

**Memorandum**

**To:** Mayor and Council  
**From:** Tom Baker, Town Administrator  
**Date:** April 15, 2014  
**Re:** Funding Request: West Elk Multi-Use Club

---

**Purpose:** The purpose of this item is to consider a \$300.00 funding request from West Elk Multi-Use Club (WEMUC).

**Discussion:** Attached is a letter, history and financial information regarding this request. While the WEMUC is requesting funds for a trail system north of the Rifle/Silt area, it can be considered in the larger context of "Expose New Castle" and is a recreational resource that our visitors may enjoy.

In terms of funding, this \$300 request matches the funding that was included for RREDC in the Economic Development line item. Council chose not to fund RREDC in 2014.

**Recommendation:** If Council finds that this recreational amenity is consistent with our "Expose New Castle" effort, then staff recommends Council fund this request from the Economic Development line item.

March 31, 2014

Larry McDonald  
Recreational Department Director  
Town of New Castle  
P.O. Box 90  
New Castle, CO 81647

Mr McDonald,

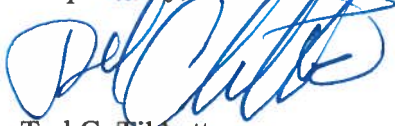
West Elk Multi-Use Club is a volunteer organization, supported by donations and voluntary user fees, whose mission is to mark, maintain and promote trails in the White River National Forest North of Silt for horseback riding, hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, dog sledding, and other non-motorized uses. We are requesting financial assistance to solidify our ability to continue servicing the current trail system we have built and to further our efforts to fulfill our mission.

My request for \$ 300.00 in financial support is for operational funding to cover our annual liability insurance, equipment maintenance and other operating costs for maintaining our winter trail system for the enjoyment of New Castle residents and visitors to our area. Because the large percentage of our regular users are from the Silt, New Castle, Rifle and Glenwood Springs communities, as show in the attached graph, there is justification for financial support from the individual communities that our winter trail system services. While we ask for a \$ 25.00 per person annual voluntary membership fee, we feel our mission is to make this amenity available for free to any user. Having this trail system available is an asset each community can take advantage of, especially in their promotions of outdoors activities available for residents or visitors alike. With the funds provided by the Town of Silt, Holy Cross, Garfield County and members during the 2012-2013 season, we coordinated nearly 400 hours of volunteer work on the winter trail system in the White River National Forest, and had close to 600 user visits during the season. This was an increase in user visits of approximately 20% over the previous season. We look forward to even more usage this year as our trail system becomes better known.

Attached is a brief history of our Club with a basic explanation of our needs, our 2013/2014 budget and a letter of support for our mission from the US Forest Service's White River National Forest Rifle Ranger District. Our operating permit with the Forest Service is valid through 2017.

