Understanding Voluntary Surcharge Programs
1% for Open Space is:
(Some basic definitions)

• An independent, unaffiliated 501c3 that is...

• A consortium of local businesses working to permanently preserve open space in Gunnison County, Colorado

• We do this by raising funds through participating businesses who ask their customers for a voluntary 1% donation on top of gross sales of products and services

• With this method we have raised over $1.9 million dollars to protect over 5,100 acres since 1997
This open space serves to protect our:

- Spectacular Viewsheds
- Recreational Access
- Wildlife Habitat
Ranching Heritage

Rural Lifestyle

Watershed & Ecosystem Integrity
Who We Are

The Organization
- Executive Director
- Seven Board Members, the majority of whom are local business owners in the program
- Our methodology of collecting a 1% voluntary donation from customers of participating businesses

The Businesses
- Restaurants
- Retail Shops
- Guide Services
- Building Industry
- Heath & Beauty Service Providers
- Artists
- Property Managers
- Landscapers
- Local Ski Industries
- Realtors
- Any business can participate!

The Customers
- Year-round locals
- Second Homeowners
- Visitors
- Any customer of any participating business
The true beauty of 1% is in its elegant simplicity
Entities working to permanently preserve open space in Gunnison County then apply to 1% for these funds.

Customer makes the donation at the point of sale.

Business collects and remits these funds to 1%.

The Basic Process
The customer identifies a 1% participating business through signs such as this.

Each business must have a minimum of TWO forms of notification of their participation in the program in their actual place of business.

A variety of signs are provided to the business to fit a variety of places such as storefront windows, registers and menus.
If a customer doesn’t wish to donate, they simply notify the business and the voluntary surcharge is removed from their tab.
For the customer, the requested donation is typically very small.

For example:
• $30 of a burrito dinner at Donita’s Cantina = $.30
• $100 jacket from the Mountain Shop = $1.00
• $6,000 weekly cabin rental from Crested Butte Property Management = $60

For large donations, a tax donation receipt can always be given

What we’ve learned is that customers are typically thrilled to help preserve the reason they came to live or visit here – the availability of open space.
• Participation is FREE for the business, not impacting their bottom line, but allowing them to contribute to a community program

• They choose on whether to remit their collected donations monthly or quarterly through a contract

• When a business signs up with 1% for Open Space, we immediately begin advertising their participation with ads such as these

• We provide them with free bookkeeping services to help them set up their register and accounting system

• They post their mandatory two signs

• We help educate their staff

• Collections begin
We work hard to make participation easy for businesses

• The voluntary surcharge is automatic with the responsibility on the customer to refuse the donation

• Few refuse

• We provide businesses with brochures, flyers, signs, wording for websites, sample invoices and Fact Sheets for Employees
We work hard to promote our participating businesses – when they make money, we make money and more open space is preserved.

Promotions include:
• Thank you ad run every week in local papers listing the businesses
• Press releases on their participation
• Web page built inside our website with contacts and links back to them
• Facebook posts
• Special promotions such as “Trail Fairy Coupons”
Collecting funds through the voluntary 1% surcharge is the organization’s SOLE means of fundraising.

To date we have close to 100 participating businesses.

Through them we raise approximately $130,000 per year.

We do not own land, hold conservation easements or initiate projects.

We are simply an economic engine whose singular focus is to raise money to permanently protect open space lands.

1% for Open Space therefore serves as a granting institution for entities working to permanently protect open space in Gunnison County.
The Grantee Experience

- 1% places donations into high interest bearing accounts in anticipation of incoming projects
- Entities wishing to receive these funds must have a focused project and complete the application process
- Funds are granted by majority vote by the Board of Directors
- Thus far, 1% has helped fund projects initiated by the Trust for Public Land, Gunnison Ranchland Conservation Legacy, Town of Crested Butte, Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory and the Crested Butte Land Trust

Awarded grants have ranged from $10,000 to $200,000 per project. The average grant tends to be around $50,000
Application for funds requires:

• A project description
• Budget
• Environmental, cultural and recreational values
• Public benefit
• Financial statements of the requesting organization
• Proposed easement
• Property uses

In addition to easements, 1% further helps protect land it funds through a Grant Agreement which requires the Grantee to:

• Maintain the property as defined in the application
• Notification of any potential changes of which 1% reserves the right to refuse
• Yearly reports on the property

1% for Open Space is rarely the only funder of a project. We are rarely the largest. Our power comes from stating with a clear voice that 100 businesses support open space in this county. This helps leverage much larger funds with great effectiveness.
Why does this work so well?

- Participation is free for the business
- Once set up, business participation takes no longer each month than writing a check
- There is a “bandwagon” appeal once the program is established
- Donation is small on the part of the customer, hence out tagline “saving paradise pennies at a time”
- Everyone can help preserve open space in this program. Every contribution, no matter how small, counts. You don’t have to be a big donor
- Every participant – from customers to businesses - is doing so voluntarily.
- Recreational tourism is the #1 economic driver in Crested Butte
- The ecosystem services provided by this open space that drive participation in the program are beauty, recreation, and preservation of a lifestyle and cultural heritage

1% for Open Space literally preserves the very thing that makes Gunnison County businesses money.
Building a Successful Program

- Businesses appreciate the free marketing opportunities and promoting their business
- Make it easy for businesses to participate
- Make both businesses and customers feel a part of the team and proud of their contributions no matter how large or small
- Make the connections – educate your businesses and customers about the open space land their contributions have preserved
- Pictures speak a thousand words
- Make it personal – use pictures of business owners and customers in your promotions. Customers can drive business actions
- Connect with your businesses – work to fit the program to their needs, get to know their business, let them know you
- Keep it simple to be more economically successful
It’s About Making Connections

Through the faces of participating business owners

Connecting customers with these businesses through education

Connecting business owners with the open space they help preserve

Connecting customers with the open space they help preserve
Just Starting Out

• Set a coffee date with potential businesses to have their undivided attention. Plus, coffee is inexpensive for the organization, but appreciated by the business owner

• Create that bandwagon appeal. Go out with your full board, have a happy hour social for the business community

• Create partnerships – have booths at your local water fair, farmer’s market and other environmentally focused events. Connect with your tourism association and chamber of commerce

• Get the local newspapers on board. Make them participants through in-kind ad donations. Utilize the free services of press releases and notifying staff photographers of events
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