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*“To walk in nature is to witness
a thousand miracles.”*

— Mary Davis

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Getting kids outdoors at
Chapin Wright Marble Basecamp.
Photo by Vic Schendel

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ASPEN VALLEY LAND TRUST

2019 ANNUAL REPORT & HIGHLIGHTS





Having special places for peace, solace,
and strength is something we can all
appreciate, especially now.

Photo by George Hendrix.

GRATITUDE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

A note from Gary

As a family doctor in a small community for over 40 years, I have been graciously allowed into my patients' lives. I have developed an understanding of what motivates people and the threads that form the community's values.



Our valleys have changed drastically, but the land and people that steward it anchor our values. *Hard work. Personal connections. Attachment to the land.* The towns grow, but the sense of community holds strong.

A challenge of this pandemic's scale can be a time of growth for resilient communities like ours. I have watched our communities reinvent themselves several times throughout my life and our connection to the land and to one another always centers and guides us.

The same is true for my family. My great grandfather came to Colorado as a pioneer, where he and my grandfather became farmers. My father settled in Rifle as a veterinarian, caring for cattle while raising some of his own on land that I inherited and conserved with Aspen Valley Land Trust. I'm glad I did. Farming and ranching have never been my day job, but an avocation that has long had my heart. I've formed deep connections with ranchers from Parachute to Aspen that knew my dad or became my patients.

Well before COVID, the medical community began recognizing the role of social determinants of health – food, housing, and social connections. COVID has further highlighted these needs. It has also made clear to me how AVLT complements the incredible work of our nonprofit neighbors by improving our quality of life – *connecting people to place, to each other, and to healthy local food, clean air, and water.*

My patients, family, and I talk about our gratitude for this place everyday. It's a remarkable thing to be able to go for a run or a ride up Prince Creek or Red Hill – or any other conserved place so special to us. It helps us get through times like these and grow as we have through other challenges.

The feedback you gave AVLT last year was incredibly helpful in renewing our roots as a community-driven conservation organization, with our values and the land guiding us. Thank you for championing these values, caring for the land, and caring for one another.

Gary Knaus, Board President

A WIN FOR WILDLIFE

McBride Family conserves valley gem

John and Laurie McBride were made for each other. Both share twinkly eyes, infectious grins, and a ready laugh – not to mention a resounding passion for protecting good land and the wild creatures that share it. Long involved in conservation here and abroad, the McBrides most recently founded a conservation education program in Kenya that brings Roaring Fork valley youth to experience the magnificence of the African landscape, its people, and its iconic wildlife.



