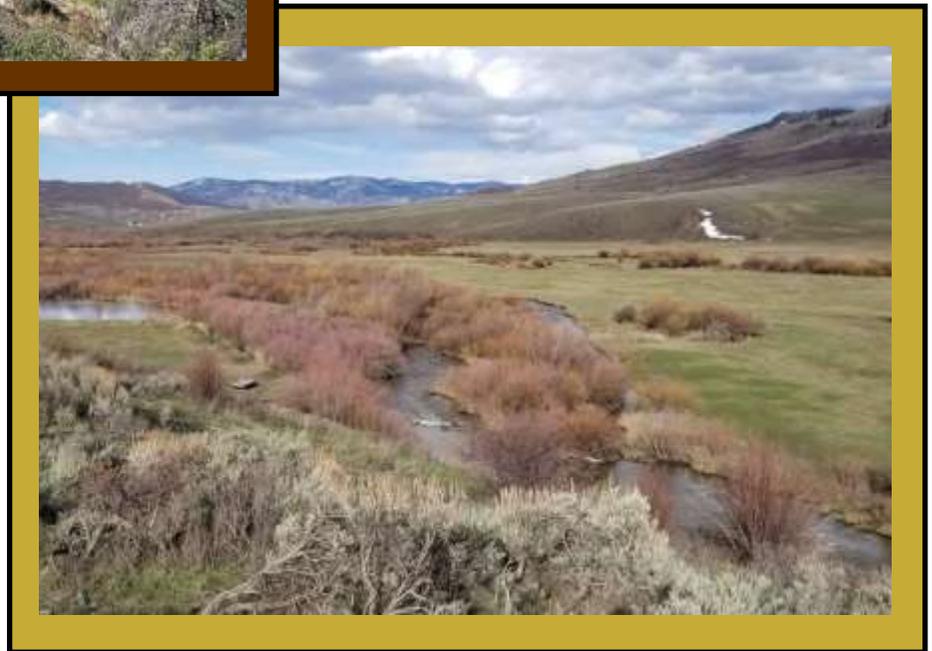


Routt County Purchase of Developmental Rights Program



2022
Progress Report

Photos by: YVLT



Prepared by:
Routt County Purchase of Development Rights
Citizens' Advisory Board

ROUTT COUNTY PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

Yampa Valley citizens and visitors alike have long recognized the value of Routt County's agricultural lands and natural areas. Agriculture represents a significant and relatively stable portion of the County's economy, having an annual fiscal contribution of more than **\$46 million**. The abundance of agricultural lands and natural areas in Routt County also plays a substantial role in attracting tourists and thus supporting the local recreational economy. Natural areas also sustain the vital ecological communities that support wildlife, waterfowl, and fisheries. Many of the County's natural areas contain important riparian areas that have been nationally recognized as being ecologically significant.

Realizing the importance of preserving these vital open lands, Routt County voters initially approved the creation of a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program in November of 1996, and reaffirmed their commitment to the program in November 2005 by voting to renew the effort with increased funding through 2025. PDR is a land protection tool in which a property's development rights are purchased from willing landowners. In exchange, the landowner grants a perpetual conservation easement, or deed restriction on the property, thereby permanently protecting the land from development. The land may be sold or transferred, but the deed restriction remains in place.

The PDR Program provides landowners an economically attractive alternative to selling land for development by compensating them for the development rights on their land. Ownership of the property remains vested with the landowner, who can use and manage the property consistent with the terms of the conservation easement.

