



Frank Kennicott Ranch

Photo by Annie Layman

# BENCHMARK

NEWS FROM THE SAN ISABEL LAND PROTECTION TRUST

SPRING/SUMMER 2010

## Inside This Issue



### 2009 - 2010 Easements

Read about the H. G. Vickerman Ranch and other properties under easement since our last newsletter. *See page 7*

### Financial Report

Board Treasurer Lynn Karantz, shares an overview of San Isabel's finances. *See page 6*

### 2009 Contributors

We greatly appreciate all those who supported us in 2009. *See pages 4-5*

### Tax credit update

Land Protection Specialist Ben Lenth explains what's happening with the Colorado Tax Credits *See page 3*

## Thanks to Our Supporters

by Katherine Ripley-Williams

This issue of Benchmark is dedicated to you our supporters. It is through the generosity of our donors, volunteers, and concerned community members that The San Isabel Land Protection Trust has been able to make such a significant and positive impact on Custer County's landscapes as well as the landscapes of Fremont, Huerfano, and Pueblo Counties. With your help the San Isabel Land Protection Trust has protected more than 34,000 acres of wildlife habitat, streams, forests, ranch lands, and awe-inspiring views.

Your contribution provides the solid base of support the organization needs to do its critical work. None of what we do—the placement of conservation easements, the appropriate planning and partnership with landowners and community members, the stewardship and ongoing protection of our existing natural areas and preserves, and the monitoring of our conservation easements—would be possible without your support.

*Continued on page 6*



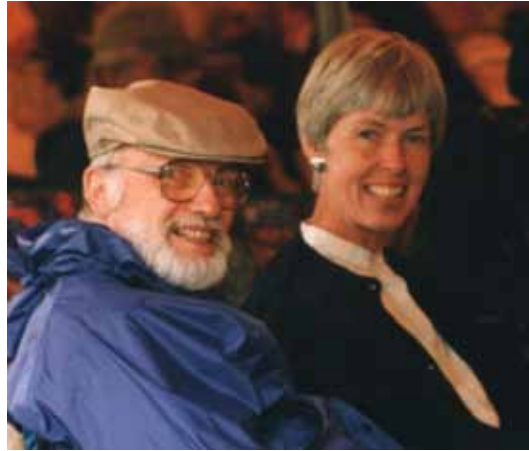
*"It is through the generosity of our donors, volunteers, and concerned community members that The San Isabel Land Protection Trust has been able to make such a significant and positive impact ..."*



# He Will be Greatly Missed

by Annie Layman

San Isabel lost a very special friend in February. Fred Karsten was one of those rare people who was liked by everyone, in large measure because he



took a sincere and caring interest in them. In his years on our Board of Directors, I remember Fred as always quiet and thoughtful at meetings – not one to put his opinions forward until he had listened to others and carefully weighed what was being dis-

cussed. When he was ready, he would put forward a suggestion that might be just the right answer to a problem or put a totally new spin on an idea.

Always anxious to be of service, Fred could be counted on to cheerfully make calls to potential art sale sponsors – usually with a successful result because of his warm and friendly approach. Fred loved the outdoors and he loved San Isabel. Even after walking long distances became a challenge for him, he was out monitoring properties with his trekking poles, enjoying the scenic beauty of many of our easements. I will always remember Fred as an example of generosity and thoughtfulness who truly cared about others. I feel privileged to have known him and worked with him- and I will miss him.

## San Isabel's *Benchmark* Wins Gold

San Isabel's newsletter, *Benchmark*, won a Gold Award in the newsletter category of the Seventh Annual Service Industry Advertising Awards. *Benchmark*, designed by Jan Lee of ReThink Creative, was among more than 300 agencies and 900 institutions vying for awards that were presented to less than one-third of the 1400 entries. A national panel of judges reviewed every entry - among those from Dunkin' Donuts, J P Morgan Chase, Blue Cross/Blue Shield - for execution, creativity, quality and consumer appeal.

