

ASPEN VALLEY
LAND TRUST

2020 ANNUAL REPORT & HIGHLIGHTS





AVLT Board of Directors and staff at a socially-distanced meeting at Strang Ranch.

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A RENEWED COMMITMENT



Like many of you, the last year has given me a lot to think about. That such a huge disruption can change the very way we live our lives, what we cherish, and what we take for granted is profound. There can be forest fires raging across Australia, California, and even in Colorado, and most of us still go to work, go out for lunch, shop online, and watch TV.

But this pandemic *changed* things. It will someday hover in the background of our collective memory, but like many of you, I will never forget those anxiety-filled weeks where all I could do to calm myself was... go outside. Outside – in nature, in the mountains or canyons, in my backyard where I tended the most prolific garden ever – *everything felt as it should*. It felt *right*. As being outside in nature *has always felt right*.

And to a world in lockdown, nature is healing. It is freeing. It is life.

Nature has also become painfully overused. Our trails were flooded with souls like me looking for a little away time. Parks and open spaces took on new levels of importance. The idea of local food suddenly became about *providing food*. Climate-related disasters took on epic proportions. And we became painfully aware of the inequities in our society that mean that not everyone can enjoy the same access to nature and the healing it provides. Not everyone can work remotely from their garden patio. Not everyone is shielded from the effects of global outbreaks and environmental destruction. We must protect nature to protect ourselves.

So what is a little conservation organization to do about all this?

First, we take a deep breath and remember that this is long work. The ills and divisiveness unleashed last year will take healing. That will take time, but we can start with personal conversations and of course, time in nature.

Each time you tend a flower, take a walk, or smell the sweet air of spring, you partake in the ancient process of renewal. Renewal defines nature. After a year of stress and disorientation, I am grateful for the reassurance and renewal I have experienced in my commitment to save a little bit of this place. Of nature and the healing, freedom, and life it gives. For *everyone*. I hope you too savor a renewed commitment to nature and each other.

Suzanne Stephens, Executive Director

A NEW FUND BRINGS NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO MORE KIDS

Expanding outdoor education for the future of conservation

The 2020 change of perspective on education was profound. All schools and students struggled. All kids spent more time on screens. All kids faced new challenges and stress.

Last year, due to COVID-19, while all was quiet under the towering aspens at Chapin Wright Marble Basecamp, we at AVLT took time to focus on the future of outdoor learning on conserved land. The need was obvious, and with the community's input, we are more committed than ever to investing in natural places for meaningful and equitable access to outdoor education.

Thanks to generous supporters, AVLT protected 'Basecamp' in 2016 for students to connect with nature and one another and have a special place to unplug, away from the cares of modern life. Ongoing community support and a generous grant from Great Outdoors Colorado will, together, allow us to expand access, free of charge, to local schools and nonprofit partners, growing the impact of Basecamp in the coming years.

Witnessing the profound impact the Basecamp experience has on kids of all backgrounds inspired a group of board members, led by our outgoing Board President, Gary Knaus, to launch AVLT's Community Education Fund in 2020. The fund, which has already raised over \$65,000, is dedicated to expanding outdoor education access and programs for more kids on conserved land and helping inspire the next generation of land stewards.

The more we invest in outdoor learning for all of our children now, the greater the dividend will be for the future of our land and community. We hope you join us in opening doors to more inclusive and equitable opportunities for all kids to connect with nature.

7

schools served by AVLT
(and counting!)



YOU CAN HELP

GET MORE KIDS OUTSIDE

From Chapin Wright Marble Basecamp, the Silt River Preserve, to Coffman Ranch, and more, we need your help to bring these experiences to the youth of our valleys and guarantee that we will be there to support our schools and youth groups with inspiring places to grow for years to come.



Watch our video and learn how you can get involved at avlt.org/Education.

Photo courtesy of Vic Schendel

PROTECTING WHAT MATTERS MOST

Creating a strategic conservation plan

Over the past 53 years, support for your local land trust has helped shape the landscape and character of our slice of Western Colorado. Yet record development pressure and potential impacts from a changing climate are increasing the urgency to protect more of these valley's natural resources and community treasures. And as our community grows and diversifies, we need to help create opportunities for all people to connect to parks, trails, local agriculture, and nature.

In 2020, AVLTL laid the groundwork for a **10-year Strategic Conservation Plan** to ensure our work is as effective as possible. With your help, we have defined the next decade of conservation priorities.

