

# THE ASPEN TIMES

## Vote for Open Space

October 23, 2006

Dear Editor:

We who live, work or play in Pitkin County are fortunate to have such an effective Open Space and Trails program. More than 14,000 acres of public lands have been conserved since the Pitkin County tax was created in 1990. Those include huge family ranches such as the Child and Harvey properties, important lands on the valley floor such as North Star and Filoha Meadows and visual backdrops such as Smuggler Mountain, which the county purchased in conjunction with the City of Aspen.

In addition, Pitkin County Open Space and Trails has acquired land for and built some 40 miles of trail, providing recreation and transportation alternatives throughout the valley. These significant accomplishments have been the result of a talented and dedicated staff of professionals who know the value of open spaces to all who live here. The program is a model for others throughout Colorado.

Much has been done but opportunity is passing quickly. Our Western ranching heritage has all but disappeared, and open vistas are closing quickly. The time to conserve land in the Roaring Fork, Crystal and Fryingpan river valleys is now.

Voters have the ability to increase the pace of conservation by approving Referendum 1B, which would extend the open space and trails tax through 2020, and authorizes the county to borrow up to \$20 million. The borrowing capacity will allow Pitkin County to acquire land now, before land prices make public open space only a fond memory.

Pitkin County Open Space and Trails partners with Aspen Valley Land Trust, Great Outdoors Colorado and many other entities to make sure that county funds are invested wisely and our quickly disappearing open spaces.

The Board of Directors of Aspen Valley Land Trust urges you to vote "Yes" on 1B.

Dave Bellack  
President  
Aspen Valley Land Trust board of directors

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