



Rainbow Reflections

Special Land Edition

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Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of the Rockies
Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp
107 South Ninth Street, Suite B
Canon City, Colorado 81212

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Rainbow Trail is operated and maintained under authority of a USDA Forest Service Special Use Permit. Rainbow Trail is located in the San Isabel National Forest, USDA.

Address Service Requested

One Step Closer to Home

Rainbow Trail purchases 120 acres to use in Forest Service land exchange to acquire camp

Together, we have been on an amazing journey these last two years. In early 2012, an opportunity arose for the Rainbow Trail Board to pursue private property the Forest Service would like to acquire that could be used in a potential land exchange so we could own our site. There was urgency because the owner wanted to close on the sale of the property before the end of the year. Without knowing neither the value of the new land or ours, or even how much money we would need to raise, we stepped in faith in May of that year and entered into a contract to purchase the land. We started raising money in July and by the end of 2012, we had raised \$712,000! This was the most phenomenal fundraising experience I have ever been a part of. In the end, that property did not meet our needs, but we now had the funding to still move forward.

In January of 2013, the RTLC board approached Ed and Diane Jago about our interest in purchasing their property, an isolated private inholding on the National Forest located eight miles from a county-maintained road. The Jagos purchased the 120 acre Locke Park parcel in 1994 to retire on. The parcel is located within the San Isabel National Forest on the north side of the Wet Mountain Range. After several conversations, the Jagos allowed us to have the property appraised so that we had an idea of the value of the property. Though the Jagos were not initially excited about selling, as we moved into spring, they embraced the idea and decided to sell.

The 120-acre Locke Park property is extremely attractive to the Forest Service as this portion of the Forest provides habitat for the federally listed Canada lynx (threatened) and Mexican spotted owl (threatened). The headwaters of Newlin Creek, which are located on this property, are part of the municipal watershed for the City of Florence. Also, Newlin Creek has been determined to be a suitable stream for reintroducing Greenback Cutthroat Trout.

After several offers and counter offers, Rainbow Trail's offer to purchase the Locke Park property was accepted. The hope was that we would be able to acquire the land and still have enough funds to cover the cost of the exchange process and consulting support. However, the purchase price negotiated with the Jagos was \$630,000. After careful deliberation, the Board approved the purchase price, realizing there are no other options in the San Isabel Forest if we really wanted to own our site. On February 19, 2014 Rainbow Trail closed on the non-federal land and became the owners of 120 acres of land to use in an exchange with the Pike-San Isabel National Forest!

With the acquisition of the Locke Park property, we are one step closer to home. And this is a big step! Since acquiring land that makes a land exchange viable, we have stepped up conversations with the Forest Service. In June of 2014, the San Carlos District Ranger and land specialists in the Forest Supervisor's office spent a day with us walking the Locke Park property as well as the extended Rainbow Trail property that we would acquire. They loved the idea of the Locke Park property becoming park of the National Forest, probably as much as we desire to own our site!!

A Reminder of Why We Need To Own Our Site

Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp is a holy place for so many people and has become a precious gift of the Church. Yet the land on which Rainbow Trail is located on is not owned by the Church, but by the federal government as part of the San Isabel National Forest. Since its inception Rainbow Trail has leased land from the Forest Service. This arrangement is concerning for several reasons, including:

1. The possibility our lease would not be renewed or even terminated if the Forest Service perceives a better use for the property.
2. Some day the existence of a religious organization located on public lands may become controversial, thereby threatening the security of Rainbow Trail's lease.
3. Because we are on public lands, we cannot limit stranger access to our site. This could become a safety issue.

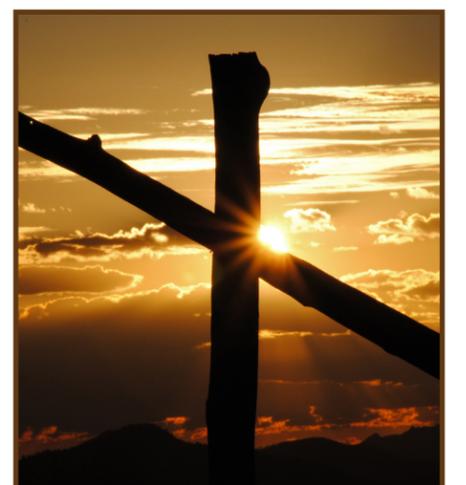
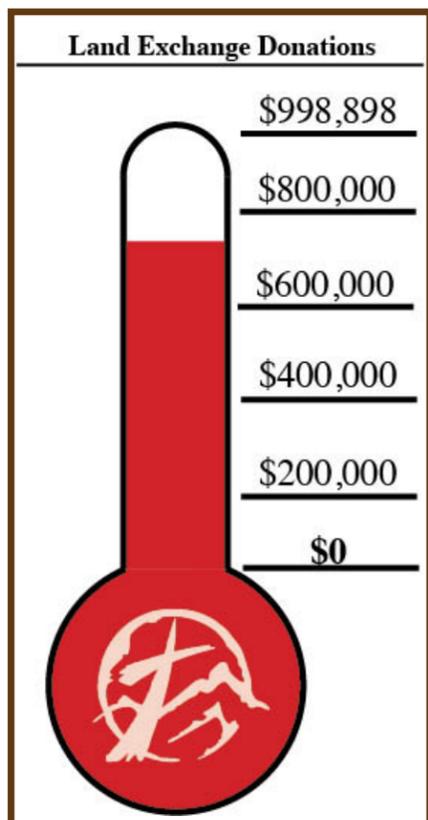
Ownership of the property would protect the camp's investment of \$4.5 million in buildings to date. And by owning our site, we will guarantee that Rainbow Trail will be available for generations to come.

