Project Objectives
The project focuses on achieving six objectives identified as "High Priorities 0-3 Years" for the Eagle area trail system as identified in the [Town of Eagle Open Space and Trails Master Plan](#).

- Trail Hub development with improved navigation and signage
- Re-routes of eroding, unsustainable trails
- Unsanctioned trail management
- Trail maintenance collaboration
- Habitat improvement projects
- Motorized access

Land Management Objectives
Additionally, all of the projects align with the management goals defined by the BLM under the [Hardscrabble Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) Recreation Management Zone (RMZ) #1](#).

Definition. The SRMAs are administrative units where the existing or proposed recreation opportunities and recreation setting characteristics are recognized for their unique value, importance and/or distinctiveness, especially as compared to other areas used for recreation.

Management Focus. The SRMAs are managed to protect and enhance a targeted set of activities, experiences, benefits, and desired recreation setting characteristics. The SRMAs may be subdivided into recreation management zones (RMZ) to further delineate specific recreation opportunities. Within SRMAs, R&VS management is recognized as the predominant land management focus, where specific recreation opportunities and recreation setting characteristics are managed and protected on a long-term basis.

Requirements. The SRMAs/RMZs must have measurable outcome-focused objectives. Supporting management actions and allowable use decisions are required to: 1) sustain or enhance recreation objectives, 2) protect the desired recreation setting characteristics, and 3) constrain uses, including non-compatible recreation activities that are detrimental to meeting recreation or other critical resource objectives (e.g. cultural or threatened and endangered species).

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Review Process
These projects are currently under review per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and are not approved at this time. [What is the NEPA you ask?](#) NEPA requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions. The range of actions covered by NEPA is broad and includes
- making decisions on permit applications,

- adopting federal land management actions, and
- constructing highways and other publicly-owned facilities.

Using the NEPA process, agencies evaluate the environmental and related social and economic effects of their proposed actions. Agencies also provide opportunities for public review and comment on those evaluations.

The trails in this area are within severe winter range for elk and deer and will continue to have a seasonal closure for mechanized use from December 1-April 15 (Boneyard, Bellyache Road and Redneck Ridge are open to all uses year-round).
The projects listed reference the trail names on the map below for those not familiar with the area.

Wildlife
The majority of the Hardscrabble SRMA RMZ #1 contains severe winter range for elk and deer as identified by the Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW). While we understand that mapping is not perfect, it is created from data and science collected in the field. Furthermore, to mitigate any potential wildlife impacts during the winter season, we recommend that all of these projects continue to have a seasonal wildlife closure consistent with the existing closures of December 1-April 15. The only trails not included in this closure are Haymaker 1st and 2nd Loop, Boneyard, Bellyache Road and Redneck Ridge as they are open to year-round use. VVMTA Wildlife Trail Ambassadors will continue to focus on high-use trails with potential user/animal conflict to ensure users are educated and understand the importance of this seasonal closure.

Funding
If approved by the BLM, these projects will be funded by the Town of Eagle Open Space budget, funds from VVMTA and HTC, and additional fundraising as necessary. The projects will be completed in partnership with the VVMTA and their Trail Conservation Crew, volunteers from VVMTA and HTC, and potentially with help from the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps. Partnerships to complete the habitat restoration, after trails are decommissioned, will be explored and budgeted for accordingly.

East Eagle - Hardscrabble SRMA RMZ 1
The proposed projects in East Eagle focus on re-routes, maintenance, unsanctioned trail management, and trail decommissions. East Eagle is the most used trail area in Eagle making these projects a top priority in order to maintain a high-level user experience in this area. The recent acquisition of the Brush Creek Valley Ranch and Open Space borders a significant portion of the East Eagle Hardscrabble SRMA RMZ #1. The Brush Creek Valley Ranch & Open Space management plan was adopted in 2017 after a community input process. This management plan drives the current and future values of the area "that preserve our region's ranching heritage, visual character, and landscapes of the Brush Creek valley. The property protects wildlife habitat and

provides opportunities for public access, recreation, and education for future generations." The 7-8 miles of proposed decommissioned trails in this area will prioritize this land for wildlife habitat by connecting a broad landscape scale habitat and limiting recreation use in the area.

