



Giberson Ranch's open space will always look this way, thanks to conservation easements.

In Land We Trust

How one dedicated nonprofit is looking out for our wide open spaces.

In 1909, Giberson Ranch, just outside of Frisco, sprawled in the shadow of Buffalo Mountain as a 700-acre spread. Sadly, the last 100 years have seen Dillon Reservoir and I-70 cut through its meadows and aspen stands, with the march of time and development dwindling the family holdings to 174 acres. But in 1998 Howard Giberson stopped the development creep for good, putting the family's holdings into a conservation easement with the Continental Divide Land Trust.

"I like to say that the work of land trusts is what you don't see," emphasizes CDLT's director, Leigh Girvin. "That entire hillside could have been developed into high rise condos. Instead, it will now remain wildlife habitat and a beautiful backdrop of open space forever."

Conservation easements are land preservation agreements in which private land owners retain ownership to their property but donate or sell development rights to a qualified preservation group like the CDLT. The lands the organization has protected to date include some of Summit County's prime wetlands, wildlife habitat, and view corridors.

For seventeen years, the Continental Divide Land Trust (CDLT) has worked behind the scenes to ensure that the landscape that gives so much to locals and visitors also receives in return. The organization has placed nearly 2,600 acres of open lands surrounding Breckenridge under conservation easements, protecting them from future development into perpetuity.

— KATE LAPIDES

WANT TO HELP?

No need to be a big-time landowner to support the CDLT—you can also make an online monetary donation at www.cdlt.org, or volunteer to help monitor protected properties, lead nature walks, or pitch in with special events like the summer Pulling for Colorado weed pull or Art and Wildflower Celebration (both in July). For more info call 970-453-3875.