

## **Gunnison Basin Land and Water Steward**

### **Summary of Position:**

Colorado Open Lands (COL) is seeking a passionate and dedicated **Gunnison Basin Land and Water Steward** to join our team! This position, based in COL's new **Gunnison** office, will contribute to the stewardship and long-term protection of conserved lands and water resources, and will help build a broad community presence in the region to encourage future land and water conservation. The Land and Water Steward will work collaboratively with landowners, partners, and COL staff to steward conservation easements. Responsibilities include working with conserved property owners to address conservation easement stewardship issues and conducting conservation easement monitoring visits. The Land and Water Steward will also support COL's land and water restoration program.

### **About Colorado Open Lands**

Colorado Open Lands (COL) is a nationally accredited and state-certified, statewide land trust. Our mission is to preserve the significant open lands and diminishing natural heritage of Colorado through private and public partnerships, innovative land conservation techniques, and strategic leadership. Since 1981, we have helped to protect over 582,000 acres of native prairies, forests, wetlands, rangelands, and working lands.

### **Primary Responsibilities:**

- **Conservation Easement Compliance Monitoring**
  - Monitor 50+ conservation easements annually *in-person*, across Colorado, to ensure compliance. Properties range in size from 1-20,000+ acres.
    - In-person monitoring includes hiking or driving around a conserved property using GPS and ESRI Field Maps to navigate and collect field data, documenting any changes to the property.
    - Meet with landowners to discuss the conservation easement, any changes to the property within the last year, and their plans for the future.
  - Monitor 50+ conservation easements annually using *satellite imagery*.
  - Complete thorough reporting of each monitoring visit.
  
- **Conservation Easement Stewardship**
  - Support landowners in addressing conservation easement stewardship issues. Conservation easement stewardship issues include reviewing requests for new buildings, roads, utilities, etc. and resolving violations or other enforcement issues.
  - Build and maintain strong relationships with private landowners, providing natural resource stewardship technical assistance to support best management practices.

- **Land and Water Restoration**
  - Work with private landowners, natural resource government agencies, academic institutions, and other stakeholders to identify prospective habitat restoration opportunities and support COL's land and water restoration program.
- **Community Engagement**
  - Build cooperative, effective working relationships with partner agencies, landowners, funding agencies and foundations, local government, conservationists, policy makers, and planners to advance conservation, stewardship and restoration goals.

### **Minimum Qualifications:**

- 2-3 years of work experience in conservation, environmental science, or a related field.
- Bachelor's degree in natural resource management, agriculture, environmental science, land use planning, geography, or a related field; OR 2-3 additional years related experience.
- Familiarity with ESRI ArcPro computer mapping software.
- Willingness and ability to work in sometimes challenging field conditions. Ability to work outdoors and navigate large farms and ranches independently, often in remote settings.
- Willingness to travel across Colorado, including occasional overnight trips (travel comprises approximately 35% of time, mostly from June-September).
- Strong organizational, time management, and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills.
- A valid driver's license and good driving record (vehicle provided June-September).
- A positive attitude and sense of humor.
- A commitment to land and water conservation.

### **Preferred Qualifications:**

- Experience working with a land trust or similar land conservation organization.
- Experience working with private landowners and agricultural producers.
- An understanding of land and water conservation issues in Colorado.

### **Compensation and Benefits:**

- This position is a permanent, full-time (40 hours/week) position.
- The salary range is \$57,000–\$62,000 commensurate with skills and experience.
- Colorado Open Lands offers a competitive compensation package, including 401k plan with match, health insurance (medical, dental, vision, and HSA), life and disability insurance, paid time off (sick leave, vacation, and holidays) and a collaborative, flexible work environment.

**Position Location and Timing**

- The start date is flexible, ideally late May 2026.
- This position will be based in our new Gunnison, Colorado office and the successful candidate will be expected to live within a reasonable driving distance.
- COL provides a hybrid work model that balances remote flexibility with a requirement for regular in-office attendance.

**Application Instructions:**

- Please send a résumé and cover letter to Chelsea Collins, Director of Land Stewardship at [jobs@coloradoopenlands.org](mailto:jobs@coloradoopenlands.org).
- Please identify in your cover letter where you saw the job posting.
- **The subject line should be in this format: “Last name, First name: Land and Water Steward”**
- The position is opened until filled.

**EEO Statement:**

- Colorado Open Lands provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetics, or other protected status. For information about Colorado Open Lands, please visit our website at [www.coloradoopenlands.org](http://www.coloradoopenlands.org).