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ASPEN VALLEY LAND TRUST

2018 ANNUAL REPORT & HIGHLIGHTS

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*“When you got more shingles than
grass, it’s too late, pardner. You’re
not going to get that back.”*

- Dusty Cray, Montana Rancher



Riding home from a cattle drive at the conserved Harvey Ranch in Snowmass Creek.

HOPE FOR TOMORROW

A note from Suzanne

A couple of weeks ago, I had the honor of sitting down at the closing table with some dear, long-time locals who, after decades of thinking about conservation, family, and the future of their ranch, were ready to ink the paper and protect part of the East Sopris Creek drainage with a donated conservation easement. The name of the ranch is “Lost Marbles,” because that’s what friends thought had happened to the McBrides 40 years ago, when they first bought land up this windy valley, far, far from Aspen.



Today the ranch is practically in Aspen’s backyard, but still a world away in a quiet valley of mountain meadows and quaking aspens. Elk and deer spend the better part of the year here – it’s part of an important migration route with excellent winter and summer habitat and elk calving ground.

Places like this are now fewer and farther between. Western Colorado is changing. Weather patterns are changing. Solitude is harder to come by. Open range, where a creature can move from summer in the high country to winter in the valleys is harder to come by – cut up and hemmed in by highways, fences, and people.

But all is not lost. The wildlife haven’t given up. And neither have people like you who care about this place. And that is hope.

In my 15 years here at Aspen Valley Land Trust, I’ve been humbled and inspired to sit down with so many dedicated families, working to do what is right for the land and their family – each with a story to tell. From the Roan Plateau to Rifle to Divide Creek and Grass Valley through the Elk Range to Aspen and Marble, **this work brings out the best in people, for the good of us all.**

It is easy enough to sell land around here. But as one fifth-generation rancher recently confided, “*We’d be losing a big chunk of our soul with it.*” In the end, conservation needs people. And the people who work with the land and care for these special places know that it is about connection. Roots. Life. And hope.

Thank you for giving me hope. Hope for the future of my daughter. For our wildlife. For our communities. We’re all in this together. Let’s go save some land.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suzanne Stephens'.

Suzanne Stephens, Executive Director



LITTLE BITS ADD UP

Students restore a riverbank on the Crystal

“Just a little bit.” That is the most common answer when you ask a Colorado Rocky Mountain School student how much they contributed to a year-and-a-half long project to restore a degraded riverbank along the lower Crystal River. Over the life of the project, more than 100 CRMS students have contributed ‘little bits’ that have added up to a very big difference.

In the Summer of 2017, AVLT approached CRMS staff about collaborating to address a damaged area of the Crystal’s riverbank just above its confluence with the Roaring Fork. Teacher Robin Colt’s class began looking into the problem and discovered livestock were using the area to access the river for water while wintering on an adjacent CRMS owned pasture.

Student teams developed a solution and raised funds to implement it. All the pieces came together in the fall of 2018 with the installation of two upland watering stations that provide water to cattle, away from the river. That allowed the riverbank to be fenced off and restored, which students undertook this spring by planting native cottonwood ‘poles.’ The new trees have taken root and are already beginning to stabilize and restore the riverbank.

The magic of this project – beyond the win for rivers, livestock, and wildlife – is in the partnerships created between ranchers, who had kept the land agriculturally productive for decades; AVLT, who provided technical and financial support from its R3 Fund; Pitkin County Healthy Rivers and the Mt. Sopris Soil Conservation District who provided funding; the Natural Resources Conservation Service; and of course the energy and ingenuity of many committed CRMS staff and students.

Your support has made a difference that shines in every leafing tree and the faces of the students that planted them.

KEA C. HAUSE R³ rivers, riparian, & restoration FUND

Aspen Valley Land Trust stewards the Kea C. Hause Rivers, Riparian, and Restoration (R3) Fund, created in memory of legendary local fishing guide Kea Hause. The R3 Fund’s purpose is to restore, improve, and promote the health of the Roaring Fork and Crystal rivers.

“It taught me to not be boxed in by what I think I can do, and just go for it. That’s how real change happens.”