By creating this plan, together, we can:

- **Create a vision of conservation success** for the next 10 years and beyond, making the case for conservation and for connecting community to nature.
- **Prioritize projects based on data, community input, and partner expertise** – with a focus on increasing resilience to climate change.
- **Expand AVLTL's community-driven work**, focusing on equity and expanding access to and resources for underrepresented community members.
- **Foster enduring partnerships and collaborations** with local governments and land management agencies who all play important roles in conservation.

Science-based and community-informed

This plan is not about protecting everything, but about protecting what matters most. Biodiversity, wildlife habitat, agricultural lands, riparian and wetland areas, and conservation data helped identify these priorities.

More significant than maps, charts, and numbers were the community members behind this plan. Feedback from our 2019 community outreach, *Your Land Trust Listens*, reached 550 people and helped shape this plan. Discussions last year included 23 interviews with towns and counties and 11 nonprofits from Aspen to Rifle. **The community highlighted needs such as improving climate resilience, balancing the need for affordable housing with preservation of small-town character, and increasing our focus on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.**

We now have a guide for our work to be as effective as possible while balancing the needs of our community.

We look forward to sharing the full Strategic Conservation Plan with you and thank everyone who helped create this monumental roadmap for conservation and our community. A sneak peak of the plan's goals:



To see the full Strategic Conservation Plan soon,
join our email list at avlt.org

PLACES FOR COMMUNITY

Community feedback in 2019 highlighted the need for a focus on conserving and caring for land to create accessible, equitable outdoor community spaces. This community need was magnified and escalated by the pandemic, and AVLT was fortunate to find the resources to step up.

Late last year, Great Outdoors Colorado awarded AVLT nearly \$400,000 in order to improve five outdoor community spaces over the next two years. Chapin Wright Marble Basecamp, Marble Children's Park, Silt River Preserve (and its Highwater Farm), and Carbondale's Red Hill and Riverfront Park received funding for enhanced facilities to allow more students to learn outside and to relieve the increased pressure on outdoor places as result of COVID-19.

This generous support to help better connect our community to conserved land is transforming what it means to be a land trust and community partner in the face of the growing challenges. We are inspired by new ways to engage our community in the outdoors, and how we can collectively steward these special places that so many human and wild lives rely on now and will depend on for a healthy future.



Funded projects include:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 SILT RIVER PRESERVE</p> <p>Create outdoor classroom and interpretive signs, restore habitat and wetlands, maintain trails.</p> | <p>4 RIVERFRONT PARK</p> <p>Construct natural outdoor classroom and expand ADA accessibility to the riverfront.</p> |
| <p>2 HIGHWATER FARM</p> <p>Improve irrigation, heat greenhouse, install a high tunnel for tomatoes, and build classroom space.</p> | <p>5 MARBLE CHILDREN'S PARK</p> <p>Improve park infrastructure, update landscaping, define parking areas, and add signage.</p> |
| <p>3 RED HILL RECREATION AREA</p> <p>Build shade structure, install picnic tables and interpretive signage, add restorative landscaping.</p> | <p>6 CHAPIN WRIGHT MARBLE BASECAMP</p> <p>Build primitive backcountry restrooms and group camping infrastructure to host more students.</p> |

33

miles of trail protected through AVLT

PARTNERS MAKING CONSERVATION POSSIBLE



Rancher Ty Burtard with AVLT
Education Coordinator Brian Hightower,

Decades of partnerships protecting decades of ranching

Deep in the heart of the Thompson Divide, surrounded by public land, rests 406 acres of beautiful aspen groves, vibrant meadows, and critical wetland and riparian areas along a mile and a half of North Thompson Creek that will remain natural, forever.

Thanks to the strong partnership between Pitkin County and AVLT, TD Ranch will remain an iconic working landscape. The ranch was purchased by the County last year and protected by AVLT so that it may continue to be home to sustainable agriculture and diverse wildlife habitat for decades to come.

Funding support from Great Outdoors Colorado and AVLT donors helped with Pitkin County's purchase of this remarkable historic homestead. This follows decades of collaboration between Pitkin County and AVLT that has protected several treasured public open spaces like North Star Preserve, Sky Mountain Park, and the Redstone Coke Ovens.

Whether for public access, wildlife habitat, ranchland protection, or river restoration, partnerships like this help to multiply our collective impact and protect more vital land and water for the benefit of wildlife and our community.

42

active AVLT conservation
partnerships (and counting!)

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 community treasures 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)

- ★ Gave for last 5 consecutive years
- ★★ Gave for last 10 consecutive years
- ★★★ Gave for last 15 consecutive years
- ★★★★ Gave for last 20+ consecutive years

We apologize for any misprints or omissions. Please contact avlt@avlt.org for any corrections.

