

RIO GRANDE HEADWATERS LAND TRUST

2007 ANNUAL REPORT

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Notes from the Director

In 2006 the Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust (RiGHT) started the *Rio Grande Initiative*, our major effort to protect private land along the Rio Grande corridor, in 2007 the *Initiative* took flight. While I personally battled a recurrence of breast cancer, we experienced an amazing year marking, conducting outreach to landowners and funders, working with our partners and enjoying the success of the fruits of our labors. We were also thrilled to close on two conservation easements along the Rio Grande River and the final phase of the King Ranch Preservation Project. Please join me in reviewing another successful year for the San Luis Valley! Sincerely, Nancy Butler, Executive Director

Land Protection: 2,791 Acres

RiGHT closed on three conservation easements in 2007, which brings our current acreage for conservation easements up to 10,280 acres of the most critical private land in the San Luis Valley and Colorado.

The King Ranch — the final phase of this incredible project closed in 2007 protecting 2,237 acres in this phase and more than 5,200 acres altogether. This important ranch south of The Nature Conservancy's Medano-Zapata 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, the National Scenic Byways program and private donors.

The Former Virginia Wright's Ranch — Our first project in the Rio Grande floodplain in Rio Grande County was a ranch on the spectacular Rio Grande river island. This 200 acre project creates a keystone property between Del Norte and Monte Vista. The property was important to protect for its viewshed, agricultural productivity and wildlife habitat. It was funded by Great Outdoors Colorado, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, The Colorado Division of Wildlife and the Colorado Conservation Trust.

The Dugan Ranch — Acting as another keystone property near Monte Vista, RiGHT also closed on the Dugan Ranch, in 2007. This project protected another 352 acres along the Rio Grande river. This project was funded by Great Outdoors Colorado, the Colorado Conservation Trust and the Colorado Division of Wildlife's Habitat Partnership Program.



The Former Virginia Wright's Ranch, 2007

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



The Rio Grande Initiative

Much of 2007 was spent planning for a large scale funding request to Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) to protect six key ranches in the Rio Grande river from Mineral County down to Conejos County. In December 2007, RiGHT was pleased to receive our full request of \$7.385 million for a Legacy Grant from GOCO for the *Rio Grande Initiative*. Through this Legacy Award, The Colorado Division of Wildlife is partnering on two large ranches with \$2.385 million of the total request. The *Rio Grande Initiative* was the largest amount granted through this cycle anywhere in Colorado. The GOCO funds will be matched by other grants from public and private sources as well as generous donations of value from the participating landowners.



Cathy McNeil, Nancy Butler and Aaron Welch receiving the GOCO Legacy Announcement with Governor Ritter December 2007

The collaboration of our partners and broad based support from the community, including all four counties in the project area, the water districts, users and organizations, the wildlife agencies and many more will allow us to implement voluntary, incentive-based conservation easements. This is a rare and exceptional opportunity to achieve landscape-scale conservation that contributes to the sustainability of the water, wildlife and agriculture along of the Rio Grande river and the San Luis Valley (SLV) community as a whole.

Financials

2007 Profit and Loss Statement

Income	
Board Contributions	\$ 2,150
Corporate Donations	\$ 700
Grants	\$155,813
Individual Contributions	\$ 5,510
InKind Income	\$ 5,139
Interest Income	\$ 2,871
Legal Endowments	\$ 30,000
<u>Program Income</u>	<u>\$ 57,513</u>
Total Income	\$259,696

Expenses	
Conferences	\$ 765
Fundraising	\$ 759
Employer Tax Exp	\$ 2,544
Insurance	\$ 3,055
Interest Exp	\$ 320
Land Protection Exp	\$ 63,696
Legal Exp	\$ 16,020
Memberships with LT's	\$ 1,100
Postage	\$ 1,422
Printing	\$ 24
Office Expenses	\$ 1,150
Office Supplies	\$ 2,025
Rio Grande Initiative	\$ 39,098
Staff Salaries	\$ 33,251
Telephone & Internet	\$ 1,356
Travel	\$ 398
<u>Wetlands Prog Exp</u>	<u>\$ 2,545</u>
<u>Total Expenses</u>	<u>\$ 169,528</u>
Net	\$ 90,168

Board of Directors

Peggy Blenden - President
Ralph Curtis - Vice President
Cathy McNeil - Secretary
Pete Atkins—Treasurer
Cathy Morin
Jim Rhett
Steve Russell
Linda Schoonhoven

Staff & Consultants

Nancy Butler
Executive Director

Aaron Welch
Asst. Project Manager

Rio de la Vista
Consultant

Gigi Darricades
Legal Consultant

Great Additions to our Board

New faces to RiGHT continue to help us broaden our perspectives, enhance our capacity and grow organizationally. In 2007 we were grateful to add three new members to our Board of Directors.

Cathy Morin is an SLV staple and is a successful fundraiser for the SLV Regional Medical Center. Cathy has been involved with environmental causes within the SLV for many years. Cathy is currently the chairperson of RiGHT's Development Committee.

Jim Rhett is recently retired as the BLM's SLV Director and brings years of experience to our organization in public lands issues and management. Jim serves on RiGHT's Finance Committee.

Steve Russell retired from his career at the National Resources Conservation Service as a District Conservationist. His expertise in conservation, land management, river restoration and long term relationships with local landowners is a great asset to RiGHT. Steve is currently on RiGHT's Governance Committee.