## San Isabel Land Protection Trust

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**Land Protection  
Specialist:** Ben Lenth

**Special Projects  
Coordinator:** Annie Layman

**Administrative  
Assistant:** Holly Wray

**Office phone:** 719/783-3018

**E-mail:** [info@sanisabel.org](mailto:info@sanisabel.org)

**Web address:** [www.sanisabel.org](http://www.sanisabel.org)

**Newsletter design:** Jan Lee,  
ReThink Creative

*We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization*

### Our Mission

*The San Isabel Land Protection Trust protects ranch, farm and forest lands, wildlife habitat, scenic views for public enjoyment and historic resources.*

# Conservation Policy Update



by Ben Lenth

## State Tax Credit

Due to the Colorado State budget shortfall, new legislation has been passed that will affect the Colorado tax credit for the donation of a conservation easement. The Colorado land trust community has been closely monitoring HB 10-1197 and successfully advocated for the best solution in the short term. Nonetheless, the forthcoming changes will have serious implications on the pace of land conservation in Colorado

Starting in January, 2011, the Conservation Easement Tax Credit Program will be capped at \$26 million per year, which is roughly half the program's budget in recent years. For the next three years: 2011, 2012, and 2013, this budget will only provide enough funding for about 90 conservation easement transactions to receive tax credits in the entire state each year. This means fewer landowners will be able to receive state tax credits for their conservation efforts over the next three years. Hopefully, the budget will be restored in 2014, as planned, but only if the economy picks up and the state has moved towards a balanced budget.

This will complicate the conservation easement process for a few years, as the timing of closing deals will affect the tax implications. But, for the remainder of 2010 there is no cap to this tax credit program. So, tell your neighbors, tell your friends.... 2010 is the year for land conservation. If you know landowners who have been considering a conservation easement, please share this news.

## IRS Scrutiny

On other fronts, we have seen positive changes to the scrutiny the IRS has given to charitable donations of conservation easements. From 2005 through 2009, the IRS's "Dirty Dozen Tax Scams" list included specific reference to "easements on property" as a component of the category "abuse of charitable organizations and donations". The 2010 list has

removed this language, demonstrating that the IRS recognizes the legitimacy of these often unusually-large donations. While this doesn't mean the end of easement audits, it does remove an obstacle to land conservation by making such audits less likely.

## GOCO threats

In April of this year, a state representative from Sterling introduced legislation that would divert all Colorado Lottery monies to education in fiscal emergency years. Lottery proceeds funnel about \$90 million annually into parks and land conservation work through Great Outdoors Colorado, State Parks, local governments and the Colorado Division of Wildlife, helping to define the Colorado we all know and love. While this bill didn't leave committee, it does represent an ongoing threat to the funding of conservation work in Colorado, and should not be taken lightly.

**Thank you for your ongoing support!**

## 2nd San Isabel Public Auction

The tradition of exchange in the Wet Mountain Valley continues. The San Isabel Land Protection Trust will hold its second General Auction on Saturday, June 26, 2010, at 9:00 am at the Wet Mountain Valley Saddle Club in Westcliffe. Lunch will be available for purchase from the American Legion and Enos Mullet will be selling his homemade ice cream.

If you have items in your barn, home, garage or storage unit that you would like to donate to benefit San Isabel, please call Holly Wray at 719-783-3018. Donations receive a 100% tax benefit or if consigned, the donor receives 80% of the income. Working farm equipment, tools, guns and antiques are already arriving. Auction items can be brought to the San Isabel office on the ground floor of the Wells Fargo Bank building. To take a peak at available items, go to the Public Auction web page at [www.sanisabel.org](http://www.sanisabel.org)

# Thank you to all our

## 2009 Easement Donors

Rosita 117, LLC  
Kathleen VanWhye  
Scott Van Whye  
Brian Van Whye  
Mike Pearson  
R. S. Bliss  
Ute Springs Ranch, LLC  
Daniel & Gus Slanovich  
Larry & Milla Leu Vickerman and  
the Harold G. Vickerman Ranch  
Greenhorn Ranch, LLC  
Jane Lawrence

