AGENDA ITEM or FINAL CONTRACT REVIEW SUBMITTAL FORM

Agenda Item: Conservation Easement Grant Agreements

Action Requested: Board of County Commissioners' Signature

Parties to the Agreement: Gunnison Conservation Ranchland Legacy and Colorado Open Lands

Term Begins: sign date - perpetual **Term Ends:** **Grant Contract #:**

Summary:

Grant agreements for Gothic Townsite, Krueger Ranch, Ocate Property, Weidler Property, and Mill Creek IV Ranch.

Fiscal Impact:

Submitted by: Mike Pelletier **Submitter's Email Address:** mpelletier@gunnisoncounty.org

Finance Review: (●) Required ( ) Not Required

Comments:
No concerns, agreements total $491,382. Sufficient available resources for these easements. If all five are finalized in 2020 we will request a budget amendment request for $41,000 as some were originally planned in the 2019 budget and have been carried forward to 2020. ln

Reviewed by: GUNCOUNTY1\lNienhueser Discharge Date: 5/21/2020

County Attorney Review: (●) Required ( ) Not Required

Comments:
ok db 5/22/20

Reveiwed by: GUNCOUNTY1\dBaumgarten Discharge Date: 5/22/2020 Certificate of Insurance Required Yes ( ) No (●)

County Manager Review:

Comments:

