

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Don't Mess it Up: New Book, *Living Beneath the Colorado Peaks: The Story of Knapp Ranch*, Artfully Illustrates Couples' Guiding Land Management Principle

Living Beneath the Colorado Peaks: The Story of Knapp Ranch follows the journey of Betsy and Bud Knapp, former publishers of Architectural Digest and Bon Appetit magazines, as they transformed their high alpine ranch in the Vail Valley of Colorado into a paradigm for land management practices.

Vail Valley, Colo. (July 25, 2018)—Located high in the Colorado Rocky Mountains, not far from Vail, Knapp Ranch looks very different today than it did when Betsy and Bud Knapp bought the parcel in the 1990s, though you'd never know it. At the time, the couple, renowned in publishing industry circles, was looking for a change of pace and a change of place—a simpler life where they could build a welcoming home for themselves, their family and their friends; where they could grow some of their own food and breathe the fresh mountain air. Eventually, they found their dream property and it was love at first sight.

To the casual observer it looked postcard-perfect, but closer inspection revealed the property had endured decades of neglect, leaving behind a host of land management dilemmas. Unrestrained livestock and the property's earliest settlers wreaked havoc on the creek and riparian habitat. Water use rights, a complicated issue in Colorado, needed to be sorted out. Invasive plant species devoured swaths of land. Beetle-killed trees infested the surrounding forest like matches in a tinderbox waiting to be ignited. Then there were the questions about how to build structures that complimented the landscape rather than dominated it. What crops would grow at 9,000 feet above sea level, in the shadow of a mountain? How could this idyllic alpine landscape nurture not only the current owners, but generations to come. And finally, where to begin?

The answer, first and foremost, was “Don't mess it up.” It became the starting point and a guiding principle throughout the project for Betsy and Bud Knapp. This simple, humorous and all too true mandate came from celebrated landscape architect Laurie Olin, a consultant on the project, in his site report: “The principal task here is to keep from messing up a perfectly beautiful site.”

A commitment to conservation begins with understanding the responsibility that comes with land and water stewardship. Through words, photographs and interviews with experts, *Living Beneath the Colorado Peaks: The Story of Knapp Ranch* advocates for what's possible with careful planning and attention to detail. The Knapps had the foresight and good fortune to consult with top experts across multiple disciplines about how best to proceed and they generously share their insights, solutions and vision with readers:

- Site evaluation, selection and planning
- Lake, stream and riparian habitat restoration
- Re-establishing water use rights
- Using weather monitoring stations
- Forest reclamation and regeneration
- Repurposing beetle-killed wood
- High altitude farming techniques including crop selection and rotation

In its broadest sense, land management is the desire and duty to guard the land, air, water and biodiversity of a place in a way that conserves its resources for the benefit of all living things in the present and for the future. “The benefits of caring for the land will outlast our individual lifetimes,” property owner Bud Knapp said. “Knapp Ranch and places like it are finite in number. My advice—if you make the investment to

purchase land, make the investment to care for it properly. With thoughtful stewardship, it is possible to leave behind a legacy of hope for future generations.”

Living Beneath the Colorado Peaks: The Story of Knapp Ranch provides inspiration and tangible solutions to the many and varied problems that inevitably arise for property owners, developers and municipalities as they pursue the worthy goals of land management and environmental stewardship.

Author Sarah Chase Shaw is a landscape architect and an Aspen-based freelance writer whose expertise includes landscape architecture, land planning and design in the American West. She is the author of two previous books on those subjects. The Knapp Ranch book features the photography of Todd Winslow Pierce, a Vail-based award-winning landscape and fine art photographer whose images have appeared in national and regional publications, advertisements and fine art galleries.

Living Beneath the Colorado Peaks: The Story of Knapp Ranch is an 11” x 13” hardcover book with 288 pages and over 200 photographs, drawings, maps, historical pictures and an index. Retail price, \$70. ISBN 978-1-4236-5096-6. It will be available for sale beginning Sept. 11, at [Gibbs Smith](#), www.KnappRanch.com and at online sellers, independent bookstores and other quality retail outlets.

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About Knapp Ranch

[Knapp Ranch](#) is situated in the Vail valley of Colorado. Its owners, Betsy and Bud Knapp fell in love with the property on first sight. As their knowledge of and affection for the land grew, the Knapps expanded their vision beyond building an informal country retreat for family and friends. Twenty-five years in the making, Knapp Ranch is now a thriving working farm using sustainable practices; it is an exemplar for land management and water conservation, an inspiration for architectural design and traditional craftsmanship, a contributor to climate science studies, a lab for horticultural experimentation, a US Forest Service partner, an educational center for environmental studies of all kinds and it continues to evolve. Encouraged by friends and professionals to document their journey and share their knowledge with others, the result is *Living Beneath the Colorado Peaks: The Story of Knapp Ranch*.

About Distributor Gibbs Smith, Publisher

[Gibbs Smith](#) is a Utah-based publisher, founded in 1969. Its trade and special interest division publishes high-end quality products on a variety of subjects including non-fiction, home and design, cooking, regional titles, as well as distribute for select publishers. Additional information about the book is available at www.GibbsSmith.com and www.KnappRanch.com.

Media Contacts:

Karin Gamba, Resort Trends, Inc.
[Karin's email](#), Phone: 970-948-3151
or

Patsy Popejoy, Resort Trends, Inc.
[Patsy's email](#), Phone: 317-509-7384