



Board of County Commissioners

970-328-8605

970-328-8629(f)

eagleadmin@eaglecounty.us

www.eaglecounty.us

August 18, 2022

Mr. Scott Fitzwilliams, Forest Supervisor
White River National Forest
900 Grand Avenue
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

Dear Forest Supervisor Fitzwilliams:

The Eagle County Board of County Commissioners supports the White River National Forest's request for the Fiscal Year 2024 funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund to acquire a 160-acre inholding on the East Fork of the Eagle River near the Camp Hale National Historic Site.

Located between Minturn and Leadville in the Eagle River Valley, the Camp Hale area is vital to Colorado's historical, recreational, and environmental heritage. We strongly support land acquisition efforts that protect the county's mountain ecosystems, access, and history.

Camp Hale's role in our nation's history is legendary. During World War II, approximately 15,000 U.S. Army soldiers in the 10th Mountain Division trained at 9,200 feet for Alpine and Nordic skiing, climbing, and snowshoeing, creating an elite ski corps. After the war, many veterans returned to Colorado to put down roots in what is now Colorado's world-renowned ski terrain. Camp Hale commemorates our nation's war and ski industry heroes, and this project will further protect the visitor experience.

The acquisition will allow the USFS to secure and permanently connect the portion of the hiking access in this currently private parcel to the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and Colorado Trail, popular hiking trails with national and state significance. This property further connects hikers to an intimate view of a waterfall cascading down Cataract Creek as they hike the trail. The current landowner voluntarily allows public access on both trails, but that could change if it were under different ownership. Our county depends on the recreation economy, and this project provides critical trail links.



Board of County Commissioners

970-328-8605

970-328-8629(f)

eagleadmin@eaglecounty.us

www.eaglecounty.us

The property has high ecological significance. Cataract Creek and the East Fork of the Eagle River run through the property, eventually feeding into the Colorado River. This high elevation property's riparian and wetland features sustain diverse wildlife species. Wildlife in the area includes the Federally-threatened Canada lynx, black bear, elk, mule deer, moose, trout, and native nongame fish.

USFS' protection of this strategic inholding within the White River National Forest is a priority for our county. This acquisition will protect Colorado's history, recreation, and mountain ecosystem for current and future generations.

Sincerely,

Jeanne McQueeney

Chair

Kathy Chandler-Henry

Commissioner

Matt Scherr

Commissioner

cc: Frank Beum, Regional Forester, Rocky Mountain Region, U.S. Forest Service
Leanne Veldhuis, District Ranger, Eagle-Holy Cross District Ranger, White River National Forest, U.S. Forest Service
The Honorable Michael Bennet, U.S. Senator
The Honorable John Hickenlooper, U.S. Senator
The Honorable Joe Neguse, U.S. Representative