Reveiwed by: GUNCOUNTY1\mbirnie Discharge Date: 5/29/2020

( ) Consent Agenda (●) Regular Agenda ( ) Worksession Time Allotted: 20

Agenda Date: 6/2/2020

Revised April 2015

To: Board of County Commissioners

From: Mike Pelletier, GIS Manager

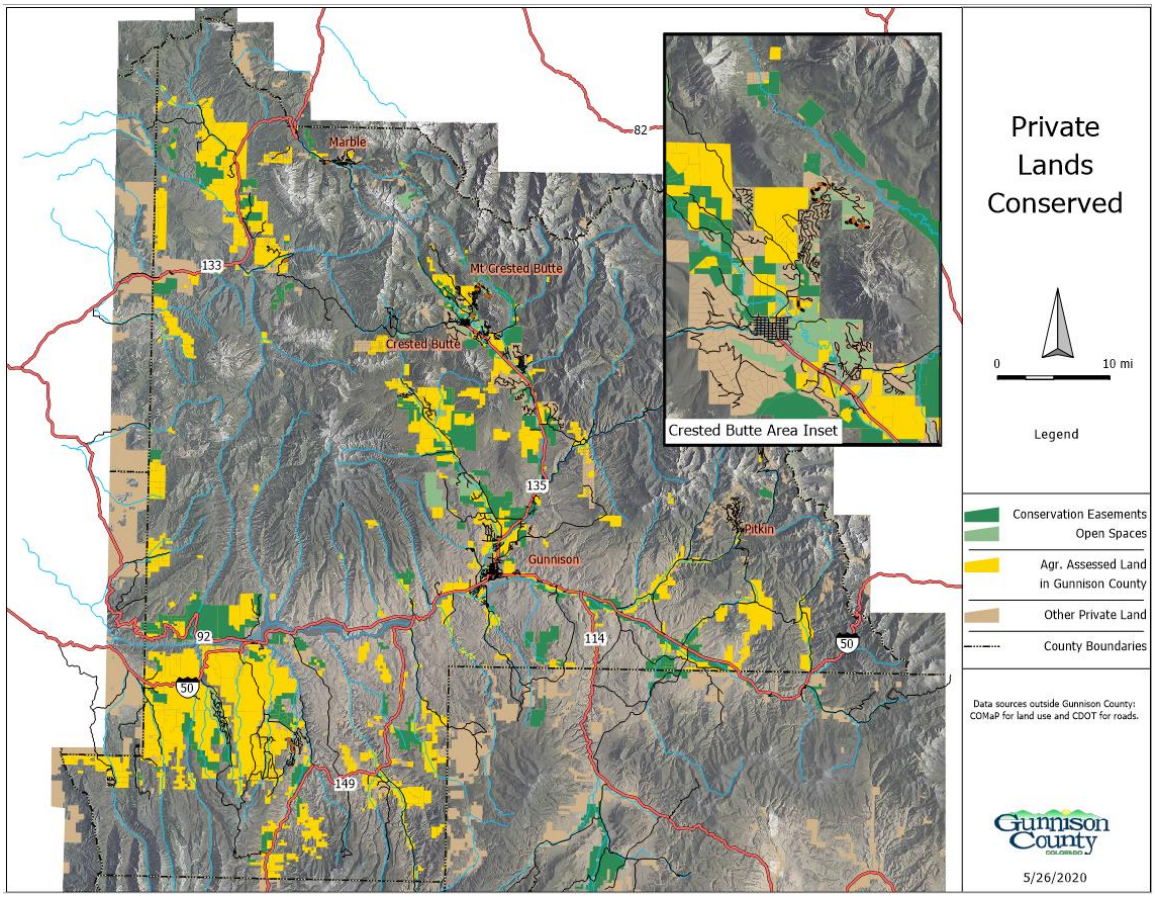
Date: June 2, 2020

RE: Various conservation easement grant agreements

The Gunnison Valley Land Preservation Board approved funding for the following conservation easements at their January 2019 meeting, for the amounts shown in the grant agreements. The projects have not changed from what was presented to that Board.

For the purpose of a general context, below is a map showing what private lands have a conservation easements. Roughly 20% of all the private land in Gunnison County is protected with conservation easements.

The following pages have project summaries provided by the applicant and a map for the property location.

