Case Statement for

Our Valley—Our Heritage

Preserving Hardscrabble Ranch in Brush Creek Valley

Eagle Valley Land Trust

Prepared by: Robin Thompson

June and July 2017

EAGLE VALLEY LAND TRUST

All photos courtesy of Ed Roberson, Mirr Ranch Group

| Hearing and Acting on the Call of the Wild

If you listen closely you can hear the sound of each step you take, the swish of grass as you walk through it and in the distance, a babbling brook. There are people who live in inner cities who don't know what that sounds like. Here in the mountains of Colorado, we are in a very unique area where we have that available to us every time we walk out our front door. That is right now.

If we don't act now, it may not be there for our future or our children or grandchildren. Fortunately there is a way that you can help protect this incredible resource today for future generations. And you will be in the company of several other respected organizations, leaders, and concerned citizens. Listen:

> ***"We have a unique opportunity to protect this outstanding place, in fact, we believe this is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Eagle County encourages your careful consideration and support for The Conservation Fund's Protect Initiative application!"***
>
> Board of County Commissioners
>
Jill H. Ryan	Kathy Chandler-Henry	Jeanne McQueeney
Chair	Commissioner	Commissioner

> ***"The Town has fought to preserve this property for more than 30 years, spending thousands of hours working to mitigate development proposals that had been submitted by the previous property owner. The Town is very excited that an opportunity to protect this beautiful property in perpetuity has finally come to fruition."***
>
> Town of Eagle
> Anne McKibbin
> Mayor

> "***This campaign is about is being part of something bigger than any single one of us. It's about making a lasting impact personally on this community. It's about bringing our whole community together simply because this is a rare opportunity to do so and because community cohesiveness is so vitally important. Here, we have an opportunity to bring the community together in such an extraordinarily meaningful way."***
>
> Andie Bombard
> President, Eagle Valley Land Trust Board of Directors

Eagle Valley Land Trust (EVLT) is joining with other significant entities and citizens to help preserve a key piece of land by orchestrating acquisition of the Hardscrabble Ranch in the Brush Creek Valley in Eagle County, Colorado. This pristine property-was once included in the plan to develop Adam's Rib ski area, a resort development that would have consumed the Brush Creek Valley. This is the last piece of property of its kind in the Brush Creek Valley. Purchased in 2015 by a Denver developer, the Hardscrabble Ranch faces a significant threat of development.

The Conservation Fund and Eagle County Open Space (ECOS) are in the process of acquiring and preserving this 1,540 acre ranch as open space while the opportunity to do so exists. Once acquired by The Conservation Fund (TCF), a conservation easement will be granted to the Eagle Valley Land Trust (EVLT), and fee title will be conveyed to ECOS. ECOS will continue leasing the ranch out for agricultural use, generating income for management and maintenance, and preserving an important piece of the Brush Creek Valley's agricultural heritage and character. Conservationists, outdoor recreationists, local ranchers and historians will all benefit tremendously.

This project will achieve the following strategic objectives:

- Protect large connected landscapes, rivers and riparian corridors, and wildlife habitat;
- Increase recreational access and trail connections to enjoy the outdoors;
- Preserve agricultural land with senior water rights necessary to sustain future operations.

Photo courtesy of Ed Roberson, Mirr Ranch Group

| History of the Brush Creek Valley

Homesteading and ranching came to Eagle County well before the development of its world-famous ski resorts. In 1890, the Hardscrabble Ranch property helped establish ranching in the county. By 1899, stockman John Love, the man who first brought cattle to Eagle County, had established a 640-acre ranch on the property known today as Hardscrabble Ranch. Evidence of early settlement there includes the Brush Creek Schoolhouse and a small private cemetery—with six graves dated from 1888 to 1920—known as the Newcomer Ranch Cemetery.

> *This property is unique in several ways and is a potential game changer for both wildlife and local recreation.*
>
> *Ron Velarde, Colorado Parks and Wildlife*

| Game changer for Outdoor Recreation and Wildlife

Colorado Parks and Wildlife calls Hardscrabble Ranch a "game changer" for wildlife and outdoor recreation in the Brush Creek valley. It is the last remaining parcel in the Brush Creek drainage large enough to preserve movement corridors and habitat for big game. The property contains Brush Creek and Salt Creek before they flow into the Eagle River—a major tributary to the Colorado River.
Brush Creek is a healthy cold water trout stream and a candidate for reintroduction of cutthroat trout. Substantial senior water rights will remain with the ranch— as they have since the early 1900's—keeping Hardscrabble Ranch productive for hay and livestock.

| Preserving Natural Habitat

At peak times herds of 300+ elk gather on the Hardscrabble Ranch property. As they adapt to the loss of habitat in the area, mule deer and elk increasingly use Hardscrabble Ranch to move to and from adjacent BLM and National Forest lands. Hardscrabble Ranch also provides important habitat for fox, coyote, badger, short-tailed weasel, mink, raptors and numerous small mammals.

