

Grand County's Open Lands, Rivers, and Trails Fund

Your Sales Tax Dollars Saving Our Open Spaces, Preserving Our Rivers, and Maintaining Our Trails Since 2016



Granby Highlands Trails – The Colorado Headwaters Land Trust received \$1.2 million to secure a conservation easement, which will protect over 740 acres of open space and 2 miles of the Colorado River in perpetuity.



Headwaters Trails Alliance receives funding for their Winter Trail Grooming Program, maintaining over 40 miles of public access trails across Grand County, free for all to enjoy.

In 2016, Grand County voters passed Ballot Initiative 1A, creating the Open Lands, Rivers, and Trails (OLRT) Fund with 60% support. This fund was established to:

- 1. Acquire lands** for conserving water, supporting agriculture, preserving scenic open spaces, wildlife habitats, wetlands, and river access.
- 2. Secure water rights** and water storage rights.
- 3. Maintain and improve hiking and biking trails** across Grand County.

In 2023, 72% of voters renewed their support, ensuring funds continue to be available for these purposes while expanding the scope to include trail creation, water quality initiatives, wildfire prevention efforts, and operational expenses for nonprofits.

Since its inception, the OLRT Fund has directed **\$5 million towards 11 open lands and river projects and \$2.8 million to support 85 trail and wildfire projects.** Check out our website to

learn about each project - www.co.grand.co.us/851/Open-Lands-Rivers-and-Trails-Advisory-Co Thanks for this fund, we're conserving open spaces for future generations right here in Grand County.

2024 Highlights

- Colorado Headwaters Land Trust (CHLT)** acquired the 743-acre Granby Highlands-Trails Conservation Easement, including 2 miles of the Colorado River. Jeremy Krones, CHLT's Executive Director, shared "CHLT is deeply grateful for our community's enthusiasm for conservation. Hundreds of acres have been preserved thanks to OLRT, and we look forward to continuing this work with the OLRT Advisory Committee and the Board of County Commissioners."
- Shoshone Water Right Preservation:** This year, Grand County allocated \$1 million towards the Shoshone Water Right Preservation. This critical

effort, managed by the Colorado River District, will help secure water flows essential to our outdoor recreation, tourism, and agriculture, adding 200-400 cubic feet per second to the Colorado River in average and dry years.

- Trail Improvements:** Over \$800,000 was awarded for six trail maintenance projects, a new loop trail, four wildfire prevention efforts, and operational support for three nonprofits. The Town of Winter Park received funds to repave the Fraser River Trail and Hot Sulphur Springs completed the Himebaugh Gulch loop trail.
- Wildfire Mitigation:** OLRT funds supported multiple wildfire prevention projects. Grants were awarded to the Grand County Wildfire Council and Grand Fire Protection District No. 1 for burn programs and road safety enhancements. Brad White, Fire Chief at Grand Fire Protection District No. 1 says "We're very excited to finally have some locally available annual funding for wildfire mitigation. Protecting our community from wildland fire is a critical part of protecting open lands, rivers, and trails and the projects funded this year will not only fund great projects in 2025, but will help lay groundwork for effective projects for years to come."

Partnerships & Matching Funds

All projects were further supported by matching funds from local and state organizations, including Grand County municipalities, Fire Districts, the Colorado State Forest Service, and the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance, among others. This collaboration helps maximize the impact of each dollar contributed through the OLRT fund.

Committee Members:

Paul Bruchez, District 2 Rep
Michelle Cowardin, Hot Sulphur Springs Rep
Brian Kelly, District 1 Rep
Maura McKnight, Chair & Fraser Rep
Laurie Pope, Kremmling Rep
George Sharpe, Winter Park Rep
Cam Stone, Grand Lake Rep
Doreen Sumerlin, Granby Rep
Wendy Thompson, District 3 Rep

* We gained three new members in 2025 who replace 2024 members who termed out. Zach Wehr (replaced Paul Bruchez), Adeline Brackett (replaced Wendy Thompson) and Adam Cwikin (replaced Maura McKnight).

In 2024 alone, OLRT awarded \$2.1 million across eight organizations, bringing additional funding into Grand County and leveraging sales tax dollars for the greatest benefit.



A \$1 million award was provided to support Grand County's contribution to the preservation of Shoshone Water Rights.

Thank you, Grand County voters, for your vision and commitment to preserving open spaces, protecting our rivers, and enhancing recreational opportunities. The benefits of your contributions are significant, and we are excited for what the future holds, particularly with the expanded uses of the fund.

For more information, please contact Anna Drexler-Dreis at aldrexler@gmail.com.

Next Grant Cycle:

February 3 - March 7, 2025. Visit our website and follow us on Facebook and Instagram @grandcounty_olrt.



The Advisory Committee tours the Colorado River Connectivity Channel, a project awarded \$1 million in 2018. Pictured left to right: George Sharpe (Winter Park rep), Anna Drexler-Dreis (Administrator), Cam Stone (Grand Lake rep), Laurie Pope (Kremmling rep), Brian Kelly (District 1 rep), Doreen Sumerlin (Granby rep), Maura McKnight (Chair and Fraser rep). Not pictured are Paul Bruchez (District 2 rep), Michelle Cowardin (Hot Sulphur Springs rep), and Wendy Thompson (District 3 rep).