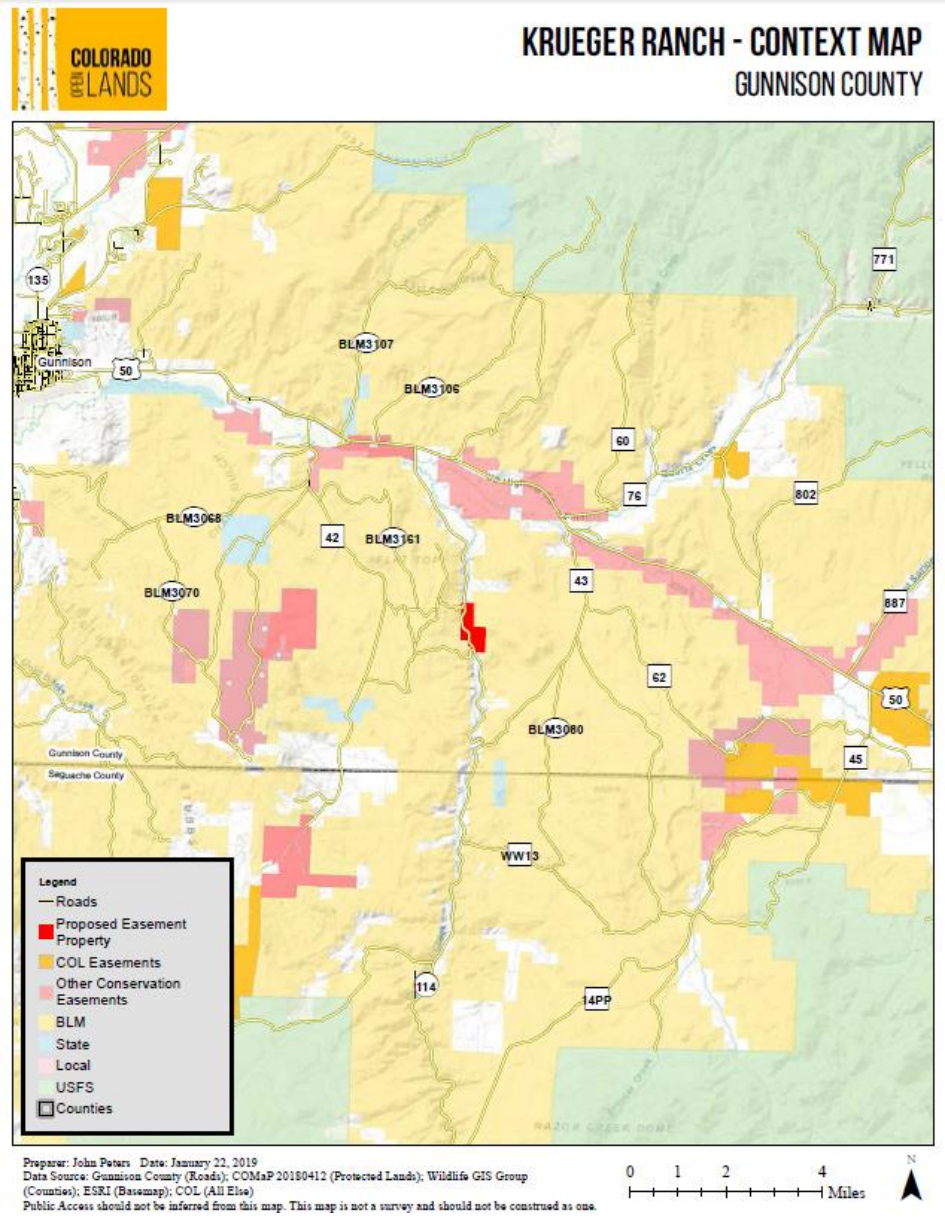


Krueger Ranch

The Krueger Ranch Conservation Easement preserves wildlife habitat (specifically Gunnison Sage-grouse), wetland and riparian areas along a mile of Cochetopa Creek, and agricultural production on 198 acres in southern Gunnison County. The scenic terrain of the property is visible to the general public driving along State Highway 114 and from nearby Bureau of Land Management lands. Preservation of the property will continue to provide an opportunity for the general public to appreciate its scenic values.

