



Memorandum

To: Town Council

From: Paul Cada, Wildland Program Manager

Date: April 5th, 2022

Subject: Resolution No. 8, Series of 2022. Town of Vail and Eagle County Government Intergovernmental Agreement Concerning Wildland Fire Mitigation

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this memo is to provide Council with supporting information for an Intergovernmental Agreement between the Town of Vail and Eagle County Government for the continued implementation of Wildfire mitigation within our community.

II. Background

The Town of Vail and Eagle County have a long standing relationship with respect to wildfire mitigation. Over the past 20 years the two organizations have partnered on several highly impactful wildfire mitigation projects such as the 2007/2008 Vail WUI project and the 2017 Vail Intermountain Forest Health project. Both organizations are long standing active participants in the Eagle County Wildfire Council which has worked towards community wildfire adaptation countywide since 2008.

III. Current Situation

Twenty of Colorado's largest wildfires have occurred within the last twenty years. Four out of the five largest fires in State history have occurred within the last three years. In 2021, the Sylvan Fire burned 3,792 acres above Sylvan Lake State Park; In 2020, the Grizzly Creek Fire burned over 32,000 acres and directly threatened several communities within Eagle County. In 2018, the Lake Christine Fire burned nearly 13,000 acres in Eagle County, destroying three homes, and threatening hundreds more. A worrisome trendline now points to Eagle County's increasing vulnerability to wildfire destruction.

In response to this growing threat from uncontrolled wildfire, in 2015 the Town of Vail adopted the "Fire Adapted Vail" strategic framework to guide efforts to create a resilient community in the face of the growing risk from wildfire. In 2020, Vail Fire and Emergency Services completed a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) that expands upon the strategic framework by establishing five main community goals - reduce the risk of a Wildland Urban Disaster within the Town of Vail; decrease the probability of landscape scale high severity wildfire events; build business community resiliency to wildfire disasters; foster citizen engagement and preparedness; and support the utilization of forest products

Since 2015, Vail Fire and Emergency Services has implemented over 150 acres of fuel reduction and the Town of Vail has spent in excess of \$2.8 million dollars on wildfire risk reduction staffing and projects.

Since 2007, Vail Fire and Emergency Services has completed over 400 tons of community chipping at no-cost to residents in unincorporated West Vail and completed more than 50 acres of fuels reduction work adjacent to homes in unincorporated West Vail.

In recognition of the tireless community wide work the Town of Vail has implemented, Eagle County would like to partner with the Town of Vail to continue this critical work within the community. Eagle County will provide up to \$40,000 to the Town for the continued support of the curbside chipping program, implementation of additional acres of treatment in the Intermountain Forest Health Project and for direct aid to property owners in the unincorporated portion of West Vail. These funds will aid the department in the continued rapid implementation of the CWPP. Eagle County will also engage with VFES to conduct RealFire property assessments within the Town of Vail which provide property owners within depth evaluations of their wildfire risk. The RealFire assessments are tailored to expand upon the information that is being provided in the curbside wildfire hazard evaluation program currently be provided to all properties in the community.

IV. Staff Recommendation

Approved the attached Intergovernmental Agreement between the Town of Vail and Eagle County for implementation during the 2022 field season.