

NEWS RELEASE

Colorado Headwaters Land Trust
(Formerly Middle Park Land Trust)
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COLORADO HEADWATERS LAND TRUST RECEIVES OURAY RANCH CONSERVATION EASEMENT FROM TROUT UNLIMITED

Granby, CO – Colorado Headwaters Land Trust is the new holder of the Ouray Ranch Conservation Easement, an easement that Trout Unlimited has held since 1984 and recently assigned to the land trust. The 229-acre Ouray Ranch easement is located along the Colorado River on both sides of Colorado Highway 34 between the Town of Granby and Lake Granby.

“The Ouray Ranch conservation easement is a terrific addition to our ongoing work along the Colorado River in Grand County,” said Carse Pustmueller, the executive director of the Colorado Headwaters Land Trust. “I have thoroughly enjoyed collaborating with Trout Unlimited, the Ouray Ranch Homeowner’s Association, and the landowners who own land in the easement.”

Trout Unlimited is reassigning its few conservation easements to local land trusts around the country; the Ouray Ranch easement, located only a few miles north of the land trust’s Granby office, was the first one to be transferred.

“Trout Unlimited is pleased to assign this conservation easement to the Colorado Headwaters Land Trust for perpetual stewardship. TU has been a partner in the conservation of this land for over 30 years but realized that the local land trust is better positioned and equipped to provide on-going monitoring and stewardship assistance to the Ouray Ranch community,” said Chris Herrman, Colorado Director of TU’s Coldwater Conservation Fund. “With the assignment, everybody wins, especially the trout and their watershed.”

The Ouray Ranch easement is an important addition to the land trust’s *Colorado River Initiative*, a project to protect private lands in the Colorado River corridor in Grand County. This corridor makes up the majority of the *Upper Colorado River Priority Landscape*, one of 25 priority landscapes identified by the Colorado Conservation Partnership (CCP), a collaboration among the state’s national, state and local land trusts. Of the 25 landscapes identified, the Upper Colorado River is the top priority for protection.

“We are in the process of protecting several working ranches within the spectacular Colorado and Fraser River corridors that will help protect these landscapes and perpetually tie the landowners’ water rights to their land, an increasingly important part of our conservation work,” said Pustmueller.

Last year, Colorado Headwaters Land Trust acquired the 114.11-acre McElroy Ranch (East) Conservation Easement, which includes one mile of the Colorado River and irrigated hay- and pasture lands and encumbers the landowner’s water rights.

The Ouray Ranch is an unusual easement in that five different landowners own a portion of the conservation easement property. The easement, however, retains its scenic and agricultural open space values since the owners' homes were built outside of the easement's boundaries.

Colorado Headwaters Land Trust's primary land protection tool is the conservation easement, a voluntary legal document between the landowner and the land trust that identifies a property's conservation values (such as scenic open space, wildlife habitat, agricultural open space) and permanently protects those values by restricting development, subdivision and other non-compatible uses of the property. In exchange, the landowner can receive federal tax deductions and state tax credits based on the value of the easement. Colorado Headwaters Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and the only land trust located in Grand County. Anyone interested in learning more about or volunteering for the land trust, go to **www.coloradoheadwaterslandtrust.org** or contact Carse Pustmueller at 970-887-1177.

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