



RIO GRANDE

HEADWATERS LAND TRUST

2019 SUMMER NEWSLETTER





Photo by Ryan Scavo

“Conserving our land, water and way of life in Colorado’s San Luis Valley.”

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Executive Director’s Letter

Over the past year, we’ve worked hard on a new, exciting strategic plan for RiGHT. We’re partnering to develop new conservation tools to help sustain our aquifers, farmland, streams, and wetlands. We’ll also be expanding our community outreach with a focus on getting young people outside to learn more about what makes their home here in the San Luis Valley so special.

This newsletter is a reminder that, as great as some of our new ideas are, the *Rio Grande Initiative* is still critical. Within the year we’ll protect five extraordinary ranches along the Rio, mostly with longtime local ranch families. This newsletter highlights the Encantada, but each of these ranches is just as ‘enchanted.’

Eight pages really isn’t enough to capture everything that we’re achieving in 2019. If you want to know more, stop by one of our events. We’d especially love to see you at this year’s 20th Anniversary Headwaters Hoedown on September 15th. Last year the Willett’s were such amazing hosts, and this year promises to be even better.

Allen Law
Executive Director

Cathy McNeil Summer Intern

WRITTEN BY EILEEN EGOLF,
RiGHT Intern

I am majoring in Environmental Science and Engineering at Harvard College in Cambridge, Massachusetts and will be starting my junior year in the fall. I grew up on a high mountain ranch near Creede, Colorado and attended Creede schools from pre-school through high school. Outside of school and work I am an avid barrel racer, hiker and artist! Having grown up in Colorado, I feel very strongly connected to Colorado's natural landscape and conserving the state's land and resources.

I learned about RiGHT through the process of placing a conservation easement on my family's ranch and really connected to the mission and philosophy of the organization. I am thrilled to spend the summer working with the incredible team at RiGHT and learning more about how they protect Colorado's land and resources!



Remember to donate to the *Cathy McNeil Stewardship Fund* to help us offer professional development opportunities for others and to help build our stewardship capacity.

Pam Houston Book Reading



In 2019, Pam Houston, local author from Creede, conserved with RiGHT. To get to this point was not easy. In *Deep Creek*, the reader follows Pam's journey as a landowner in the high country. The lessons she learned resonated with us at RiGHT, and we are thrilled to have the opportunity to share her story.

Pam Houston will be at the Windsor

Hotel in Del Norte, July 31st at 6 pm to present her newly published book, *Deep Creek*, with a book reading followed by questions and a signing.

Come join RiGHT and Pam at the Windsor courtyard for dinner from the new 1874 Food Truck and enjoy the reading while supporting RiGHT's mission to conserve our land, water, and way of life in the San Luis Valley.

Tickets will be \$25 and there is limited availability. Get your tickets at eventbrite through our website at www.riograndelandtrust.org. We hope to see you there!

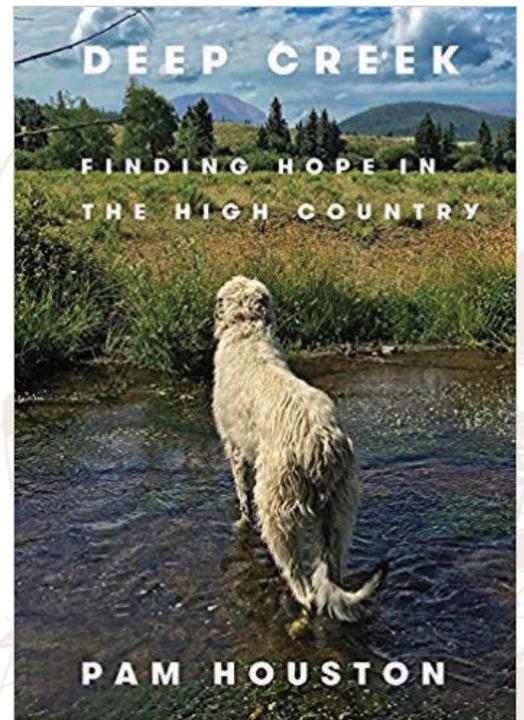




Photo by John Fielder



Photo by Christi Bode



Photo by Christi Bode

When: The Hoedown will be on Sunday, September 15th, 2019 at the Cross Arrow Ranch in Conejos County from 12pm-5pm. This year is RiGHT's 20th Anniversary, making the Hoedown even more special!

What: A celebration that will include music from the Rifiers featuring Don Richmond, local food from Pepita's Catering and a selection of locally brewed beer from The Colorado Farm Brewery, and a live and silent auction.

Who: Everyone is welcome! Bring your family and friends! The Hoedown is a time to celebrate our shared values of land and water conservation and our way of life in the San Luis Valley.

