

# Wyoming Community Foundation Competitive Grant - Spring 2023 – WYCF

## 1. Project name

“Never Forget Park” in Saratoga, WY

## 2. Request amount?

\$10,000

## 3. Summary

Saratoga is creating a new landscaped park: "Never Forget Park". A local young man, Army SSgt. Tyler Pickett, was killed in action in Iraq and this will be a tribute to all those who have sacrificed their precious lives for the sake of others.

## 4. Which best describes your request?

One-time Program/Project

## 5. What is the purpose of your request? 5000/3095

The Town of Saratoga (pop. 1700) is creating a new landscaped park: "Never Forget Park". The park project began in 2008 after a local young man, Army SSgt. Tyler Pickett, was killed in action in Iraq and will be a tribute to all those who have sacrificed their precious lives for the sake of others. The community has been raising funds for over a decade. Unfortunately, the park has been delayed until now due to a lack of strong direction from the Town of Saratoga.

The Town of Saratoga's new, dedicated and focused park committee began its work in May 2021 and is comprised of private citizens, veterans and newly elected councilmen. The committee has collaborated with American Legion Post #54, Platte Valley Arts Council, Inc. and Order of the Eastern Star. This committee has developed the park design, created a website, worked with the family of Tyler Pickett, commissioned a memorial sculpture, and hired an engineering firm to create documents. The committee hopes to install curb and gutter, irrigation and plant trees and shrubs this spring. Light posts, benches, restrooms and asphalt will complete the park, hopefully by late summer 2023.

The community has been very clear: this park must be completed, out of respect for Tyler Pickett and his family. They have been very frustrated with the long process and delays. With the help of Wyoming Community Foundation funding, completing “Never Forget Park” will be a respite and reflects the determination of Saratoga residents.

Currently, the space is a patch of gravel and weeds and is used for overflow parking to the adjacent “Veterans Island Park.” The North Platte River flows around the island. “Veterans Island Park” is the location of numerous events such as family reunions, music festivals, and community picnics. It features a playground, walking path with connection to the free mineral hot springs, barbeque picnic shelter and a skate park.

“Never Forget Park” will extend the public space and add much-needed parking spaces for cars and RV's. Its location along a busy street leads to premier lodging facilities and to Saratoga Lake and will be a source of pride for residents and visitors alike.

“Never Forget Park” will include a memorial sculpture, ADA compliant benches, handicapped accessible restrooms and parking. Lush plantings of native species will provide shade to the open space. Light posts installed along the sidewalk will aid those using the park after dark. Flags and poles for each of the five branches of the armed forces will be installed and lit from dusk to dawn. Several gabion basket benches will be installed and will have veteran's memorial plates attached. An open-air pavilion will be built for community events such as concerts and patriotic presentations.

Volunteers will fill gabion baskets with river rock and build seats using high-density composite decking. A few work days will be organized for community members to complete this project. School children will work with the local conservation district to plant the trees and shrubs as part of their school curriculum.

## **6. How will you know if your project is successful? 3000/1884**

The committee has identified seven goals in the completion of “Never Forget Park”:

Goal 1: The Town of Saratoga will install new decorative light posts along sidewalks

Quantity: 12 posts

Benefit: safe use of park after dark

Goal 2: The Town of Saratoga will purchase materials to make gabion basket benches with composite decking seats

Quantity: 20 benches

Benefit: ADA compliant benches for rest and reflection, rocks provided by the town as in-kind

Goal 3: The Town of Saratoga will organize volunteers to assemble benches and install them in the park

Quantity: 50 volunteers

Benefit: community engagement and in-kind donation decreases cash expenses

Goal 4: The Town of Saratoga will organize volunteers to compile list of veterans from Saratoga and install memorial plaques

Quantity: 12 volunteers

Benefit: List does not currently exist and honoring their sacrifices is vital

Goal 5: The Town of Saratoga will install signage in the park listing project sponsors and funding agencies

Quantity: 3 signs

Benefit: Recognition shows wide support of the project

Goal 6: The Town of Saratoga will plant trees and shrubs in the park, with help from school children and volunteers

Quantity: 150 children, 5 volunteers

Benefit: Educational experience demonstrates conservation principals such as water usage and care of native plantings

Goal 7: The Town of Saratoga will open the park to the public with a ribbon cutting ceremony by late summer 2023

Quantity: 1 event with 250 attendees

Benefit: Celebration of this success propels community to accomplish other projects. Attendees of all ages and sectors of the community brings everyone together for a collective purpose

Overall, the park will be successful when it is used all year round (for picnics, rest stops, quiet reflection, Veteran’s Day services) and when the family of SSgt. Tyler Pickett feels love and support for them and their sacrifice.

## **7. How do you collaborate in your community?**

### **7a. Referral or Programmatic Collaboration 2500/692**

The Town of Saratoga is the lead agency for this project. The new mayor and councilmen have stated their support for the project. In addition to two councilmen, the committee consists of private citizens with experience in completing large public projects. Town staff will be donating their time and heavy equipment use in order to keep cash expenses lower.

The American Legion Post 54 has been raising funds for over ten years and will continue taking the initiative to organize raffles, barbeques and events. The Platte Valley Arts Council collaborated on a commissioned memorial sculpture for the park. Order of the Eastern Star has made a significant financial donation to the cause.

## **7b. Financial Collaboration**

The “Never Forget Park” committee has submitted a few grant applications from other funding agencies. One of the committee members is a professional grant writer and has created a funding plan for the project.