2020 STEWARDSHIP CIRCLE

(1/1/2020 through 1/10/2021)

Founders

(\$100,000 & over)

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(\$25,000 - \$99,999)

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in memory of Kelly K. Johnston, Sr.

GROWING FOOD, SAVING WILDLIFE

Record Ranch's natural wildlife habitat, agricultural productivity, and scenic vistas were forever protected last year thanks to the Fulton family and generous donor support.

This historic, multi-generational Divide Creek ranch overlooks an expanse of rolling, open ranchlands bounded by the Grand Hogback, the foothills of Battlement Mesa, and the steep foothills and ridges rising toward the Grand Mesa and the Elk Mountains. **Record Ranch is an important part of the Divide Creek network of remaining working ranches and borders West Divide Creek and public land.** It also provides winter range and is part of a migration corridor for elk, mule deer, and black bears. Thank you to the area's landowners that are leaving a legacy to our community's ranching future.



44,000

acres protected
through AVLT

Don Fulton and AVLT Conservation Director Erin Quinn
Photo courtesy of George Hendrix

2020 SUPPORTERS

(1/1/2020 through 1/10/2021)

Aspen Leaf cont.

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ROOM FOR WILDLIFE

Last year, Jill Soffer generously donated a conservation easement on 161 acres on the east side of Spring Park Reservoir in Missouri Heights, forever protecting this vital wildlife habitat.

This special place for deer, elk, grouse, and waterfowl borders the reservoir and public land, making it a key wildlife corridor for big game and critical bird habitat. The reservoir is designated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society and is one of 54 areas on the Colorado Birding Trail. This donation removes four platted and approved building lots while protecting potential for productive agriculture. Many thanks to Jill for making her conservation vision a reality!

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(1/1/2020 through 1/10/2021)

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Please contact avlt@avlt.org for any corrections.

Harvest Picnic

Thank you to everyone who joined AVLT's Harvest Picnic! While we missed celebrating conservation in-person with you, we hope you were able to safely enjoy a great meal with good company in your favorite special place (or backyard). Your continued support in this challenging year was deeply appreciated.

THANK YOU SPONSORS!

NORTH STAR SPONSORS



FIRSTwestern
TRUST



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Spring Valley Ranch | Seligman Family
Foundation

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FirstBank

FLYING DOG SPONSORS

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DHM Design Corporation
Garfield & Hecht, P.C.

If your business is interested in supporting local land and water conservation, please contact Jeff Davlyn at jeff@avlt.org.



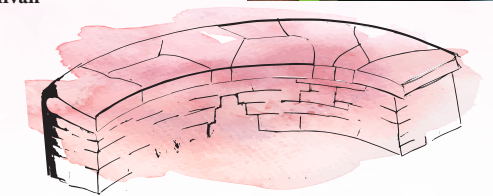
BEV'S BENCH SUPPORTERS

Thank you to everyone who made a gift in memory of Beverly Forsman to make Red Hill even more special.

Karen & Enis Alldredge
Jim & Suzanne Axe
Mark & Sally Baldwin
Kathy & Carter Barger
Cynthia & Donald Butterfield
Jan & Pat Campbell
Robert & Karen Davis
Joan Drake
Jack & Susan Eiteljorg
Norris & Susan Ewalt
Mike & Jayne Field
James Forsman

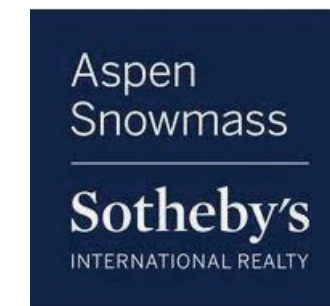
Joe Forsman
Susan & Paul Goldstein
Gruenefeldt Construction
Carolyn Hayes
Bob & Sue Hess
Steve & Laura Hill
Jeanne Humphrey
Robert & Cynthia Johnson
Joseph & Susan Lake
Chris & Monica Latkiewicz
Phyllis & Dale Lentz
Jack McKay & Leslie Gallagher

Judith Mercer-Friedman
Mary Jo Murphy
Nancy Peterson
Laura & Ron Pickman
Frank & Barbara Quigg
Julie & Brent Schenk
Judy & David Steele
★ Edward Sullivan
Ellen & Edward Sullivan
Patty Tague
Paula Walbert



BUSINESS PARTNER OF THE YEAR

ASPEN SNOWMASS SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY



A sincere thanks to Aspen Snowmass Sotheby's International Realty for their ongoing support and impactful commitment to conservation and our community. This company recognizes the relationship between development and conservation and our valley's need for balance.

