



Preserving the Yampa Valley's
Rural Heritage

Open Space, Scenic Vistas, Wildlife Habitat, and Agriculture

840 NEWLY CONSERVED ACRES!

Wildlife Conservation and Scenic Open Ranchland



Since homesteaders first arrived here in the late 1800s, open ranchland has long been a defining trait of this community and of Northwest Colorado at large. These lands have always supplied **food, shelter, and movement corridors for wildlife**, and now they provide agricultural opportunities that contribute to the local economy while **preserving the critical habitat many species depend on**.

Yampa Valley Land Trust has dedicated 25 years to protecting this region's wealth of open land resources, with over **56,130 acres conserved** to date. YVLT also collaborated with community leaders to bring over **5,500 acres to the public providing access to outdoor recreation**, giving people new opportunities to experience nature and connect with Northwest Colorado's diverse mountain landscapes.

Our community-based land conservation organization owes much of its success to the strong relationships it has built with local ranchers and agricultural operators over the years, and YVLT's latest conservation project in South Routt County is no exception.

*Read on to learn about the 840-acre **"Rossi Ranch: Devil's Grave."***

Photo: Kim Rossi



YVLT's New Project Along Flat Tops Trail Scenic Byway

Thanks to your support, YVLT just finalized a conservation easement on an 840-acre property known as the "Devil's Grave," a project that unites wildlife conservation and Northwest Colorado's storied agricultural history.

This newly conserved parcel in South Routt County will forever remain undeveloped and available for wildlife while still providing opportunities for brothers Dean and Jim Rossi to continue open land ranching. **The Rossis have deep roots in the Yampa Valley: their family has owned and operated a Routt County ranch for four generations.** A fifth generation is in line to ultimately take control of the ranch, continuing the family's agricultural legacy on the same lands Dean and Jim (and their father before them) have spent decades working.

The conservation easement also safeguards the **striking open vistas as seen from the Flat Tops Trail Scenic Byway and Colorado Highway 131,** which feature unobstructed views into the Flat Tops Wilderness and its rugged 11,000-foot peaks.

YVLT's latest project highlights the natural compatibility between wildlife and agriculture. With a limited human footprint on this property, wildlife enjoy an 840-acre sanctuary where they remain undisturbed for much of the year. The sagebrush environment here provides important **habitat for Greater Sage-**

grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, and provides **Critical Winter Range for mule deer** when the Yampa Valley is blanketed in snow.

All of these iconic Colorado species have suffered a statewide decline in recent years and the ecosystem fragmentation is largely to blame. **Their long-term survival may hinge on today's efforts to preserve core blocks of sagebrush and mountain shrub habitat throughout the Intermountain West.**



Fortunately, a conservation easement on the "Devil's Grave" brings us one step closer to securing a critical mass of protected shrubland ecosystems in this magnificent corner of the state!

Thank you to Great Outdoors Colorado, Routt County (via its Purchase of Development Rights program), the Rossi family, and dedicated YVLT supporters for making this conservation project a reality.

[Click here to read more about YVLT's latest conservation project.](#)



[Click to watch.](#)

"I think the comforting fact for me is that when I'm

gone, this place will still stay a ranch, and will still be a haven for wildlife and be protected."

- Maggie Miller, Cattle Rancher -

Video: Sage Grouse Initiative

Bordering Conservation Projects:

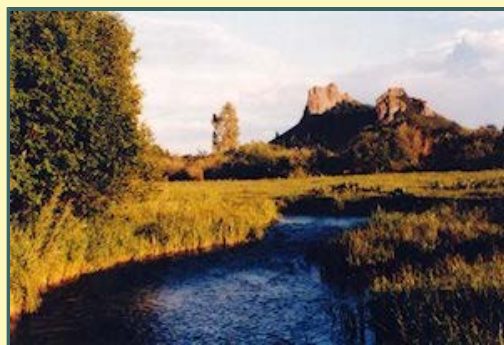
Harnessing Natural Synergy in the Landscape



The *"Devil's Grave"* shares a border with and is in close proximity to another YVLT-conserved property owned by the same historic ranching family: the 600-acre ***"Rossi Ranch on the Yampa River."***

Completed in 1996, **this project was the first conservation easement in the state funded by Great Outdoors Colorado**, preserving the property's lush irrigated meadows along the Yampa River as well as the instantly recognizable Laughlin Buttes. These stunning volcanic towers loom ominously above Highway 131 between the towns of Yampa and Phippsburg, even catching the eye of famed Colorado landscape photographer John Fielder (featured in his 2009 book, *"Ranches of Colorado"*).

The two bordering conservation easements protect a total of 1,440 acres (1,773 acres when including a contiguous 333-acre conservation easement), safeguarding invaluable riparian and sagebrush environments as well as South Routt County's sweeping rural vistas. These neighboring projects highlight YVLT's landscape-scale approach to land conservation - recognizing that ecosystems and scenic view corridors extend far beyond the boundaries of a single tract of land.



Many privately-owned lands harbor incredible biodiversity and provide important passageways for wildlife to roam. Bordering conservation projects keep the landscape's natural connections intact, preserving conservation values across a broader and more significant area.

Fueled by your support, YVLT will continue to seek out new opportunities to develop "**conservation corridors**" in key places throughout Northwest Colorado - expanding protections for wildlife as well as the region's striking open scenery.

A sincere **thank you to our donors - you make these conservation projects possible!**

*Your continued support helps us keep the Yampa Valley **wild and open.***



You
Can Make a
Difference
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Visit our website at www.yvlt.org to learn more about Yampa Valley Land Trust.

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