The Krueger Ranch Conservation Easement protects the entirety of the ranch and prohibits future subdivision. Water rights are tied to the land through the terms of the conservation easement and mineral rights are retired into the easement. Primary funding for the conservation easement is provided by a grant from the NRCS for protection of Gunnison Sage-grouse habitat through a program that protects grasslands of special environmental significance.

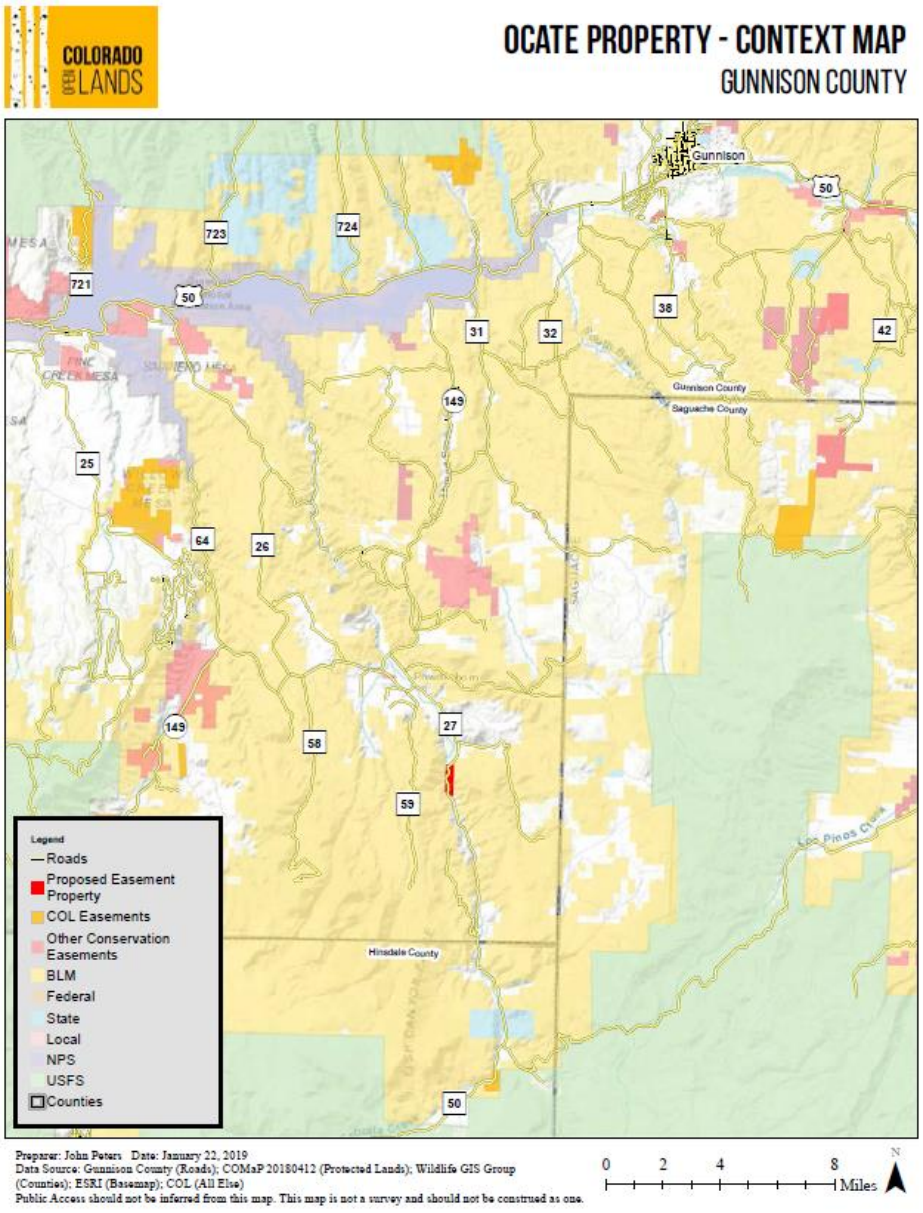
The Land Preservation Funds constitute 20% of the project value. The remaining project value is a donation by the landowner. No material changes have been made to the project since the grant was awarded by the Gunnison Valley Land Preservation Board.