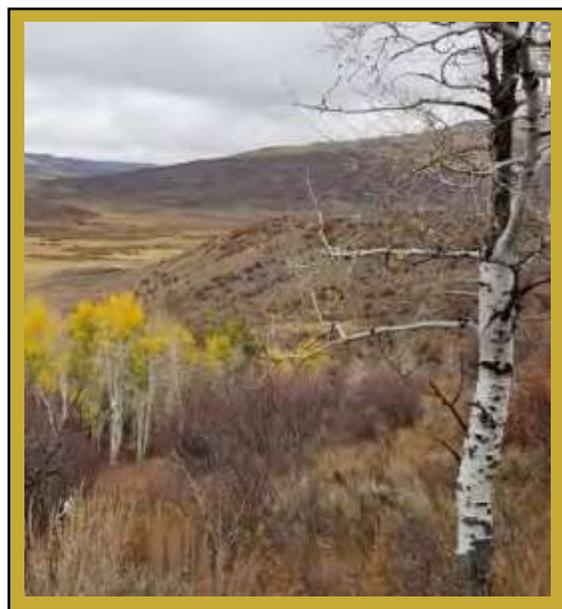
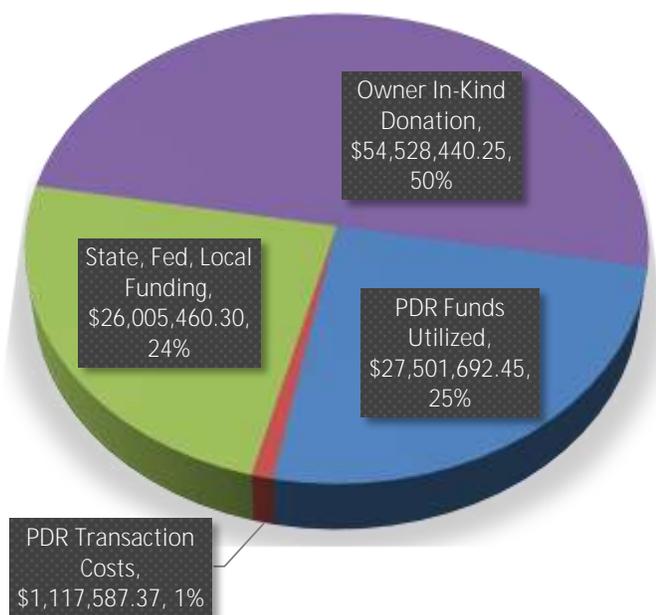


Photo by: YVLT

To receive PDR funds, landowners must be sponsored by a qualified land conservation organization. The landowner and land conservation organization apply for funding to the seven-member, PDR Citizens' Advisory Board, which is appointed by the Routt County Commissioners. The PDR Board reviews all applications for compliance with submission requirements, rates their conservation values and functions, and then makes recommendations to the Routt County Board of Commissioners to either approve funding for the purchase in full, or part, or not approve the funding at all.

Funding for the Routt County PDR Program is derived from a 1.5 mill levy in County property tax approved by voters for a twenty-year period beginning in 2006. The PDR Program provides only a portion of the total funding needed to complete the transaction, with the landowner donating, on average for 68 completed projects, 50 percent of the easement's value. Other federal, state, and local agencies have also contributed funds, with 24 percent of the total PDR project funding to date coming from these agencies. The PDR funds have thus been used as leverage to secure an average of nearly three dollars of additional value for every one dollar of County funds.

Since initiation of the PDR Program in 1997, the County has helped fund the purchase of conservation easements on 57,013.24 acres, at a cost of \$28.6 million dollars, including transaction costs. Six PDR projects covering an additional 7,813 acres, at a PDR funds cost of \$2,250,000 have also been approved for funding and are pending completion. Once these projects are completed, the program will have preserved a total of 64,826.24 acres at a PDR funds cost of about \$30.8 million dollars. By using PDR funds to leverage funding from other agencies, the cost to the County for preserving these lands have to date averaged only \$476 per acre.

The completed PDR projects range in size from the 4,800-acre Smith Rancho Land & Livestock, LLC property, north of Hayden, to the 13-acre Fournier property - this riverfront property includes a half mile bank along the Yampa River on the west side of Steamboat Springs. The completed projects are located as far west as Hayden, extending south to Toponas, and north near the Wyoming border. Completion of the pending projects will significantly broaden the geographic extent of the projects. The following pages provide brief summaries of the projects completed in 2020 and 2021.



Monger Home Ranch

PDR Project #194

Project Completion: May 2020

Total Acres:110

Sponsor: Yampa Valley Land Trust Land Trust

Other Funding Agencies: NRCS

Total Funding per Acre: \$4,609

PDR Funding per Acre: \$2,382

The Land: The Monger Home Ranch sits at the corner of Routt County Roads 42 and 44 in an attractive stretch of the lower Elk River Valley. It is located just 7 miles northwest of Steamboat Springs, a mile west of the Marabou LPS boundary, and roughly a quarter-mile east of an existing 1,200-acre block of conserved land. This agricultural corridor is distinguished by its sweeping, spectacular views of the Sleeping Giant, Buffalo Pass, and Mt. Werner / Steamboat Ski Area, with Monger Home Ranch adding to its rural character. A short reach of the Elk River flows through Monger Home Ranch, supporting irrigated hay meadows that yield over 2 tons per acre. The irrigated meadows cover approximately 75% of the property; some of which consists of soils designated “*Farmland of Statewide Importance*” by the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service. Conserving this property will not only keep a historic irrigated meadow in production; it will help ensure the continued availability of important habitat for elk, mule deer, Greater Sage grouse, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, bald eagles, Sandhill cranes, and other wildlife.