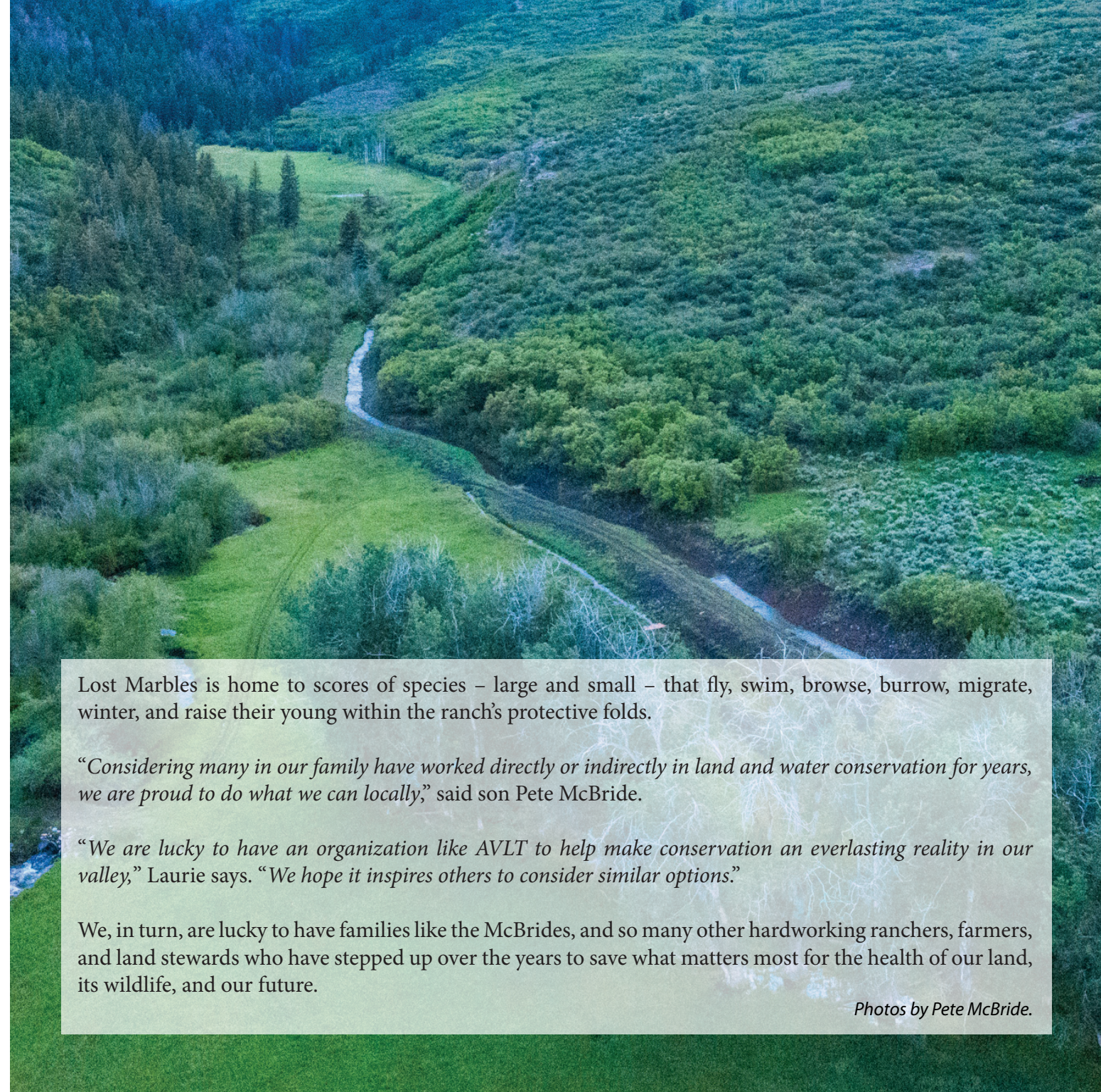
While Western Colorado long ago lost much of its bison, wolves, and grizzlies, and nearly exterminated its elk during the Gold Rush (by 1910 fewer than 1,000 elk were estimated to remain in Colorado due to overhunting), it is still home to its own spectacular landscapes and iconic wildlife. Today, the major threat to these animals comes not from hunting, but from the rapid loss of undisturbed, quality habitat.

Appreciation for this landscape and its wildlife is why the McBrides purchased a large ranch far up the remote Capitol Creek Valley in 1979. When John mentioned his plan to friends, they told him he was crazy – a sentiment that gave rise to the name “Lost Marbles Ranch.”

The McBrides have now lived on that very ranch for over 40 years, and raised three kids in the same modest ranch house they live in today. Lost Marbles hosts the same diverse habitat and rural ranching character as the day they bought it and conserving it so many years later will ensure it stays that way forever. *“We feel it’s the right thing to do for the land and the wildlife that inhabit it,”* said John.

The entire family supported the decision to protect these 1,870 acres – encompassing much of its own valley. In 2019, they culminated years of work by donating a conservation easement to AVLT that sets this land aside for ranching, water, and wildlife. Daughter Kate remarked, *“It is wonderful that three generations of our family support this move to protect land that hardly changed since homesteaders first came here in the early 1900s.”*

Bordered by public land, this branch is now part of a 5,300-acre corridor of private land conserved, including the nearby Capitol Creek, Harvey, and Weiben ranches. As both working land and wildland,



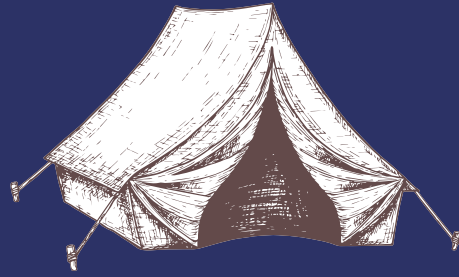
Lost Marbles is home to scores of species – large and small – that fly, swim, browse, burrow, migrate, winter, and raise their young within the ranch’s protective folds.

“Considering many in our family have worked directly or indirectly in land and water conservation for years, we are proud to do what we can locally,” said son Pete McBride.

“We are lucky to have an organization like AVLT to help make conservation an everlasting reality in our valley,” Laurie says. *“We hope it inspires others to consider similar options.”*

We, in turn, are lucky to have families like the McBrides, and so many other hardworking ranchers, farmers, and land stewards who have stepped up over the years to save what matters most for the health of our land, its wildlife, and our future.