TICKETS: Early Bird \$30 (up to 9/8/19) | Regular \$40 (after 9/8/19 or at the door)

For more information, including a schedule of events and to buy tickets, visit our website www.riograndelandtrust.org or call 719.657.0800

Planned Giving

An interview with Forrest Ketchin, member of the Headwaters Legacy Circle

WRITTEN BY DANI GRONHOVD



In 2010 Forrest Ketchin stepped into RiGHT's office with hopes to honor her mother by making a donation with some of the inheritance she received. Forrest grew up in Georgia and her mother really loved that landscape. While Forrest didn't relate to her mother's love of Georgian land, she went to the place she felt this energy and deep connection with instead- the San Luis Valley.

Like many others, Forrest first came to the San Luis Valley to explore the Great Sand Dunes. She found herself making the long journey from Boulder to the Valley in spurts of a couple days at a time, being drawn back to the complexity of the environment and its people. She enjoyed being challenged by the people she met: the potato sorter, the engineer, and the professors. "We all see the world through different lenses and if I think I'm right about something, I can walk two steps and find out I'm wrong," Forrest admits.

Throughout the years as an anthropology and environmental studies professor at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado, Forrest was intrigued by the ten American Indian tribes whose ancestral lands include the Valley. She became close to a Puebloan man and his family who enlisted her in a multitude of projects and shared many of his understandings about the land, in the gentle and indirect way that Puebloans do - by planting seeds of thought in her head and then nurturing her ideas. Through Jose's teachings, Forrest received affirmation about her own understanding of the land, one that she had first absorbed as a very young child from her mother and grandmother.

Back at RiGHT's office, Forrest thoughtfully explained her situation and asked if there was a way she could help. She ended up assisting RiGHT in conserving the 768-acre Garcia Ranch in Conejos County. This success gave Forrest a lot of confidence in RiGHT's work, which grew stronger after developing friendships with RiGHT's staff. Now Forrest is planning for her future and part of that is naming RiGHT as a beneficiary of her estate. With this action Forrest has the financial flexibility to determine the exact details of how her charitable bequest is distributed and the satisfaction knowing she'll be connecting with this land she loves so deeply.

It's more than your Valley, it's your legacy.

We love the San Luis Valley because it is a place that feels set apart from time. With its outstanding agricultural production, precious water resources, beautiful views, and abundant wildlife, the headwaters of the Rio Grande is still much like it was decades ago. In the Valley, our heritage and way of life all ties back to the land. That's why, when RiGHT started in 1999, we made a promise to protect special places all across the San Luis Valley, from the cottonwood bosques of ranches along the Rio Grande to fields where migrating sandhill cranes feed every spring and fall.

Please consider joining our *Headwaters Legacy Circle* by making a planned gift. Your support is critical to sustaining our conservation work, which will leave a legacy that lasts for generations to come.

Let Us Know Your Plans. If you have already included RiGHT in your estate plans, please let us know by contacting us at 719.657.0800. We would like to thank you and acknowledge you for your generous commitment.

Questions? We look forward to sitting down with you and discussing your many options with estate planning. If you would like to set up a meeting or if you have any questions please contact Allen Law at 719.657.0800.



Encantada Ranch

Save the Ranch

WRITTEN BY ALLEN LAW

Photos by Ryan Scavo

When the Encantada came up for sale in 1973, two long time ranching families from the Del Norte area, the Davies and the Colvilles, knew they had to jump on the opportunity. With neither able to take the leap by themselves, the two families agreed to share the ranch. Years later, both families still own the property together with Rick Davie and Davie Colville helping each other move cattle, hay the grass meadows, irrigate with its senior water rights, fix fence, and everything else that it takes to run a ranch. Family agriculture is the backbone of our way of life in the San Luis Valley, and RiGHT is thrilled to help Rick and Davie continue their families' legacies.

Now they're making an even bigger commitment together by deciding to conserve this 'enchanted'

place. Although it is just a couple miles east of Del Norte, the Encantada is almost like a different world because the ranch spans two channels of the Rio Grande. With cottonwoods and willows surrounding its meadows, the Encantada is extraordinary habitat for deer, elk, ducks, and numerous other migratory birds. In the winter it is common to see bald eagles gracing the branches of its tall trees from Highway 160 as you drive out of town.

Protecting the Encantada is also important because it builds on our past success. By the end of the year, RiGHT will have conserved over twenty-one working ranches along the Rio Grande. While we are expanding this 'corridor of conservation,' it's hard-working family farmers and ranchers who protect and care for most of the headwaters of the Rio Grande.



Just like the Davies and Colvilles are helping to protect the San Luis Valley by conserving the Encantada, you can make a difference that will last generations by donating to our 2019 Save the Ranch campaign! As an added bonus, everyone who donates to the 2019 Save the Ranch campaign will be invited to a private picnic on the Encantada Ranch next spring or summer. So donate today to support family agriculture and conserve our land, water, and way of life here in the San Luis Valley.

Encantada Ranch, Conservation Easement Rio Grande County, CO

- Preserves *scenery* that you can see from U.S. HWY 160
- Protects **47 acres of wetland habitat** for Canada geese, great blue heron, and the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher
- Conserves **388 acres** of exceptional ranchland, including almost **2 miles** of the Rio Grande River



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