

# RIO GRANDE HEADWATERS LAND TRUST

## 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

P.O. Box 444, Del Norte CO 81132 Phone: 719-657-0800  
right@fone.net • www.riograndelandtrust.org

### *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* experienced its first major funding success and in 2008, our funding successes continued and we were proud to conserve three Rio Grande corridor ranches and assist our partners, The Nature Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited, in protecting another two. We learned that collaboration can take a lot of hard work, but when this many conservation organizations, agencies and private landowners put their energy behind something as important as conserving the Rio Grande, we can change the future by protecting what we have today. Protection of these ranches represents years of hard work on everyone's part, and we are pleased to have engaged in such an ambitious project with great results.

### *Land Protection: 772 Acres*

RiGHT closed on three conservation easements in 2008, which brings our current acreage for conservation easements up to 11,052 acres of the most critical private land in the San Luis Valley and Colorado.

**The Rio Oxbow Ranch** — the first phase of this incredible project closed in 2008 protecting 505 acres of one of the most scenic ranches on the Rio Grande. Stretching along the Silver Thread Scenic Byway in Mineral County, this ranch has more than one mile of the Rio Grande running through it, with some of the best trout fishing in Colorado. Protection of this ranch blends well with a nearby project RiGHT completed in 2003, creating a corridor of more than 1,300 acres of protected ranch lands. Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation through the Colorado Conservation Partnership all provided funding.



The Rio Oxbow Ranch, photo by Mike Blakeman

**The Jansen Ranch** — Our first project near South Fork included conserving this 145 acre ranch along the banks of the Rio Grande known for its “Gold Medal” fishing. Protection of this ranch creates a keystone property between South Fork and Del Norte. The property is important for its viewshed, agricultural productivity and wildlife habitat. The Nature Conservancy and the Conservation Resource Center provided the majority of funding for transaction costs associated with completing the project.

**The Knoblauch Ranch** — This “centennial farm” also lies between South Fork and Del Norte and protects valuable wildlife habitat, wetlands and senior surface water rights on 122 acres. Together with the Jansen Ranch and other protected properties in this stretch, nearly 2,000 acres of private land has been protected between South Fork and Del Norte, which is experiencing the highest development threat along the entire Rio Grande corridor in Colorado. GOCO, CWCB and the Colorado Division of Wildlife's Habitat Partnership Program were all financial contributors.

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



## The Rio Grande Initiative

2008 brought more funding success to the *Initiative* as well as the protection of RiGHT's three projects plus. Additionally played a major role in fundraising for the projects Ducks Unlimited and The Nature Conservancy completed.

The \$5.7 million of funding used purchase and pay for transaction costs for conservation easements in 2008, included contributions from the Colorado Water Conservation Board; the North American Wetlands Conservation Act; Great Outdoors Colorado, the Colorado Division of Wildlife and their Habitat Partnership Program, the Duke Charitable Foundation and the Conservation Resource Center. Equally as important, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, the Rio Grande Water Conservation District and the Moore Charitable Foundation provided funding for implementation and planning expenses..

Notably, RiGHT has raised nearly \$13.5 million for the *Initiative* and has only spent 1.5% of that on project planning and implementation over the last three years. Plus we are extremely proud to have partnered with Ducks Unlimited and The Nature Conservancy to direct \$3.6 million of those funds to projects completed by their organizations in order to conserve an additional two ranches in the Monte Vista –Alamosa corridor with significant wetlands and wildlife conservation values.



The Gilmore Ranch, protected by The Nature Conservancy in 2008, with funds raised by RiGHT.  
Photo by Rio de la Vista.

## Financials

### 2008 Profit and Loss Statement

Income	
Board Contributions	\$ 2,150
Corporate Donations	\$ 16,450
Grants	\$ 2,397,156
Individual Contributions	\$ 8,258
InKind Donations	\$ 8,652
Interest Income	\$ 3,241
Program Income	\$ 69,500
<u>Special Events</u>	<u>\$ 63,491</u>
Total Income	\$ 2,568,898
Expenses	
Accounting	\$ 3,000
Conferences	\$ 485
Employer Tax Exp	\$ 5,322
Information Tech	\$ 700
Insurance	\$ 4,131
Interest Exp	\$ 162
Land Protection Exp	\$ 2,262,842
Legal Exp	\$ 13,492
Memberships with LT's	\$ 1,575
Postage	\$ 2,314
Printing	\$ 1,009
Property Tax	\$ 7,375
Office Supplies	\$ 6,643
Rent & Utilities	\$ 3,611
Special Events	\$ 43,457
Staff & Consultants	\$ 124,024
Telephone & Internet	\$ 2,780
<u>Travel, Food &amp; Lodging</u>	<u>\$ 6,970</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 2,489,891

### 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*

**Aaron Derwingson**  
*Stewardship Director*

**Rio de la Vista**  
*Consultant*

**Gigi Darricades**  
*Legal Consultant*

## Events

RiGHT held three events in 2008. The first one in February was honored the King Ranch landowners, who completed a three phase project in 2008, protecting over 5,000 acres of their beautiful ranch along the Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic and Historic Byway.

August brought RiGHT's first ever major fundraiser, the "Keep the Rio Grande Grand" Art Sale in South Fork, which raised more than \$18,000 for the Rio Grande Initiative.

In December RiGHT partnered with the La Vereda Foundation to co-host their annual "Stuffed Stocking Auction," raising more than \$8,000 through a lively live auction.

## Staff Changes

In 2008 we sent a couple of Aarons through a revolving door. Aaron Welch, RiGHT's Assistant Project Manager since 2006, resigned in December to take Fulbright Scholarship in India. We will miss his calm demeanor, keen writing skills and dedication to conservation.

However, in August, we welcomed Aaron Derwingson, a recent graduate with his Master's Degree in Community Planning from the University of Oregon. Aaron comes to RiGHT through a Conservation Fellowship program sponsored by the Colorado Conservation Trust. He brings with him a passion for big landscapes and the know how to bring communities together to accomplish shared goals.