



SUMMIT FIRE & EMS

FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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April 23, 2025

Subject: Support for the Frisco Backyard Fuels and Recreation Project

To whom it may concern:

The Summit Fire & EMS Board of Directors strongly supports the Frisco Backyard Fuels and Recreation Project proposed by the White River National Forest. As the local fire-protection authority serving Frisco and the surrounding areas, we recognize both the urgent need and the thoughtful planning behind this one-of-a-kind project. Because wildfire is the single greatest existential threat to our community, our organization has worked side-by-side with the Dillon Ranger District for decades, both by responding jointly to wildfires when they start and promoting efforts to prevent fires from encroaching on developed areas in the first place. The proposed project continues long-running fuels-reduction efforts on both sides of the forest boundary.

The wildland-urban interface surrounding Frisco is densely developed and surrounded by continuous, heavy timber – conditions that significantly increase wildfire risk and create tactical challenges for fire response. The steep topography, combined with the density of dead and downed timber and other fire-prone vegetation, limits options for both ground crews and aerial operations. This project addresses these challenges head-on by breaking up continuous fuels and improving strategic access for firefighters to areas that otherwise may be inaccessible, and sometimes dangerous, in battling a wildfire.

Importantly, this project builds cohesively on the work already completed through the adjacent Ophir Mountain fuels treatments, expanding our operational advantages in a way that strengthens regional fire resilience. These treatments directly enhance our ability to contain fires safely before they reach neighborhoods and critical infrastructure in the Town of Frisco.

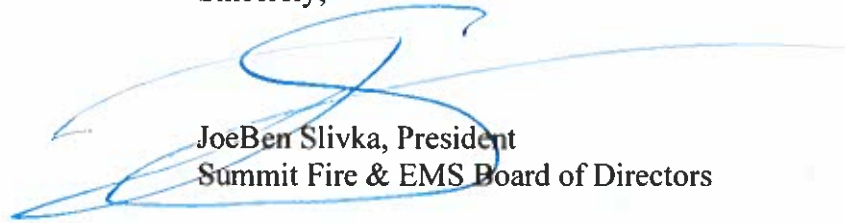
Because the Frisco backyard sees heavy recreational use and is easily accessible, Summit Fire & EMS firefighters frequently respond to abandoned campfires in this area – a significant source of human-caused ignition risk that threatens hundreds of homes and many millions of dollars in property values. The proposed fuels-reduction work would be a valuable tool in reducing the likelihood that one of these small escaped fires could escalate into a large, damaging wildfire.

Another major strength of the project is its comprehensive, interdisciplinary planning. Beyond fire mitigation, it thoughtfully integrates recreational access improvements, cultural-resource protection, and ecological goals – such as improving stand robustness and overall forest health. This kind of landscape-scale, multi-benefit approach is exactly what our forests and communities need.

From a firefighter-safety perspective, reducing standing dead timber and deadfall is crucial. The proposed treatments would create safer, more defensible terrain for our crews and increase the likelihood that fire-suppression operations can be conducted effectively and without unnecessary risk.

In sum, the Frisco Backyard Fuels and Recreation Project represents a highly strategic investment in safety, forest health, and community resilience. SFE strongly supports its implementation and applauds the U.S. Forest Service and its partners for their proactive and holistic approach to managing wildfire risk in this critical area. This endorsement comes after discussion and unanimous support from the Summit Fire & EMS Board of Directors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Ben Slivka", is written over the typed name and title. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "S" and "B".

Joe Ben Slivka, President
Summit Fire & EMS Board of Directors