And Why A Land Exchange With the U.S. Forest Service?

The Forest Service does not have the authority to conduct an outright sale of National Forest lands. A land exchange is the only method for acquiring federal lands such as the site on which Rainbow Trail currently resides.

To complete an exchange, Rainbow Trail needs to provide private lands on the San Isabel National Forest with high public benefits that the Forest Service is interested in acquiring. The Locke Park property meets this requirement. The next step is a formal exchange proposal that will be submitted to the Forest Service, beginning the 64-step land exchange process. The process culminates in the Forest Service issuing a patent to Rainbow Trail and Rainbow Trail deeding the private lands it secured to the federal government.

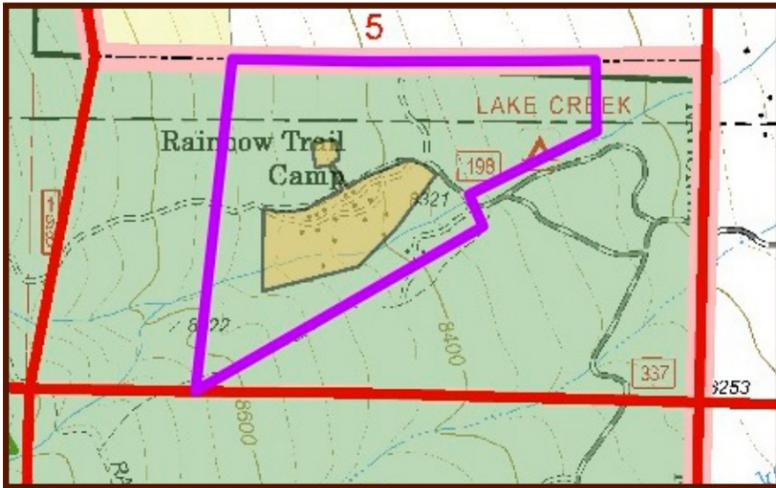
The current configuration of the federal parcel around our current site includes 108 acres that would create a logical management boundary. The 108 acres includes Rainbow Trail's existing 19-acre site and extends north of the ballfield to the Forest boundary and east on the north side of Lake Creek across from the Forest Service's Lake Creek Campground.



Rainbow Trail Mission Statement

Through the ministries of Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp, God claims us, Christ transforms us, and the Holy Spirit sends us for faithful service.

One Step Closer to Home



Configuration of 108-acre parcel around current RTLCL site.

Most Asked Questions

There are several questions that we have been asked often. Hopefully by answering these, we can clarify the whole exchange process. **Didn't the exchange already happen?** No. Rainbow Trail acquired non-federal land back in February that can now be used in an exchange. That was an important step to initiate the process to move into an exchange. **When are you moving camp?** We are NOT moving camp. Camp will stay right where it has always been, but will be surrounded by about 90 additional acres that will be ours after the exchange process. **How long will the exchange process take?** The land exchange process can take anywhere from two to eight years, depending on the time available for the Forest Service to focus on our exchange and time needed to complete all of the studies as part of the exchange. Finding a retired Forest Service employee to serve as the point person on our exchange would greatly speed up the process. We are hoping that this land exchange process can be completed over the next three years. **What is the cost of the land exchange process?** The cost of necessary studies and reimbursing Forest Service staff to process the land exchange is approximately \$200,000. However, there are additional expenses such as the land conservancy process, consulting fees to walk us through the exchange, and a new site master plan that need to happen as part of this exchange that take the total cost of the land exchange process to \$275,000.

We Need Your Assistance

One way you can help us move this process forward is to help us identify a retired Forest Service employee that might be able to serve as the point person for the land exchange. They would need to be approved by the local Forest Service but this would greatly speed up the exchange process. If you have any names, please contact me at dave@rainbowtrail.org and I will have our consultant follow up.

How Can You Help?

Because of the higher price that we had to pay for the Locke Park parcel, Rainbow Trail anticipates that we will need to raise an additional \$275,000 to cover the cost of consultant fees, administrative expenses, and the work to complete the Forest Service's 64-step exchange process.

The RTLCL Board has spent a great amount of time considering all of the additional expenses that will be related to the exchange itself along with related expenses because of the additional acreage we will acquire such as a new site master plan, a new strategic plan, the land conservancy process, as well as all of the studies and assessments related to the exchange that will occur during the exchange process.

