



COLORADO HEADWATERS — LAND TRUST —

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LAND TRUST'S NAME CHANGE EMPHASIZES IMPORTANCE OF COLORADO RIVER HEADWATERS TO THE COUNTY

Granby, CO -- After much thought, research and input from constituents and stakeholders, the Middle Park Land Trust's Board of Directors unanimously voted to change the name of the organization to **Colorado Headwaters Land Trust (CHLT)** at its April 11th board meeting. The change was a strategic move to emphasize the importance of the Colorado River and its tributaries in CHLT's mission to help protect the county's valuable watersheds, wildlife, biodiversity and scenic and agricultural open lands for the benefit of the public.

"The impressive fact that the Colorado River begins in our county — as do several of its headwater tributaries, including the threatened Fraser River — in many ways defines Grand County," said CHLT Executive Director Carse Pustmueller. "These rivers and streams of the Colorado River headwaters in the county have created the scenic valleys that are such a critical component to the landscapes that draw residents and visitors here. These landscapes are the areas that the land trust is working hard to protect."

CHLT, the only land trust servicing Grand County, is a state-certified land trust that currently holds 63 conservation easements on 6,954 acres of private land. CHLT's primary land protection tool is the conservation easement, a voluntary binding legal document between the landowner and the land trust that identifies a property's qualified conservation values (as defined by the IRS regulations) and permanently protects those values by restricting development and other non-compatible uses. The IRS Treasury regulations state that a qualified conservation easement must include one or more of four conservation values. The easement must 1) preserve land for outdoor recreation by, or education of, the general public; 2) protect relatively natural habitat of fish, wildlife or plants; 3) preserve agricultural or scenic open space; or 4) preserve historically important land or structures. Landowners of conservation easement properties are often entitled to federal and state tax benefits while the public benefits from the open space that easements provide. "It's really a win-win situation," explained Pustmueller.

The Upper Colorado River Corridor, which includes the Colorado River and its tributaries in Grand County, has been identified by state, regional and national conservation organizations as the top Colorado Priority Landscape in need of protection. *American Rivers*, an organization dedicated to protecting U.S. waterways, recently released their annual list of endangered rivers naming the Colorado River as *the most endangered river in the nation* due to outdated water management, increased drought and overuse.

"We, as an organization, feel a sense of responsibility to do our part to protect these rivers and the spectacular valleys and scenic views they've created," said Pustmueller. "These areas provide critical wildlife habitats, vital water rights, quality wetlands, working farms and ranches, and scenic open space as well as world class rafting, fly-fishing and other recreational opportunities."

CHLT will be hosting a Name Change Celebration & Summer Fundraiser on July 6, 2013 from 6-8pm at the Western Riviera Lakeside Event Center in Granby, CO. Tickets are \$75 and include food, drinks, live music, silent auction and great conversation. Tickets can be purchased online at www.coloradoheadwaterslandtrust.org or by calling 970-887-1177.

CHLT is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization located in Granby. Anyone interested in learning more about the land trust should visit www.coloradoheadwaterslandtrust.org or contact Carse Pustmueller at 970-887-1177.

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