Ocaté Property

The Ocaté Property Conservation Easement preserves wildlife habitat, wetland and riparian areas along 1.25 miles of Cebolla Creek, and agricultural production on 158 acres in the Powderhorn area of Gunnison County. The scenic terrain of the property is visible to the general public driving along County Road 27 and from adjacent Bureau of Land Management lands. In addition to protecting scenic open space for the general public, preservation of the property will continue to provide range resources for livestock and wildlife, including Gunnison Sage-grouse.

The Ocaté Property Conservation Easement protects the entirety of the property and prohibits future subdivision. Water rights are tied to the land through the terms of the conservation easement and mineral rights are retired into the easement. Primary funding for the conservation easement is provided by a grant from the NRCS for protection of Gunnison Sage-grouse habitat through a program that protects grasslands of special environmental significance.



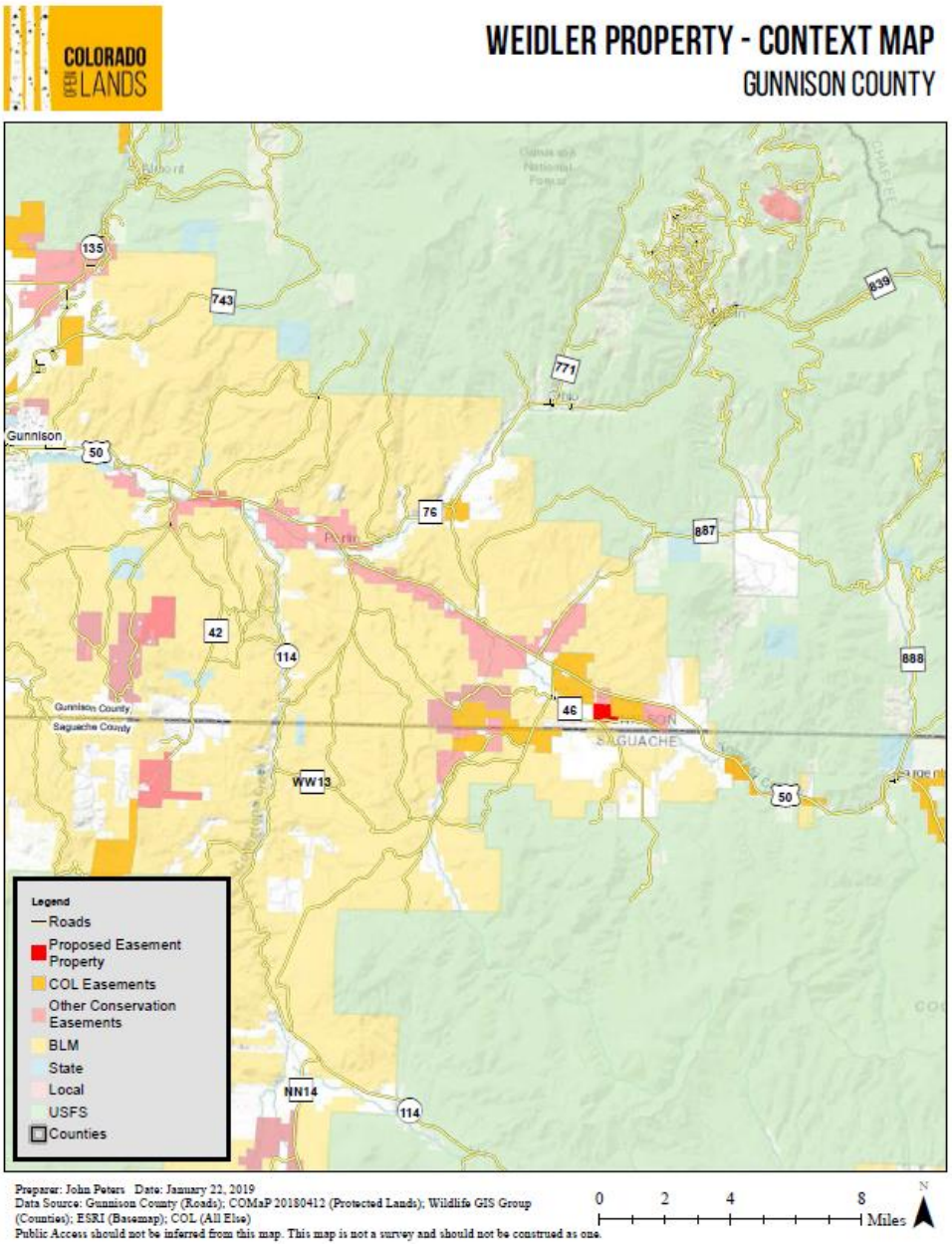
The Land Preservation Funds constitute 17% of the project value. The remaining project value is a donation by the landowner. No material changes have been made to the project since the grant was awarded by the Gunnison Valley Land Preservation Board.

Weidler Property

The Weidler Property Conservation Easement preserves wildlife habitat, wetland and irrigated grassland areas along ½ mile of Tomichi Creek, and agricultural production on 173 acres in southern Gunnison County. The scenic terrain of the property is visible to the general public driving along State Highway 50 and from adjacent Bureau of Land Management lands. In addition to protecting scenic open space for the general public, preservation of the property will continue to provide range resources for livestock and wildlife, including Gunnison Sage-grouse.

The Weidler Property Conservation Easement protects the entirety of the property and prohibits future subdivision and development. Water rights are tied to the land through the terms of the conservation easement and mineral rights are retired into the easement. Primary funding for the conservation easement is provided by a grant from the NRCS for protection of Gunnison Sage-grouse habitat through a program that protects grasslands of special environmental significance.

The Land Preservation Funds constitute 24% of the project value. The remaining project value is a donation by the landowner. No material changes have been made to the project since the grant was awarded by the Gunnison Valley Land Preservation Board.