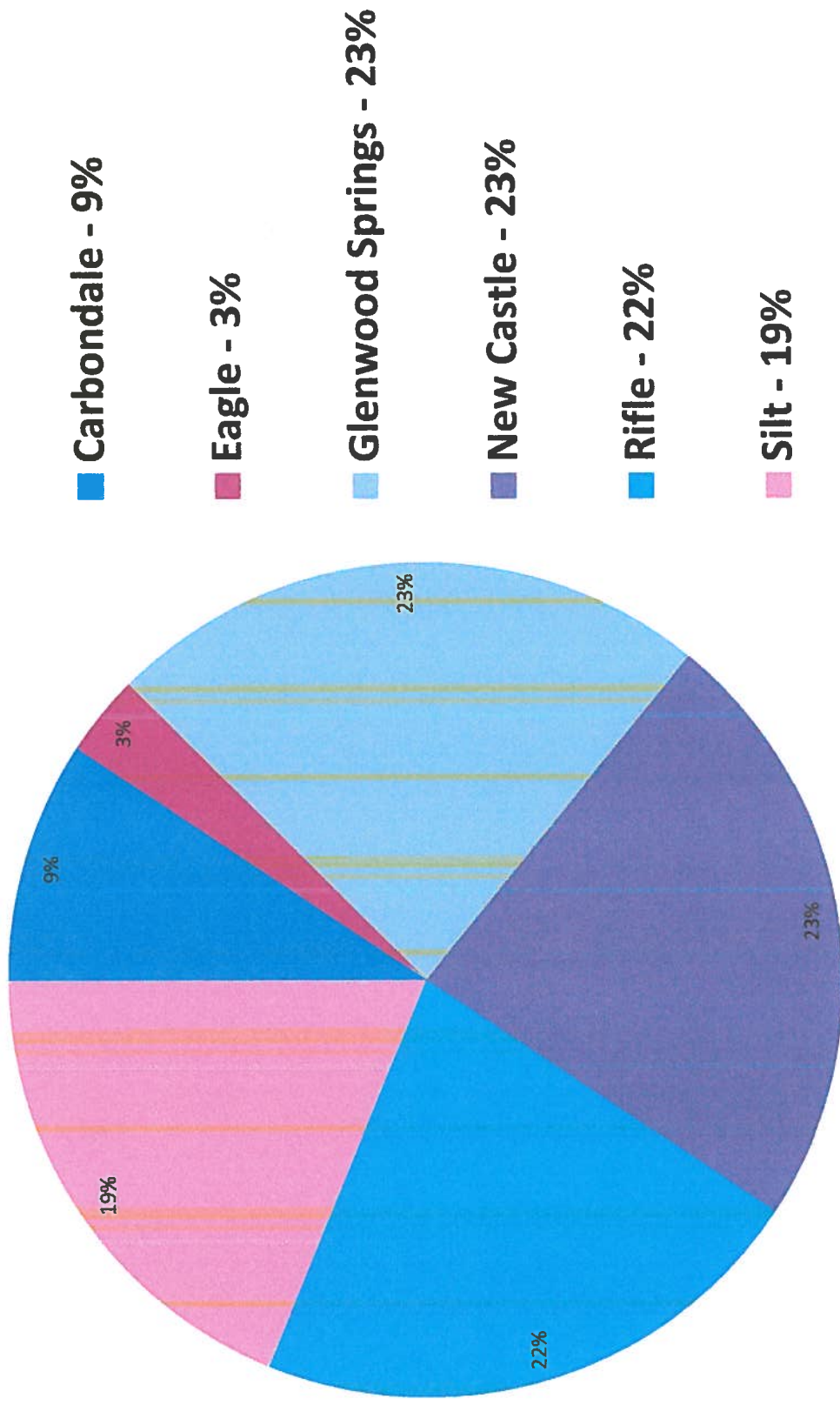
I would like to meet with you at your convenience to discuss this funding request and what process New Castle uses for granting funds to organizations that provide community benefit.

Respectfully,



Tod C. Tibbetts  
Executive Director  
West Elk Multi-Use Club  
todt@silt.net  
Phone: 970-876-2230

# Percent of Donors by City



**West Elk Multi-Use Club Budget for Season 2013/2014**

	<b>SUMMARY</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	
Net Fund Balance Forwarded	\$7,200.00
Trail User Contributions	\$1,200.00
Government/Grant Contributions	\$2,100.00
Total anticipated funds for 2013/14 season	<u>\$10,500.00</u>
Grooming Snowmobile Replacement Reserve	\$5,000.00 **
Funds available for 2013/14 Trail Program	\$5,500.00
 <b>EXPENSES 2013/14 Season</b>	
Admin (Insurance & Office Supplies)	\$950.00
Trail Maintenance Program	\$3,450.00
Total Expense	<u>\$4,400.00</u>
Net Fund Balance End 2013/14 Season	\$1,100.00
Additional funds for Replacement Reserve	\$1,000.00 **
Trail Program Funds for Start of 2014/15 season	\$100.00

\*\* Our main grooming snowmobile is 25 years old and is near its useful life. We are trying to add \$1,000 each year to our replacement reserve so we have a realistic reserve amount to replace this piece of equipment with a newer, used machine in the next 2-3 years.

## West Elk Multi-Use Club (WEMUC) – History and Future

In 2002, the West Elk Multi-Use Club was formed to mark, maintain and promote trails in the White River National Forest North of Rifle, Silt and New Castle for horseback riding, hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and dog sledding. The Club worked with the WRNF Regional District to put in a 3 loop winter trail system, approximately 10 miles in length, starting on Forest Road 819, 16 miles North of New Castle on the Buford Road. The Club has also organized a number of volunteer projects that have cleared horseback trails going from Rifle Mountain Park to the Triangle Park area connecting to an existing network of pack trails on the Flat Tops.

The Club is a volunteer organization, supported by donations and voluntary user fees. Since its inception, the Club has been supported by 93 donors giving between \$ 850 and \$ 1,400 per year. These donations have historically covered the cost of maintaining the winter ski trail. Most of the donors are from the Towns of New Castle and Silt, and each municipality from Parachute to Carbondale is represented on their donor list. A very small group of dedicated volunteers have accomplished a lot in this group's 10 years of existence, but their success has put strain on the organizational capacity as user numbers continue to grow. With the improved grooming program put in place three years ago with financial assistance from the County, the trail usage continues to grow.

