



Board of County Commissioners

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February 1, 2021

Board of Directors
Great Outdoors Colorado
Resilient Communities Program
1900 Grant St., Unit 725
Denver, CO 80203

Re: Application for a GOCO Resilient Communities Grant

Dear Board of Directors:

Eagle County Open Space is partnering with the Vail Valley Mountain Trails Alliance (VVMTA) to co-apply for a GOCO Resilient Community Grant. We are in full support of this collaborative application, as the maintenance, stewardship and restoration work described therein represents a critical need in our community to address the impacts of increased recreation on public lands. It also meets two of Eagle County's strategic goals - protecting the natural environment and making Eagle County a great place for all, by stewarding land and trails and enhancing trail systems for community recreation.

Our undeveloped lands and trails are some of Eagle County's most cherished resources, and recreation is integral to our local economy and quality of life. Particularly during the COVID pandemic, our citizens and visitors have increasingly relied on the outdoors to maintain their physical and mental health. The citizens of Eagle County have overwhelmingly voiced their support for preserving the natural resources, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities that make Eagle County a wonderful place to live, work and play.

However our enthusiasm for the outdoors isn't without impacts, which have been exacerbated by increased use during the pandemic. Our community is increasingly concerned with the decline in local wildlife populations, and issues of crowding and carrying capacity that can result in natural resource degradation. There is a critical need to address trail maintenance and closure enforcement, along with educating users in the outdoors, to reduce natural resource impacts. At the same time, we recognize that land managers at federal and local levels are often required to manage more visitation and its associated impacts with fewer financial resources.

If awarded GOCO funding, the Trail Conservation Crew (TCC) will provide much needed trail maintenance, natural resource protection and restoration, and educational awareness across land management jurisdictional boundaries. The TCC will also provide local jobs, and help foster a stewardship ethic amongst visitors and residents.

VVMTA has a strong volunteer base within the community, and has proven their commitment to trail maintenance and wildlife conservation through their Adopt-a-Trail and Wildlife Trail Ambassador programs. Eagle County Open Space utilizes both of these programs on open space lands, greatly expanding their staff capacity. The TCC will be a natural extension of and complement to these existing programs.



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In summary, the TCC will help Eagle County land managers address impacts caused by increased numbers of people in the outdoors. Eagle County is pleased to partner with VVMTA on this grant application, and we thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Matt Scherr

Chair

Jeanne McQueeney

Commissioner

Kathy Chandler-Henry

Commissioner