"Without AVLT's conservation work, so much of the valley's land will be developed and gone forever. We've all seen changes in open land that we took for granted. We were complacent thinking it would stay undeveloped. We know we can't conserve it all, but AVLT has proven that there is plenty more that can and should be protected."

- Ernie Fyrwald, Partner

LEAVE A LEGACY

Your forever impact can help ensure the places you love will forever sustain future generations, both human and wild. In uncertain times it is important to protect what you value most. By planning a gift to AVLT, you can protect the clean water, open lands, wildlife, and culture of today for tomorrow. Leaving a conservation legacy is one of the best ways to make a meaningful and lasting impact. Some of your options include:

- Leave a simple bequest through your will.
- Designate a gift through your life insurance plan or retirement account.
- Donate a gift of real estate that can be conserved or sold to benefit conservation.

To learn more about how you can invest in the future of our valleys, contact Jeff Davlyn at jeff@avlt.org.



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public parks owned by AVLT

ASPEN VALLEY LAND TRUST SUMMARY STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

For the year ending December 31, 2020 (based on audited financial statements)

	2019	2020
CURRENT ASSETS	108,351	297,373
INVESTMENTS	3,748,040	4,495,638
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT		
Investments held on behalf of others*	1,118,151	1,187,009
Property & Equipment, net of depreciation	954,277	954,276
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 5,928,819	\$6,925,904
CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,131,620	1,190,029
LONG TERM LIABILITIES*	0	1,201,251
NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS		
Unrestricted Operating Investment	1,237,453	2,007,862
Board Designated Monitoring Investment	1,759,628	1,958,490
Fee Owned Land, Property & Equipment	609,098	600,706
NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS		
Temporary in Nature	845,841	823,638
Land Held Permanently for Conservation	345,179	345,179
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$ 4,797,199	\$ 5,735,875
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 5,928,819	\$ 6,921,444

* Amount held on behalf of BLM and Highwater Farm

YOU ARE INVESTING IN FUTURE GENERATIONS



Aspen Valley Land Trust is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to protect the special places and open spaces of the Roaring Fork and Colorado River valleys for wildlife, agriculture, and community, forever.

2020 REVENUE



2020 EXPENSES



Printed on recycled paper.

SAVING A PIECE OF THE PAST FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE

Right now, one of the last great ranches on the Roaring Fork River needs your help

After 65 years of caring for 141 acres of fertile ranchland along the Roaring Fork River, Rex and JoAnn Coffman knew it was time to retire from ranch life as they prepared to turn 90. **Having raised three children and countless cattle on this patch of ground, the Coffmans are as much a part of this land as the deer, herons, and cottonwoods that thrive on the river's edge.**

As the Coffmans are part of this land, the land is part of their history, family, and identity. Having worked with AVLT to conserve a piece of the ranch years before, they reached out and conversations started about how they want to see the whole ranch saved and protected forever. Before long, a vision was coming together – one of food systems and wildlife thriving together, a rich ranching history helping shape the next generation of land stewards, and opportunities for the whole community to connect with the land and with each other in nature.

Soon enough, AVLT was under contract to purchase the beloved Carbondale ranch, while granting Rex and Jo a life tenancy in their home. Many thanks to Great Outdoors Colorado, Pitkin County, and Garfield County for leading this campaign with their incredibly important financial commitments in 2020 and for the Coffman family for their reduced price, AVLT is underway to close in late summer 2021. **This purchase will kick off the fundraising needed to make the community vision for this ranch come to life.**

These partners understand the community and biological treasure at risk. A local ecologist called Coffman Ranch **“One of the most, if not the most, important properties along the middle Roaring Fork River.”**

You will find inspiration anywhere you look on the ranch, and what you cannot miss is the love and history behind the emerald green pastures and the remarkable natural riverfront that runs three-quarters of a mile along Gold Medal waters, with 35 acres of wetlands and a thriving riparian corridor providing critical habitat for many species of wildlife and native plants.

