchkiss, Colorado will celebrate its first hundred years of outstanding land stewardship in 2014. The ranch

was originally founded by Mark’s grandfather in 1914 and it is the third generation of LeValleys currently at the helm, including Mark and Robbie and Mark’s brother Hank. Apparently three generations on the land is not very many for the LeValley clan. Mark and Robbie’s three sons are learning the ropes and preparing to become the fourth generation of great stewards of the LeValley Ranch.

In addition to the 600 acres of LeValley land that will ultimately be held in conservation by BCRLT on Black Mesa, the family operates a much larger overall ranch composed of private land and BLM grazing allotments just south of Hotchkiss. The LeValleys have undertaken extensive conservation initiatives on these acres, including short livestock rotations, water improvements and wildlife waterers.

BCRLT is honored to be partners in conservation with all of those multi-generational agricultural families, like the LeValleys, who work hard and sacrifice much to preserve the open landscape of western Colorado and keep the tradition alive. Thanks guys.



Miller Mesa above Ridgway, CO. Thanks to J. Kuijvenhoven for this and other photos in this newsletter.