NEW TRAIL SPOTLIGHT: EVERKRISP

DISTANCE: 4 miles
DIFFICULTY RATING: Intermediate
TIME: 30 min to 1 hour
ELEVATION GAIN: 1,000 feet
TYPE: Singletrack
SEASON: Closed Nov. 23 to June 20 for elk habitat and calving.

DID YOU KNOW?
In creating the Everkrisp Trail, the community became aware of the impacts that recreation has on local wildlife. During the trail planning process, Colorado Parks and Wildlife reported a drastic decline in Eagle County wildlife populations due to trail use. As a result, the U.S. Forest Service and VVMTA installed new seasonal closure signs and gates throughout the Vail Valley and launched the Wildlife Trail Ambassador program to help educate trail users. The results were dramatic. In 2017, 200 trail users were photographed on a seasonally closed trail over two weeks. In 2018, after the gates, signage and education initiative, only 44 people violated the same trail closure over a two-month period.

DESCRIPTION: The Vail Valley's newest trail will be as refreshing of an addition to the area's singletrack network as its namesake, the large-scale lettuce company that once operated on the hillside. The trail, which is slated to be completed by early July 2019, will connect Paulie's Plunge and the Eagle-Vail Trail with Meadow Mountain via an undulating route that will hug the south-facing hillside. It will also allow Whiskey Creek, a downhill route from the top of Meadow Mountain, to re-open to cyclists. The singletrack has been closed for the last few years due to its encroachment on private property.

Once the trail opens, bikers will enjoy the connection between two popular ride areas and a few more technical bits, such as some rock gardens and other features. Hikers and trail runners will appreciate the moderate mileage and undulating terrain.

The project is a collaboration between the Vail Valley Mountain Trails Association, the U.S. Forest Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the communities of Eagle-Vail and Minturn, and many volunteers, planners and fundraisers.

The addition of Everkrisp plays an important part in connecting the entire valley via bike paths and trails. Once finished, riders will be able to ride from Beaver Creek to Minturn, entirely on singletrack.

"It's all about connecting communities with communities, and the idea of the driveway being your trailhead. This brings us one step closer to that valley-wide connection," said VVMTA board member Bill Hoblitzell.