

# Vail ski collision suit settled for \$750,000

Daily staff report  
Newsroom@vaildaily.com

VAIL — The law firm of Bloch & Chapleau LLC recently announced that it has settled a ski injury lawsuit in the amount of \$750,000. The lawsuit followed a ski collision that occurred on Vail Mountain on Dec. 8, 2017.

Paulina Romero Labra suffered severe injuries in the collision that occurred. The lawsuit on behalf of Labra and her husband, Jorge Rodiles, was filed in Eagle County District Court against defendant Craig Michel of Virginia. A six-day jury trial was scheduled for Jan. 7-14.

On Dec. 8, 2017, Labra was skiing on the Lower Lion's Way trail at Vail. According to witness deposition testimony obtained by Bloch & Chapleau during discovery, Michel was attempting to pass Labra on a narrow portion of Lower Lion's Way, where there was no room for him to pass. Michel failed to maintain his speed and course and failed to maintain a proper lookout when he collided

with Labra from behind at a high rate of speed, a violation of the Colorado Skier Safety Act. The Eagle County Sheriff's Office investigated the collision, but no charges were filed.

"We were clearly able to prove that Mr. Michel was 100% at fault for the ski collision," said Labra's attorney, Joseph D. Bloch. "As a result, Mr. Michel's insurance company offered a substantial amount to settle the case to avoid going to trial."

Labra suffered serious injuries as a result of the collision, including a shattered left humerus. Labra's injuries required surgery to place hardware throughout her shoulder, and she has had nearly two years of medical treatment and rehabilitation. She might eventually require a bone replacement for her left humerus.

"Ms. Labra and Mr. Rodiles have suffered tremendously as a result of the ski collision," Bloch said. "They are very pleased with this settlement, which will enable Ms. Labra to obtain the additional medical treatment she needs for her injuries, including future surgery."

## CURIOUS NATURE

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But wherever you go in the Eagle Valley, you will find that life revolves around water, and riparian zones can be found at all elevations, providing the life-giving liquid that all life depends upon. And it is this water that also unites all the life zones, as the snow melts high in the alpine, trickling down through the subalpine where it winds its way

through the montane forests into the valley floors, and eventually west to the Colorado River. Animals like beavers, otters, mink, and muskrats frequent these areas, but species from all walks of life rely on having clean, free-flowing water, including humans.

*Austin Averett is a naturalist at Walking Mountains Science Center working on his master's degree in interdisciplinary science at Florida Institute of Technology.*

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