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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Ribbon Cutting Highlights Accessibility Projects in Estes Valley

Estes Park, CO – On October 2nd, 2025, the Rocky Mountain Conservancy co-hosted an Accessibility Showcase at the Estes Park Mountain Shop to highlight collaborative accessibility efforts in the Estes Valley that include the Conservancy, Kep Expeditions, Visit Estes Park, and the Estes Park Mountain Shop.

The Conservancy also held a ribbon cutting ceremony to promote the GRIT all-terrain wheelchairs available at the Estes Park Mountain Shop and to recognize donors in attendance: Bruce and Judy Lavash, John and Machteld DePoortere Lavash, Mike and Anne Hamman, and David and Mary Hemphill, whose generous support have made the GRIT chairs available for free to the public.

The six GRIT all-terrain wheelchairs, available to rent free of cost at the Estes Park Mountain Shop, reduce outdoor accessibility barriers and can be used in the Estes Valley and Rocky Mountain National Park. “The people who rent GRIT wheelchairs are able to experience Rocky in a way that would not be possible without them,” said Zach Zehr, owner of the Estes Park Mountain Shop.

The participating partners at the event showcased several other accessibility projects and equipment. Estes Park Mayor Gary Hall also facilitated a discussion panel, which was signed by American Sign Language interpreters, Rebecca Hill and John Pauls from Purple Communications. Representatives from the Estes Park Mountain Shop, Kep Expeditions, and Rocky Mountain Conservancy shared their organizations’ dedication to increasing accessibility.

Rocky Mountain Conservancy would like to extend a special thank you to National Park Foundation, R.C. Kemper Charitable Trust and Foundation, Sam Schneider Legacy Foundation, Mike and Anne Hamann, David Hemphill, Bruce and Judy Lavash, John and Machteld DePoortere Lavash, Les and Susan Noe, and other generous donors whose contributions have made the GRIT chair rentals and other Conservancy accessibility projects possible.

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Caption: Donors and staff from Rocky Mountain Conservancy, Estes Park Mountain Shop, and Kep Expeditions gathered to celebrate the addition of five GRIT all-terrain wheelchairs available for loan at Estes Park Mountain Shop.

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Caption: Karen Lloyd D'Onofrio of Rocky Mountain Conservancy assists a user trying out a GRIT chair during the Oct. 2 accessibility showcase.