Re-Routes & Maintenance
- **Good Bit** - creates a singletrack connection from the Bluff's neighborhood to Boneyard, bypassing steep, lower Bellyache Road. With increased motorized use of Bellyache this project will decrease user conflict and provide a better user experience by connecting the neighborhood to the Boneyard trail with access that is characteristic of the actual trail.
- **Pool and Ice Bottom** - Reroute brake bumps at the bottom to prevent trail widening and reduce maintenance needs.
- **Dirt Surfer and Dirt Surfer Shortcut**- In partnership with Rocky Mountain Sports Riders (RMSR) and Eagle County Open Space, we are proposing to decommission and re-route Dirt Surfer. With the recent acquisition of the Brush Creek Valley Ranch and Open Space (BCVROS) by Eagle County, part of Dirt Surfer crosses onto the property which doesn't allow motorized use. The reroute alignment will be in the general area of the unsanctioned trail Burn After Riding to create a legal, more sustainable trail alignment. The reroute will attempt to retain the steep, intermediate/expert characteristics of the original trail. The reroute will be non-motorized access. This change will limit motorized use to Bellyache Road and Road Gulch.
- **Road Gulch Reroute (Partial)** - with the purchase of the BCVROS, motorized users can no longer access Road Gulch from Haymaker. The only motorized access to Road Gulch is from Bellyache Road above. In order to eliminate user conflict and illegal motorized use on BCVROS, we propose decommissioning the road below the intersection of Will's Thrill and rerouting to non-motorized singletrack. This will help prevent illegal motorized use of the trails on Haymaker and BCVROS.

Unsanctioned Trail Closure
The demand for trails in this area is supported by the disproportionate development of unsanctioned trails. Unfortunately, these unsanctioned trails are unsustainable and have poor alignments. We are exploring new trail alignments for future projects in order to meet the demand and desired user experience. An illegal trail in the area known as "Braaap" will be closed and decommissioned. As part of the Dirt Surfer Reroute (explained above), the illegal trail known as "Burn After Riding" will be closed with the Dirt Surfer Reroute new trail alignment occurring in the same area.

Decommission

The following is a list of the underutilized roads we propose to decommission. These roads have a history of promoting illegal trail creation. With the newly acquired BCVOS property, the decommissioning of these trails is the start of restoring habitat in the area. The proposed decommissions are best viewed on the map but include BLM 8412, 8412A, 8412AA, 8413E, 8413G, 8413D, 8413BA, 8413B, 8413, and 8413BC. If approved, further exploration for habit restoration after the decommission will be discussed in partnership with key stakeholders.

West Eagle - Hardscrabble SRMA RMZ 1

The proposed projects located in West Eagle focus on developing two new trail hubs, reroutes of unsustainable trails to improve intermediate access, improving motorized connectivity to decrease user conflict, and various related decommissions. The trails in West Eagle are less popular than the trails in East Eagle. User feedback indicates that a lack of signage and the presence of a number of spurs/trail connectors make it difficult for local users and visitors to navigate. Additionally, the primary access to the area, Abrams Ridge, is an intermediate/advanced trail making it extremely challenging for beginner/intermediate riders to access the area. These projects will ultimately improve the user experience for both non-motorized and motorized use by providing better navigation, intermediate access, connectivity, and signage to direct the user experience.

Reroute - Trail Hub #1 "Shire" or "Cow Camp" Trail Hub - Catwalk/Mikes Night Out/Blue Grouse/Scratch

The trails in this area are infamously hard to identify and navigate unless you are riding with someone who knows them. The idea is to reroute existing routes so they all connect, and start/end in one location with appropriate maps and signage improving the user experience. With signage and proper use designation, the hope is to eliminate the illegal motorized use of the area, while providing additional legal motorized use, and decreasing the potential for user conflict. The details of the reroutes are as follows:

