

Local & Region

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The Minturn public's WORK

Minturn residents, Eagle Valley Land Trust volunteers host a cleanup day for new open space

By Randy Wyrick
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MINTURN — Dozens of Minturn residents worked for their dinner Saturday when they hauled trash and cleared their new open space.

The 4.4-acre property runs 2,200 feet along the Eagle River on the south side of Minturn. It's protected by a conservation easement, held by Eagle Valley Land Trust. That conservation easement limits its uses to public recreational access and improvements, including access for kayakers, rafters and anglers.



SCOTT CONKLIN | EAGLE VALLEY LAND TRUST

Holden Stavney was among the volunteers for Saturday's cleanup of Minturn's new open space, 4.4 acres along the Eagle River.

It's a beautiful piece of property, and developers have been romancing the town and U.S. Forest Service for years to get it.

Minturn Mayor Gordon "Hawkeye" Flaherty was among those who proudly cut the ribbon, dedicating the open space.

"It would have been a beautiful development, but it's better as open space. There's room for one house, and it's here already," Hawkeye said as the ribbon was being cut.

Volunteers removed trash, barbed wire and dead trees from the property.

The U.S. Forest Service owned it almost since the time creatures crawled out of the primordial ooze looking for a decent cup of coffee and a chili cheeseburger at the Turntable restaurant. The Forest Service used it for what was euphemistically called equipment storage, and they did store all kinds of equipment there. But along with that, they also stored all kinds of abandoned junk vehicles they pulled out of the White River National Forest. Apparently people used to have the unfortunate tendency to abandon junk vehicles on public land — cars, trucks, vehicles of every description including an ice cream truck.

The town worked for many years to secure the Boneyard property for public use. The transaction was finalized on March 20, and the land is now owned and managed by the town of Minturn.

Eagle County and the town of Minturn partnered



ABOVE: Minturn's public works staff was out in force to volunteer for the cleanup of Minturn's new open space, 4.4 acres with 2,200 feet of river frontage along the Eagle River.

LEFT: Volunteers gathered on Saturday to help clean up Minturn's new open space along the Eagle River.
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to purchase the property for \$2.3 million. Of that, more than \$2 million came from the county's voter-approved open space fund.

"This is a terrific community amenity for the residents of Minturn, and our efforts today will ensure it's in top condition from the start," said Jim White, Minturn town manager. "We remained resolute and despite several setbacks, we were finally able to make this purchase and preserve this beautiful acreage along the Eagle River."

"We're all about saving land for people, so when we have a project that contemplates public access we want to make sure the public is safe when on the property," said Scott Conklin, projects manager for Eagle Valley Land Trust. "The conservation easement will ensure this land will be publicly accessible and remain in its natural character, forever."

Future improvements are to be completed on the property will include formalizing trails, including those that access the river, to minimize the human impact on the property and installing exclusion boulders to ensure vehicles are restricted to the existing parking lot.

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MINTURN OPEN SPACE

- ▶ 4.4 acres
- ▶ 2,200 feet of river frontage along the Eagle River
- ▶ Purchased from the U.S. Forest Service for \$2.3 million by town of Minturn and Eagle County's dedicated open space fund