## **7c. Who do you hope to begin a partnership or collaborate with in the future?**

The committee has identified the following funding agencies and plan to submit grant requests in the next several months: AARP Community Challenge Flagship Grant, Daniels Fund, Wold Family Foundation, T-Mobile, Wyoming Community Gas, HF Sinclair, American Association of Dermatology, and Walmart.

## **Please elaborate on plans for match funding**

Few of these agencies require matching funds, however, funding agencies award projects with multiple funding sources, demonstrating a viable and sustainable project. Private donors are more likely to donate if their peers support the project as well.

## **8. Population to be served by organization 5000/1356**

“Never Forget Park” will serve about 3500 people in the small, rural communities of Saratoga, Encampment and Riverside in southeastern Wyoming. The closest population center (Rawlins) and Interstate-80 are over forty miles away. The North Platte and Encampment Rivers, the Medicine Bow National Forest and the Snowy Range and Sierra Madre Mountains form this valley. The area’s economy is driven by the tourism and travel industry (drawing tens of thousands of visitors year-round), agriculture, and mineral and energy development.

According to the 2020 Census, the population of Saratoga is 1,702. The towns of Encampment (pop. 456) and Riverside (pop. 66) and Saratoga all work together on various events and projects. Carbon County has 14,649 residents.

Census data shows the median age for Saratoga to be 52.2 years and 28.9% of the adult residents are seniors. Four percent of Saratoga is under the age of five years. The gender of the area is 49.75% female and 50.25 % male. Ninety-two percent of the population identified as “white.”

Of the 185 veterans who live in Saratoga, 99 of them are over seventy-five years of age. Seventy-seven (or 70%) of Saratoga’s veterans served in Vietnam, which is two times greater than any other conflict and greater than the US’s 43%. Thirty-three vets served in the Gulf Wars, just as SSgt. Tyler Pickett had.

## **9. Does your organization work statewide or have statewide impact?**

Yes

### **9a. Please describe the geographic distribution of your organization's impact.**

The Town of Saratoga has a statewide impact in that its tourism amenities are world-renowned. The free Hobo Hot Springs draw hundreds of thousands each year and both Old Baldy Club and The Lodge and Spa at Brush Creek Ranch have hosted a large number of celebrities and corporate CEOs over several decades.

**Carbon County:** 15,000

**10. EIN\***

83-6000089

**11. Mission statement\***

n/a

**12. Website URL\***

<https://www.townofsaratoga.org>

<https://www.neverforgetpark.com>

**13. Are you using a fiscal sponsor?**

no

**14. Number of full-time staff**

0

**15. Board member list**

n/a

**16. Board member contributions**

No board

**17. Please elaborate on board member contributions**

**20. Fiscal year start date\***

July 1

**21. Fiscal year end date\***

June 30

**22. Project budget sheet**

Upload "NFP project budget"

**23. Organization budget\***

"Never Forget Park" in Saratoga, Wyoming is owned by the Town of Saratoga, Wyoming. A committee comprised of council members and private citizens has formed to design and construct the new park, with a goal of completion in fall 2023. The committee has been charged with design, fundraising, grant writing and oversight.

Committee Members

Chuck Davis, Mayor

Mike Cooley, council member

Stacy Crimmins -professional grant writer, former CEO of chamber of commerce

Joe Parsons-director of local conservation district, veteran

Jon Winters-former town employee

## **24. Income statement\***

n/a

## **25. Balance sheet\***

n/a

## **26. Budget Narrative 5000/1772**

During Phase 1 of the project, the committee has relied on in-kind donations for setting up a website capable of taking donations, landscape design and artistic rendering of the park, and writing grants. A local arts council commissioned a sculpture which commemorates the sacrifices of Tyler Pickett and other servicemen. The committee has been working with a local engineering firm to create construction documents. Cash expenses have been paid with the donations collected over the past several years. All donations are held with the Town of Saratoga in a designated fund. It is expected that curb and gutter and sidewalks will consume much of the funds already raised for the project.

In Phase 2 of the project, the open grassy area will be hydroseeded by a local company, possibly at cost. The plantings will be supplied by the local conservation district and planted by volunteers and children from the school as an educational experience. The committee expects that donations will increase significantly since a few verbal financial commitments have been made with the condition of seeing progress in the project. The committee must demonstrate sound fiscal responsibility given that some past donations have been misappropriated by previous town staff.

Phase 3 will involve making gabion baskets for benches. The benches will be made by filling wire baskets with river rock and then adding a seat made of composite decking material. All the labor will be provided by volunteers and most of the materials will be donated.

Since the restrooms and amphitheater are large and expensive elements in the park design, their completion will be in Phase 4. In addition to this grant application, other grants will be submitted to help fill the unmet financial need.

## **27. Please confirm that the financial statements uploaded reflect a full, completed fiscal year.**

n/a

## **30. Additional information 2000/500**

Although the Town of Saratoga is not a charitable organization, the development of "Never Forget Park" is a charitable project. Many individuals and several not-for-profit organizations have collaborated to create a plan to complete the park. The committee will conduct a marketing campaign in order to apprise the public of its progress and instill confidence in the project's development. Oversight of the project from these same individuals and organizations will ensure successful completion.

## **30a. Additional Document Upload Space**



NFP plan 4c.pdf

## **Document Upload Space (optional)**