On the Horizon: Eagle Valley Land Exchange

Five Eagle County entities, one state agency, an arm of the federal government and a local private landowner are working together to complete a complex land exchange that will permanently protect 1,500 acres of open space in Avon and Edwards. The Colorado State Land Board, Eagle County, the U.S. Forest Service and the Upper Eagle Regional Water Authority signed the Eagle Valley Land Exchange Agreement in November of 2012. Additional partners in the deal include the Town of Avon, the Nottingham Family, Eagle River Water & Sanitation District and the Eagle Valley Land Trust.

The conservation project has been years in the making and will result in the permanent protection of five properties, including:

- The 157-acre West Avon Parcel will be owned and managed as open space by the Town of Avon.
- Approximately 80 acres of the Avon Village parcel, north of 7-10 Post Boulevard, will be owned and managed as open space by the Town of Avon.
- The 92-acre Colorado State Land Board property north of Berry Creek will be added to the White River National Forest.
- 196 acres of private land on the Eagle’s Neck Williamsburg property will be added to the White River National Forest; and
- The 100-acre Cordillera L will become Eagle County Open Space.

To equate the value of land changing hands, cash is required to complete the deal. The Town of Avon will contribute $1 million in an additional $500,000 will be provided by USFWS and DOW. The majority of the funding, or $5.5 million, will come from Eagle County Open Space.

Approval of the Eagle Valley Land Exchange came almost 10 years to the day that Eagle County voters approved the dedicated Open Space Tax, without which officials say the exchange would not have been possible. Closing is expected to take place in early 2013.

Thank You

Thanks to our partners, landowners, civic groups, organizations, and the citizens of Eagle County who have contributed to the success of the Eagle County Open Space Program.

Our Partners

Eagle Valley Land Trust
Bureau of Land Management
Colorado Parks & Wildlife
Colorado State Land Board
Eagle County
Kearny Creek Homeowners Association
Eagle River Water & Sanitation District
Eagle River Watershed Council
Eagle Valley Land Trust
Colorado Community Authority
Garfield County
Great Outdoors Colorado
Homestead Homeowners Association
Mid Valley Trails Committee
Pilots Country
U.S. Forest Service
Town of Avon
Town of Braslet
Town of Eagle
Town of Gypsum
Town of Minturn
Town of Red Cliff
Town of Wolcott
Visit Valley Foundation

Aspen Valley Land Trust
Eagle County Planner
Eagle River Watershed Council
Eagle County Open Space Program
Eagles Valley Citizens for Open Space
Mid Valley Trails Committee
Meadow Creek Homeowners Association
Homestead Homeowners Association
Reno County
Total Partner and Grant Funding
$15,179,105
Total Open Space Funds Expended
$16,365,519

Eagle County Open Space Celebrates 10 Years

November 2012 marks the 10th anniversary of the passage of Eagle County Open Space Tax. The community members voted to approve a 1.5 mill levy in 2002 to be used to acquire, maintain or permanently preserve open space. In passing the ballot question, Eagle County joined neighboring Summit, Pitkin and Routt counties with a property tax supported program.

The vote was brought about by the Eagle Valley Citizens for Open Space, a citizen group that proposed the ballot initiative and spearheaded the campaign. The group is subsequently joined by Eagle Valley Land Trust and others to research and recommend ways to implement a comprehensive program, including creating a citizen advisory committee to evaluate open space projects.

Now, 10 years later, the Open Space Program has used the dedicated fund to preserve a total of 2,324 acres, across 51 different projects, some of which are located in the region’s 14 permanent open space preserves.

As the Open Space Advisory Committee looks toward the next 10 years, it’s poised to continue the tradition of critical role played by advisory committee to shape future land acquisition projects.

Contact Information

Eagle County Open Space Program
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www.eaglecounty.us/openspace

Eagle County Open Space Program Statistics through Nov. 9, 2012

Acres Protected
5,219
River Frontage
3.8 miles
Hiking Trails
6.1 miles
Total Partner and Grant Funding
$15,179,105
Total Open Space Funds Expended
$16,365,519

Advisory Committee Plays Critical Role in Open Space Program

Eagle County Open Space Advisory Committee members have successfully identified hundreds of acres of critical land that will be protected. The group’s work has helped shape future land acquisition projects, and to help guide many open space projects that provide permanent public access for hiking and fishing.

Our partners include the town of Avon, the U.S. Forest Service, the Eagle County Watershed Council, the Eagle County Open Space Program and others.

Criteria for the Evaluation of Land Suitability and the Prioritization of Potential Acquisitions

I. Scenic Landscapes and Vistas

Preserve and protect Eagle County’s outstanding natural beauty and scenic values.

II. Regional Heritage, Agriculture and Ranching

Preserve and protect land that is critical to the region’s agriculture and ranching base. This includes areas that contribute to the region’s economic health and provide access to critical resources.

III. Wildlife, Wildlife Habitat and Migration Routes

Preserve wildlife, habitat and human access to wildlife corridors and migration routes that contribute to the region’s natural beauty and provide access to public lands.

IV. Natural Areas, Water, Soils and Geology

Preserve and protect land that is critical to the region’s natural beauty and provides access to public lands.

V. Physical and Visual Buffers

Preserve the scenic beauty and aesthetic values of the region by maintaining and improving access to the region’s natural beauties.

VI. Access to Streams, Rivers, Public Lands and Dispersed Recreation

Preserve and protect land that is critical to the region’s natural beauty and provides access to public lands.

VII. Open Space and Natural Areas

Preserve and protect land that is critical to the region’s natural beauty and provides access to public lands.

VIII. Conservation and Resource Protection

Preserve and protect land that is critical to the region’s natural beauty and provides access to public lands.

IX. Human History and Cultural Resources

Preserve and protect land that is critical to the region’s natural beauty and provides access to public lands.

X. Open Space and Natural Areas

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