- **Blue Grouse** - Extend Blue Grouse from the BLM road 8383d down into Catwalk as it connects to the Shire. Decommission the existing illegal section that connects into Mikes Night Out to help prevent illegal motorized use of Mikes Night Out and provide a legal motorized trail alignment that creates a new loop option with Catwalk. The local motorized community has long desired motorized trail options that are located within a "forest environment" as opposed to the majority of West Eagle which contains dusty, dry, Gypsum type of soils.
- **Mikes Night Out** - reroute the steep, eroding end section of Mikes Night Out away from the Abrams Creek watershed to connect into the Shire. Close (not

decommission) existing .59 miles of trail on utility road that parallels the Abrams Creek watershed. This utility road was created to provide a water drinking source for the Town of Gypsum. Currently, many motorized users access this section of trail/road to climb up Mikes Night Out (illegally) and have also created illegal trails crossing Abrams Creek to connect to Dead Cow. Crossing Abrams Creek not only has the potential to negatively affect the water supply but also negatively affects the known populations of [Native Cutthroat Trout located in Abrams Creek.](#)

- **Scratch** - reroute scratch to connect with the Shire location and decommission existing sections of Scratch.
- **Reynolds Wrap Reroute** - extend the trail as it approaches Spring Creek Road so that it connects with Scratch and into the Shire hub.
- **Abrams Gulch Reroute** - reroute the upper section of Abrams Gulch and build new singletrack that connects with Scratch. Decommission steep Abrams Gulch road (.57 miles). This project will help provide better, intermediate access from LOV Connection, up Abrams Gulch into the Shire Trail Hub. It will also eliminate a creek crossing over Abrams Creek reducing the impact on that watershed.

Reroute - Trail Hub #2 Worlds Greatest Trail Hub - Abrams Ridge/Itch/Scratch/Worlds Greatest/Yellow Chair

As with the trails identified for the Shire hub, the trails in this area are infamously hard to identify and navigate. The idea is to reroute existing routes so they all connect to the Shire Trail Hub. Improved maps and signage would be created with the goal of improving the user experience. With improved signage and proper use designation, the hope is to eliminate the illegal motorized use of the area and decrease the potential for user conflict all while improving the user experience by creating a connected singletrack trail system. The details of the reroutes to accomplish this goal are as follows:

- **Abrams Ridge Extension** - extend the top part of Abram's Ridge by rerouting the existing doubletrack track into a new singletrack and connecting to the Worlds Greatest Trail Hub. Decommission existing double track road.
- **Itch Reroute** - Close and decommission the Itch trail below Worlds Great and reroute it to the Worlds Greatest trail start.
- **Scratch Extension** - extend Scratch singletrack to connect with Worlds' greatest and new proposed Itch start.

Motorized Connectivity
The trails in the West Eagle Hardscrabble SRMA RMZ #1 and RMZ #2 have historically been built and used by motorized users. The organic nature of the development of

these trails, lower usage by non-motorized users, and lack of trail signage/use designation have created an environment where you can regularly encounter a motorized user on a non-motorized trail. The goal of these projects is to provide better connectivity for motorized users. It will also separate the two uses to help prevent user conflict ultimately improving the trail experience for all users.

- **8384B** - Decommission existing road that is currently close to motorized use and leads to a dead end.
- **Mikes Night Out Hike-a-Bike Reroute** - Not only is this an impossible pitch for most humans to ride up on their bike but increasingly moto's and OHV's are on this section of trail that is designated for non-motorized use. The reroute will provide a ridable climb and will prevent motorized use.
- **Blue Grouse** - Decommission the existing illegal section that connects into Mikes Night Out to help prevent illegal motorized use of Mikes Night Out coming up the trail.
- **Dead Cow and Firebox Singletrack** - Open to dirt bikes to improve the connectivity of motorized loops in the area.
- **Firebox Alternative** - Close illegal trail and provide motorized access iva Dead Cow and Firebox Singletrack

Eagle Ranch - Hardscrabble SRMA RMZ #1 ACEC
We have two projects proposed for this special area of the Hardscrabble SRMA RMZ #1 as they both exist with the Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

- **Water Tank Trail/Riddle Area** - a social trail has become popular with dog walkers from the Highlands area that connects the water tank road to Hardscrabble Road and connection to Riddle. We plan to decommission this illegal trail per the BLM's Resource Management Plan identifying this area as an [Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)](#).
- **3rd Gulch Reroute** - Reroute the existing 3rd Gulch trail/road that is severely eroding and creates a new sustainable singletrack alignment. Our hope is we can do a site-specific visit to look at the existing trail/alignment and determine whether rerouting it on the west side of the existing alignment, moving it away from the creek, and building a sustainable trail, would improve and enhance resource protection per ACEC requirements.