

# Vail Daily

## Vail Daily's View: Hidden Gems merit county's support

Vail Daily Editorial  
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A big part of what makes our community special is the wild country right out the door.

The views, the environmental considerations and, for the hardy ones among us, the room to roam are invaluable.

There also are economic benefits to the watershed, hunting, camping and recreational activities.

The Hidden Gems campaign to expand wilderness designation below treeline in the White River National Forest and neighboring Bureau of Land Management areas enhances these values.

Official wilderness recognition for spots such as Castle Peak, Red Table ridge and a host of similar -- well, gems -- makes complete sense to us.

There are restrictions on motorized use and mountain bikes in such places. Mining and drilling are not permitted there. But the value for water purity downstream and hunting, for example, grow well beyond the borders of wilderness areas, which make up less than 2 percent of the national forest lands.

We think those other uses have enough room in the other 98 percent of these public lands. Let's preserve that smidgen. So we encourage the Eagle County Board of Commissioners to support the Hidden Gems campaign on Tuesday.

Such support for conservation is wise in pretty much every way you can look at it.

Vail Daily Editorial Board

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