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Organization: Vail Valley Mountain Trails Alliance

Title: Executive Director

Comments: The Vail Valley Mountain Trails Alliance (VVMTA) strongly supports the Eagle County Trails (ECO Trails) proposal to construct the Minturn Segment of the Eagle Valley Trail.

There are numerous benefits that this trail will provide to Minturn residents, neighboring communities, and visitors. Meadow Mountain is one of the most popular recreation areas in the Eagle River Valley. Per our trail counters, Meadow Mountain sees over 40,000 users on an annual basis. The number of users often exceeds the number of parking spaces available. This segment of the Eagle Valley Trail will help alleviate the crowded and overflow parking.

The trail will provide a safe and enjoyable experience for Minturn residents and visitors to access Meadow Mountain. In addition, this also provides a climate friendly transportation approach to access the ECO Transit Bus service as well as connecting to the Gore Valley Trail to Vail and Eagle Valley Trail to EagleVail and to the West. Similarly, it will allow residents in neighboring communities a non-vehicle route to access Minturn, its businesses, and recreation opportunities such as Game Creek, Cougar Ridge, and the Minturn Bike Park.

The proposal fits cleanly within the intent and purpose of the categorical exclusions listed at 36 CFR220.6(e)(1), Construction and reconstruction of trails and 36 CFR 220.6(e)(3), Approval, modification, or continuation of special uses that require less than 20 acres of NFS lands. We support the use of this regulatory tool to expedite review and approval of the proposed Special Use Permit. We agree with USFS that to the best of our knowledge none of the extraordinary circumstance criteria exist in this area.

We strongly support the construction of this segment of trail and truly believe it will improve our communities quality of life, physical and mental health, economic vitality, access to recreation opportunities, and climate friendly transportation options.

Sincerely,CC: VVMTA Board of Directors

Ernest Saeger

Executive Director