In 2007, the Club was required to carry liability insurance which more than doubled their expense load. In 2009 came the realization that to groom a cross-country trail system at 9500' requires equipment designed for that task instead of the personal snowmobiles previously used that didn't stand up. With Garfield County and RFTA's help in 2010, WEMUC purchased equipment to appropriately handle that task and the winter trail usage appears to have doubled. Even with last winter's below average snowfall, we were able to provide winter trail enthusiasts with groomed trails from late November through the end of March, which is our normal 16 week season. This year, conditions permitting, we plan on grooming from Thanksgiving through the end of March.

Last season, WEMUC coordinated over 400 volunteer hours necessary to provide our groomed trail system. Based on user count samples taken, there are 50 to 80 unique users on peak weekends, and 5 to 40 users during the week. Judging from the tremendous increase in use of the winter trail system, and the great support we have gotten from the Forest Service and the volunteers, WEMUC's services are needed. With a minimum amount of financial support, we can continue to provide Garfield County residents and visitors alike an important recreational amenity.



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

White River  
National  
Forest

Rifle Ranger District  
0094 County Road 244  
Rifle, CO 81650  
(970) 625-2371  
FAX (970) 625-2532

File Code: 2720

Date: NOV 13 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in support of the work that West Elk Multi-Use Club (WEMUC) does for visitors to the White River National Forest in Garfield County.

The US Forest Service does not have the financial resources to fully fund marking and maintaining multi-use recreational trail systems and relies on organizations like West Elk Multi-Use Club to provide the volunteer labor hours required to maintain a winter trail system like the West Elk Trail. A working partnership between The US Forest Service, a citizen group like WEMUC, and Municipalities in Garfield County is ideal in providing a long-term recreational amenity that opens the White River National Forest to another group of users, Garfield County residents and visitors alike.

WEMUC has had a permit to mark and maintain the winter trail system since 2005 and has been excellent to work with. The addition of grooming equipment for the trail has improved the quality of the trail and increased the number of users. We have a good working relationship with WEMUC and look forward to that relationship continuing.

We support West Elk Multi-Use Club's goals and mission and appreciate the Municipalities in Garfield County's consideration of providing financial support to continue their valuable service.

Sincerely,

GLENN R. ADAMS  
District Ranger



Since 2002, the **West Elk Multi-Use Club** has marked, maintained, and promoted trails in the White River National Forest, north of Rifle, Silt, and New Castle, for hiking, biking, horseback riding, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and dog sledging. Multi-use is a key management principle for the US Forest Service. **WEMUUC** has worked with the White River National Forest Rifle Ranger District on a 3-loop winter trail system, approximately 12 miles in length, starting on Forest Road 819, on the Buford Road.



**How to Get There**

**From Silt:** North on 7th Street which turns into Peach Valley Road(214) to Silt Mesa Road(333). Turn L on 233 to Gort Road(281). Turn R on 281 to Bendlett Road(280). Turn L on 280 to Harry Gap Road(237). Turn R on 237 to Grass Valley Road(228). Turn R on 228 to Cutoff Road(247). Turn L on 247 to New Castle/Buford Road(245). Turn L on 245 to the Trailhead Parking Lot. Total Distance: 17 miles

**From New Castle:** North on 7th Street which turns into Buford Road(245), past East Elk Road & Main Elk Road. Turn R past the sign for West Elk at junction of Buford Road (245) and Grass Valley Road(228). Stay on 245 to the Trail Head Parking Lot. Total Distance: 16 miles

**From Rifle:** North on CO Hwy 13 to CO Hwy 328. Turn R on 328 past Rifle Gap to Grass Valley Road(228). Turn R on 228 to Cutoff Road(247). Turn L on Cutoff Road to New Castle/Buford Road(245). Turn L on 245 to the Trailhead Parking Lot. Total Distance: 22 miles



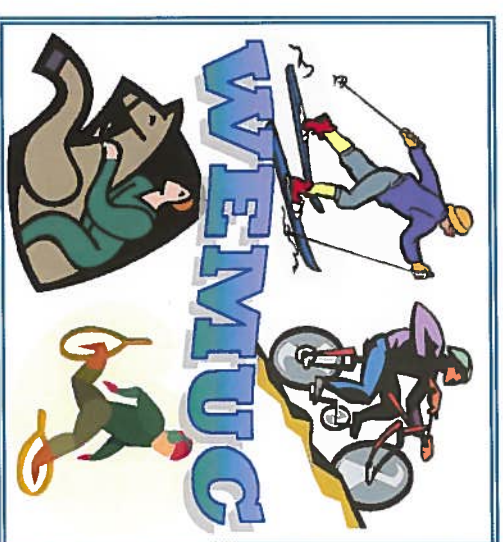
**West Elk Multi-Use Club**

**WEMUC** is a volunteer organization, supported by voluntary user fees and donations which cover the cost of grooming the winter ski trails. We welcome new members!