Photos by Pete McBride.



“Everything stops and you really just breathe. Everything about your senses comes alive.”

- Jen Ellsperman,
BMS Principal

Want to help a student group connect with nature?

Contact us:
970.963.8440 / avlt@avlt.org

Your support helps kids from Basalt Middle School and others come back for another year of outdoor adventure at Basecamp.

Top and bottom photos courtesy of BMS.



A PLACE WHERE FANCY SHOES AND PHONES DON'T MATTER

Changing lives one campfire at a time

Your generous support may not *exactly* move mountains, but it can bring deserving kids to the mountains, and, in a simple act of nature, change their lives for the better.

Last year, Basalt Middle School students experienced their first camping trip to AVLТ’s Chapin Wright Marble Basecamp. For many, it was their first camping trip ever. Tucked into the shimmering aspens and towering mountains of the Marble high country, Basecamp is a unique, peaceful wilderness retreat.

Today you are helping to bring this opportunity to new schools and children of all backgrounds.

Molly Tiernan, BMS Assistant Principal, shares that, *“Basecamp opens up access to outdoor education that we never had before. By providing a safe infrastructure, we can offer this equal platform to everyone.”*

With the goal of staying local and offering a more affordable option for families, BMS staff led small, meaningful camp-outs at Marble Basecamp for half of their eighth-grade last fall. And for the kids, leaving behind cell phones and tablets, cooking plain-air pancakes on the griddle, connecting to nature, and bonding with their classmates, teachers, and themselves under a dome of stars was magic.

“This is a place for kids to be kids. It breaks down societal barriers,” Molly explains. *“Nobody cares what you have back home, because your only home is right there. It’s just this pad in the woods with a sleeping bag, and if you want dinner, you’ve got to work together.”*

BMS teachers intend to provide more trips, scheduled earlier, so they can “reap the lasting benefits” right away. Science teachers have designed lessons around Basecamp and added tools like a telescope for stargazing. Teachers describe breakthroughs made with students around the campfire that carried through the year.

Of course, online learning will have a real impact on this school year, but BMS Principal Jen Ellsperman believes that Marble Basecamp is their best option for accessing the outdoors. *“I hope we can have outdoor ed, if nothing else. Everything stops and you really just breathe. Everything about your senses comes alive. Every student last year had a great experience and notices more around them.”*

In a world that currently seems to have gone haywire, your continued support can bring a little more connection, magic, and peace to young lives. Thank you for joining the journey.

“Everyday, I am inspired by the work we do - from land stewardship to community engagement and more.”

- Anna Thomas

Program Coordinator,
AmeriCorps VISTA



Portions of the farm's harvest are going to Lift-Up, providing fresh, local produce to those in need during the pandemic.

Photo by Chelsea Self, wThe Post Independent.

LOCAL FOOD ON THE COLORADO RIVER

Protected land feeds our community

Do you love strolling through the farmer's market? Seeking out fresh and locally-inspired cuisine? Pulling carrots and cutting herbs from your backyard garden? Or showing your kids the baby goats and lambs in the spring? Maybe you are worried about the growing food insecurity worsening during this pandemic.

Food connects us all to the land.

Your support for land conservation strengthens local farmers and our communities. From ACES' Rock Bottom Ranch in Basalt, to the Farm Collaborative at Cozy Point Ranch, to Highwater Farm at the Silt River Preserve – local food is growing on conserved land and making our community stronger!



Photo courtesy of Highwater Farm.

Highwater Farm's story starts with an inspired woman's vision to cultivate community farms. Sara Tymczyszyn first approached AVL T in search of affordable land for a nonprofit youth farm project to teach life skills, build soil on degraded land, grow nutritious food, and feed the most vulnerable among us.

Your support to save Silt River Preserve also helped create a home for Highwater Farm. Still in its first year, Highwater Farm is cultivating transformation. Transforming land, transforming lives, and transforming the way our communities rely on conservation.

This story now continues with you. Highwater Farm's Americorp leaders, CMC students, and local volunteers have already put hundreds of hours into installing irrigation and other farm infrastructure, and growing fresh food. More sweat equity and financial investment is still needed.

Your support for AVL T and organizations like Highwater Farm strengthen all aspects of our local food system and help care for our community and our land.

To learn more and support Highwater Farm, visit highwaterfarm.org.