## Major Donors, \$500 or above

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Jay & Sheri Young  
Jim & Monica Young

## Supporters

Barnes Family Heritage  
Custer County Medical Center  
Frontier Kitchens & Interiors  
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Bob & Sally Gilchrist  
Pamela Gladding

# Our 2009 supporters!

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Audrey & Peter Gluschke  
Alberto Gonzales  
Marci & Roger Gregg  
Richard Hacker  
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Ray & Mickie Herrick  
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Steve & Peggy Willman  
Dana Wyrick  
Robin Young  
Jennifer Younger & Dan Miller  
Art & Cynthia Zapel



**With a contribution of \$100 or more, you too could look as sharp as Lucy Lenth in a San Isabel hat.**

# ART FOR THE SANGRES!

**Tickets \$50**

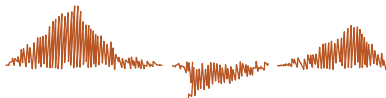
**Reception begins: 4:30 pm**

**Drawing for fixed price**

**lottery sale: 6:30 pm**

**September 25, 2010**

**The Historic Pines Ranch  
Westcliffe, Colorado**



### The Artists:

Gregg Albracht  
Edward Aldrich  
Bill Alther  
Dix Baines  
Angie Coleman  
Carl Dalio  
Tim Deibler  
Shane Dimmick  
Shane Duerksen  
Adele Earnshaw  
Joe Garcia  
Jim Gilmore  
Paul Kethley  
Tom Lockhart  
Elizabeth Sandia  
Nathan Solano  
Jill Soukup  
Joshua Tobey  
Rebecca Tobey  
Mike Untiedt  
Jerry Weers  
Don Weller  
Grace Wever  
Ginger Whellock  
Sarah Woods  
Dinah Worman

One third of all proceeds benefit the  
San Isabel Land Protection Trust  
For more information go to [www.sanisabel.org](http://www.sanisabel.org)

# 2009 Fiscal Year Report

by Lynn Karantz, Treasurer

San Isabel Land Protection Trust has closed the books on another fiscal year – our 15th year anniversary!

The year ended, not unexpectedly given the country's economic downturn, with our unrestricted and stewardship revenues down a significant 45% from last year. However, through careful control of costs, we ended the year with only a small reduction in net assets for unrestricted operations. The stock market recovery and stewardship donations contributed to a significant increase in net assets for stewardship. Stewardship funds are set aside to monitor and protect the lands under easement into perpetuity, and are not available for daily operating expenses.

The following is a condensed version of the numbers, unaudited of course. SILPT will undergo its second financial statement review this summer, along with filing its tax return, Form 990. Both the financial statements and tax return will be available for public inspection once finalized.

	For year ended	
	3/31/2010	3/31/2009
<b>Unrestricted statement of activities:</b>		
Revenues:		
Donations	105,713	200,590
Baseline survey income	15,041	30,141
Program income	24,368	42,323
Fundraisers, net of expenses	30,090	56,683
Dividends and interest	6,320	17,554
	<u>181,532</u>	<u>347,291</u>
Expenses:	(203,418)	(233,536)
Investment gain (loss)	10,500	(51,800)
Increase (decrease) in unrestricted net assets	<u>(11,386)</u>	<u>61,955</u>
<b>Statement of activities restricted for stewardship:</b>		
Revenues:		
Donations:	73,284	72,963
Dividends and interest:	10,796	3,880
	<u>84,080</u>	<u>76,843</u>
Expenses	(4,175)	(1,159)
Investment gain (loss)	57,547	(50,316)
Increase in stewardship restricted net assets	<u>137,452</u>	<u>25,368</u>

## Thanks to Our Supporters *continued from page 1*

Every contribution is used effectively and efficiently, and we are proud of our ability to leverage our contributors' generosity to attract public funding to further support our work.

