



“Voice of the Western Slope Since 1953”

A coalition of individuals, businesses and local governments

(970) 242-3264 ★ FAX (970) 245-8300

P.O. Box 550 ★ Grand Junction, CO 81502-0550

08-4 PL 1

FIRE BUDGET (Forest Service), SEPARATING FROM OPERATING BUDGET

WHEREAS, because of extended drought conditions, continued population growth in the wildland-urban interface, and a long-term decline in vegetative treatments and timber harvests on national forest lands, wildfires across the nation continue to get bigger, burn longer, and cost more, and

WHEREAS, historically, whenever the Forest Service’s costs for wildland fire suppression exceeded levels appropriated within their operating budget, the agency was able to borrow money from emergency trust funds and was reimbursed by Congress at the end of the fire season through supplemental appropriated funds, and

WHEREAS to combat catastrophic wildland fires, Congress requires the Forest Service pay for these expenses out of its operating budget and directs that the fire suppression portion of this budget be based on a 10-year average of firefighting costs, and

WHEREAS the ten-year average firefighting cost for fiscal year 2008 was \$911 million—a 23 percent increase from 2007, and the Forest Service projects the costs could exceed \$1 billion by 2009, and

WHEREAS wildland fires are a national emergency and in 1991, the Forest Service spent 13 percent of its total budget on wildland fire management and in the past year, 45 percent or more of the agency’s constrained budget went to pay for fighting fire;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that CLUB 20 believes that once a fire exceeds the Forest Service’s first response efforts, the additional costs for containing the fire should be paid from a separate emergency firefighting fund, similar to other national emergencies. CLUB 20 believes that the Forest Service should not be expected to pay for the costs of such fires out of their annual operating budget, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that CLUB 20 opposes any effort to “create” such emergency funds by simply reallocating the Forest Service’s existing operating budget for that purpose.

Adopted April 4, 2008