- Willa Schendler,
CRMS Student

Left: CRMS students harvest and plant cottonwood poles along the lower Crystal River. The poles were harvested from a conservation easement on CRMS land just upstream.
Photos by Michelle Smith.



GO GO GROOVER SHANTY

Improvements to Chapin Wright Marble Basecamp make it easier for student groups to answer nature's call

There are a number of challenges involved in helping student groups experience the magic of the outdoors. When we asked local educators about this, in an effort to help more schools get outside at AVLT's outdoor education 'Basecamp,' they identified the handling of human waste as a major obstacle.

This is especially tricky while attempting to teach a leave-no-trace backcountry ethic. Out in the wild, the question of where and how 20 kids go to the bathroom comes with everything from privacy concerns to squeamishness to general health and sanitation.

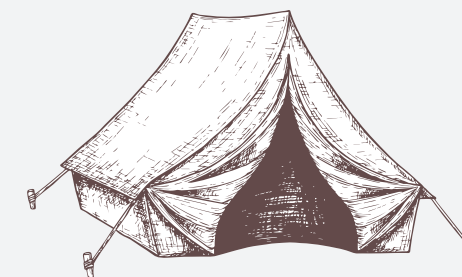
While investigating a permanent solution for this remote mountain area, AVLT's crack team invented a temporary system to help reduce barriers to the outdoors... the Groover Shanty.

A Groover Shanty is an outhouse with one major difference. Instead of a bench with a hole over a pit in the ground, it houses a large portable sit-on-top container (commonly known as a 'groover') that allows for easy collection, hauling, and proper disposal after each group's trip. It's private, sanitary, and teaches kids the importance of packing out their poop. Most importantly, it breaks down a real pain-in-the-rear barrier to getting more kids into the great outdoors.

The Groover Shanty was just one improvement that helped open Marble Basecamp to more young lives in 2018. Your support, and a generous contribution from the Seay Foundation, paid for two large seasonal wall tents, steel bear boxes, and addressed several student safety considerations - all of which are helping more kids experience mother nature's recharge.

THE BASECAMP STORY

Thanks to your support, AVLT acquired a unique wilderness retreat high in the mountains near Marble in 2016. The property is named Chapin Wright Marble Basecamp for a young Aspen High School graduate who loved the outdoors and passed away too soon. Today, your support is extending the power of the great outdoors to students of all backgrounds from around the area.



Want to help a student group connect with nature?

Contact us:
(970) 963-8440 / avlt@avlt.org

Left: Thanks to you, students from schools throughout the valley experienced the wonders of Basecamp in 2018.



5 REASONS TO LOVE YOUR FARMING AND RANCHING NEIGHBORS

Local agriculture protects your way of life

Of the more than 43,000 acres you've helped conserve between Independence Pass and the Roan Plateau, over 80% are productive farm and ranch land, much of it irrigated with water tied to the land by your conservation dollars. This power coupling of land and water preserves not only the rural scenic heritage of the land, but also economic opportunities for our region. Here's how:

Wildlife: Conserved rangelands provide much of our most important wildlife habitat – seasonal migration corridors linking high country to valley bottoms, access to water, and important winter and reproductive ranges.

Local food production: Improving our region's ability to grow and produce food locally, and sustainably, is critical to reducing the energy footprint of feeding ourselves. It presents one of our largest opportunities to address climate change locally.

Good business & ecosystem services: A 2017 Colorado State University study found that every dollar invested in conservation easements in Colorado returns up to \$12 in ecological benefits.

Wildfire protection: Irrigated agricultural lands buffer our built communities from the increasingly dry wildlands that surround us – reducing the wildfire risk to adjacent land and property.

Agritourism: People are increasingly interested in learning about and engaging in the production of food, leading to the rise of agricultural based tourism as a growth industry in Colorado.

Thank you to the many farmers and ranchers whose hard work and dedication, in spite of incredible challenges, continue to create opportunities for our communities, while keeping them quintessentially Colorado.



“The biggest single reason for the growth of Colorado’s fire risk is the conversion of agricultural land to other uses.”

- Mike Lester, Colorado’s State Forester and Director of the State Forest Service.

Want to conserve more agricultural land?

Donate today at
avlt.org

Left:

Carbondale area elk showing off the multiple conservation benefits provided by local agricultural lands.
Photo by George Hendrix.