The San Isabel Land Protection Trust believes that everyone in Custer County and the surrounding areas we serve has a stake in the health of our lands, especially our children and our children's children. Ensuring their future requires cultivating a shared commitment to stewardship of our region's lands and waters—a major focus of our work.

Thank you for all your support and we hope you will continue to partner with us in our efforts to conserve our region's lands and waters.

# Spring 2010 Land Conservation Report

by Ben Lenth

Since our last newsletter, SILPT has closed on four conservation easement projects protecting an additional 1,223 acres in Custer County.

## HG Vickerman Ranch

Utilizing funds from Great Outdoors Colorado and the USDA Farm & Ranchland Protection Program, SILPT purchased a conservation easement on the 720-acre HG Vickerman Ranch in December, 2009. The HG Vickerman Ranch has been in continuous agricultural production for over 90 years, during which time the ranch has grown significantly. The ranch lies in the southern Wet Mountain Valley and contains over 300-acres of irrigated hayground along several miles of Grape Creek and Middle and South Colony Creeks. This project continues the conservation momentum in the southern valley floor, which currently represents SILPT's highest-priority area for conservation easements. The HG Vickerman Ranch was one of only a handful of projects in Colorado that met the rigorous standards for GOCO funding this past year.



HG Vickerman Ranch

## Greenhorn Ranch

The Greenhorn Ranch lies at the foot of Music Pass and is crossed by all visitors to that area. The ranch is in fact visible from much of the Wet Mountain Valley, at the edge of the grasslands and the forests of the Sangre de Cristos. Music Pass Creek runs through this beautiful mix of conifer and aspen forests and open meadows, providing valuable wildlife habitat and a buffer to public land.

SILPT accepted the transfer of this conservation easement from another land trust that has faced difficulties stewarding their easements. By accepting the transfer of this easement SILPT is providing the level of protection the landowner desired, and is taking responsibility for defending the conservation values of this land forever.



Greenhorn Ranch

## North Brush Creek Tract

As the name implies, North Brush Creek flows through this 157-acre property in the forested foothills of the Sangre de Cristo mountains northwest of Westcliffe. Ponderosa pine forests dominate the property, providing excellent habitat for Abert's squirrels and a wide variety of songbirds. Along the year-round creek Cottonwoods, Aspens and Firs provide sanctuary and travel corridors for other wildlife as well.



North Brush Creek Tract

## Wixson Mountain IV

This fourth and final phase of the Wixson Mountain conservation project adds 156 acres to the existing 1,358 protected acres encompassing Wixson Mountain and portions of Junkins Park in the Wet Mountains near McKenzie Junction. Abundant wildlife finds refuge on this property which will be managed as wilderness.



# Public Auction!

Contributing to The San Isabel Land Preservation Trust Benefits Everyone

**June 26, 2010**

10:00 AM at  
The Saddle Club  
Westcliffe, CO

**NOTHING TOO BIG OR TOO SMALL!**

- Farm equipment
- Furniture
- Firearms
- Used vehicles (running)
- Woodworking Tools
- Stock Trailers
- Saddles & Tack
- Vintage glassware
- Pumps & Tanks
- Combines & Balers
- Musical instruments
- Silver treasures
- Tires & Wheels
- Hitches & implements
- Bridles & Yokes
- Gardening Equipment
- Welding & Forging Gear
- Kilns & Potting Wheels
- Doors & Windows
- Vintage Signs
- Irrigation Stuff
- Timber Grapples
- BBQs & Kitchen Tools
- Clothing & Quilts
- Belt Buckles
- Hood Ornaments
- Bobble Heads

## Support Our Work!

I would like to support the work of the San Isabel Land Protection Trust.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\$25     \$50     \$100     \$250

\$500     \$1000     other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to The San Isabel Land Protection Trust. PO Box 124 Westcliffe, CO 81252



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