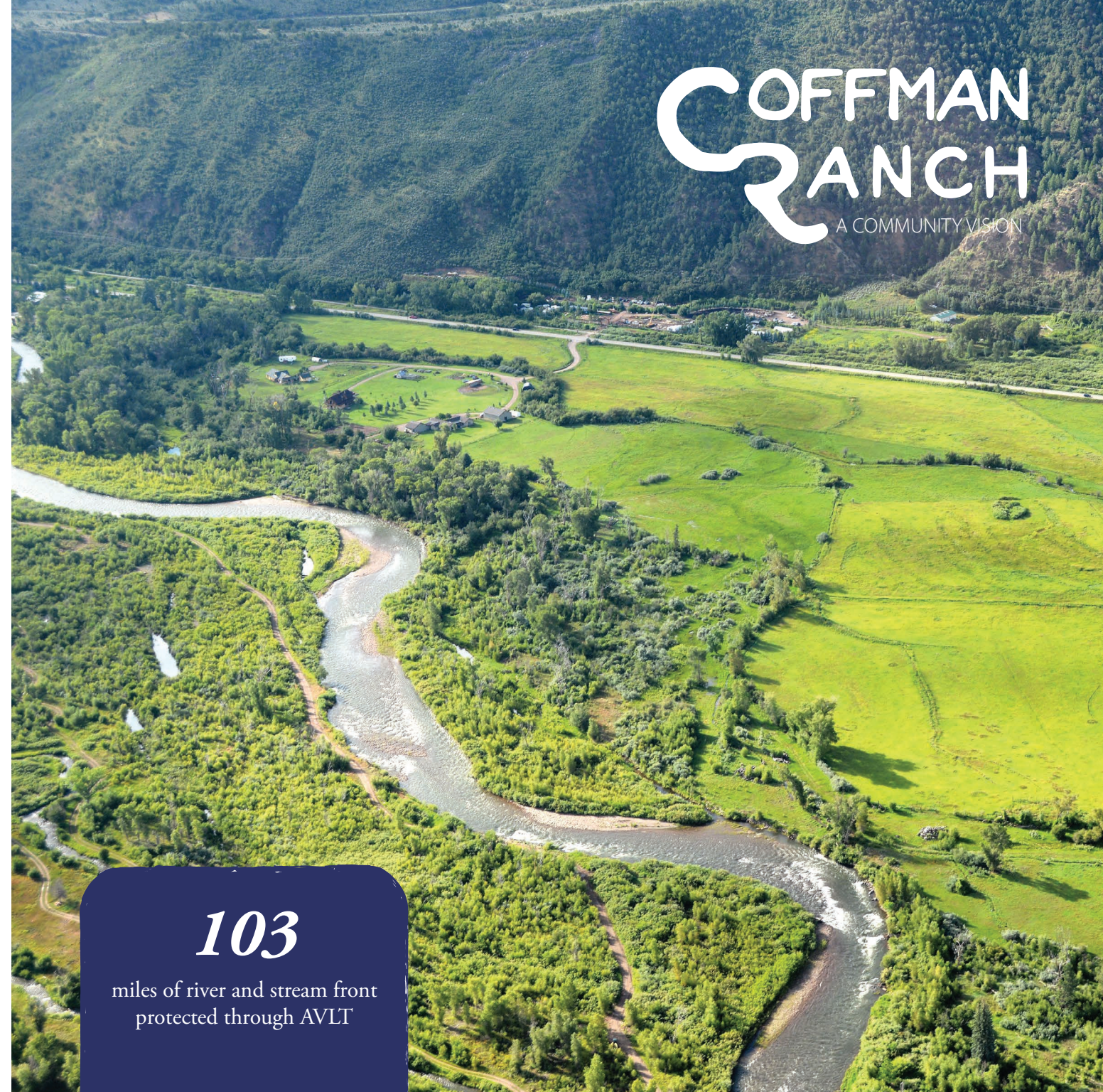
With valuable senior water rights, the opportunities to restore and expand wetland habitat gives this project added importance in the face of a changing climate and diminishing water quality and supply. The potential for community engagement, access, outdoor learning, and for the next generation of farmers and ranchers now relies on the community to shape and support a vision for conservation here and throughout Western Colorado.

As this project unfolds, stay tuned for more about this one-of-a-kind ranch and how you can help guide and support the future of conservation in our community. For updates, see avlt.org/coffman.



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miles of river and stream front
protected through AVLT





320 Main Street, Suite 204 Carbondale, CO 81623
(970) 963-8440 | avlt.org | avlt@avlt.org

”

*The purpose of conservation: The
greatest good to the greatest number
of people for the longest time.*

- Gifford Pinchot

*Back cover photo
courtesy of George Hendrix*

*Front cover photo
courtesy of Ann L. Ramsey
taken at Silt River Preserve*