

To: Mayor and Town Council
From: Cindy Krieg
Date: February 27, 2025
Agenda Item: Letter of Support for a GOCO Grant Application



REQUEST:

Approve / sign on to a Letter of Support for Eagle County and the Vail Valley Mountain Trails Alliance with regard to a GOCO Stewardship Impact Program grant application.

INTRODUCTION / ANALYSIS:

The Eagle County Outdoor Stewardship Partnership seeks to address critical stewardship needs across public lands in Eagle County. The project will expand and enhance existing stewardship programs, including the Trail Conservation Crew (TCC) and creating the Outdoor Stewardship Crew (OSC) programs, to mitigate recreation-related impacts, improve ecological health, and engage the community through volunteerism and education. Eagle Valley Outdoor Stewardship Coalition (EVOSC) partners will utilize these crews to accomplish important and necessary stewardship projects on the ground. Through collaboration with land managers and community partners, this project will support long-term resource sustainability while fostering equitable access to outdoor recreation opportunities.

Project Need and Benefits:

Eagle County's public lands continue to experience increasing recreational use, resulting in significant impacts such as trail degradation, habitat disruption, and ecological disturbance. Public lands make up over 80% of Eagle County. A majority of which is part of the White River National Forest (WRNF) which is the busiest forest in the country. In 2011 visits to the WRNF were estimated to be around 10 million and in 2022 that number increased to 18 million. While a majority of those visitors were for skiers, almost 7 million were during the summer season. Meanwhile, the WRNF's budget has decreased from \$30 million in the early 2000s to \$18 million in 2023. These visits and public lands contribute an estimated \$1.6 billion in economic impact for communities surrounded by the WRNF. So what do these numbers mean? In short, they simply don't add up. While visitation and use continues to increase, the boots on the ground to maintain natural resources decline.

Proactive and increased stewardship is critical to sustaining the Eagle County's environmental and economic vitality. The project will significantly enhance the quality of life in the community by ensuring safe, sustainable recreational access, preserving natural resources, and fostering a culture of environmental responsibility.

COMMUNITY INPUT: Ongoing

BUDGET / STAFF IMPACT:

- No impact to Town of Minturn budget or staff requirements with regard to this request

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

- This contract supports all proprieties identified in the 2025-27 Strategic Plan

RECOMMENDED ACTION OR PROPOSED MOTION:

- Approve the Town of Minturn to sign on to this letter of support

ATTACHMENTS:

- Letter of Support
- GOCO Grant Program Narrative