



Larimer County Department of Natural Resources
1800 South County Road 31
Loveland, CO 80537
(970) 679-4577

January 15, 2012

Dear Supporter:

We need your help in re-developing Hermit Park! Please help us by writing a letter of support!

Located in Larimer County's Estes Valley Conservation Priority Area, the Hermit Park property includes 1,362 acres of forested slopes, open meadows and intact wetlands. The opportunity to protect this highly visible, pristine property in early 2007 was an unforeseen opportunity - one that Larimer County and its partners could not pass up. An unprecedented effort to raise funds to purchase Hermit Park was undertaken and hundreds of individuals, foundations and corporations contributed to make it happen, including a Great Outdoors Colorado grant contribution of \$700,000.

Protection of this amazing property has provided a contiguous land connection with existing protected lands, publicly-owned Roosevelt National Forest and Rocky Mountain National Park and privately-owned Meadowdale Conservation Easement. It adds to approximately 42,000 acres of existing protected lands in the Estes Valley, not including Rocky Mountain National Park. Accessible within 30-45 minutes from the Loveland/Fort Collins area and 40 minutes from Boulder, this property provides expanded public recreational opportunities to thousands of Larimer County citizens as well as visitors to the Estes Valley area.

A unique thing about Hermit Park is that is intended to be a "turn-key" operation. Fifteen cabins and 80 campsites exist on the property, built by the prior owner for private use by their employees. These facilities need to be updated to meet the local and state standards and codes for all the buildings and roads, as well as the sewer and water facilities. Additionally, trailheads and trail systems must be built to direct the public to appropriate areas of the property and prevent the proliferation of social trails. Now that it is fully open, recreational uses such as camping, cabin rentals, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, wildlife watching, picnicking, and large group use events take place on the property, increasing the demand for such improvements. However, because of the extent of the improvements that need to take place and because Larimer County does not have the budget to accommodate them all, Hermit Park facilities will be updated in phases, as funding becomes available.

This specific project proposes to create and improve the Equestrian campground at Hermit Park, permitting Larimer County to increase recreational opportunities in 2012. Of the current campgrounds, the Equine Campground demands the largest overhaul and will hence cost the most money - money that Larimer County does not have. This project will allow for a new vault toilet, improved and safer road access to the camp area, and equine specific renovation of 6 existing campsites. Renovations include vehicle with trailer parking spaces, corrals, fire grates, picnic tables and new tent pads. The campground will also include a new, large parking area designed for equestrian users that will come complete with a kiosk, signage and a horse manure disposal dumpster.

To help fund this project, Larimer County is applying to Great Outdoors Colorado (Colorado Lottery Funds) for a local government grant. Letters of support from the community as well as park and open space users are extremely beneficial to winning grants of this nature from Great Outdoors Colorado. We need your help! We need your letter of support to help make this grant application a successful one!

The strongest and most influential letters of support are written from the heart and talk specifically about ***why recreation (or more specifically camping) at Hermit Park is important to you or your organization.*** Letters should identify a need for the project as well as the benefits of the project from your perspective. It is essential that letters of support be written ***in your own words. Form letters are not useful for these grants.***

To assist you in drafting your own letter of support, we have provided a sample list of benefits and needs as well as a sample support letter – ***it is only a sample, please do not copy it.***

Benefits of the Project:

Through a partnership between Larimer County, Great Outdoors Colorado and the Roundup Riders of the Rockies:

- Greatly improving the Equestrian Campground for the public, renovating 6 campsites and adding additional parking and more restrooms to help bring in revenue for Hermit Park, allowing it to be more self sustaining for operations and management.
- Provide safer road access to Kruger Equestrian Campground for trailer access and family vehicles. Approximately .5 miles of upgraded road will eliminate current drainage issues, meet environmental needs for dust suppression and allow for easier, less costly maintenance in the future.
- Provide a new vault toilet that will be accessible to those at the Equestrian Campground as well as hikers and anyone else visiting Hermit Park.
- Compliment public camping opportunities in Estes Park by providing a back country camping experience in a front country location while allowing visitors to camp with their horses.
- Provide increased availability of diverse camping opportunities to the Estes Park area by allowing dogs and horses alike.