Approximately 2.5 miles of Brush Creek and Salt Creek meander through the Hardscrabble Ranch, providing riparian habitat for a large diversity of neo-tropical birds, reptiles and amphibians, as well as small mammals and big game. Brush Creek is a healthy cold water stream for rainbow and brown trout. The creek has been identified by CPW as a candidate for reintroduction of the Eagle River's indigenous cutthroat trout, which exist today only in Abrams Creek, a nearby tributary to Brush Creek. Hardscrabble Ranch provides the opportunity for restoration and reintroduction of species of concern such as the leopard frog, boreal toad and tiger salamander—all species that were historically present. The property was also historically used by Sage Grouse, another species of state and federal concern.

| Preserving Public Recreation & Trail Connectivity

Portions of Hardscrabble Ranch will provide access for a variety of recreational and outdoor activities, will improve the safety and availability of outdoor recreation for youth and families, and will enable the connectivity that local communities and outdoor enthusiast's desire. This project will support the Town

of Eagle's efforts to become a recreational destination, and will enable Eagle County and the Town to develop several miles of new and connecting trails.

On the southern portion of Hardscrabble Ranch, 1.1 miles of paved trail already exist from a previously approved PUD. Acquisition of the property will enable this section of trail to be connected to trails in the Town of Eagle's Haymeadow subdivision adjacent to Hardscrabble Ranch on the north. Completion of this trail will eliminate the hazardous sharing of Brush Creek Road by autos, bicycles and pedestrians. It will provide for new trail connections to BLM's Hardscrabble SRMA for hiking, mountain biking and equestrian use. As part of Eagle County's Open Space program, the property will be open to the public for fishing, picnicking, biking, hiking, wildlife viewing, education and other outdoor activities.

Hardscrabble Ranch will provide access to high quality recreation, connecting Eagle to adjacent BLM lands and to Sylvan Lake State Park. Acquisition of the property will enable ECOS and the Town to develop new and connecting trails, most notably, a new 2-mile path that will eliminate the current very hazardous sharing of Brush Creek Road by autos, bicycles and pedestrians. In addition, the property will provide public access to Brush Creek for fishing, hiking and wildlife viewing.

Hardscrabble Ranch is the gateway to thousands of acres of surrounding public lands managed by CPW, the BLM, and the U.S. Forest Service. These include Sylvan Lake State Park, the White River National Forest, the Holy Cross Wilderness, Red Table Mountain Wilderness Study Area, the Tenth Mountain Division Hut System, and Hardscrabble Special Recreation Management Area.

These areas are extremely popular for both summer and winter recreation. For example, in 2016, the Tenth Mountain Huts in Eagle County received 11,946 visitors, while Sylvan Lake State Park had 98,015 visitors. White River National Forest is one of the country's most heavily used, receiving 15 million annual visits.

Photo courtesy of Ed Roberson, Mirr Ranch Group

| Preserving Scenic Open Space

The property is the scenic centerpiece of the Brush Creek Valley, and the foreground to the popular summer and winter recreational destinations mentioned above. Hardscrabble Ranch is bordered on the north, east and west by 21,900 acres of BLM land designated as the Hardscrabble Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA).

Preservation of this large, historic working ranch will create a permanent buffer between the Town of Eagle on the north (including the adjacent Haymeadow subdivision recently approved for 837 homes) and the Frost Creek community and golf course on the south. Hardscrabble Ranch is visible from every high ridgeline in western Eagle County. The ranch itself affords iconic mountain views in every direction—south to New York Mountain (12,550 feet) in the Holy Cross Wilderness and Mt. Thomas (11,977 feet) in the Red Table Mountain Wilderness Study Area; north and west to the Castle Peak Wilderness Study Area and Flat Tops Wilderness Area.

| Preserving Agriculture

Despite its location bordering the growing Town of Eagle, the Hardscrabble Ranch still functions as a highly productive operation for livestock grazing and hay—the last of its kind in the Brush Creek valley. The ranch contains housing, barns and corrals that support the ranching operation.