**Tod Tibbetts, Executive Director**  
**Peggy Tibbetts, Secretary/**  
**Treasurer**

**PO Box 129**  
**Silt, CO 81652**

**Visit our blog at:**  
<http://wemuc.wordpress.com>



**West Elk**  
**Multi-Use**  
**Trails**

Brought to you by the  
**West Elk Multi-Use Club**  
 in partnership with the  
**White River National Forest**  
 Rifle Ranger District



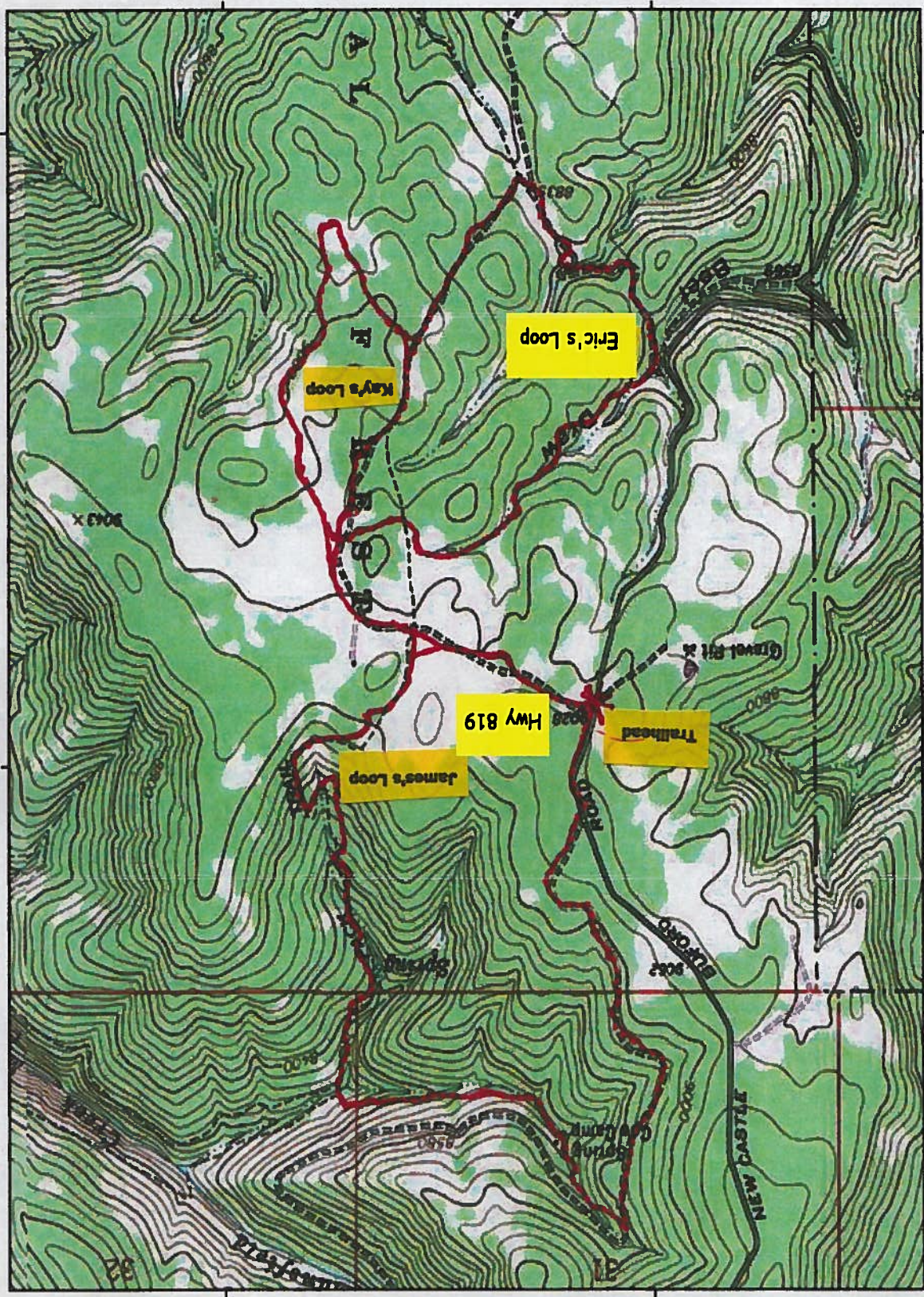
Map created with TOPOI © 2002 National Geographic (www.nationalgeographic.com/topo)



107°39.000' W WGS84 107°38.000' W

39°43.000' N

39°43.000' N



39°44.000' N

39°44.000' N

107°39.000' W WGS84 107°38.000' W