Improving the Mighty Colorado

The 130-acre Silt River Preserve became a wildlife reserve and river park in 2009 after it was acquired by the Town of Silt and conserved with AVLТ.

Your support has enabled AVLТ and the Town to team up with Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers, Rocky Mountain Youth Core, and Garfield County Vegetation Management to improve habitat, install a more efficient irrigation system for the agricultural facilities on the property, and build new scenic trails along the Preserve's half-mile stretch of the Colorado River.

Thank you volunteers

John Campbell	Rustyn Randolph
Alejandra Carranza	Ryan Randolph
Paula Casper	Ron Reed
Vicki Devine	Joyce Rinehart
Christopher Dominick	Lindsey Sidener
Dave Erickson	Maria Starceski
Justin Fowler	Kelby Strohm
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Soleigh McIntosh	Tyler Treganza
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Thomas Patierno	Chloe Young
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Heather Ramsey	

We apologize for any misprints or omissions.



A work crew with the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps construct a new hiking trail along the Colorado River at Silt River Preserve.

PARTNERING TO PROTECT WILDLIFE AND COMMUNITY

Preserving a wildlife corridor in Aspen

Your support helped conserve the small-but-mighty Soldner Wildlife Reserve, which will permanently protect critical wildlife connectivity between Aspen's Deer Hill Open Space, a nearby conserved ranch, and the Roaring Fork River corridor. In the words of Stephanie Soldner, "My parents loved this land and this place and so too does my family. We are honored to continue sharing the land with the wild lives that surround us." *Thanks to Pitkin County Open Space and Trails, City of Aspen, and the Soldner family for your vision and partnership.*



Freddie Fisher gets a face-lift

In the late 1960's, Park Trust (AVLT's predecessor) was gifted a number of small parcels in the Aspen area which today are public parks. The very first of them was Freddie Fisher Park along the Roaring Fork River in Aspen's east end. Fritz and Fabi Benedict donated the park in memory of the late musician, philosopher-about-town, and all-round renaissance character, Freddie "the Fixer" Fisher. After disappearing for a while under a haze of overgrowth, a generous donor and some elbow grease brought the park back to life with a wildflower garden and a quiet bench by the river. Please stop by and leave Freddie (or us) a note!

Thanks to the City of Aspen and the park's generous neighbors for helping to maintain and cleanup this special place!

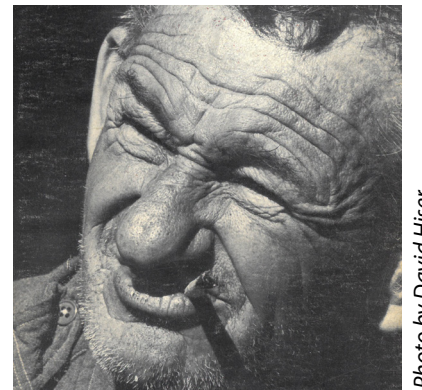


Photo by David Hiser.

Protecting a community play space in Marble, CO

The residents of Marble, CO now have a permanent public park to play in. In 2018, longtime resident Pam Hepola donated a parcel in the middle of town to AVLТ. Known for years as "Thompson Park," Ms. Hepola had allowed the public and local school to use the property informally. Her gift, and your support for AVLТ, ensures kids of all ages will always have a space in town to play at "Marble Children's Park." *Thank you to the Town of Marble and the Marble Charter School for your ongoing stewardship of this community treasure.*





History

Community

Kids in Nature

Breathing Spaces

Wildlife

Rivers & Water

Agriculture

Western Heritage

PLANNING A VITAL FUTURE

Creating a regional conservation plan

Conservation is only as good as the land and resources it protects. And only as meaningful as the lives it touches. At its best it's a tool to save what is most precious and valuable about a place for those that are here today, and those that will come after.

