

# RIO GRANDE HEADWATERS LAND TRUST

## 2006 ANNUAL REPORT

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### *Notes from the Director*

I've been with The Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust (RiGHT) for nearly five years now and each year it has been a pleasure to build our capacity to accomplish private land protection within the San Luis Valley. This year we took several leaps forward closing on three conservation easements, starting the *Rio Grande Initiative*, hiring a part time Assistant Project Manager and hosting three workshops, as well as continuing to grow our relationships with funders and partners. Certainly being out on the land and seeing these spectacular places we are protecting brings our work into sharp focus. Please join me in reviewing another successful year for the San Luis Valley! Sincerely, Nancy Butler, Director



### *Land Protection: 2,367 Acres*

RiGHT closed on three conservation easements in 2006, which brings our current acreage for conservation easements up to 7,422—quite an accomplishment for an organization that just a few years ago was mostly volunteer-run.

**The King Ranch** — RiGHT closed on the 2nd phase, 1,893 acres, of this important ranch south of the Medano-Zapata in 2006. When the project is complete in 2007, the ranch will be the southern bookend of one of the largest protected corridors in Colorado, more than 275,000 acres, stretching north from the ranch to the Medano-Zapata, the Great Sand Dunes and the Baca National Wildlife Refuge. In addition, the ranch is in an important link between the Rio Grande National Forest to the east and the BLM's Blanca Wetlands to the west and it is along the Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic and Historic Byway. Funding for this phase came from Great Outdoors Colorado, The Nature Conservancy, The Colorado Division of Wildlife's Habitat Partnership Program and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.



The Historic King Ranch, 2006

**Rio Grande Initiative** —Our first project in the Rio Grande floodplain in Alamosa County was a ranch north of the river. This 147 acre project dovetails nicely with several Ducks Unlimited projects and is near both the Rio Grande and the Higel State Wildlife Areas, managed by the Colorado Division of Wildlife. The property was important to protect for its viewshed, agricultural productivity and bird foraging areas.

**Rock Creek Heritage Area**—Acting as a buffer for the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge, BLM and Colorado State Lands, protecting another 327 acre private ranch in the Rock Creek Heritage Area south of Monte Vista, fills in another key property in this important region. The Heritage Project now has nearly 8,500 acres of private land protected through RiGHT and our partners Ducks Unlimited and American Farmland Trust. Funding for this project was provided by the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

Conserving Our Land, Water and Way of Life in Colorado's  
Rio Grande Basin, the San Luis Valley.



## Education

RiGHT continues to be the leader in conservation education in the San Luis Valley holding three workshops in 2006. The workshops were sponsored by the Colorado Division of Wildlife's Habitat Partnership Program, with support from Wall, Smith & Bateman, Walters & Assoc., Richard J. Jacobs, P.C. and Darricades and Assoc. Two of the workshops were on conservation easements for landowners and one was on estate and succession planning for farmers and ranchers.

## Changes in Staff and Board

New faces to RiGHT continue to help us add new perspectives and grow organizationally. In 2006 we were thankful to Pete Atkins for joining the Board of Directors. Pete has owned several pieces of property on the Rio Grande and sold those parcels to buy his ranch in the Rock Creek area. Pete has made a wonderful addition to our Board of Directors with his wealth of knowledge of ranching, water rights, and people in the San Luis Valley.

Aaron Welch also joined the organization as a Fellow from the Colorado Conservation Trust to become RiGHT's first Assistant Project Manager. Aaron originally hails from Lakewood and has extensive conservation experience through his work in the Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic and receiving his Masters Degree from the Yale School of Forestry.

In 2006 we said goodbye to Founder and long time Board member, Christine Canaly. Chris put at least ten years into the land trust conceiving its idea, securing our 501c(3) status, bringing in donors and guiding us every step of the way. Our eternal gratitude for her dedication, time and commitment in starting RiGHT and seeing us through on a path of sustainability!

## Financials

### 2006 Profit and Loss Statement

Income	
Board Contributions	\$ 750
Corporate Donations	\$ 1,074
Grants	\$ 80,262
Individual Contributions	\$ 3,630
InKind Income	\$ 500
Interest Income	\$ 1,556
Legal Endowment Inc.	\$ 15,000
<u>Program Income</u>	<u>\$ 8,252</u>
Total Income	\$111,024

Expenses	
Computer/Website	\$ 362
Fundraising	\$ 1,401
Employer Tax Exp	\$ 1,799
Insurance	\$ 324
Interest Exp	\$ 137
Land Protection Exp	\$ 46,864
Legal Exp	\$ 1,893
Memberships with LT's	\$ 815
Postage	\$ 1,255
Printing	\$ 939
Office Expenses	\$ 2,331
Office Supplies	\$ 1,557
Staff & Consultant	\$ 21,933
Staff Training	\$ 125
Travel	\$ 523
Wetlands Prog Exp	\$ 14,423
<u>Workshop Ex</u>	<u>\$ 4,754</u>
<u>Total Expenses</u>	<u>\$ 101,435</u>
Net	\$ 9,589

### Board of Directors

**Peggy Blenden - President**

**Ralph Curtis - Vice President**

**Cathy McNeil - Secretary**

**Pete Atkins—Treasurer**

**Linda Schoonhoven**

### Staff & Consultants

**Nancy Butler**  
*Director*

**Aaron Welch**  
*Asst. Project Manager*

**Rio de la Vista**  
*Consultant*

**Gigi Darricades**  
*Legal Consultant*

## *The Rio Grande Initiative*

One of the most exciting projects RiGHT embarked on in 2006 was the *Rio Grande Initiative*. This ambitious project we are spearheading aims to protect as much private land along the Rio Grande in Colorado as possible. The project offers incentives to landowners along the Rio Grande to protect their property. We are incredibly fortunate in Colorado to have a relatively intact and healthy watershed. We would like to preserve the character of the area along with its associated agricultural productivity, healthy wetlands, historic ranches, senior water rights, important wildlife habitats and scenic viewsheds for future generations.

In 2006 we garnered support for the project from: Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colorado Conservation Trust, Kodak American Greenways Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project, SLV GIS/GPS Authority, Mineral County, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, SLV Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project.



The Upper Wright's Ranch—the first conservation easement closest to the headwaters of the Rio Grande. Protected in 2003.