

JOHN FIELDER SLIDE SHOW - Highlighting the Preservation of Lower Blue Ranch Land - EARTH DAY! 6:30 pm, Tuesday, April 22

We are thrilled to announce that John Fielder will share this exciting new photographic project with us on Earth Day at the Silverthorne Pavilion. He wants to accelerate the rate at which ranches are being preserved by manifesting their beauty on film with his large format camera. Colorado's ranchlands are fast being lost to development. Conversely, federal and state tax laws encourage ranch protection.

Colorado ranchers want their ranches to remain in the family and to never be developed. Estate tax liabilities often encourage land rich-cash poor families to sell out. Many are clamoring to sell their development rights for the much-needed cash in exchange for placing a conservation easement on the deed. This restriction means that the ranch can never be subdivided in perpetuity no matter who owns it. Ranch families "get their cake and eat it, too!" However, non-profit land trusts are having a hard time raising all of the money needed to save Colorado ranches.

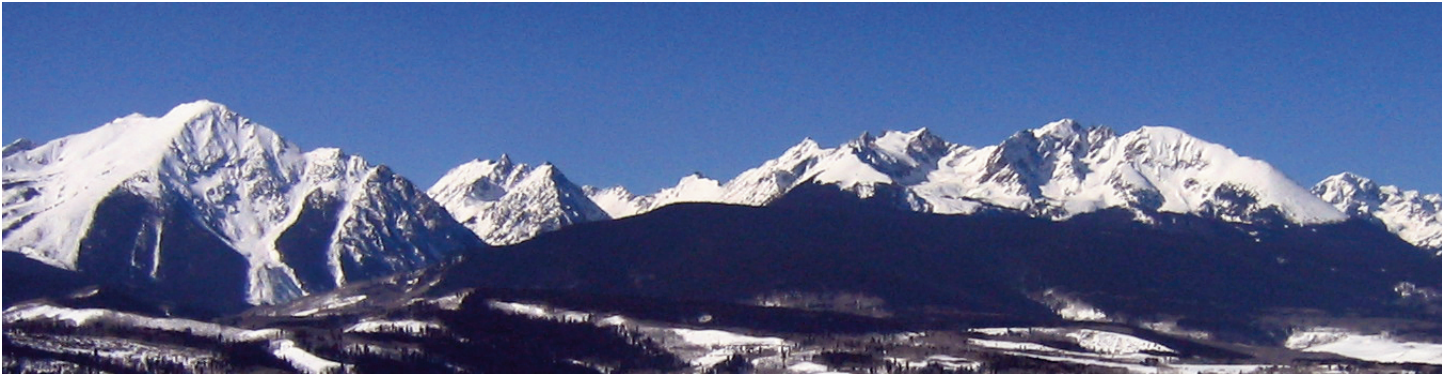
Containing photographs of the landscape of working Colorado ranches, *Ranches of Colorado*, will be published by Westcliffe Publishers in September, 2009. Partners Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts, Colorado Cattlemen's Association Land Trust, and Colorado Open Lands will be the beneficiaries of proceeds of books sales and underwriting of the project by Colorado corporate sponsors. The book and project will be used politically to attract interest in finding new funding sources to save Colorado's rural landscapes.

Please join us for this extraordinary preview of photographs for the book project! You will especially enjoy the special focus on ranches in the Lower Blue.

A Snotel Site on Elliot Ridge?

The Middle Park Conservation District (MPCD) is funding the construction of a new snotel site on Elliot Ridge. Snotel data includes automated snow pack, water content, soil moisture, air, soil temperatures, solar and wind data. MPCD has been requesting interested landowners to contribute to the cost of construction which will begin this summer. They have received funding from the Colorado State Water Conservation Board, Middle Park Water Conservation District and one landowner. They are hoping some other folks will make contributions. The total cost is around \$18,000. The data that would come from this snotel site would be available to the public and would help landowners predict available irrigation water. Anyone interested in contributing can contact Bonnie M. Koblitz, District Manager, Middle Park Conservation District, 970-724-3456

The MPCD annual dinner, March 1st, will feature the dynamic speaker, Rich Knight a CSU professor with the Department of Forest, Rangeland and Watershed Stewardship. He will speak on "Ranchers as a Keystone Species in a West that Works." Contact Bonnie Koblitz for more information.



LOWER BLUE WATER FORUM

The Future of Water Use and Development in the Lower Blue 7:00 pm, JUNE 19 at the Silverthorne Pavilion

Join us on June 19 for a close look at Lower Blue water issues. FOLBR and the Blue River Watershed Group (BRWG) will jointly present this water forum with a focus on the Lower Blue.

Your perspective on Colorado water depends on your location in a watershed. The Lower Blue is in a unique location with respect to many of these water issues. Discussion will include the the Lower Blue Pumpback, Wolcott Reservoir, Old Dillon Reservoir enlargement, the Blue River Management Plan, the future of agricultural water, and river / habitat enhancement in the Lower Blue and recent water legislation.

The evening will include an open house with information and displays by entities with an interest in Lower Blue water and a panel discussion focusing our water future in the Lower Blue. Speakers will include Jim Pokrandt, Colorado River District and Scott Hummer, State Water Commissioner.

River enhancement projects in the Lower Blue will be highlighted. Ranchers in the Lower Blue represent a vanguard of fish, waterfowl and river flow enhancement projects. We can all learn more about how to be better stewards of the river and our precious water resources. The future will bring increased pressure on our water resources.

The water quality in the Lower Blue is of the highest quality and has been designated as a gold medal fishery by the Division of Wildlife. Other segments of the Blue River watershed have significantly impaired water quality due to impacts associated with historical hard rock mining, runoff from old mining areas, urban areas, construction and I-70 maintenance activities. The Lower Blue is dependent on reservoir operations that could minimize water quantity and quality.

The Blue River Watershed Group (BRWG) is a volunteer organization that strives to protect, restore, and promote a healthy Blue River Watershed through cooperative community education, stewardship, and resource management.

For more information, go to <http://www.blueriverwatershed.org/>

