



FRUITA
COLORADO

AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

TO: FRUITA CITY COUNCIL AND MAYOR

FROM: MARC MANCUSO, PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR

DATE: OCTOBER 17, 2023

AGENDA TEXT: RESOLUTION 2023-28 – Supporting an application for a Colorado Parks and Wildlife Non-Motorized Planning Grant for the enhancements to the Mack Ridge area of the Kokopelli Trail System

BACKGROUND

The City has been aggressive and successful at leveraging limited funding with grants to accomplish planning, design, maintenance, and construction of capital projects for many years.

The City of Fruita, Mesa County, the Bureau of Land Management Grand Junction Field Office (BLM GJFO) and the Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association (COPMOBA) are working in unison to create a trails master plan for the Mack Ridge/Kokopelli Loops (Mack Ridge) area of the McInnis Canyons NCA (MCNCA). The MCNCA was created in 2000 by Congress to protect the conservation values of the area. The conservation values as identified by the Resource Management Plan for the Mack Ridge area include recreation. The Mack Ridge Area is located about 5 to 10 miles west of Fruita. It is a highly visited area attracting nearly thousands of trail users from local communities and around the U.S. and world per year that ride bicycles, hike and run on the 30-plus miles of existing singletrack trails.

The RMP was adopted in 2004. The trail concepts approved as part of the RMP were effectively built with completion of the Mack Ridge construction efforts in 2021 which created Wrangler, Wrangler Extension, Hawkeye and Steve's Reroute. There is no current planning document addressing trail development in the Mack Ridge Area. Developing a trails master plan for the Mack Ridge area would refine this trail system and provide planning for approximately 20-24 of much needed and new non-motorized trail miles. Collecting and documenting past trail development and planning activities, along with a thorough community engagement process would be conducted by a third party, outside consultant. The plan ultimately would determine future trail alignments, trail management objectives and construction methods as they interconnect with the existing trail system and existing infrastructure.

Existing trail maintenance and sustainability, wildlife and natural resource conservation and new trail development will be addressed by development of the trails master plan through: evaluation of existing conditions; (2) evaluation of new trail proposals which include new trails, reroutes and repurposing of existing two track trails; (3) preliminary resource evaluations for wildlife, biological, cultural and paleontological resources; (4) maintenance planning; and infrastructure recommendations.

Staff has prepared an application for the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Non-Motorized Planning Grant for the enhancements to the Mack Ridge Area of the Kokopelli Trail System. A Council resolution supporting

the grant project is required to apply.

City of Fruita residents stand to benefit significantly from this planning initiative to improve the overall management of the Kokopelli system, as do the broader local community of Mesa County. One of the most popular trail systems in the region sees nearly 120,000 visitor days in essentially a rural area actually several miles from Fruita closer to the small town of Loma. Beyond the local impact, the trails within the Kokopelli system have emerged as some of the most iconic in the state, including the famous Horsethief Bench Loop, often featured on national ads for Colorado tourism featuring the stunning overlook of the Colorado River. As the state continues to market this destination across the country the demand for more sound long-term planning has grown in intensity as we now see visitors from all over the world looking for a unique trail experience.

FISCAL IMPACT

The \$10,000 cash match for the master plan for Mack Ridge Area of the Kokopelli Trail System project is included in the 2023 Budget. If this grant is awarded, there will be no additional cost to the City. The project is funded in the 2023 Budget through impact fees designated for Parks and Open Space. Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association (COPMOBA) has pledged an additional \$2,000 to support the planning efforts.

APPLICABILITY TO CITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The enhancements to the Mack Ridge Area of the Kokopelli Trail System are supported in the Parks, Health, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan by maintaining an active partnership and being a lead partner in the development of recreation opportunities on nearby lands managed by federal agencies. Completing a master plan for the Mack Ridge Area of the Kokopelli Trail System goals in the Parks, Health, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan, and improvements the quality of life and place for Fruita residents and visitors.

OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE COUNCIL

As a requirement of the grant, the City Council is required to take formal action on this before an application can be submitted. The options available to the City Council are:

1. Approve Resolution 2023-28, A Resolution Supporting a Grant Application to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Non-Motorized Planning grant for the enhancements to the Mack Ridge area of the Kokopelli Trail System.
2. Advise staff to amend the grant application or project that has been presented.

RECOMMENDATION

It is the recommendation of staff that Council:

ADOPT RESOLUTION 2023-28 - A RESOLUTION OF THE FRUITA CITY COUNCIL SUPPORTING AN APPLICATION FOR A COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE NON-MOTORIZED PLANNING GRANT FOR THE ENHANCEMENTS TO THE MACK RIDGE AREA OF THE KOKOPELLI TRAIL SYSTEM