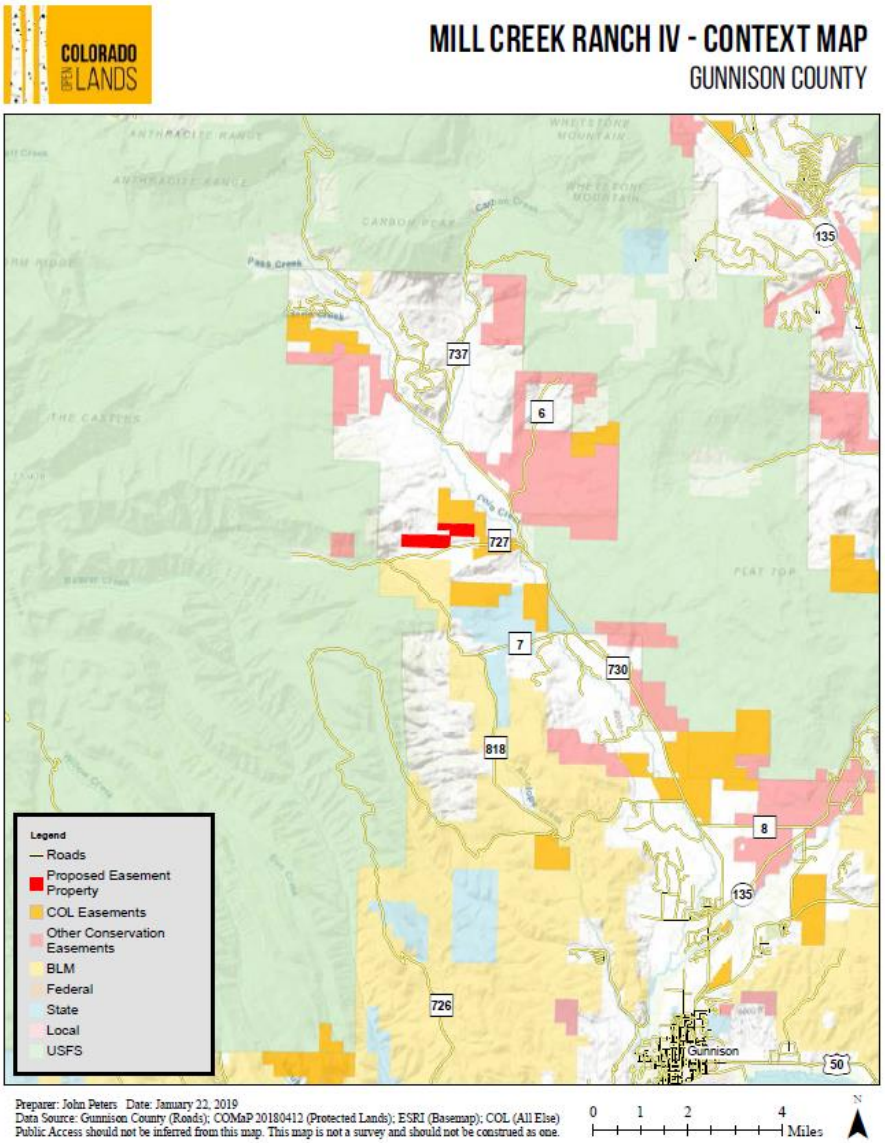


Mill Creek IV Ranch

The Mill Creek IV Ranch Conservation Easement preserves wildlife habitat (specifically Gunnison Sage-grouse), wetland and riparian areas along Mill Creek, and agricultural production on 260 acres in the Upper Ohio Creek Valley. The scenic terrain of the property is visible to the general public driving along Mill Creek Road (County Road 727) and Ohio Creek Road (County Road 730), and from nearby Bureau of Land Management lands, nearby Gunnison National Forest lands, and West Elk Wilderness Area lands to the east, north and west. Preservation of the property will continue to provide an opportunity for the general public to appreciate its scenic values.

The Mill Creek IV Ranch Conservation Easement, the last remaining acreage of the ranch not already under permanent conservation easement, prohibits future subdivision and water rights are tied to the land through the terms of the conservation easement. Mineral rights are retired into the easement. Primary funding for the conservation easement is provided by a grant from the NRCS for protection of Gunnison Sage-grouse habitat through a program that protects grasslands of special environmental significance.

The Land Preservation Funds constitute 8% of the project value. The remaining project value is a donation by the landowner. No material changes have been made to the project since the grant was awarded by the Gunnison Valley Land Preservation Board.