Conservation requires partnerships and planning. Planning requires maps and data. And also people. This spring, your support drove a series of community listening sessions called *Your Land Trust Listens* to help inform AVLT's first Regional Conservation Plan. **Over the course of a month, we heard from over 400 of you, and learned a lot!**

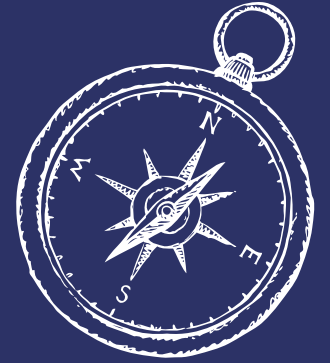
We heard that you continue to value the work AVLT has done over the last 52 years. We heard that conserving wildlife habitat, ranch land, wetlands and rivers, and scenic open space buffers continue to be important. We also saw strong interest in addressing climate change, and ensuring that today's youth are tomorrow's conservationists.

We heard loud and clear that our valleys want to see conservation used as a tool to further community goals and improve the lives of all those who live here.

Over the next several months, we will be developing our Regional Conservation Plan, and in the coming years, we'll be working to expand and address new conservation priorities.

We recognize that each community in our region is unique. We look forward to working with you to respond to opportunities and provide programs that protect the special places we all love, and create lasting relationships with the land.

Thank you for your thoughtful feedback and participation!



“Keep doing what you’re doing for the wildlife and agricultural community, but engage more people in the work!”

- Survey respondent

Stay updated!

Subscribe to our email list at avlt.org

Thank you community engagement sponsors!

*Firstbank
Land Trust Alliance
Aspen Times
Post Independent*

RED HILL UPDATE

Thanks to you, 2018 was a big year for the *Save Red Hill* project. You helped reach our \$1.35 million fundraising goal, purchase the property, and transfer it to the Town of Carbondale for public use.

AVLT partnered with Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers, the Town of Carbondale, and many of you, to construct the new Ruthie's Run hiking trail.

Early 2019 brought the completion of two additional connector trails through the property. More exciting trailhead and parking improvements are in the works. Stay tuned!

LEAD DONORS

(Gave \$10,000 or more towards the Save Red Hill campaign)

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| Henry Lord | |
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| Mike & Tricia Mines | |

Gave \$1,000 or more



We apologize for any misprints or omissions.



Thank you volunteers ... for helping to build the awesome new Ruthie's Run hiking trail!

- | | | | |
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We apologize for any misprints or omissions.

Thank you donors! You turn ideas into reality

We would simply not exist without you. It really is you who protects what we love most about this special place where we live. Thank you for preserving our wild-lands, working lands, and connections to land in Western Colorado.

Join AVLT's Stewardship Circle

Are you ready to take your conservation commitment to the next level? Join us!

Founder	\$100,000 +
Gold Leaf	\$25,000 +
Silver Leaf	\$10,000 +
Bronze Leaf	\$5,000 +
Aspen Leaf	*\$1,000 +

(levels based on annual giving)

* \$85 per month (Aspen Leaf)

- ★ Gave for last 5 consecutive years
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- ★★★ Roger & Helen Carlsen
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Stephen & Jennifer Ellsperman
Stephen & Jennifer Ellsperman,
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Jenn Flentge
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Cici Fox
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Jay Harrington
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Chris & Stefani Heaphey
Doug Heller, *in memory of Jack Hatfield*
Donald & Linda Helmich
- ★★★ Casady Henry
Bob & Sue Hess
- ★★ Teddy Hill & Elizabeth Penfield

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in honor of Clare Bastable's birthday
- ★ Ann Hodges
Timothy Hogen
Glenn Horn & Alice Davis
Kristina Hurrell
Charles & Sandy Israel
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- ★ Jim & Sharon Nieslanik
- ★ Meredith & Chuck Ogilby
- ★ Tom Oken & Janie Lowe

- ★★ Bob Olenick
Grace Oliphant
Kimberly Parham
Niall Parker, *CW Marble Basecamp*
Carol Pasternak
Robert & Marci Pattillo
- ★★ Dr. Norman & Melinda Payson
- ★★★ Fred & Sandra Peirce
★ Bob & Sue Pietrzak
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in memory of Lathrop Strang
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in memory of Kelly Osborn
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- ★ Gave for last 5 consecutive years
- ★★ Gave for last 10 consecutive years
- ★★★ Gave for last 15+ consecutive years

Thank you!

