

Gunnison Ranchland Conservation Legacy

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Gunnison Family Preserves Ranch Land

Bob Robbins and his family have granted a conservation easement on 487 acres of grazing land and wildlife habitat in the Steuben Creek Valley, about eight miles west of Gunnison. The protected acreage is adjacent to another 500 acres that the Robbins family protected in 2005. Colorado Open Lands, a statewide land trust, will hold the conservation easement. Local grassroots organization Gunnison Ranchland Conservation Legacy coordinated the project and secured grants and donations to fund the deal. The land is now restricted to allow only one home on the entire 487 acres.

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), funded by the Colorado Lottery, granted \$243,240 for the agricultural land preservation project. The Gunnison County Land Preservation Fund, Colorado Conservation Trust, and private donations provided the remaining cash. Contributions to the Jim Gebhart Memorial Fund also helped finance the project. The Robbins Family donated \$111,000 worth of easement value.

The Robbins will continue to graze livestock on the property. The ranch will also continue to provide habitat for the imperiled Gunnison sage-grouse and winter habitat for elk and deer. The parcel, which is located between Beaver Creek Wildlife Area and Centennial Wildlife Area, includes riparian areas along Steuben Creek and upland sagebrush grazing land. The easement does not permit public access to the property.

Since 1998, Gunnison Ranchland Legacy has facilitated the placement of 33 easements on 15,348 acres in the Gunnison/Crested Butte area. GOCO has provided more than \$10 million in lottery proceeds to assist with many of those easements. An additional 13,000 acres, worth over \$30 million in development value, remains on the Legacy waiting list for funding, according to Lucy High, Executive Director for the organization.

“Legacy is constantly seeking additional donations and grants,” High commented. “We are very grateful for our many supporters whose contributions ensure that we can continue our mission to preserve ranching and conserve ranchlands in the Gunnison Country. Conservation easements help protect productive ranch lands while also preserving wildlife habitat and scenic views.”

Further information is available at Gunnison Legacy’s website, gunnisonlegacy.org.