



# CONSERVING IRRIGATED FARMLAND IN LARIMER COUNTY

# Why?

## Our Lands Our Future

Table 3-1. Land Conservation Needs Assessment Summary

	Our Lands - Our Future Outreach	Plug In To Nature Outreach	Master Plan Update Outreach
Conserve lands to protect lakes, rivers, streams and preserve water quality	Dark Orange	Light Brown	White
Conserve lands to protect natural resources, wildlife habitat and rare species	Dark Orange	White	White
Conserve lands for more outdoor recreation opportunities	Dark Orange	Dark Orange	White
Conserve lands to create greenways or trail corridors that connect communities and parks	Dark Orange	Dark Orange	White
Conserve lands to preserve working farms and ranches	Light Brown	White	Dark Orange
Conserve lands within our communities near neighborhoods and schools	Dark Orange	Dark Orange	Light Brown
Conserve community separators (open lands between cities and towns)	Dark Orange	White	White
Conserve regional lands	Dark Orange	White	Light Brown
Conserve historic sites or renovate historic structures	Light Brown	White	Light Brown
Invest in management and maintenance of current natural areas and facilities	Dark Orange	White	White
Invest in additional paved and natural surface trails	Light Brown	White	Light Brown
Invest in additional trailheads, parking, shelters, facilities, etc.	Dark Orange	White	White
Restore and rehabilitate rivers and open lands	Light Brown	White	Dark Orange
Acquire water rights for in-stream flows and wildlife habitat	Dark Orange	White	White
Secure water for agricultural lands	White	White	Dark Orange
Provide land for emerging farmers and small acreage farming	Light Brown	White	Dark Orange
Conserve land with proximity to existing open space	Dark Orange	White	White

Public Outreach Photo:

Dark Orange = Top priority; Light Brown = Secondary Priority; White = either not a priority or the question was not repeated in this study.  
 \*In effort not to duplicate efforts from previous studies, these surveys asked a limited number of questions to gather additional feedback. Not all questions were asked in all studies.

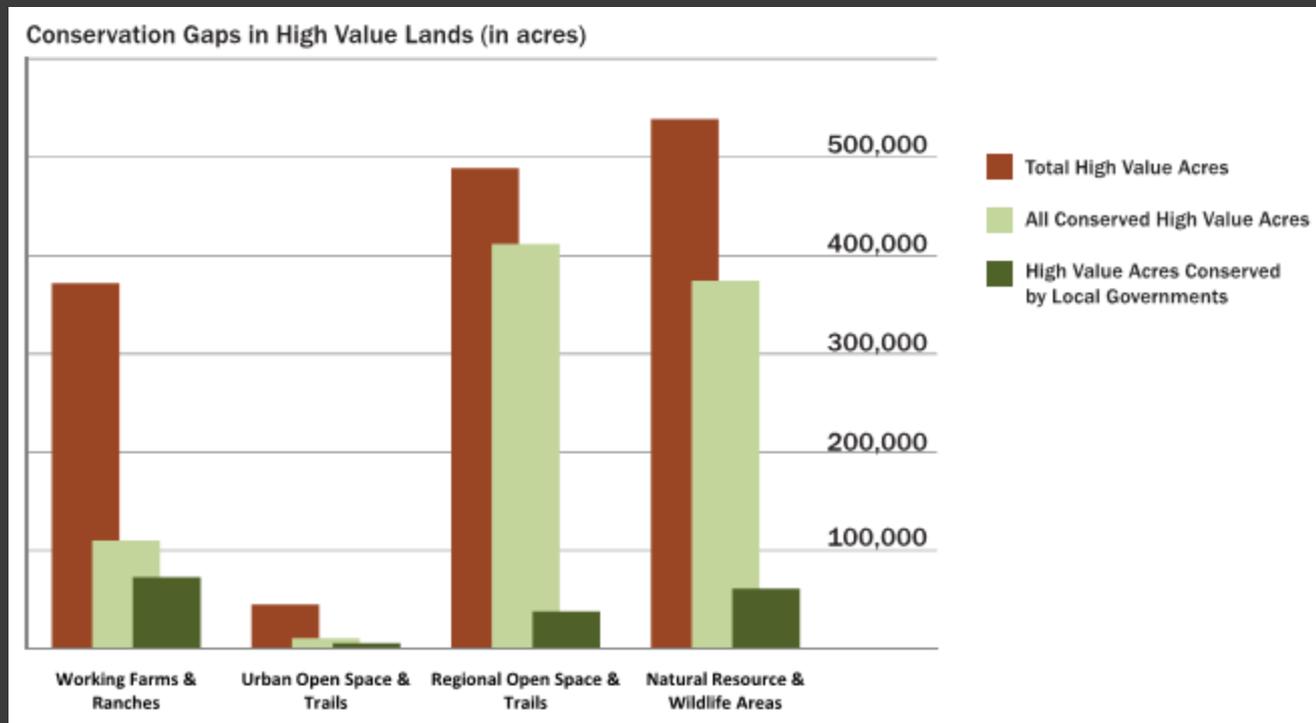
# Why?

