

Financial Compensation Available for Landowners Who Want to Protect Their Land

What is Colorado Headwaters Land Trust (CHLT)?

The mission of CHLT is to preserve and steward open lands within the headwaters of the Colorado River for vistas, wildlife, agriculture and water, in partnership with landowners for the benefit of all. Incorporated in 1995, CHLT is the only local land trust serving Grand County, Colorado. They are a Colorado state certified land trust and became nationally accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission in 2016.

CHLT works with willing landowners to protect land and water in Grand County with conservation easements. A conservation easement permanently protects land from overdevelopment and subdivision, therefore protecting the conservation values of the property. Over the past 22 years, CHLT has protected scenic open space, wildlife habitat, agricultural land, and water resources on close to 9,000 acres in Grand County. They are a nonprofit organization with an office in Granby that houses a small crew of dedicated staff who work in collaboration with an active board of directors. CHLT works diligently on conservation easements to help maintain our beautiful vistas and lands for the benefit of residents and visitors to Grand County. These efforts impact both current and future generations.

What is the Colorado River Initiative?

CHLT and its conservation partners work with interested landowners to place conservation easements on private lands along or near the Colorado River or one of its many tributaries. CHLT then assists the landowner with the easement process to permanently protect the land and water. For example, at the end of 2016, CHLT and The Conservation Fund announced the protection of the 622-acre Troublesome Creek Ranch conservation easement. This historic ranch is located near the confluence of Troublesome Creek and the Colorado River. The property has been ranched for four generations and is now forever secured as agricultural land. Permanent protection of this scenic working ranch and its abundant water rights is critical to sustaining the health of the Upper Colorado River.

How do I place a Conservation Easement on my Property?

A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust. The agreement contains permanent restrictions on the use or development of land to protect certain values of that property. The landowner still owns the land, can lease or sell the land, and is able to continue ranching operations. If you, the landowner, chooses to donate some or all of your property rights, tax benefits may be available. There are several documents that must be drafted before the conservation easement process is complete, which can be costly for the landowner and the land trust. CHLT is here to help you through that process.

What financial assistance is available?

In Grand County, funds are available for landowners interested in pursuing a conservation easement. The passage of Ballot Issue 1A established a fund that landowners can use to protect their land and water with a conservation easement. There are also other funding sources available for eligible properties. CHLT can help you identify and apply for funding that will enable you to reduce the cost of a conservation easement and protect your land in perpetuity. Let's keep Grand County grand!

If you are interested in learning more about conservation easements and available funding sources, contact CHLT at 970-887-1177 or info@coloradoheadwaterslandtrust.org. We would love to hear from you!