

# Vail Intermountain Helicopter Logging Project

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **When will the project be starting and ending?**

Project work begins in August and is planned to be completed in September 2017.

### **Where is the project located?**

On U.S. Forest Service Property uphill of the homes in the Intermountain neighborhood. See the project area map for exact locations of the project.

### **Why is the Forest Service cutting the trees and removing the wood?**

The purpose of the project is to improve community protection from wildfire by reducing the amount of fuel (trees) available to burn in strategic locations. Through planning efforts it has been identified that the Intermountain area of Vail is the most vulnerable portion of the town to large-scale wildfire.

### **Who are the partners involved?**

White River National Forest (Eagle-Holy Cross Ranger District); Town of Vail; Colorado State Forest Service

### **What methods are being used to complete the project?**

Vail Fire and Emergency Services has contracted with Timberline Helicopters to complete the project. Crews from Timberline Helicopters will use chainsaws to cut down the trees before a helicopter will be used to bring the logs to a "landing" location where they will be loaded onto trucks and hauled off site. The contractor will be supervised by professionals from the USFS, Colorado State Forest Service and Vail Fire and Emergency Services.

### **Will the logs removed during the project be used? Where are they going?**

All logs removed from the project will be utilized as wood products. Much of the wood will be sold as commercial firewood, heating wood pellets and dimensional lumber.

### **Can I cut firewood from the log deck/landing area?**

No cutting is allowed from the deck or the project area. The wood in this area is already sold. If you would like to cut firewood, please visit a U.S. Forest Service office to obtain a permit. Permits are required to remove forest products such as firewood, Christmas trees, rocks and minerals, transplants and decorative wood.

### **Why is a helicopter being used for this project?**

A helicopter is being used for this portion of the project so that the maximum amount of fuels (trees) can be removed. This will reduce the wildfire risk and reduce the number of slash piles that will need to be burned.

**What type of helicopter is being used?**

A Sikorsky Blackhawk helicopter, which is designed as a “workhorse” helicopter to lift and transport heavy loads.

**What does it cost per hour to fly the helicopter?**

The cost is \$1.00 per second, which equates to \$3,600 an hour.

**How loud will the helicopter be? Will it affect my pets?**

Noise may be heard directly adjacent to the logging area. It is recommended to keep pets indoors to not disrupt them.

**Are there safety closures in place?**

Yes, a White River National Forest Special Closure Order is in place. It is prohibited to go into or be upon any area which is closed for the protection of Public Health and Safety, per 36 CFR Section 261.53(e). The closure area is depicted on the project area map. Additionally, a small portion of Matterhorn Circle will be closed daily while the helicopter is operating.

**Will the helicopter be flying over Vail and homes in the area? What is the flight path?**

Because safety is the highest priority on this project, the helicopter will not be flying logs over homes or open roads. The helicopter will be using flight paths over National Forest land to avoid flying over homes and roads.

**As a visitor or resident in the area, where can I safely view the helicopter operation?**

We ask that the public stay out of any area actively being worked by crews. Please observe operations only from a safe distance and do not attempt to approach the area where the trees are being delivered by helicopter and loaded onto trucks. Recommended viewing areas are on the north side of I-70 at Ellefson Park, 2300 Garmisch Drive, or along Davos Trail, located above Cortina Lane. Observers are also asked to avoid flying drones in the work area. Flying drones in the area endangers the lives of the public and contractors. Remember: “If you fly, we can’t.”

**How can I learn more about the project?**

The project record can be found <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=44884>