

# RIO GRANDE HEADWATERS LAND TRUST

## 2004 ANNUAL REPORT

THE RIO GRANDE HEADWATERS LAND TRUST  
P.O. Box 189 CO 81144 Phone: 719-852-4015

### *Notes from the Staff*

2004 was our 4th full year of operation and with all young organizations, we continued to grow. We completed our Strategic Conservation Inventory and Plan, worked with numerous landowners to protect their land, held three workshops, two special events and continued to participate in the San Luis Valley Wetlands Focus Area Committee and valley-wide planning efforts to balance growth with our agricultural industry and inspiring open spaces.

In the middle of that we also moved our offices from the USDA/NRCS building in Monte Vista to six miles south of town in the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters building. As all “moving” experiences can be, this one proved to be a good medium to purge and re-organize. Now nestled in our new home we enjoy all the sights and sounds of the things we hold dear: cranes, cattle, mountain vistas and open spaces.

It has been a busy year involving in-depth planning of which we will bear the fruit in 2005. A big thank you is in order for our hardworking and fun loving Board of Directors, Staff and consultants.

Please join me in taking a closer look at our year in review and celebrating our successes.

Sincerely,  
Nancy Butler, Director

### *Land Protection*

RiGHT anticipated closing on four conservation easements in 2004, but if you are familiar with the adage “change is the only constant”, it certainly rings true for the conservation field. All our projects got pushed back to 2005 and we are hoping to close on all four of them in the first half of the year.

The four projects are spread out between Saguache, Mineral and Rio Grande counties. In Saguache County we are working with The Nature Conservancy to help protect an 840-acre nature preserve at Mishak Lakes. In addition, we are working with the Trust for Public Land to protect a 1,240-acre farm near La Garita.



Protecting the Rio Grande River

In Rio Grande County we continue to work with landowners who own a beautiful 1,500 acre ranch spanning the Rio Grande for nearly two miles. When completed, this property will truly be one of the jewels in the conservation crown of the San Luis Valley. In Mineral County we have an on-going project with a landowner hoping to protect a total of 200 acres of his ranch near Creede.

Susan Pierce, RiGHT’s Conservation Director, continues to do a wonderful job working one-on-one with landowners to make sure their wishes for their land is represented in the structure of our conservation easements.

As the growth equation in the San Luis Valley and particularly along the Rio Grande corridor becomes increasingly more dominant, the need for RiGHT’s services to provide a balance to growth and other options for landowners is multiplying as well.

In addition to those projects, RiGHT has a whopping ten other potential projects in the starting blocks for 2005. As indicated, not all projects start and end in one calendar year, but even if we complete just three of the additional projects it will bring our total acreage protected up from 2,055 to well over 7,000 acres in 2005. Now, that is something to celebrate.

## Education

RiGHT's goal to promote sustainable agriculture and conservation through education was in full force in 2004. We sponsored three workshops, two of which were part of our "Farming and Ranching for Prosperity and Posterity" series and one was our annual conservation easement workshop.

Class participants for the "Farming and Ranching for Prosperity and Posterity" workshop convened in Monte Vista last February to spend two days learning about grazing planning. In May they met up again for the final session of the workshop at George Whitten's ranch in Saguache county to learn about land planning and biological monitoring and enjoy hands-on field work. Both classes were lead by Jim Howell, a certified Holistic Management trainer and rancher near Cimarron. This series of workshops was made possible by grants from the Musser Family Foundation and the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative. Rio de la Vista, who also heads up the San Luis Valley Wetlands Focus Area Committee, coordinated this great set of workshops.

Last April, participants from all over the state braved the biggest spring snow storm in 2004 to attend "Conservation Easements: Concepts to Completion". These annual workshops are making a name for themselves as people came from as far away as Greeley to learn from our expert field of speakers from Colorado's front range: Bill Silberstein, a prominent conservation easement attorney; Marty



Zeller, a well known planner and tax credit broker; and Dave Peterson; a highly recognized appraiser. Just as the title suggests, the workshop covered conservation easements from start to finish. Our sold out workshop was generously sponsored by the San Luis Valley Habitat Partnership Program; The Trust for Public Land; the Nature Conservancy; and Wall, Smith and Bateman.

### Board of Directors

Pete Magee - **President**  
 Ralph Curtis - **Vice President**  
 Karen Henderson - **Treasurer**  
 Christine Canaly - **Secretary**  
 Cathy McNeil  
 Scott Miller

### Staff & Consultants

Nancy Butler  
*Director*

Susan Pierce  
*Conservation Director*

Michelle Le Blanc  
*Development Director*

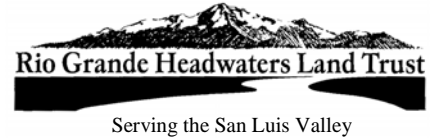
Rio de la Vista  
*Consultant*

Gigi Darricades  
*Legal Consultant*

## SCIP

Our Strategic Conservation Inventory and Plan, otherwise known as SCIP, involved a lot of, well, planning in 2004. RiGHT worked with Agro Engineering to create a database which will evaluate parcels on a set of criteria and helps us determine where our financial resources should best be spent to protect which lands. The SLV GIS/GPS Authority was an invaluable partner creating maps and compiling information to compose the big picture of land protection and the need for it in the Valley.

Our final SCIP report was completed in April. This almost two year process, made possible from a grant from Great Outdoors Colorado, and numerous partners has been a rich experience mapping out the valley, working with other conservation groups, talking to citizens and local governments to help chart our course and make the biggest difference we can to protect our land and resources in the San Luis Valley.



## Financials

### 2004 Profit and Loss Statement

#### Income

Board Contributions	\$ 25,540.
Corporate Donations	\$ 2,750
Education Grants	\$ 10,710
Individual Contributions	\$ 15,571
InKind Income	\$ 13,146
Interest Income	\$ 566
SCIP Grants	\$ 6,400
Special Events	\$ 2,023
Water Protection	\$ 10,543
<u>Workshop Income</u>	<u>\$ 3,698</u>
Total Income	\$ 90,947

#### Expenses

Admin Director	\$ 13,143
Bank Charges/Interest	\$ 215
Development Director	\$ 7,664
Fundraising	\$ 5,558
Employer Tax Exp	\$ 2,031
Insurance	\$ 1,388
Land Protection Expenses	\$ 7,154
Land Protection Staff	\$ 6,515
Legal Expenses	\$ 10,074
Memberships with LT's	\$ 300
Postage	\$ 1,326
Printing	\$ 447
SCIP	\$ 10,164
Office Space	\$ 194
Office Supplies	\$ 850
Staff Training	\$ 494
Telephone and Internet	\$ 1,728
Water Protection	\$ 12,927
Workshop Ex	\$ 14,181
<u>Total Expenses</u>	<u>\$ 89,838</u>
Net	\$ 1,109

## Special Events

The great Michelle LeBlanc, coordinated two wonderful events for RiGHT in 2004. The winter event, was a classy get together at the Cottonwood Inn in Alamosa that celebrated our donors, partners and Dorothy Steele, the owner of the Wright Ranch, who donated a conservation easement on her land in 2003. The second event was the "Farm and Ranch Rendezvous". RiGHT collaborated with ScSeed and had perfect weather for this outdoor BBQ at Roy Oliver's Oxcart South Ranch, with McNeil beef prepared by Greg Gosar, live music and a silent auction. It was a great way to kick up our heels and raise money for both groups.