The purchase of the Locke Park property is only the first step, but a critical one to realize the goal of Rainbow Trail owning its site and having control of its future. This kind of opportunity may never occur again. We need to press forward and make this happen!

We need your prayers and we need your financial support. For us to achieve the goal of raising another \$275,000 to finish this project, we need people to step forward that believe in the value of this ministry in the lives of youth and families. We know that many of you have already given and given generously to the purchase of the land. We promise this will be the last time we come back to you and ask you to give to the land exchange project. If you gave to the land purchase, I hope that you will consider giving an additional gift for the future of RTLCL. If you haven't given yet, consider making a special gift for the future generations that will be a part of this ministry. We are open to matching fund opportunities or a capstone gift if you would like to use your gift to help encourage others to give as well. I have even put a bounty on my mustache for a capstone gift of at least \$30,000 to \$50,000 to finish off this campaign. I would love to have a more in-depth conversation with you and explain more about this once in a lifetime opportunity. You can reach me by email at dave@rainbowtrail.org or by phone at 719-429-1377. Help us make Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp our Home At Last!

Are We There Yet?

Home at Last.

It may seem like a strange name for a campaign when Rainbow Trail has already been a home to so many for so many years! But the truth is, it isn't really our home yet.

Although we've had a wonderful relationship with the United States Forest Service (USFS) for 57 years, they are still our landlords, and as stated on our lease, they could call back the land at any time. Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp would be required to return the land to its original state—tearing down all the cabins and buildings that hold years of life-changing ministry and memories. We aren't home yet.

Over 10 years ago, the members of the Board of Directors began to see the importance of making a land exchange a priority. We dreamed of changes and upgrades to our current site and buildings but didn't feel right putting so much money and effort into making those things happen knowing this uncertainty loomed. A land exchange felt like a pipe dream.

Our District Forest Ranger met with the Board back then and asked, "Why bother?" Our Land Exchange Consultant met with us and explained in long and painful detail how the process works, how expensive it is, how many years it can take, and how it can all blow up at any point in the process....

But we weren't home yet.

So prayerfully, we persevered. To some, the journey we've been on might look like a lot of obstacles or closed doors. ('Are we there yet?') But to us, we've seen miracle after miracle in this process. Details that appeared to fall through or dead-end, ended up turning us in the direction God was leading. Disappointments, long times of waiting, and feeling like we were going nowhere was when the Holy Spirit would step in and lead us to a new place of abundance we hadn't seen before. The time we saw this the most clearly was when, as Dave writes about, we were panicked and rushing to raise \$600,000 in a 6 month period to close on the property we thought was the right thing. But the seller wouldn't take the Board's final offer. It felt like a failure and we couldn't see what was next. But God could.

Shortly thereafter, we began talks with Ed and Diane Jago about their land—a larger and even more desirable property to the USFS. A year later, we would close on the sale of what is now known as the Locke Park property with the \$630,000 cash we had sitting in the bank thanks to the funds raised for the land deal that 'fell through.' God was with us all along.

In talking with the USFS about the exchange process, we've been told time and time again how short staffed they are and how this is not their priority. But God still walks this journey with us. They are now open to allowing a retired employee to help, and their current staff is more in favor of exchanges than ever. We continue to see God's hand and trust, but we aren't home yet.

Will you help us with this last stretch? We know we've asked before. We purposefully waited to come to you one last time. But the members of your Board believe this might be the most important thing we can ever do in the life of Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp. We believe God's hand is on this—he has a plan, and we are faithful in trying to carry it out. It's no longer a pipe dream. We're so close!

Will you pray? Will you give?

Will you help bring us Home at Last?

Michelle Okes
President, RTLCL Board of Directors



Mustache Appeal

You know it must be important if Dave is willing to put his mustache on the line for it. Well, the land exchange and the appeal to pay for it are that important to him. So there is now a bounty on Dave's mustache. We are looking for a capstone gift, a gift that will close out our \$275,000 campaign. In exchange for a single gift of at least \$25,000 to \$50,000 (or more), Dave will shave his mustache. Now that may not seem like a big deal but here are some interesting facts: the last time Dave shaved off his mustache, it was 1977; Nellie has never seen Dave without a mustache, neither have his kids. Help us close out this appeal in grand fashion and make it memorable for all! Contact Dave at dave@rainbowtrail.org if you are interested in making this special gift!

Help Us Close Out the Ropes Course

We enjoyed an incredible summer on the new ropes course. It was definitely a blessing to our campers. We still need to finish paying the remaining \$18,000 of the \$186,000 that was needed to complete the ropes course project. You can help us finish the ropes course so we can really focus on the land exchange. If you would like to make a gift to the ropes course, send your gift to the Canon City office and be sure to mark your gift designated to "Ropes Course."

ANN (JARVIS) SMITH

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Administrative Office

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Canon City, CO 81212
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**Camp Office**

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Full-Time Staff

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