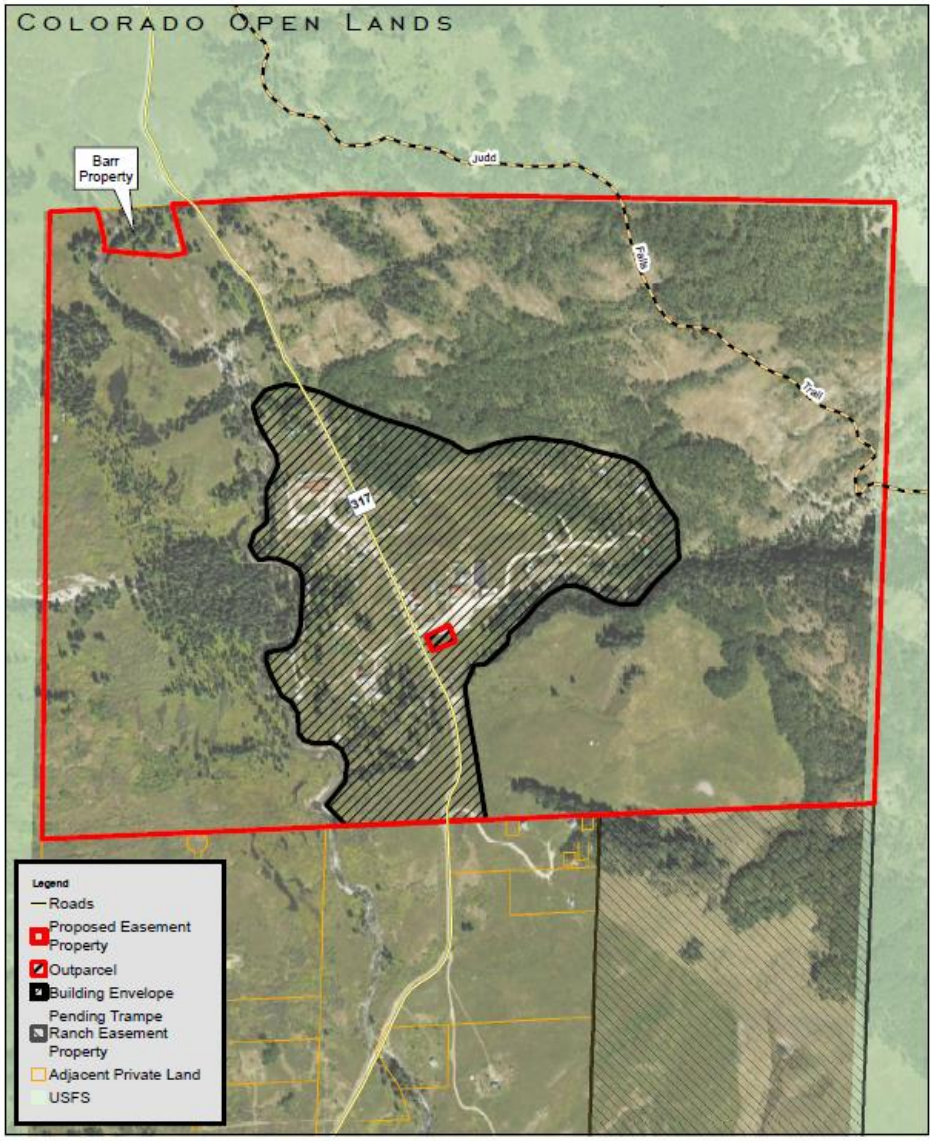


Gothic Townsite

The Gothic Townsite Conservation Easement preserves the Gothic Townsite as a research and teaching facility in perpetuity, protecting the natural resources for ecological investigation. The townsite has been owned by the Rocky Mountain Biological Lab since 1928 and has become one of the world's pre-eminent biological field stations. The 270-acre property includes the historic townsite containing the infrastructure for the biological field research station, and the surrounding areas, which are used for scientific research and education programs year-round. Preservation of the property will also allow for public access along the Judd Falls Trail.

The Gothic Townsite Conservation Easement protects the entirety of the townsite and surrounding acreage and prohibits future subdivision. Water rights are tied to the land through the terms of the conservation easement. Those mineral rights owned by the landowner are retired into the easement. Rocky Mountain Biological Lab is donating the full value of the conservation easement.

The Land Preservation Funds constitute 2% of the project value. No material changes have been made to the project since the grant was awarded by the Gunnison Valley Land Preservation Board.



Rocky Mountain Biological Lab - Property Map

GUNNISON COUNTY

Public access should not be inferred from this map.
This map is not a survey and must not be construed as one.

0 200 400 800 Feet

N

Preparer: John Peters
Date: October 12, 2016
Data source: USDA/NAIP (2015 Aerial); Gunnison County (Roads); CoMaPv9 (Protected Lands); COL (All Else)