Irrigation occurs on approximately 460 acres on the property, producing an average of 700 tons of hay annually. Substantial senior water rights will be included in the purchase of the property, ensuring that historic irrigation use can continue. These valuable water rights will be tied to the ranch in perpetuity as a result of this project.

| Preserving and Improving Water Quality

Hardscrabble Ranch contains 2.5 miles of Brush Creek and Salt Creek, which flow into the Eagle River—a major tributary to the Colorado River. The Colorado River and its tributaries are the lifeblood of the American southwest, providing water for 40 million people in 7 states. Sadly, the Colorado River is this country's most endangered river, making it an urgent priority for conservation. The health and viability of the Brush Creek drainage are dependent upon the protection of Hardscrabble Ranch.

| The Future without this Project

The Town of Eagle is increasingly popular with second home buyers moving down valley from Vail, Avon, and Edwards. With Eagle County's population predicted to double from 50,000 to 100,000 by 2040, and the proximity of Hardscrabble Ranch to Beaver Creek and Vail, this property has extremely high potential for development. Local citizens, describe the acquisition of Hardscrabble Ranch as "an opportunity that will never come again" and "a fitting end to the Adam's Rib proposal".

This project provides a proactive conservation solution, putting a timely end to decades of reactive maneuvering on the part of the actors in the Brush Creek valley. The area surrounding Hardscrabble Ranch has already experienced resort and residential development. Once a part of the proposed Adam's Rib ski resort development, Hardscrabble Ranch remains unprotected and in the hands of corporate

developers. If The Conservation Fund is unable to acquire Hardscrabble Ranch, it will very likely be extensively developed.

The current owner of the property is a real estate developer who purchased Hardscrabble Ranch and the adjacent Frost Creek golf course PUD in 2015. If not preserved, the current owner will likely sell this property to developers who are the next most likely buyers.

Under private ownership this property has not been open to public access. The exception is the Trail Gulch Trailhead located on the property. This trailhead accesses adjacent BLM lands and is accessible to the public from Salt Creek Road

Protection of this property will determine the fate of big game and many other species in the Brush Creek valley. Without this piece of land, recreational trails will remain unfinished, unconnected, and unsafe in this valley. The agricultural heritage and character of the Brush Creek valley will be lost. The opportunity to meet the area's goals for its new recreational economy will not be realized. The future of Brush Creek valley without this project is bleak.

| The Community Comes Together: A Solution

Rarely does a single property determine an area's viability for wildlife, its recreation economy, and its agricultural heritage. The Hardscrabble Ranch single-handedly defines the future of the Brush Creek valley for wildlife and people. This project represents an unbelievable opportunity to protect multiple conservation benefits through a single large-scale acquisition.

Thanks to the leadership and foresight of the following partners, this valuable gem can be preserved:

- The Conservation Fund
- Eagle County Open Space
- Bureau of Land Management
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Eagle County Historical Society
- Hardscrabble Trails Coalition
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- Eagle Ranch Wildlife Committee
- Town of Eagle
- Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)

Many other government entities, concerned citizens of Eagle County, and state of Colorado organizations have also been strong advocates and financial supporters in the drive to preserve this property in perpetuity.

In January, TCF secured a contract to purchase the Hardscrabble Ranch for $15,500,000 with a closing scheduled for July 31, 2017. TCF will acquire the property in July using funding that includes approximately $9,000,000 from Eagle County Open Space, $600,000 from the Town of Eagle, $700,000 from the Eagle Ranch Wildlife Committee, a $5,200,000 loan, and a commitment for $3,100,000 from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO).

Once acquired, TCF will grant a conservation easement to Eagle Valley Land Trust by approximately October 15, 2017. The final step in the transaction will be transfer of the easement-encumbered fee title to Eagle County by approximately November 1, 2017. On May 12, TCF finalized an agreement with the Seller to include in the purchase all senior water rights historically used on the Hardscrabble Ranch property.

|The Mission of Eagle Valley Land Trust

The Mission of the Eagle Valley Land Trust is to preserve forever our scenic vistas, open space, historic lands, waterways, and wildlife habitats that represent the uniqueness of Eagle County and the central Rocky Mountains for the enjoyment, education, and benefit of all who experience this special place.

