

To: Steamboat Springs City Council
Cc: City Staff, USFS

April 2, 2021

Dear City Council,

We the undersigned wish to bring an issue to the City Council's attention that demands immediate action.

On November 3, 2013 voters in Steamboat Springs approved [Referendum 2A](#) for the "development of trails in and around the city *in accordance with* the Trails Alliance proposal" (emphasis added). The Steamboat Trails Alliance (STA) proposal consisted of an enumerated list of 46 projects. Up until recently, the city had been acting within the scope of the voters' approval and STA proposal by only funding projects from the enumerated list. This changed in August 2019, when the 2A Trails Committee [voted to approve](#) nine US Forest Service (USFS) trails for funding not included in the STA proposal. This exceedance of the 2A authorizing language has the impact of diverting funding of trails and amenities specifically approved by the voters in 2013 to trails never approved by the voters. This is in spite of many desirable trails and amenities in the STA proposal not being funded, such as expansion of the Core Trail. It also has the effect of seeding doubt and cynicism in the public about how faithfully tax proposals are followed once passed.

The committee did this under a novel "functional equivalency" test to justify these new trails as qualifying for 2A funding. While 2A does not authorize that approach, even assuming it were to apply, these nine trails are not geographically nor functionally equivalent to trails in the STA proposal and, until the time of the 2A Committee meeting, were never considered as part of the enumerated list. The attached white paper details the specifics of how these trails fail to line up with the STA proposal. In the minutes from the meeting, one 2A committee member remarked, "If we stretch these alignments, do people start questioning what we're doing with the other trails?"

As one of the examples, the STA proposal never included trails around the Meadows Campground or Dumont Lake. Yet, the 2A Committee declared these multi-use trails as functionally equivalent to a hiking-only trail near the Ferndale area. This is not to judge whether these trails may be worthy projects; they simply cannot be funded from the city accommodations tax because they were never included in the STA proposal.

Funding trails not in accordance with the STA proposal violates both the letter and the spirit of Referendum 2A.

We wish to note that our concerns are only with the City of Steamboat Springs on this issue, and not the US Forest Service. Indeed, the USFS' own [Mad Rabbit documents](#) listed these nine trails as not being in the STA proposal. It was only subsequently that the city, through the 2A Trails committee, chose to fund these nine trails. Which trails receive city funding is the city's decision. However, the USFS uses the availability of 2A funding as one of its criteria for the

prioritization and phasing of Mad Rabbit trails, to be documented in the upcoming Environmental Assessment (EA).

With the EA expected as soon as May, the city must act quickly to clarify with the USFS which trails would be funded by 2A, and which trails would not. We ask that the city council deal with this issue immediately and inform us of their findings.

Sincerely,

Larry Desjardin
President, Keep Routt Wild

Rich Levy
Trappers Lake Sierra Club

Cristina Harmon
NWCO Chapter of Great Old Broads for
Wilderness

Doug Monger, Kyle Monger
Monger Cattle Company

Tammie Delaney
Vision 2030 Project Manager

Tom Fox

Troy Brookshire

Cari Hermacinski

Paul Stettner

Carol Fischer

Ed Watson

Martha Drake (Chris) Young

Jim Hicks

Harry Lambert

Kimberly Symalla

Diane Miller

Sharon & Jeff Sexton

Marilyn McCaulley
Dr. Mark McCaulley

Benjamin Barbier

Sally Hertzog

Eric Washburn

Winston Walker

Mary O'Brien

Bill McKelvie

Leslie Lovejoy

Dave Lambeth

Mark Ensner

Melissa Hampton

Brandon LaChance

Scott Warner

Ken Constantine