



## OPEN SPACE & TRAILS DEPARTMENT

970.668.4060 ph | 970.668.4225 f  
www.SummitCountyCO.gov

0037 Peak One Dr. | PO Box 5660  
Frisco, CO 80443

### **STAFF REPORT**

**TO:** Board of County Commissioners  
**FROM:** Katherine King, Senior Resource Specialist  
**DATE:** February 17, 2020  
**FOR:** February 25, 2020 Consent Agenda  
**REQUEST:** Approval to exercise option agreement to acquire the Eclipse Lode (Snake River)

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The OSAC made a unanimous recommendation at their January meeting that the County pursue acquisition of the Eclipse Lode above Sts. John (see attached map).

Eclipse Lode MS# 132, Schedule No. 3009444, 1.83 acres. Owner: Amy Gray. Cost: \$20,000

The owners of the Eclipse Lode reached out to Open Space staff to gauge the County's interest in acquiring the claim. They initially purchased it intending to build a backcountry cabin on it; however, after looking into the process and considering the difficult access to this location, they abandoned the idea. They paid \$26,000 for the property and were hoping to break even selling it.

At their January meeting, OSAC discussed the contiguity with other open space lands the protection of this parcel would provide, and its merit in protecting the backcountry character of the Snake. They thought the owners were likely looking for a similar price per acre as the Zulu King claim the County acquired in September, 2019. OSAC recommended the County acquire the claim at a similar price, or \$20,000 total. Staff does not believe there are any environmental concerns on the property.

Open Space Values: On the east flank of Glacier Mountain near and above treeline, this backcountry mining claim contains high alpine habitat and is surrounded by other public lands. Open space values include:

- Extensions: The property is surrounded by existing County Open Space and USFS lands.
- Access/Recreational: The property currently does not have road access. Development of the claim could result in a significant change in character to the area.
- View corridors: Development above treeline in this location would be visible throughout the Deer Creek basin.
- Unique lands: the Eclipse Lode contains mostly high alpine tundra and wetlands.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION/REQUEST:** Staff concurs with OSAC's recommendation to pursue acquisition of the Eclipse Lode at a cost of \$20,000 to the Open Space fund. Staff requests BOCC approval to exercise the option agreement and move forward with closing.

Cc: Scott Vargo, Bentley Henderson, Jeff Huntley, Jim Curnutte