

Vail Field Revitalization

Project Overview

We are looking to revitalize Vail Field back to its former glory for all to enjoy. In light of the recent improvements to the tennis and basketball courts, we are working to bring additional enhancements to the baseball field.

Grant Request

39000

Total Project Budget

93197

Applicant Information

Name of Applicant / Organization / Business

Woodstock Youth Baseball and Sports

Mailing Address

PO Box 152, Woodstock, VT 05091

Name of Project Coordinator

Patrick Crowl

Contact's Email Address

Budget

Telephone

8023564609

Organization's Website URL

TBD

EIN

TBD

Applicant / Organizational Description

Our mission is focused on improving the baseball experience for the children in our communities. We view a high quality baseball facility as an integral part of a community.

If you are applying on behalf of an organization, what is your total organizational budget?

As a newly formed non-profit our budget will be limited to fundraising capabilities for the Vail field project plus sundry other baseball expenses (scholarships, uniforms, equipment, etc.). We have a goal of raising \$30,000 over two years.

Project Information

Detailed Project Description

In 1900, Woodstock had its own integrated baseball team: The Woodstock “Invincibles” - 47 years before Jackie Robinson ever played in a Major League game. The “Invincibles” home was Vail Field. We are a group of parents looking to revitalize that very space back to its former glory for all to enjoy. In light of the recent improvements to the tennis and basketball courts, we would like to propose additional enhancements to the baseball field. Specifically: new fencing, landscape revitalization (new grass, infield dirt, etc.), historically appropriate dugouts, scoreboard and stands for spectators, temporary and removable fencing and foul poles during the active baseball season (that would easily be removed for other sporting events) and an additional small outbuilding for sports storage/concessions. A well manicured baseball field is inviting to all visitors and residents and demonstrates a town’s commitment to their kids’ recreational choices.

Presently the field suffers from a dilapidated fence, no dugouts or spectator seating, and gravel dirt which is unsafe for young players. Our field needs to be restored back to the inclusive, vibrant space it once was. We are seeking grant funds to partner with the Woodstock Rec Department, and in-kind donations from our non-profit (Woodstock Youth Baseball and Sports) to revitalize Vail field.

It’s no secret that Woodstock competes with other small Vermont communities for state of the art facilities like hockey rinks, tennis courts, and open spaces for events. It stands out as a great downtown village for shopping and eateries as well as overnight lodging. Woodstock is indeed judged by it’s schools, housing opportunities, it’s National Park and it’s overall beauty.

We feel the baseball field at Vail—within walking distance of a vibrant downtown— is a significant historical gem in our Village that needs updating. It is an infrastructure improvement that is along the lines of the rehab of Teagle’s Landing, Phil’s upgrade of the basketball and tennis courts at Vail and the investment Union Arena years ago. It ticks off several boxes in having the potential to positively affect Woodstock’s economy from helping to market Woodstock in a competitive tourist environment--and even increasing the number of visitors to our town, to improving and managing important open spaces for our own community residents.

For instance, a beautiful baseball facility could potentially attract competitive leagues to host a game at Vail Field from the Upper Valley Nighthawks, Vermont Little League and/or State High School Championships. Doing so would bring an influx of visitors which leads to additional revenue to the village and businesses. Additionally, adult softball leagues and/or charity games could be played - raising money for local causes (e.g. Woodstock Food Shelf, WARF, etc.)

We have spoken to the owner of the Upper Valley Nighthawks specifically about a “throwback” exhibition game to highlight the Woodstock Invincibles and he has been extremely supportive of the work we’re doing.

Project Timeline

We are hoping to have the entire project completed in 2022, but realize it may take an extra year to complete the entire project. There are funds earmarked by the town & Rec for Vail Field improvements which will cover field renovations this spring.

Project Champion

Patrick Crowl, has lived in the Woodstock community for over 30 years and is the owner of the Woodstock Farmers’ Market. He has been the head coach of our Woodstock Little League team for two years.

John Malcolm is assisting Patrick in this endeavor. John is from Reading and is active in the Woodstock Rec sports leagues helping coach soccer and baseball and has three children that will have many years of future play on Vail field. He also serves as Reading’s ECFiber delegate, and runs the Reading Ski Runner program.

We’ve seen first hand how baseball has had such a positive impact on kids - especially our own. During the past baseball season, when visiting other towns (Hartford, Hanover, Lebanon) it was apparent that our

facilities in Woodstock are extremely dated and in need of renovation. Patrick took up the charge to see how we can bring back a beautiful baseball facility to Woodstock at Vail.