Need/Urgency of the Project:

- As mentioned previously, Hermit Park was an unforeseen opportunity for Larimer County and its partners. The purchase cost was \$6.5 million in 2007. As Hermit Park was intended to be turn-key operation, Larimer County does not have the funds to complete all the necessary renovations.
- The current available parking for horse trailers is inadequate and must be improved. This project will increase and improve the number and quality of spaces designed specifically for equestrian users.
- ***Now is the time!*** The Roundup Riders of the Rockies has committed \$10,000 Larimer County for the development of this campground. This funding will likely be re-allocated should the grant application be unsuccessful.
- The recreational experience offered at Hermit Park does not currently exist in the Estes Valley. Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) does not provide for "front country" camping experiences that have a remote feel. Additionally, dogs are not permitted at RMNP and camper cabins or group camping areas are not available. All of these public recreation uses are available at Hermit Park. These public areas can now compliment each other!
- ***Citizens in Larimer County have expressed their desire for an increase in recreation areas.*** In a 2001 scientific survey of county residents, 72% of respondents indicated they wanted to see more lands with public access. Statistics from existing camping areas show that visitors are staying longer

at our campgrounds and weekday use is up 30% from past years and visitors are requesting more diversity in things to do during their visit. Larimer County's camping areas are full from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Hermit Park will provide a haven to "get away from it all" and enjoy nature.

Please mail or fax your letter by January 31, 2012 to:

Zac Wiebe

Larimer County Department of Natural Resources

1800 S. County Road 31

Loveland, CO 80537

Phone (970) 679-4534

FAX (970) 679-4574

zwiebe@larimer.org

But, be sure to address your letter to:

Great Outdoors Colorado Board

c/o Jackie Miller

1600 Broadway, Suite 1650

Denver, CO 80202

I hope this information is helpful in writing your letter. Please feel free to call me at (970)679-4534 or email zwiebe@larimer.org if you need any further information.

Thank you for your support.

Zac Wiebe

Larimer County Department of Natural Resources

Open Lands Program

YOUR LETTERHEAD HERE

January 26, 2012

Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund
c/o Jackie Miller
1600 Broadway, Suite 1650
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Ms Miller:

I am writing to show my support of the Kruger Equestrian Campground Development grant application. The improvement of this Camp Area will benefit the citizens and visitors of Larimer County for years to come and will provide Hermit Park the revenue it needs to be self sufficient in its operations and management activities.

Hermit Park fills a niche that is not currently available in the Estes Park area. The camp sites in Hermit Park are far from one another creating a back country "feel" while also accessible by vehicle. Based on experiences at RMNP, I believe the large population up and down the Front Range wants a camping experience in the summer, in the mountains with cool temperatures that have a back country "feel" with good accessibility. Additionally, the large group camping center and cabins at Hermit Park fulfill another unique niche. RMNP has only one group camping area, and it is very often full by reservation throughout the summer. Church groups, Boy Scout and Girl Scout groups etc are frequently disappointed they cannot find available space in RMNP. As you know, Hermit Park's group camping center is an exceptional area for these and even larger groups. And, unlike Hermit Park. RMNP has no cabins available for rent.

Upgrading Hermit Park is more important now than ever. Over the last decade, growth in Larimer County exceeded the average rate for the state by 5%. Because of its close proximity to a popular vacation destination, Hermit Park will be a popular destination point for locals and visitors alike. With support from GOCO, Larimer County can continue to improve this amazing property.

It is for these reasons that I strongly support the Hermit Park grant application as submitted by Larimer County. The protection of this property will forever benefit the citizens and visitors of Northern Colorado, and the re-development of it will allow those citizens to enjoy the property firsthand. I encourage Great Outdoors Colorado to participate in this crucial re-development effort.

Respectfully,

YOUR NAME AND CONTACT INFO HERE (if not on your letterhead)