



# COLORADO WEST LAND TRUST

Conserving Land. Connecting People. Enriching Lives.

## LEGAL INTERN – WATER RIGHTS

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>STATUS</b>       | Temporary; casual; non-exempt   |
| <b>REPORTS TO</b>   | Conservation Director   |
| <b>LOCATION</b>     | Remote with at least one in-person meeting in Grand Junction required |
| <b>SCHEDULE</b>     | Part-time Fall position. Flexible schedule                            |
| <b>TRAVEL</b>       | Optional outside of mandatory Grand Junction meeting                  |
| <b>SALARY RANGE</b> | \$35/hour for an anticipated 400 hours                                |

**Colorado West Land Trust (CWLT)** is the leading Land Trust in western Colorado, serving a seven-county region from Grand Junction south to Ouray and Gunnison west into Grand County, Utah. Based in Grand Junction, CWLT has conserved over 120,000 acres through more than 500 conservation agreements over its 40-year history. CWLT is a private, charitable non-profit organization, accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and governed by an active Board of Directors. CWLT has offices in Grand Junction and Montrose, Colorado.

**Mission:** *To protect and enhance agricultural land, wildlife habitat and scenic lands in western Colorado to benefit the community at large, enrich lives, provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, and ensure our connection to the land for generations to come.* CWLT's professional staff are flexible, solutions-oriented, collaborative workers who have a passion to fulfill the organization's mission.

## **JOB SUMMARY**

The Legal Intern (Water Rights) advances the mission of Colorado West Land Trust (CWLT) by assisting the organization in developing a database that will help the organization better understand and manage the water rights encumbrances held in its portfolio of 600 conservation easements. This work will enable the Land Trust to develop and implement strategies and tools that will ultimately make the West Slope's natural systems and agricultural communities more resilient in the face of a warmer, dryer climate and shrinking water supplies.

The Legal Intern will research and catalogue water rights information from conservation easements held by CWLT. This will entail working closely with CWLT staff and consultants to review conservation easement water rights language, research water rights encumbered by conservation easements, create a system to catalogue this information, integrate the data into a database, and conduct research to assist in these tasks.

## **ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Conservation Easement Water Encumbrance Catalogue**

- Work with CWLT staff and consultants to develop a system to categorize water rights language contained in conservation easements. Identify key elements of water rights encumbered by conservation easements to be tracked in the Land Trust's database.

- Review CWLT's portfolio of conservation easements, compile information on restrictions on use of water rights contained in conservation easements, and compile information on water rights encumbered by conservation easements.
- Coordinate with CWLT's technology consultants (BackOffice Thinking) to ensure effective integration of the catalogue data into LOCATE database.
- Research information related to water rights and water use as assigned. Topics may include water rights of local irrigation entities, historical uses of water on conserved properties, conversing with other land trusts to discuss water encumbrances, relative priorities of water rights in local geographic areas, working with state water administration officials to understand water rights administration in Western Colorado river basins and other tasks as assigned.

**Professionalism and teamwork**

- Build and maintain positive collegial relationships within the Conservation Team and CWLT staff at large.
- Establish and sustain cordial, productive, and trustworthy relationships with landowners, funders, and external partners.
- Communicate professionally, courteously, and effectively with colleagues, board members, landowners, attorneys, service providers, funders, and other partners.
- Demonstrate problem solving skills. Proactively develop and recommend solutions as needed.
- Accept feedback in the spirit of growth and continuous improvement.
- Maintain productivity when working remotely and in an office setting.

**Other responsibilities**

- Participate in project related meetings with CWLT staff, consultants, and partners.

**REQUIRED EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE**

- Bachelor's Degree and current enrollment in law school or completed J.D. degree.
- Familiarity with Colorado water law, proficient with legal terminology, and an understanding of the different types of water rights in Colorado.
- Ability to research water rights information from state agencies, online databases, and other resources.
- Proficient with Microsoft Office applications (Excel, Word).
- Experience with database applications or demonstrated proficiency in learning to use software.

**PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Prolonged periods at a desk and working on a computer.

**WORK ENVIRONMENT**

- Remote, access to Zoom or Microsoft Teams video-conferencing applications required
- Limited travel in Mesa, Delta, and Montrose counties.