## Conservation Values provided by Irrigated Farms:

- Wildlife habitat
- Open space - scenic
- Community separator
- Farmland productivity – local economy
- Groundwater recharge
- Local food
- Flood surge control

# Why?

- The greatest gap in conservation occurs with working farms and ranches, having 86% of the high priority areas not currently under some form of protection.



# Why? – Time is of the essence

## ⦿ Water:

- Originally, 85% of CBT shares were owned by agriculture, now only 34% are.
- More than 72% of the 10,000 shares of North Poudre Irrigation Company stock is owned by cities and water districts.

## ⦿ Sales of Water:

○ CBT Shares	Jun 2014: \$18,000
	Feb 2015: \$25,000
	July 2015: \$30,000

# Why? – Interruptible Supply



**Irrigated farmscapes are reservoirs**

They can provide water in dry years if water-sharing agreements are developed

# How? – Open Lands Acquisitions

- Larimer County Open Lands is exploring opportunities to:
  - Tie existing water to farmland through voluntary conservation easements, either purchased or donated;
  - Purchase and manage water rights for farmland irrigation on conserved properties;
  - Develop water use agreements, alternative transfer mechanisms, and partnerships with private and public parties that dedicate water to farmland at least 7 out of 10 years;

# Funding Sources

- ⦿ GOCO – Open Space Grant
- ⦿ NRCS – Farmland Protection
  
- ⦿ CWCB – Innovation Grant & Water Supply Reserve Account
  
- ⦿ City and Town Open Space Sales Tax
- ⦿ Private Foundations
  
- ⦿ Alternative Transfer Mechanism Water Agreement
- ⦿ Conservation Buyer

# CWCB Grant

## **Alternative Agricultural Water Transfer Methods Grants**

### **What is the Alternative Agricultural Water Transfer Methods Grant Program?**

The purpose of the Program is to assist in developing and implementing creative alternatives to the traditional purchase and transfer of agricultural water. These alternative methods could include:

- Interruptible supply agreements
- Long-term rotational fallowing
- Water banks
- Deficit/partial irrigation practices
- Alternate cropping types

### **Who can apply for a Grant?**

Any private or public entity that can contract with the state and that can establish and document the need for the project is eligible to apply for funds.

### **How can the money be used?**

Approved projects should provide usable and transferable information that will increase our understanding of how to successfully design transfer programs that provide a long-term, reliable water supply while sustaining meaningful agricultural production.

Examples of activities that would qualify for funding from this program include:

- Technical analysis of transferable consumptive use
- Identification and examination of administrative and legal considerations or issues related to alternative agricultural water transfers
- Technical, logistical and/or legal analysis/work to organize the institutional framework necessary to implement an alternative transfer method(s)
- Technical, logistical and/or legal analysis of water supply delivery options. This may include conceptual solutions and the feasibility of implementing the delivery of water to the new use.
- Assist in addressing potential third party concerns

### **How do I apply for a Grant?**

Currently, the program has approximately \$750,000 available for grants.