



## ASPEN VALLEY LAND TRUST

January 2004

Best wishes for a happy and healthy new year. Thanks to the generosity of landowners who want to conserve their ranches and properties, and to the generous individuals who contribute financially, we at AVLT are looking forward to another productive and challenging year.

### **Statistics:**

January 1, 2004: **9,398 acres** under easement; **65 properties** between Northstar east of Aspen to the Schoonmaker properties south of Silt.

In 2003, AVLT acquired 20 conservation easements and increased total conserved lands by 33%. The properties preserved include:

*Pitkin County:* 11 easements

*Garfield County:* 6 easements

*Gunnison County:* 2 easements (Marble)

*Eagle County:* 1 easement (El Jebel)



### **Colorado River and Roaring Fork River frontage, ranchlands and more of Redstone preserved in 2003**

Since the last AVLT Report in September, seven landowners have donated conservation easements. Here is a brief description of each special piece:

- **Strang Ranch:** No place on Missouri Heights has a more stunning view of Sopris than Mike and Kit Strang's 453-acre horse and cattle ranch (*pictured above*). This productive, well-managed ranch is one of the most beautiful in the valley and the first phase is now protected for future generations.
- **Schoonmaker Ranch:** South of Silt, the wide fertile valleys hold some of the region's largest ranches. Dr. Raymond and Judith Schoonmaker's Kinstead Ranch, with its historic stone house and rolling meadows is one of the most scenic. An easement on more than 100 acres adjoining BLM land preserves rapidly disappearing sage and pinion habitat, which is critical to the resident elk herd.
- **Coffman Ranch:** On the back road from Carbondale to Catherine's Store, the Coffman Ranch covers lush hayfields and prime Roaring Fork River frontage. Coffman's easement includes some limited development and protects the river habitat and open meadows along County Road 100.
- **LaLone's Redstone parcel:** Ray and Vicki LaLone have owned a cabin in Redstone for many years and this year they donated an easement protecting 32 unspoiled acres at the entrance to Redstone. The land is near the Coke Ovens and protects views from Highway 133, a national Scenic Byway.
- **Colorado River Reserve:** For more than 50 years, a group of local families has owned a wildlife preserve along the Colorado River between Silt and Rifle. This year, with the donation of a conservation easement on 92 acres, including part of an island, these landowners have taken steps to permanently preserve some of the most important riparian habitat in western Garfield County.
- **El Jebel valley:** Above El Jebel is a small valley with three lakes and so much wildlife the Audobon Society sometimes goes there for its annual bird count. The valley has stunning views of Sopris and productive hay meadows. It is a treasured family gathering spot for the long-time local owners.
- **Ridders Marble parcel:** When a neighboring property owner donated an easement on a parcel above Marble, Bill Ridders decided it was such a good idea he would do the same. His 3.3-acre lot is part of a critical winter elk corridor and is an access point to Forest Service lands.

### **Conserving land every day: Volunteer Tom Adkison**

Tom Adkison, long-time Roaring Fork Valley resident and self-described "recovering attorney" volunteered this summer and fall at AVLT. His legal knowledge and familiarity with the land and locals, coupled with his sense of humor and common sense, provided untold benefits to the staff and clients at AVLT. We wish Tom the best in his next venture and we are thankful for this generous donation of his time and his wisdom.

## Major land donation near North Star Preserve

Just south of the North Star Preserve, spanning the Roaring Fork River, is four-acres of undisturbed habitat which James Roush and Cynthia Wayburn have generously donated to AVLT. The land is next to a large parcel the couple once donated to The Nature Conservancy and which is now owned by the Aspen Center for Environmental Studies. It is hoped that the donation will lead to more conservation easement donations in this wonderfully beautiful and important habitat area.

## Independence Ghost Town part of the Forest Service

The historic town of Independence, which was purchased in 2001 by AVLT to prevent development on the site, has been transferred to the U.S. Forest Service. The trade involved Independence and two Forest Service parcels in Eagle County. Many people and many local agencies, including Pitkin County Open Space and Heritage Aspen contributed to this project and it is an important project for the region.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR! Winter Stewardship Party, March 11 at Roaring Fork Club in Basalt.**

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