

Tuesday, May 17, 2005

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# Aspen Daily News

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6/17/04

**State awards Pitkin County major conservation grant**

Aspen Daily News Staff Report

text -

Pitkin County has received one of the largest open space grant awards ever given by Great Outdoors Colorado.

On Wednesday, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) approved Pitkin County's \$1 million request for the Harvey Ranch conservation easement.

The 1,840-acre ranch lies on a broad bench above Snowmass Creek and appears as de-facto wilderness from the Snowmass Ski Area. The Ranch was homesteaded in 1893 by the Hunter family, and shares over three miles of its boundary with the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness.

"I have loved this ranch dearly for over 40 years," said ranch owner Connie Harvey, a well-known environmentalist who writes a weekly column for the Aspen Daily News. "I am very pleased that GOCO recognizes the statewide importance of preserving large mountain ranches, and the unique opportunity to foster conservation in Snowmass Capital Creek area on a large scale."

Last fall, Pitkin County secured a \$3 million contract for the purchase of a conservation easement on the Harvey Ranch. The conservation easement will be held jointly by Pitkin County and the Aspen Valley Land Trust.

Last year, Pitkin County purchased a 1,480-acre conservation easement on the adjacent Childs Ranch. Bob Child posthumously received the Division of Wildlife's 2003 Landowner of the Year Award for the project.

"For over a decade, conservationists around Colorado have dreamed of preserving the upper Snowmass-Capitol Creek Valley, where large tracts of contiguous scenic open space are intact on the doorstep of the Maroon Bells/Snowmass Wilderness," Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Director Dale Will said in a prepared statement.

"The contiguous conservation of the Harvey and Child's properties protects 3,320 acres, and will hopefully inspire other large landowners in our valley to consider conservation as a viable option for their properties," Will said.

"We heartily welcome GOCO's assistance in our efforts to meet the needs of landowners while preserving our wildlife, watersheds, viewsheds, and historic agriculture," added Pitkin County Commissioner Dorothea Farris. "We are the generation that must decide the fate of Colorado's

mountain valleys, and we are grateful for the collaboration with the Harvey family, Aspen Valley Land Trust, and now GOCO, to ensure these treasures are preserved."

Great Outdoors Colorado, created through a citizen's initiative passed in 1992, is funded by up to half of the state's lottery proceeds.

This year, GOCO awarded \$9.9 million in local government and open space grants statewide for 57 projects. Since 1994, GOCO has awarded \$397 million for more than 2,100 projects in all of Colorado's 64 counties.