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# Public can make tax-deductible contributions to help see Eagle Valley Trail completed

Local fundraising effort will soon get underway

News [FOLLOW NEWS](#) | July 21, 2021



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Sen. John Hickenlooper rides the Eagle Valley Trail in August 2016. An effort to create a paved trail system from Breckenridge to Aspen has been underway for decades, and the Eagle Valley Trail represents Eagle County's portion of that effort.

*Vail Daily file photo*

A paved trail system aiming to run from Breckenridge to Aspen became much more likely following [a decision by elected officials to issue \\$20 million](#) to \$22 million in bonds to see Eagle County's portion realized.

But it will take approximately \$26 million to complete the unfinished portions of the Eagle Valley Trail — Eagle County's portion of the cross-county hard surface recreation path — staff confirmed at Tuesday's Eagle County Board of County Commissioners meeting.

If the bonding effort generates \$22 million, that still leaves some of the trail incomplete.

To help make up the difference, a local fundraising effort will soon get underway, Eagle County officials announced Tuesday.

"I am 100% convinced that \$1.5 million to \$2 million is absolutely attainable in the community," said Dick Cleveland, a 25-year member of the ECO Eagle Valley Trails Committee.

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A simple donation to Eagle County is not tax deductible, however, even if the local government is able to ensure those funds go to the construction of the Eagle Valley Trail. Without a tax deductible option, the likelihood of Cleveland's prediction coming to pass is dramatically reduced.

To come up with a tax deductible solution, Eagle County Trails Program Manager Kevin Sharkey said the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments has stepped in to assist.

### Now accepting checks

The Northwest Colorado Council of Governments has a foundation which is “a legitimate 501(c)(3), in good standing with the IRS, and we keep that status as an entity for these kinds of purposes,” said Jon Stavney, the executive director.

Stavney is a former Eagle County Commissioner who helped work on the Eagle Valley Trail.

Stavney says the board of the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments, at a meeting in July, approved Eagle County Trails' use of its foundation so those who want to contribute financial aid to help see it completed can do so in a tax deductible way.

With the commissioners and staff in Eagle County making it clear that it the trail will likely require some donations to see completion, Stavney said he wants to stress that, even though the exact mechanisms haven't been worked out with an electronic form and online donation button, the board decision in early July does enable the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments Foundation to process checks immediately if the check indicates it's for the Eagle Valley Trail.

“That's not the tool that we're intending to deploy as the best practice for how to do this, but it would work,” he said.

And those checks would be, of course, tax-deductible.

Stavney said an easier option will be forthcoming, but given the local demand to see the trail completed, he wanted to make it known the immediate option is available.

“People can make tax-deductible donations right now to help see this thing finished,” Stavney said.

### Foundation at the ready

The Northwest Colorado Council of Governments Foundation's mission is to “provide a mechanism for the member jurisdictions of Northwest Colorado Council of Governments to work collaboratively with not-for-profit organizations, citizen-based groups, and individuals on projects of mutual interest and benefit for the region.”

The Council of Governments is composed of the counties of Eagle, Grand, Jackson, Pitkin and Summit, along with various municipalities within those counties. Some municipalities from outside of those counties, like Glenwood Springs, are also part of the co-op. Each entity appoints a board member to serve on the board.

Members may request use of the foundation for projects; Stavney said the Eagle Valley Trail was an obvious choice and received unanimous board approval.

The foundation will maintain a separate bank account and separate funds for the Eagle Valley Trail within that account. The foundation will charge a 7.5% administration fee on all funds that are received into the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments Foundation bank account.

The administration fee will be used to cover overhead and operating expenses related to the administration of the foundation including “staff time and resources to account for all contributions received, provide acknowledgments for all contributions received, produce periodic project reports, write grant proposals, administer grant agreements/contracts between the NWCCOG Foundation and funders, and ensure that an annual independent audit is conducted,” according to the foundation's [website](#).