The Eagle Valley Land Trust seeks to accomplish our mission by:

- Working in collaboration with local, regional, state, and national partners to conserve significant lands in Eagle County and surrounding area.
- Educating residents and visitors about the benefits of open space and how growth can be shaped to include open space.
- Providing information and expertise on conservation tools to landowners, public agencies, and other interested parties.
- Providing a continuum of services for landowners wishing to protect their lands through the donation or sale of conservation easements;
- Acting as stewards of the land protected by the conservation easements it holds in the Eagle County region.
- Defending in perpetuity the conservation values of property it holds in trust.
- Developing strategies and serving as a facilitator for major conservation initiatives in the region.
- Raising funds to permanently protect open space by purchasing conservation easements in this region, with the assurance to donors that 100 percent of the funds raised for projects in Eagle County are used for local and regional projects.

Shaping the Future with EVLT

Join EVLT in preserving Hardscrabble Ranch in Brush Creek Valley for the future. For more information, contact Jim Daus, Executive Director, at 970.748.7654 or jdaus@evlt.org.

| Our Leaders Look Ahead

Campaign Leaders and Committees: Rosie Shearwood; Christina and Josh Lautenberg

Committees were formed with the chairman to be determined by the members.

COMMUNICATIONS: Susie Kincaid, Toby Sprunk, Christina Lautenberg, Kathy, Scott

RANCH TOURS / SPECIAL EVENTS: Rosie Sherwood, John Staight, Toby Sprunk, Scott Schlosser, and Jamie Harrison.

FUNDRAISING: Annie Egan, Tom Edwards, Bob Warner

Jim Daus
Kathy Chandler-Henry
Bob McKenzie
Rosie Shearwood
Susie Kincaid
Steve Conlin
Toby Sprunk
Annie Egan
Christina Lautenberg
Scott Schlosser

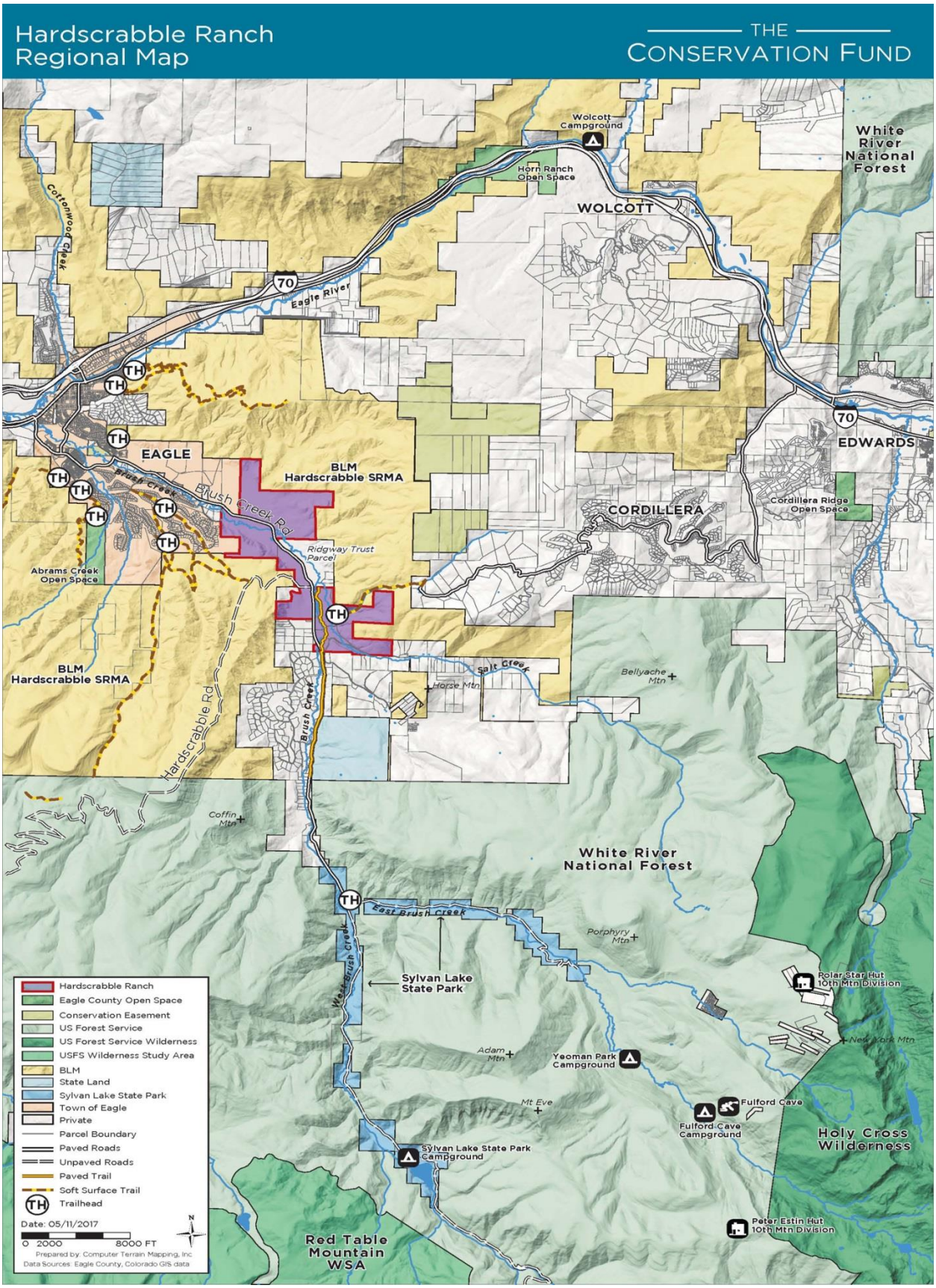
John Staight
Bob Warner
Adam Palmer
Tom Edwards
Dan Godec
Dick Kessler
Wendy Griffith
Annie Egan
Vern Brock
Cookie Murphy-Pettee