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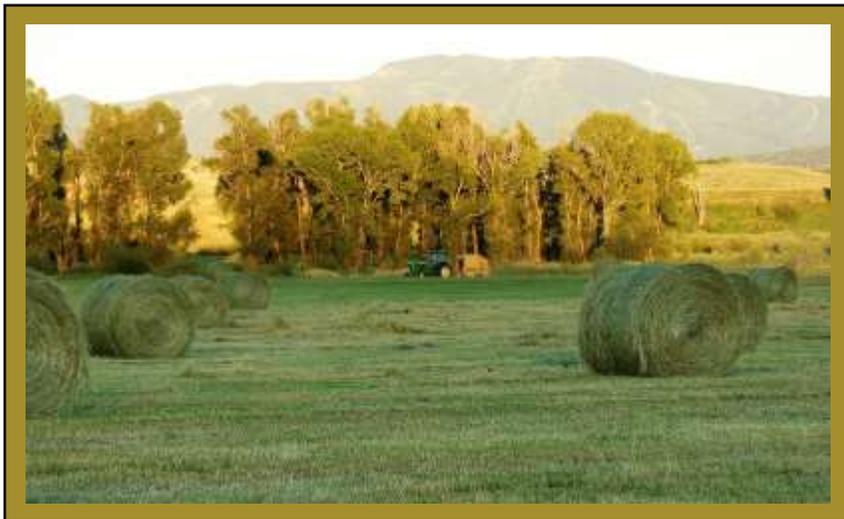
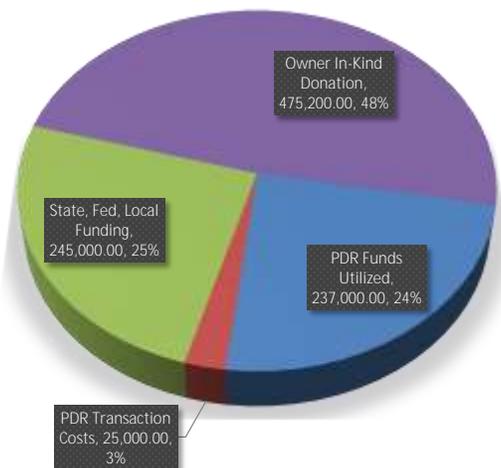


Photo by: YVLT

Total Project Value: \$982,200



The Applicant: The Monger family has owned the property since 1945. Krista Monger and Justin Warren have been a part of the agricultural operation for 17 years and have lived on the property since 2015. Through their purchase of the property from the Monger Family Limited Partnership in 2018 –facilitated by easement proceeds from Routt County PDR – Krista and Justin will have a home base for their agricultural operation. They intend to use the property for hay production and winter feeding (its historic uses), continuing the family’s multi-generational agricultural heritage in Routt County. Their children, Lloyd (10) and Alivia (13), are actively involved in 4-H and have a promising future in Routt County’s ranching community. As part of a ranch succession plan, Krista and Justin intend to purchase Larry and Mary Kay’s share of this property and ultimately pass the property on to their two children.

Smith Rancho Deep Creek

PDR Project #188

Project Completion: June 2020

Total Acres: 4,800

Sponsor: The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

Other Funding Agencies: Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) & TNC

Total Funding per Acre: \$438

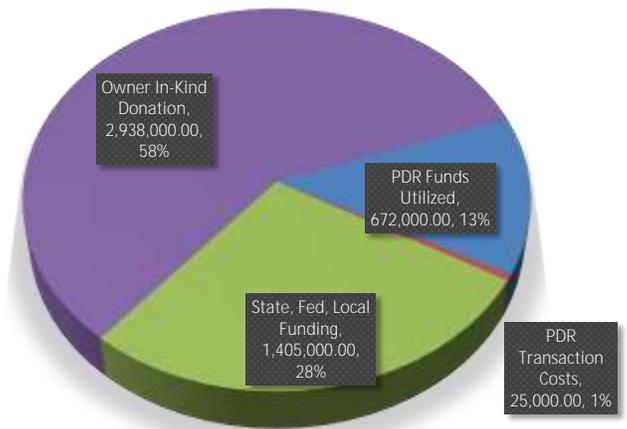
PDR Funding per Acre: \$145

The Land: The entire Smith Rancho property in this area is approximately 17,000 acres. The Conservancy currently holds conservation easements on 12,031 acres of Smith Rancho. The 2020 project conserved an additional 4,800 acres, resulting in almost 100% of the ranch under conservation easement. Deep Creek is located in the elevation transition zone between sagebrush shrub lands

into mixed conifer and aspen woodlands. Because of the variety of vegetation types on Deep Creek, it is habitat for several important species including Greater Sage-grouse, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, elk, deer, mountain lion, and black bear. Smith Rancho is a key piece in an uninterrupted landscape, and greatly contributes to the open scenic nature of Routt County. The Ranch contains water and habitat for many birds, mammals, and other wildlife of conservation value to the state.