Want to support farmers and agricultural land?

Donate today at
avlt.org

YOUR LAND TRUST *listens*

In 2019, you spoke, and we listened.

You showed up and spoke up. Through public listening sessions, focus groups, individual interviews, small meetings, and online and mailed paper surveys, our community submitted over 500 responses to Your Land Trust Listens.

You told us that you know the valleys of the Roaring Fork and middle Colorado River are filled with places vital to the life and character of the region. You know these open lands provide habitat for wildlife, protect crucial water resources, sustain local farms and family ranches, and support healthy communities. You know the ecological and economic value of conservation in this region is unmatched, yet open lands and nature face many challenges.

From Independence Pass to the Roan Plateau, you assessed the issues most important to you and shared how conservation might best help. It is clear many different people care a lot about the future of our open lands and wildlife, and that our conservation community must be more inclusive and diverse to remain vital and relevant into the future.

Photo by Tyler Stableford.

WHERE WE'RE GOING 2020 2024

the

PROTECT our special places.

- **Save more land!** Increase rate and impact of conservation to protect important wildlife habitat and migration corridors, agricultural and natural resources, and connections to public land and rivers.
- **Plan for the future.** Develop a regional conservation plan to guide both landscape-scale and community-driven conservation efforts.
- **Support landowners** in their commitment to conserve land.

STEWARD conserved lands to be vital and resilient for future generations.

- **Collaborate.** Strengthen landowner and partner relationships to further land management goals, increase local food production, and improve habitat.
- **Volunteer.** Organize opportunities for everyone to help care for conserved lands.
- **Restore land** like Silt River Preserve and Riverfront Park to enhance habitat and public enjoyment.
- **Build resources** to support sustainable agriculture and healthy soil on conserved lands.

ENGAGE our diverse community to inspire deeper connections with the land.

- **Expand opportunities for more kids** and schools to enjoy outdoor experiences on conserved land.
- **Establish community lands** for recreation and hands-on engagement with conservation.
- **Support youth connections to land** and local food production.

COMMIT to strengthening conservation for the benefit of our diverse community *forever*.

- **Support organizational growth, diversity, and excellence** through board, staff, and volunteers.
- **Increase financial strength and long-term resilience** to carry out our mission in perpetuity.

SAVING RIVERS RESTORING LAND

Last fall, a friend to the rivers and many in the community, Ian Hause, passed away. It was the second time in five years that the Hause family said goodbye to a brother and a son.

In memory of his brother Kea, a fishing guide and advocate for healthy rivers himself, Ian founded Aspen Valley Land Trust's river restoration fund, the Kea Hause R3 Fund, in 2015. It quickly raised over \$35,000 in gifts to help fund river protection and restoration projects.

Around the same time, Ian also initiated the Crystal River Restoration project, which aims to restore and enhance a half-mile of the Crystal River and 18 acres of riparian habitat at the Town of Carbondale's Riverfront Park in River Valley Ranch. He intended the R3 Fund to help support this and similar projects, and that is exactly what it's doing.

Ian has joined his brother in leaving a conservation legacy. Renamed the Hause Family R3 Fund, Ian and Kea's energy and desire to protect their home rivers is being carried forward by generous donors. AVLT's board recently committed \$20,000 from the fund to support the Crystal River Restoration Project. Now nearing the end of its planning phase, restoration work is scheduled to get underway as early as next summer.

While COVID may change the timeline a bit, it is clear that now, more than ever, people need ways to connect with nature, enjoy their local rivers, and take time to breathe in these special places. As Ian and Kea would appreciate, this project will help provide river access for everyone to enjoy including ADA accessible pathways and an outdoor classroom.

Thank you Ian and Kea, and the entire Hause family, for your vision, leadership, and love of our rivers and the lands that protect them. And thanks to our partners at the Town of Carbondale, Roaring Fork Conservancy, and American Rivers for their hard work in bringing this project to life. Ian and Kea would be proud.

HAUSE FAMILY R³ rivers, riparian, & restoration FUND

Aspen Valley Land Trust stewards the Hause Family Rivers, Riparian, and Restoration (R3) Fund. The R3 Fund's purpose is to restore, improve, and promote the health of the Roaring Fork and Crystal Rivers.



2019 HAUSE R3 FUND DONORS

(1/1/2019 through 1/31/2020)

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Eric & Karen Hause	<i>in honor of Adele Hause</i>
Ken & Laurel Hause	Tony & Sheila Thelen
Donald & Mary Anne Hillmuth	Tom & Roz Turnbull
Sam & Ann Johnson	Teresa Watkins

We apologize for any misprints or omissions.

