



The 32 acres of protected land in Edwards is located southeast of the Miller Ranch neighborhood, bordered on the west by the “blue bridge,” on the south and east by the Eagle River, and on the north by the railroad tracks.

SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

Miller Ranch open space now officially protected

Land is used by fishermen, bicyclists and pedestrians

By **Derek Franz**
EAGLE VALLEY ENTERPRISE

EDWARDS — Just because something is recognized as “open space” does not mean it is permanently protected from development.

That was the case with a 32-acre parcel east of the Miller Ranch neighborhood in Edwards until Tuesday.

“A conservation easement on the property was donated to the Eagle Valley Land Trust, which seals the deal,” said Eagle County Open Space Director Toby Sprunk.

The parcel, now known as the Miller Ranch Open Space, was first acquired by the county in 2002 through a development agreement that stipulated that the land be set aside. The land is located immediately to the southeast of the Miller Ranch neighborhood, bordered on the west by the “blue bridge,” on the south and east by the Eagle River, and on the north by the railroad tracks. Boasting more than 100 feet of Eagle River frontage, the land is used by fishermen, bicyclists and foot traffic.

“We’ve been actively prodding the county and citizens to get this protected and it

never was until today,” said Jason Denhart, director of communications and development for Eagle Valley Land Trust, on Tuesday. “This has been a major goal for us. It took a long time but it’s finally finished.”

According to the Eagle Valley Land Trust, residents of Edwards and Arrowhead have rallied for years to get permanent protection for the land. The parcel is the last remaining undisturbed portion of the former Miller Family Ranch. The new conservation easement was once a much larger parcel of open space, but hundreds of acres were lost to recent housing development.

“The third time was a charm,” said Kara Heide, Eagle Valley Land Trust’s director.

A community ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony for the Miller Ranch Open Space will take place in the spring.

“It’s now protected forever, no matter who holds title to the land,” Sprunk said.

The Eagle Valley Land Trust will make sure that it is.

More than 10,000 acres of land have been preserved by the Eagle Valley Land Trust by using conservation easements to protect, guard and defend land from future development. For more information regarding this project or the Eagle Valley Land Trust, contact Denhart at 970-748-7654 or jdenhart@evlt.org.

Lot more than 100 feet

In an article that appeared in the Vail Daily on Jan. 18, “Miller Ranch open space now officially protected” there was a statement made that “100 feet of the Eagle River frontage” was part of this protected area. While every bit of Eagle River frontage that can be protected is significant, this particular piece has more than 50 times the importance that is stated in the article. Instead of just 100 feet being protected, the conservation easement on this property actually protects over one mile of Eagle River frontage.

The residents of Edwards and Arrowhead, the Eagle County commissioners and the Eagle Valley Land Trust should all be commended for the work they have done to protect over a mile of the Eagle River that provides access for fishing, hiking and scenic viewing for all residents and visitors forever.

I hope everyone will take the opportunity to visit this property at the official ribbon-cutting ceremony that the county, Land Trust and residents are planning for this spring. And let’s hope that more projects of this nature can proceed that provide access and protect the rivers in our county forever.

Tom Edwards
Gypsum
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