The Family: The Smith family has been living and working on Smith Rancho since the early 1900's. Three generations of the Smith family have called this ranch home and made a living from its agricultural operation. Leland Ray Smith, Brad Smith's father, began running sheep in Routt County in 1918. The Smith Rancho property continues to be owned and operated by members of the Smith family to this day.

Total Project Value: \$5,040,000



Photos by: TNC

Starbuck Ranch

PDR Project #191

Project Completion: June 2020

Total Acres: 707

Sponsor: Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT)

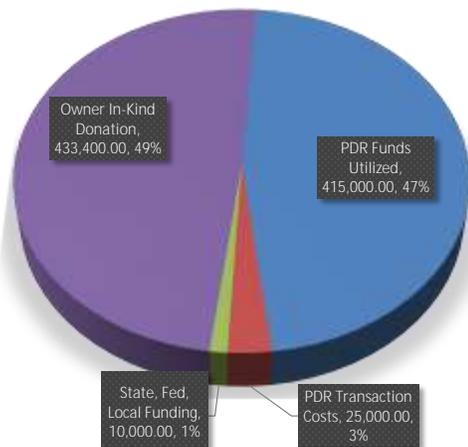
Other Funding Agencies:

Upper Yampa Habitat Partnership Program

Total Funding per Acre: \$636

PDR Funding per Acre: \$622

Total Project Value: \$883,400



The Land: The Starbuck Ranch is known by both locals and summer visitors – the property sits along County Road 7, a public access point to the Routt National Forest and popular destinations like the Yamcolo and Stillwater Reservoirs, Bear Lake, and Flat Tops Wilderness. The property can also be seen from Highway 131, which serves as the main access route to Steamboat Springs from the I-70 corridor. Within 3.5 miles of the Starbuck Ranch, more than 5,000 acres of private land has already been conserved, making conservation of the Starbuck Ranch a vital component to completing landscape scale conservation in the area. In total, this conservation work will ensure that the Yampa Valley remains primarily agriculture in nature and will continue to attract residents and tourists alike to scenic, recreational, and cultural opportunities for years to come. Home to more than just the Clyncke family – the Starbuck Ranch provides important big game and sage grouse habitat, and severe winter and summer range for elk and mule deer. Moose can be found on the ranch year round. The property also supports high quality riparian habitat along the ecologically significant Bear River. The Bear River is one of the three rivers that forms the beginning of the Yampa River in southern Routt County.

The Family: Dorothy and Wilbert Clyncke came to Routt County from Colorado's Front Range in 1963, purchasing what is known today as the Clyncke Ranch. Together, with their son Richard Clyncke, they ran a cow/calf operation and raised hay to sell along the Front Range. In 1985, they acquired the adjacent Starbuck Ranch when they expanded their agricultural operation. Today, the Starbuck Ranch is owned and operated by Richard's sons, Jeff and Gary Clyncke and their families.



Photo by: CCALT

SKCK on the Yampa River

PDR Project #197

Project Completion: August 2021

Total Acres: 476.58

Sponsor: Yampa Valley Land Trust (YVLT)

Other Funding Agencies:

Colorado Parks & Wildlife

Total Funding per Acre: \$695

PDR Funding per Acre: \$563

The Land: SKCK Ranch is located just outside of Phippsburg, Colorado. Visible from Highway 131, the ranch's irrigated pasture frames the meandering Yampa River, harboring many of the characteristics that residents and visitors alike associate with Routt County. The area's outstanding scenery and proximity to world-class recreational opportunities made the SKCK Ranch highly vulnerable to residential development. Conversion of the SKCK Ranch would have resulted in the loss of a scenic landscape, fragmented critical wildlife habitat for

big game, greater Sandhill cranes, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, and a nesting pair of bald eagles. This project leveraged previous conservation investments to build upon an existing protected landscape of over 3,100 acres within just three miles of the SKCK Ranch.