"In my life, on the Crystal River, in this valley, there's a lot of little bits. Most of those little bits were effected by other people doing a little bit. It's the drop in the pond. It's the ripple effect."

- Ian K. Hause

“My wife and I are the ones who are overflowing with gratitude. For the wonderful Colorado landscape that we are lucky enough to call home.

For the chance to roam along beautiful Castle Creek and experience its magic. And for the opportunity to assist AVLT in its important work, so that future generations can also explore that wondrous place.

So our gift of Riverdance was just a small way to express our enduring gratitude for all those gifts!”

- Tom Barron



LAND FOR PEOPLE

Making magic through community partnerships

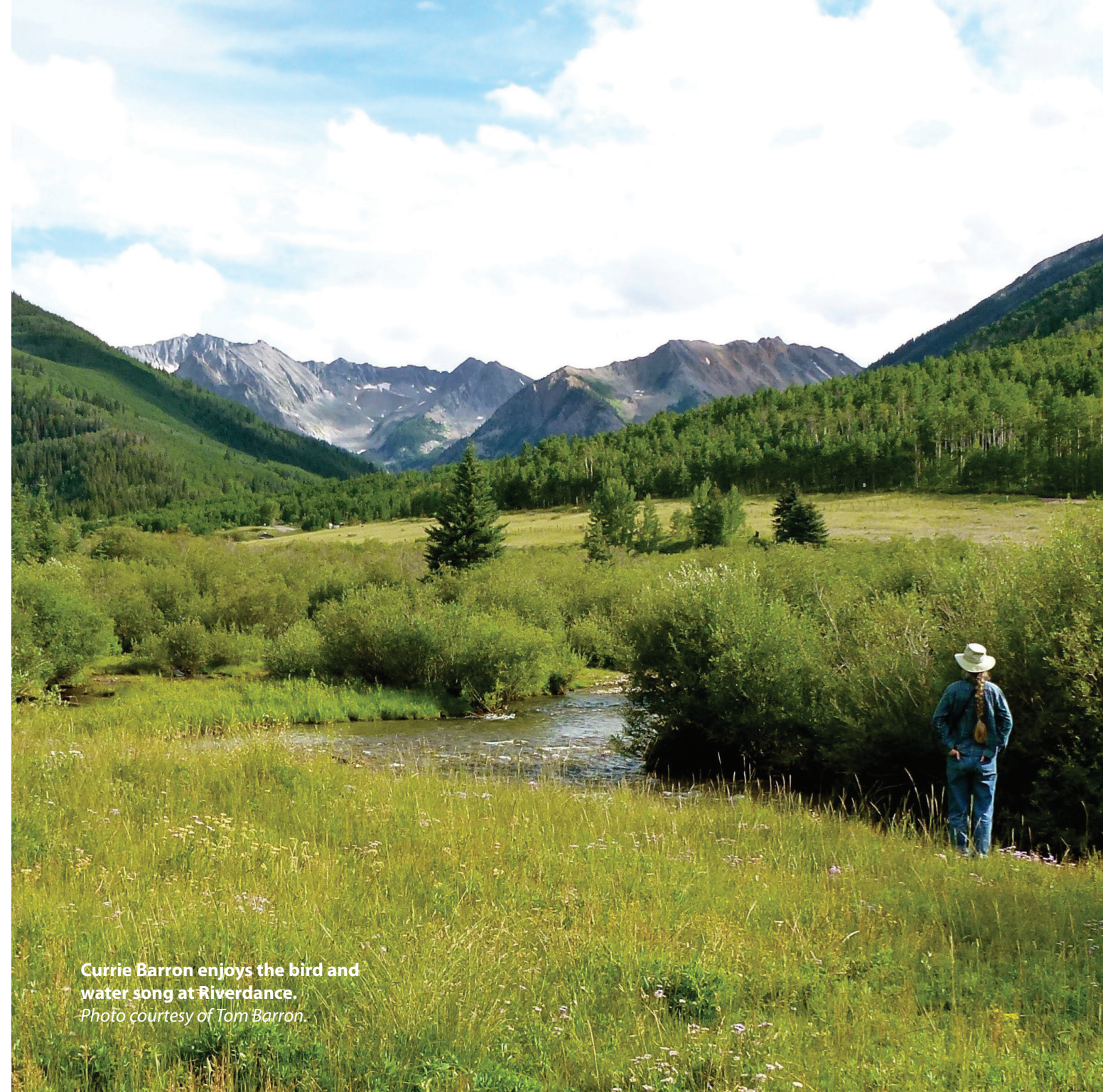
Providing places for all members of our community to escape, rest, and renew is a major reason we work to conserve land. To protect this land for people and nature takes the whole community. Partnerships are often the key to saving these special places and ensuring that they remain open, vital, and accessible.

