

Aspen Valley

Land Trust

Save the
Land Dance

As developers rush to devour the last acres of open space in the area, one group hopes to save it. Aspen Valley Land Trust held its annual Save the Land Dance Saturday night at Strang Ranch in Missouri Heights.

Approximately 350 people from all over the Roaring Fork Valley came to support and celebrate AVLTL, Colorado's oldest land trust, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year.

AVLTL holds conservation easements on 22,000 acres from Aspen to Parachute and so far has preserved 5,200 acres of land in the area this year.

Landowner Barry Stout says that without AVLTL, the whole valley could look different. "It's going to end up looking like a city," he said.

Which is why Martha Cochran, executive director of AVLTL, is grateful to landowners who have chosen to put their land into conservation easements for future generations.

"They value the land more than money," she said, "Passing the land onto their children is important to them."

AVLTL is in talks right now with 18 ranching families in the Divide Creek and Dry Hollow area, which could potentially preserve thousands of acres near Silt.

While AVLTL plays a vital role in preserving the valley's agriculture and ranching heritage, it is also important for the local economy.

"In a tourist economy, open space has value," Cochran said.

As the valley continues to surge in population, it prompts more development, which pushes AVLTL to act quickly to preserve the land that makes the area unique.

"All the development pressure makes it more urgent to save what we can," Cochran said. "And

the time is short."

While saving the land is critical for local habitat, landowners, and ranchers, Stout says the issue also affects many of the valley's residents.

"It keeps open land available for everyone to enjoy," he said.



From left, Margaret Hawkins, of Carbondale, and Pat and Rosemary Patterson, of Silt.



From left, Tony Coia of Basalt, Shelley Supplee, of Aspen, and Andy Davies and Brenda Wild, of Basalt.



From left, Lathrop Strang, of Missouri Heights; Martha Cochran, of Glenwood, Dale Will, of

Carbondale, and Wally Obermeyer, of Aspen.



From left, Jordan and Shereen Sarick, and Dan Sadowsky, all of Aspen.



From left, Lee Ann Eustis, of Missouri Heights, and Louise and Carter Jackson, of Glenwood.
BY KIM DOOSE



From left, Sher Long, of Battlement Mesa, and Don and Laura Wood, of Aspen.



Barry Stout, of Baldy Creek, and Liz Cook, of Garfield Creek.



From left, Bethany Collins, of Glenwood, and Melissa Sumera and Jeff and Suzanne Stephens, all of Carbondale.



From left, Donna and Tim McFlynn, of Old Snowmass; Connie Harvey, of Aspen, and Peter and Ann Martin, of Redstone.



From left, Anita Witt, of Missouri Heights, and Rex and Jo Ann Coffman, of Carbondale.