The Family: A dedication to land led the Kramer family to permanently conserve their ranch along the Yampa River. The conservation easement ensures the property will remain open and available for agricultural production. The Kramer family simultaneously partnered with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to grant a fishing access easement along approximately two miles of the Yampa River as it flows through the ranch. The Kramer family's dedication to seeing this land permanently protected, means it will always remain intact for current and future generations to enjoy.

Total Project Value: \$946,393

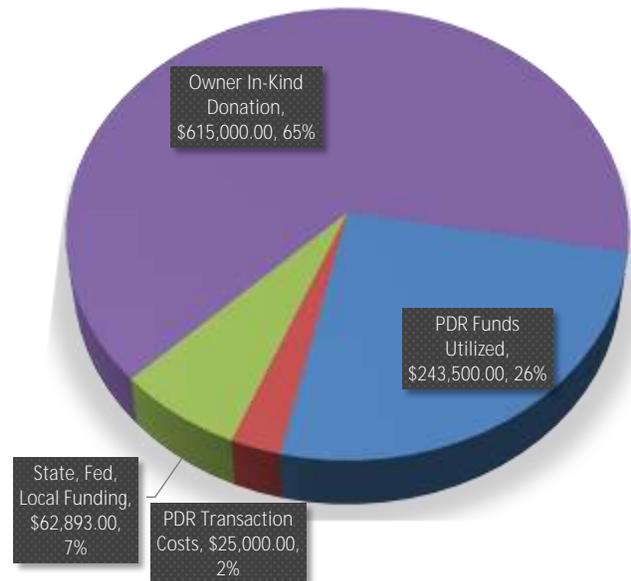


Photo by: YVLT



Flying Horse Ranch

PDR Project #200

Project Completion: November 2021

Total Acres: 321

Sponsor: Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT)
Other Funding Agencies: CCALT
Total Funding per Acre: \$1,546
PDR Funding per Acre: \$1,484

The Land: The Flying Horse Ranch sits along the western edge of the Routt National Forest south of Stagecoach State Park. 1967. Over the years the property has supported hunting, fishing, sheep, cattle, horse events, and hay production. Not only does conservation of the Flying Horse Ranch hold agricultural and recreational value, it maintains area wildlife habitat and natural resource health. The

various ecotypes and riparian areas that exist on the Property provide significant natural habitat for a wide range of wildlife species. Morrison, Silver, and Bushy Creek converge on the property and flow north from for approximately four miles before meeting the Yampa River just below the dam of Stagecoach Reservoir. The success of this project means that a key and cherished Routt County landscape will remain undeveloped and open for generations to come.

Total Project Value: \$864,953

The Family: The Flying Horse Ranch has been in the Dequine Family since 1967, and although the family came to the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) long before the northwest Colorado real estate markets felt the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the recent trends make the conservation of the 321-acre Flying Horse Ranch all the sweeter. If you were lucky, you may have attended the Kids Cavalry riding camp, an all-girls riding camp, hosted each summer on the Ranch. Today, the Flying Horse Ranch supports the production of high-quality horse hay, a small flock of sheep, and board for the neighborhood's horses. The sheep raised on the property are processed locally for the Antlers restaurant in Yampa, CO which is owned by members of the third generation of the Dequine Family.

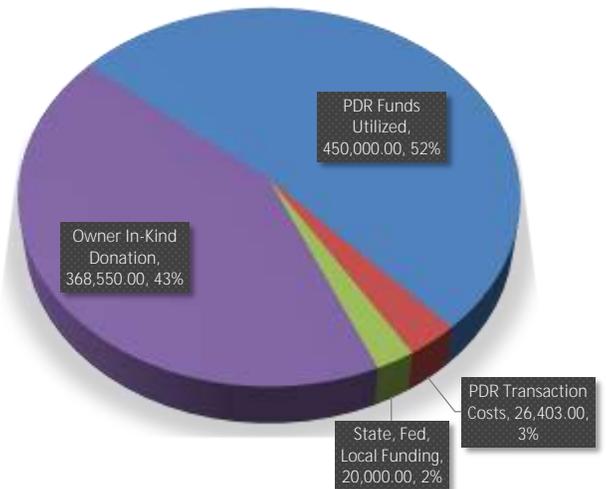


Photo CCALT

Current PDR Citizens' Advisory Board Members:

Claire Sollars - Chair

Tarn Dickerson—Vice Chair

Mary Alice Page-Allen

Dean Rossi

CJ Mucklow

Jennifer Parent- Executive Secretary

For more information about the PDR Program, or for an Application for funding, please call (970) 879-0108 or feel free to contact one of the PDR Board members or Routt County Commissioners.

Routt County Purchase of Development Rights Program
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