AVLT has been fortunate to work with many amazing partners over the years who've helped put (and keep) these places on the map for the benefit of all.

Tom and Currie Barron's generosity is a perfect example. A scenic 10-acre mining claim in the electrically beautiful Castle Creek Valley will now forever be a community treasure. Last year, Tom and Currie protected this special piece of land known as Riverdance through a permanent conservation agreement with AVLT, and then donated the conserved land to the Aspen Center for Environmental Studies to steward and use for low-impact environmental education near its Toklat Campus.

We look forward to working with ACES to meet conservation goals of this project, while providing a quiet place for kids to immerse themselves in nature.

Many thanks to the Barrons and our many other partners for saving yet another special place to inspire the next generation.



Currie Barron enjoys the bird and water song at Riverdance.
Photo courtesy of Tom Barron.

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)

* \$85 per month (Aspen Leaf)

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

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(1/1/2019 through 1/31/2020)

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(\$100,000 & over)

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We apologize for any misprints or omissions.

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2019 SUPPORTERS (1/1/2019 through 1/31/2020)

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We apologize for any misprints or omissions.

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- ★ Gave for last 5 consecutive years
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Photo courtesy of Vic Schendel.

We apologize for any misprints or omissions.

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FIRSTwestern TRUST

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GRAND LAND DANCE OF 2019

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Maria Wimmer

We apologize for any misprints or omissions.

Mark & Deborah Breen dancing with elk at the 2019 Grand Land Dance.

Photo by Eva Pekkala.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, September 26, 2020

We missed celebrating under one big tent with you this summer for another Grand Land Dance. Instead, this year, we invite you to celebrate our open lands and special places with a seasonal, locally-sourced Harvest Picnic on Saturday, September 26. We'll provide a chef-curated meal from local restaurateurs – you choose the time, setting, and company! We hope all you wonderful land stewards will take this opportunity to enjoy a great meal in your favorite special open space (or backyard), and to connect with each other and these amazing valleys we call home.

Support your local restaurants. Support your local farmers. Support your local land trust!

For more information and to order your basket, visit AVLT.ORG/PICNIC.



FIRSTwestern TRUST

BUSINESS PARTNER OF THE YEAR

First Western Trust

We'd like to recognize First Western Trust as our Business Partner of the year for their ongoing North Star sponsorship of the Grand Land Dance and impactful commitment to community conservation. We appreciate First Western's leadership and support, especially during these challenging times, and are delighted to have them as a partner.

LEAVE A LEGACY

Your forever gift.

How would you like to leave a legacy that will last forever? By planning a gift to AVLT, you can protect the clean water, open lands, and cherished wildlife we know today for future generations, both human and wild. Leaving a conservation legacy takes only a little time and forethought, and planned giving is one of the best ways to make a meaningful and lasting impact.

- 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@avlt.org.



Snowy day with the Nieslaniks.
Photo by Tyler Stableford.

Aspen Valley Land Trust SUMMARY STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

For the year ending December 31, 2019 (based on audited financial statements)

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
CURRENT ASSETS	97,179	108,351
INVESTMENTS	3,342,212	3,748,040
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT		
Investments held on behalf of others*	981,086	1,118,151
Property & Equipment, net of depreciation	967,526	954,277
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 5,388,003	\$ 5,928,819
CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,204,469	1,131,620
LONG TERM LIABILITIES	0	0
NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS		
Unrestricted Operating Investment	883,541	1,237,453
Board Designated Monitoring Investment	1,491,887	1,759,628
Fee Owned Land, Property & Equipment	622,417	609,098
NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS		
Temporary in Nature	840,581	845,841
Land Held Permanently for Conservation	<u>345,108</u>	<u>345,179</u>
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$ 4,183,534	\$ 4,797,199
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 5,388,003	\$ 5,928,819



...for more exciting news about
the Coffman Ranch project!

YOU ARE INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

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



Find out about
conservation projects,
programs, and events.

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