

Black Canyon Land Trust

Serving the Uncompahgre, North Fork, and Lower Gunnison Watersheds

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT BLACK CANYON LAND TRUST

WHAT IS THE BLACK CANYON LAND TRUST?

In the early 1990's two independent local groups of citizens founded the Valley Land Conservancy and the Three Rivers Land Trust. These citizens wanted to help preserve open space and protect a special way of life. In 2000, the two organizations merged to form the Black Canyon Land Trust. We are a private, non-profit organization.

Our founders were brought together by a common concern that rapid urban growth was crowding out agriculture and ranching, and the open spaces they provide. They were dedicated to maintaining and improving the quality of life in the Uncompahgre, North Fork, and Lower Gunnison Watersheds. We continue to pursue their common goals today.

Our Mission

Working to promote and ensure the preservation of private lands in the Uncompahgre, North Fork, and Lower Gunnison watersheds.

WHAT DOES THE BLACK CANYON LAND TRUST DO?

Conserve Agricultural Lands

Agriculture has shaped Western Colorado's landscape, economy and culture. The Black Canyon Land Trust is committed to helping farmers and ranchers conserve agricultural lands and the operations on them for future generations and for a secure food supply.

Some agricultural conservation methods include purchase of development rights, easement donations, and some limited land development. Reductions in income and estate taxes, and federal farm program incentives are available to easement donors. The Black Canyon Land Trust is available to meet with farmers and ranchers to discuss the options available.

Conserve Habitat

The mountains of the Uncompahgre, North Fork, and Gunnison Rivers may be the best place in the US to hear the chilling bugle of a bull elk or catch a glimpse of a mule deer fawn. The River Valleys are home to a diverse array of wildlife and plant species, including more than 200 different vertebrates. The area is also home to many threatened or endangered plant and animal species. Biologists have documented 150 wintering bald eagles in the Uncompahgre Valley alone. The survival of these species depend on relatively large, undeveloped tracts of uninterrupted habitat. The Black Canyon Land Trust helps conserve critical wildlife habitat and preserve the land corridors needed by many animals. We are helping landowners protect special plant communities on their lands.

Preserve Scenic Views

Some of the best scenery in Colorado is found in our area. Both our quality of life and the tourist support are due in part to the uncluttered vistas – the sight of Mount Sneffel’s, the Uncompahgre Plateau, Courthouse Range, Grand Mesa, Landsend Peak, the Saddle Peaks, and the list goes on...the allure of this natural beauty coupled with unrestrictive land development practices threatens to degrade these precious views.

Each scenic, agriculture, or wildlife conservation easement saves a piece of today for future generations. The Black Canyon Land Trust is available to work with landowners through the conservation easement process. After the easement donation, the Black Canyon Land Trust ensures the terms of the easement are not compromised by future actions.

Help Communities Plan

The Black Canyon Land Trust offers a non-governmental, voluntary approach to conserving open space and greenways. We are a voice for open space and community planning in the communities of Montrose, Delta, Ouray, and Gunnison Counties. We provide a means for individuals and groups to conserve open space and buffer areas along urban development corridors. We team with communities to save public corridors within the urban areas.

Examples of Our Easements:

- ❖ 3,700 acre working ranch in the North Fork
- ❖ 2,000 acres of operating rangeland along Smith Fork
- ❖ 1,800 acre working cattle ranch in the Cimarron Valley
- ❖ 400 acres of active grazing land above Cedaredge
- ❖ 200 acres of prime farm ground near Olathe
- ❖ 160 acres of shoreline at Fruitgrower’s Reservoir
- ❖ 145 acres of scenic viewshed on Log Hill Mesa
- ❖ 104 acres of wetlands along the Uncompahgre River
- ❖ 80 acres of wildlife habitat on Tongue Creek
- ❖ 42 acres including an active heron rookery on the Gunnison River

WHERE DO WE WORK?

The Black Canyon Land Trust works with individual landowners in Montrose, Delta, Ouray, and Gunnison Counties. On occasion we will work with landowners outside the four county area if no neighboring land trusts are available.

HOW IS THE BLACK CANYON LAND TRUST ORGANIZED?

The Black Canyon Land Trust is made up of a volunteer board of directors, an executive director, land protection specialist, outreach coordinator, and part time legal counsel.

If you are concerned about conserving agriculture, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, and open space; or you want to do something about urban sprawl, we invite you to join us.

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