



MIDDLE PARK LAND TRUST NEWS RELEASE

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Wednesday, February 6, 2013

THE MIDDLE PARK LAND TRUST PROTECTS BLUE RIDGE RANCH

Granby, CO -- The Middle Park Land Trust (MPLT) recently accepted its 63rd conservation easement, protecting the 117-acre Blue Ridge Ranch located in the Williams Fork Valley. This conservation easement, like all easements, will protect the property's scenic and agricultural open space and its quality natural habitat in perpetuity.

Characterized by upland sagebrush, wetlands, riparian habitat, and aspen and conifer forests, Blue Ridge Ranch provides habitat for a variety of wildlife, birds, fish and insects. The easement provides a link between the habitat on the property and that on surrounding public and private lands, as well as connecting adjacent and nearby conservation properties that have already been protected in the Williams Fork Valley.

Upon closing the land transaction, Peter Mostow, a family member who owns the property, said, "My family is very happy to complete the conservation easement and protect our land!"

Along with other important conservation projects, the land trust continues to focus on its *Fraser River Initiative*; a high-priority program with the goal of ultimately protecting as much privately owned Fraser River frontage property, as there are willing landowners. The Fraser River is 32.5 miles long and located entirely in Grand County. 12.8 miles of the river flow through private land, of which 4.4 miles have already been protected with conservation easements largely held by MPLT.

"Our 2013 priorities are to work with willing landowners along the Fraser River between the Towns of Fraser and Tabernash," said Carse Pustmueller, MPLT's Executive Director, "and to continue progress on a few key properties downstream of the Fraser on the Colorado River."

Middle Park Land Trust is located in Granby and is the only local land trust servicing Grand County. The land trust's primary conservation tool is the conservation easement, a legal deed between a willing landowner and the land trust. The deed identifies the property's conservation values that qualify it for conservation purposes under the IRS regulations and ensures that those values will be protected in perpetuity by restricting some activities and some or all development on the property. Landowners who donate a conservation easement on their property are usually entitled to state and federal tax benefits.

With the Blue Ridge Ranch Conservation Easement, the land trust now holds 63 easements on 6,954 acres.

If you have property that may qualify for conservation purposes or if you want to become involved in the land trust, please contact the Middle Park Land Trust at 970-887-1177 or at www.middleparklandtrust.org.

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