



Memorandum

To: Vail Town Council

From: Environmental Sustainability Department

Date: July 21, 2020

Subject: Resolution No. 31, Series of 2020, A Resolution approving a Challenge Cost Share Agreement between the Town of Vail and the USDA Forest Service, White River National Forest

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Challenge Cost Share agreement is to allow the Town of Vail and the US Forest Service to work together in the effort to mitigate the risk of wildland fire in East Vail in the area adjacent to the Booth Creek drainage, with the secondary benefit of improving habitat for bighorn sheep and other wildlife.

II. Background

The USFS has established a proposal for the Vail Valley Forest Health Project that will *reduce potential wildfire impacts to the wildland urban interface in East Vail through fuel reduction treatments. The proposed project area is approximately 4,400 acres and is located on the north side of I-70 from Spraddle Creek east to Pitkin Creek and north to Bald Mountain* and will ultimately include secondary benefits to habitat and wildlife. This project is subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process and will require the support of an approved NEPA contractor, SE Group, based in Frisco, CO. SE Group is an approved contractor of the US Forest Service, which means they are pre-qualified to complete NEPA-related work on their behalf. SE Group is familiar with the region, the Vail Community, the stakeholders, and the terrain, as background knowledge on this specific project with locally based field technicians. The town has contracted SE Group to begin silviculture field work within the 4400-acre proposed project area to determine the appropriate treatment prescription. For a detailed description of the project and NEPA review process phases, see the memorandum to the Vail Town Council dated July 21st, 2020 (Attachment B).

III. USFS and Town of Vail Partnership

In order to begin work on the NEPA review process, the Town of Vail and the USFS must enter into a Challenge Cost Share Agreement (CSA) (Attachment C). CSAs do not obligate the partner (the Town of Vail) to spend funds but allows the USFS and the

Town to work together. This partnership provides a framework for the parties to cost share and to cooperatively develop, plan, design, and implement projects that are mutually beneficial to the parties as well as facilitating rural prosperity and economic development.

At this time, the US Forest Service is committed to supporting the project through staff time for review. There is also potential for use of, or applications for the Forest Service technical staff, National Forest Foundation Grants, and Federal funding as the project moves forward.

IV. Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Vail Town Council approve Resolution No. 31, Series of 2020.

V. Attachments

- A.) Resolution No. 31, Series of 2020
- B.) Memorandum to the Vail Town Council, July 21, 2020
- C.) Challenge Cost Share Agreement