Project Budget Narrative

Field Renovation - The field will be undergoing a renovation this spring by the Rec Dept which will include new dirt, sod, and re-grading by an experienced turf landscaper.

Fencing - We are looking to replace the dilapidated fencing that exists today. The fencing that surrounds the backstop is inadequate as numerous foul balls fall behind the current fence and land in unsafe areas - some as far as the tennis and basketball courts which catches many by surprise and could lead to injury.

Dugouts - In order to host exhibition/competitive games players have come to expect dugouts as a part of the playing experience. Dugouts provide additional safety and weather cover for the players and coaches. Many modern dugouts in surrounding towns are down with cinder blocks. We would seek to build wooden dugouts that are period appropriate and fit into the historic village aesthetic (clapboard siding, etc) yet would be sealed/painted to provide lasting protection from the elements for years to come.

Scoreboard - A modest sized scoreboard would be an integral part of allowing the community/families to stay engaged during little league games to even larger exhibition games. We may start with a very basic scoreboard but do envision longer term a beautiful scoreboard that fits into the historic aesthetic of the village. A wooden scoreboard with removable numbers - similar to the scoreboard at Fenway Park, perhaps even verbiage noting "Home of the Woodstock Invincibles." The goal would be to have it be simple so even children could help during a game.

Bleachers - We are looking to procure two aluminum bleachers that can hold around 50 people or so. We anticipate most spectators will want to bring their own lawn chair (as it is today) but for any other folks the bleachers could suffice. The bleachers would be movable and could be used for Soccer/Lacrosse/Hockey and other activities that occur outside of baseball.

Storage Shed/Concession Stand - Another outbuilding is truly needed to house equipment and supplies for the field itself. Right now there are bins near the pavilion but these are falling apart and not properly secured. The vision is that we can have a large enough structure that half of it could be used for storage and the other half could have a functional concession stand that would be open for various events. Any items sold through the stand could benefit various causes or support the associate sports programs. We do envision there needing to be electricity to the building. Again, this structure would need to be properly placed and ensure it too fits the historical aesthetic that the village desires.

Project Budget - Itemized

| Income Category | Total | Applicant | EDC | Other | In-Kind |
|---------------------|-------|-----------|-----|-------|---------|
| See attached budget | | | | | |

| Expense Category | Total | Applicant | EDC | Other | In-Kind |
|------------------|-------|-----------|-----|-------|---------|
|------------------|-------|-----------|-----|-------|---------|

What will success look like?

At a high level, success for us will be having a field that becomes a focal point of outdoor recreation for the town/village. This will demonstrate Woodstock's commitment to youth sports and modern facilities - following the example of Manchester, Stowe, and Hartford. We believe that an upgraded Vail field will invigorate, enhance and attract various events from around the Upper Valley. Seeing the positive effect that Union Arena had on Hockey we believe the same will happen with Vail Field and baseball. Adult leagues, intramural leagues, charity events, little league championships in addition to regular league play.

Additionally, hosting an Upper Valley Nighthawks game during the summer (conservatively targeting summer 2023) at Vail would be one of our specific goals. From speaking to the Nighthawks ownership they are very interested in supporting our work and highlighting the amazing history of the Woodstock Invincibles.

Community support for this project

In the early stages of planning this project we have had open communication with the Woodstock Recreation Department, the manager of the Vail Field complex. Currently, with Gail Devine (Director, Woodstock Rec) and Joel Carrey's (Assistant Director) support they have engaged with Joe Swanson from the Selectboard to communicate and seek approval for the first round of spring 2022 field improvements. As we've seen from the new tennis and basketball courts our community embraces investment in modern outdoor facilities.

With the influx of new community members, baseball registration was at a recent high last spring and we introduced a summer league thanks to School Board Chair Bryce Sammel. Our whole idea for this project was birthed out of the enthusiasm shown by the kids and their parents.

Community support for this project

The initial capital investment will sustain us for many decades. Woodstock Youth Baseball and Sports and the Woodstock Rec envision a long term partnership to ensure the vibrancy of Vail Field. The Woodstock Rec Dept already has the responsibility and capacity of managing the field and the associated improvements.

Budget



Vail Field and Invincibles history



Crowl Malcolm Addendum - Revitalize Vail Field



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