



Memorandum

To: Town Council

From: Mark Novak, Fire Chief

Date: December 4, 2018

Subject: USFS Muddy Pass/Sheephorn Project

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this memo is to provide background information regarding the potential submittal of a letter supporting and commenting on the USFS-Eagle/Holy Cross Ranger District's proposed Muddy Pass/Sheephorn Project

II. Background

The USFS is proposing the Muddy Pass/Sheephorn project which will be implemented on USFS lands north of the Town of Vail and continuing to the west towards the Trough Road.

The proposed action has multiple objectives which include:

1. Provide commercial forest products and/or biomass to local industries.
2. Increase tree age/size class diversity at the stand and landscape scales, thereby increasing forest resistance and resilience to disturbances such as future bark beetle outbreaks, fires, and other climate related mortality events.
3. Manage stand density in young stands of lodgepole pine to remove dwarf mistletoe, reduce potential crown fire spread, accelerate tree growth rates, and increase tree vigor.
4. Increase forage productivity for wildlife, such as elk and deer.

Although the project is not entirely adjacent to the Town of Vail, staff from the fire department suggest that a support/comment letter is appropriate due to the potential wildfire mitigation benefits that could positively benefit the Town of Vail when a wildfire occurs and proposed benefits to wildlife habitat.

The comments incorporated in the letter request that consideration be given to additional actions which will increase both the wildfire mitigation value of the project and the wildlife habitat value.

III. Requested Action

Approve on consent, a letter to USFS-Eagle/Holy Cross Ranger District regarding proposed Muddy Pass/Sheephorn Project.

IV. Attachments

- A. Comment letter to USFS regarding the Muddy Pass/Sheephorn Project
- B. USFS Notice of Proposed Action: Muddy Pass/Sheephorn Project