Thank you

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Catherine & John Maas

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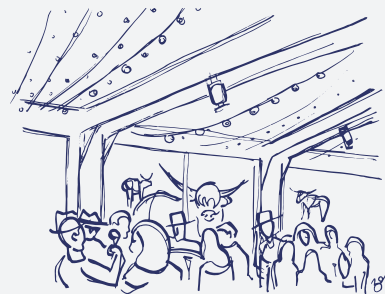


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Sketch by Raleigh Burleigh

GRAND LAND DANCE OF 2018

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Travis Van Domelen
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We apologize for any misprints or omissions.



BUSINESS PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Mountain Primal Meat Co.

We'd like to make special mention of Mountain Primal Meat Co. who hosted the 2018 Grand Land Dance on their conserved ranch in Emma and underwrote this annual report.

We appreciate Mountain Primal Meat Co.'s support, as well as their commitment to sustainable agricultural practices and careful stewardship of the land they work and love. We are delighted to have them as a partner!

If you would like to become a local business leader for conservation, contact Jeff at (970)963-8440 or jeff@avl.org.

The conserved Ranch at Mountain Primal Meat Co., Emma, CO.
Photo by Mark Harvey.

PROTECTING RARE RESOURCES AND SPECIAL PLACES

Lily Lake Conserved!

A private inholding within the White River National Forest is forever protected. Lily Lake's woods, meadows, ponds, and wetlands are home to several vulnerable native plant species and provide critical wildlife habitat. Purchased in 1969 by Craig and Mikaela Barnes, the property has remained in the caring hands of the Barnes family ever since. In 2018, the last remaining piece of this special place was protected for its quiet sanctuary for wildlife, and its unusual high-altitude lakes and wetlands.

Thank you

... to the Barnes family and all of our landowner partners who help keep Western Colorado special.

Aspen Valley Land Trust SUMMARY STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION as of December 31, 2018 (based on draft audited financials)

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
CURRENT ASSETS	97,179	256,780
INVESTMENTS	3,342,212	3,433,182
INVESTMENTS HELD ON BEHALF OF BLM*	981,086	1,049,340
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT		
Land Held for Conservation	571,659	1,306,875
Property & Equipment, net of depreciation	395,867	409,729
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 5,388,003	\$ 6,455,906
CURRENT LIABILITIES	23,383	128,139
NOTE PAYABLE & LINE OF CREDIT (for Red Hill)	200,000	256,802
AMOUNT HELD ON BEHALF OF BLM*	981,086	1,049,340
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 1,204,469	\$ 1,434,281
NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS		
Operating	883,541	83,764
Board Designated Stewardship Fund	1,491,887	1,572,754
Net Investment in Property & Equipment	622,417	1,461,782
NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	1,185,689	1,603,325
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$ 4,183,534	\$ 5,021,625
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 5,388,003	\$ 6,455,906

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

(With and Without Donor Restrictions)

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
REVENUE & OTHER SUPPORT		
Contributions & Special Events	1,182,159	1,001,124
Investment Gains & Losses	(181,218)	348,188
Fees for Services & Other Income	19,924	138,920
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 1,020,865	\$ 1,488,232
EXPENSES		
Conservation Programs	617,674	630,215
Management & General	144,277	122,712
Fundraising	230,656	186,784
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 992,607	\$ 939,711
Loss on disposition of Assets (from Red Hill transfer)	(866,349)	0
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	(838,091)	548,521

* AVLT holds an investment account on behalf of the Bureau of Land Management for the management of the Sutey Ranch, which cannot be used for any other purpose.

WHAT IS IT YOU LOVE ABOUT THIS PLACE?

With a planned gift, your impact can last forever

Is it the ranchlands, spring calves, and wide open views? The bugle of an elk in the fall? Fresh mountain air and clean water?

No matter your passion, your gift will ensure this place remains one-of-a-kind. And there is no better time. A gift through your appreciated assets or will, including real estate, can conserve more parks, trails, wildlife habitat, ranchland, and rivers, *forever*. That's a gift that will truly keep on giving.



Nationally re-accredited in 2018, Aspen Valley Land Trust is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to protect open land for wildlife, agriculture, scenic enjoyment and recreation in the Roaring Fork and Colorado River valleys.



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