



Upper Elk River Valley, Routt County

More than a century ago, hardy pioneers arrived in this mountain valley and made a living through cattle and sheep ranching along with timber harvesting and mining. Today, recreation and tourism are the mainstays of the local economy—now located on the doorstep of the Steamboat Springs resort community. Ranching continues to play an important role in the community, due in large part to a new set of pioneers. These modern day ranchers were among the first to embrace conservation easements as an option to protect their land and livelihoods. This effort included a rancher named Jay Fetcher who went on to found CCALT based on his experience by looking for a group that could understand both land conservation and agriculture. Eight ranches have been protected since the mid-1990s. CCALT continues the ranchland conservation efforts in this area in the future, assuring that the core of the valley will remain in agriculture.