



City of Ketchum

### CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA MEMO

Meeting Date:  Staff Member/Dept:

Agenda Item:

**Recommended Motion:**

I move to approve \$20,000 of funding from the Capital Contingency Fund to help cover repair costs for the *Homage to the Limber Pine* sculpture.

**Reasons for Recommendation:**

The City of Ketchum supports arts, events, and cultural programming and installations that are open and accessible to the public.

The city partnered with the Sun Valley Museum of Art (SVMoA) in the fall of 2016 to take ownership of *Homage to the Limber Pine* and place it on display in Ketchum. The piece was commissioned by SVMoA to be on exhibit at Idaho's Craters of the Moon during the summer of 2016 to celebrate the National Park Service's centennial anniversary.

The sculpture has been on display in Ketchum's Little Park, with future plans to be permanently placed at Warm Springs Preserve after restoration and improvements at the Preserve are complete. However, the sculpture was decommissioned and put into storage in 2024 due to damage caused by weather and freeze/thaw cycles common in Ketchum's climate.

The Arts Commission conducted many meetings with the artist, Jason Middlebrook, over the past year to assess the damage and repair options.

The artist accepts responsibility for the fact that the sculpture's construction (in its current state) is not ideal for Ketchum's climate. He suggests rebuilding it using marine-grade epoxy and other methods to ensure it won't need future repairs. He further agrees to complete the repairs at cost (all the city will be covering is his and his staff's time at a reduced rate). The artist agrees to provide all materials to complete the rebuild.

If funding is approved by the City Council, the Arts Commission and city staff would work on creating an agreement with the artist to warranty the work to ensure this issue does not arise again in the future. The agreement would be presented to the City Council for approval.

**Policy Analysis and Background (non-consent items only):**

Notes:

Sustainability Impact:

None OR state impact here:

None

Financial Impact:

None OR Adequate funds exist in account:

Similar sculptures from the artist are valued between \$150,000 and \$250,000. The artist agrees to discount the cost to completely rebuild the sculpture. The city's total cost for the rebuild would be \$40,000. The Arts Commission plans to use \$20,000 of funds from its reserves and annual operating budget. They are asking the City Council to contribute the remaining \$20,000 from the city's Capital Contingency Fund.

Attachments:

1. Background – Homage to the Limber Pine Repairs Funding Request
- 2.



# *Homage to the Limber Pine* Repairs Funding Request

February 26, 2026



# ABOUT THE SCULPTURE AND ARTIST

## Homage to the Limber Pine



This 13 foot high sculpture was modeled on the dramatic forms of the limber pines at Idaho's Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve for the National Parks Service's centennial anniversary.

**Medium:** Steel, fiberglass, slate tile, mortar, and grout

## Artist, Jason Middlebrook



A visual artist from the United States, Middlebrook is world-renowned for public art, installation, sculpture, drawing, and painting. He is most known for public mural and mosaic projects, and has installations in Brooklyn (NY), Austin (TX), Buffalo (NY), Queens NY), Aspen (CO), New York (NY), and more.

Middlebrook's art belongs to the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New Museum, Whitney Museum, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, among others.

## Other Public Installations



Albright Knox, Buffalo, NY (Permanent collection)



Bedford Gallery, Walnut Creek, CA (Permanent collection)



Galleria Giampaolo, Todi, Italy (Exhibit)



# SCULPTURE'S CURRENT CONDITION





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## Damage assessment

The sculpture is constructed with a fiberglass frame and slate tiles attached to it with mortar and grout. The slate tiles are falling off because of material and construction flaws.

1. The sculpture's fiberglass frame expands and contracts during freeze/thaw cycles.
2. The mortar used to secure the tiles to the fiberglass frame does not expand/contract, resulting in tiles losing contact with the mortar during freeze/thaw cycles.
3. The grout used between tiles does not expand/contract during freeze/thaw cycles, resulting in cracks that allow water in between and underneath tiles.
4. When the water freezes, it puts pressure on tiles and pops them out of place.



# SCULPTURE RESTORATION

## The artist suggests the following to restore the sculpture

1. Strip all the current tiles, mortar, and grout off the sculpture's frame completely
2. Repair and reinforce any cracks in the frame
3. Reaffix the tiles to the frame using a marine-grade epoxy or equivalent adhesive that is weatherproof in all conditions and expands/contracts
4. RegROUT all new tiles with weatherproof marine-grade epoxy or equivalent sealant that expands/contracts to keep a tight seal that doesn't crack and keeps water out
5. Apply additional sealant over all tiles and grout, if needed
6. Install the sculpture on a pedestal so snow/ice doesn't build up against the tiles around the base



# RESTORATION COSTS

## Total restoration cost:

**\$40,000**

Restoration costs reduced to just cover labor at a discounted rate

## Proposed contributions:

**\$20,000**

Arts Commission  
funding from operating  
budget and reserves

+

**\$20,000**

City of Ketchum Capital  
Contingency Fund  
contribution (proposal to be  
approved by City Council)



# RESTORATION COST VS. VALUE

Total restoration cost: **\$40,000**

Value of other works by the artist:





# NEXT STEPS (WITH FUNDING APPROVAL)

1. The Arts Commission and city staff would work on creating an agreement with the artist to warranty the work to ensure failures do not arise again.
2. The agreement would be presented to City Council for approval.
3. The artist and their staff would travel to Ketchum to do the installation in spring 2026.
4. The city would work with community partners to provide housing for the artist and staff at no cost.
5. The sculpture would be moved into the garage at the Ketchum Streets Department's shop, where work would be conducted in a controlled environment.
6. Restoration would take place over 2-3 weeks.
7. The sculpture would be re-installed on permanent display at Warm Springs Preserve before the finalization of restoration and renovations at the Preserve in summer of 2026.