| Budget

Total cost to complete the Campaign is estimated at $ 37,500 as follows:

Estimated Budget May 29, 2017 through July 31, 2017

Item	Amount
Publications	2,500
Special Events	600
Administrative and Fundraising	34,400
TOTAL	$37,500


Hardscrabble Ranch
Regional Map
THE
CONSERVATION FUND
Wolcott Campground
White River National Forest
Horn Ranch Open Space
WOLCOTT
Cottonwood Creek
70
Eagle River
TH
EAGLE
BLM Hardscrabble SRMA
Brush Creek Rd
CORDILLERA
Cordillera Ridge Open Space
EDWARDS
Ridgway Trust Parcel
Abrams Creek Open Space
Salt Creek
Bellyache Mtn
Horse Mtn
Hardscrabble Rd
Brush Creek
Coffin Mtn
White River National Forest
East Brush Creek
Porphyry Mtn
Sylvan Lake State Park
Polar Star Hut 10th Mtn Division
New York Mtn
Adam Mtn
Yeoman Park Campground
Mt Eve
Fulford Cave
Fulford Cave Campground
Holy Cross Wilderness
Sylvan Lake State Park Campground
Peter Estin Hut 10th Mtn Division
Red Table Mountain WSA
Hardscrabble Ranch
Eagle County Open Space
Conservation Easement
US Forest Service
US Forest Service Wilderness
USFS Wilderness Study Area
BLM
State Land
Sylvan Lake State Park
Town of Eagle
Private
Parcel Boundary
Paved Roads
Unpaved Roads
Paved Trail
Soft Surface Trail
Trailhead
Date: 05/11/2017
0 2000 8000 FT
Prepared by: Computer Terrain Mapping, Inc
Data Sources: Eagle County, Colorado GIS data

Hardscrabble Ranch Open Space Conceptual Planning

- Subject Property
- Parcel Boundary
- River, Stream
- Town of Eagle
- Existing Paved Path
- Soft Surface Trail
- Potential Paved Path
- Potential Soft Surface Trail
- Potential Building Envelope / Parking Area

Feet
0 800 1,600

This map was created by the Eagle County GIS Department.
Use of this map should be for general purpose only.
Eagle County does not warrant the accuracy of the data contained herein.

Haymeadow PUD

Town of Eagle

BLM

555 AC +/- Northern Parcel
East of Brush Creek Rd

Future connection to town
via Haymeadow PUD

Fishing
Access
Parking

Building
Envelope
#1

Ranch
Headquarters

Ranch
Caretaker

Building Envelope #2
& Potential Trail Head

Town of Eagle

703 AC +/- West of Brush Creek Rd

HARDSCRABBLE

BLM

Cross-Country
Ski Trail Head

Trail leads to
Cordillera Territories

Trail Gulch
Trail Head

511 AC +/- Southern Parcel
East of Brush Creek Rd

Fishing Access,
Picnic Area,
& Trail Head

5 AC +/-

Frost Creek PUD

It is 4.12 miles to
the entrance of
Sylvan Lake State Park

Eagle County, Colorado Govmnt, GIS Dept P:\Department\Openspace\HardscrabbleRanch_062316\MXD\HardscrabbleParcels_PR_050817.mxd Date: 5/8/2017 11:21:09 AM Name: scott.fleming