



August 16, 2023

Ms. Katie Kent  
Community Development Director  
Town of Frisco  
1 Main Street, PO Box 4100  
Frisco, Colorado 80443

Transmitted via email: [katiek@townoffrisco.com](mailto:katiek@townoffrisco.com)

**Re: Change Order Request for Continued NEPA Support of the *Frisco Backyard Fuels and Recreation Project Environmental Assessment***

Ms. Kent:

Sno.engineering, Inc. (d/b/a SE Group) is submitting this request to the Town of Frisco for additional contract scope and fee to continue supporting the *Frisco Backyard Fuels and Recreation Project Environmental Assessment (EA)*. This request is intended to modify our existing contract with the Town of Frisco dated March 22, 2022, and referred to in this Change Order Request as the March 2022 Contract.

The March 2022 Contract assumed a fuels treatment area of 230 acres and a project duration ending in October 2023 (20 months). During the pre-application period, the White River National Forest (WRNF) conducted preliminary fire behavior modeling of the Frisco Backyard area and identified that the fuels treatments should be expanded to approximately 1,250 acres. Specifically, the presence of dense dead lodgepole pine stands along Miner's Creek Road and public vehicle use of the road increase the risk of human-caused ignitions and undesirable fire behavior that would not be effectively mitigated by limiting treatments to the original 230 acres.

In addition, an area including the Frisco Backyard analysis area was designated by President Biden as the Camp Hale-Continental Divide National Monument (CHCDNM) on October 12, 2022. This National Monument designation was made due to the historic and scientific significance of the area, and the intent to designate the area as a National Monument was not public at the time we entered into our March 2022 Contract. This National Monument designation requires additional National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review and public involvement opportunities than were included in our original contract.

These changes resulted in modifications to the project design, regulatory environment, and public involvement since our March 2022 Contract was executed. As a result, there is a need for a change order to bring out-of-scope and previously completed tasks into contract, meet the upcoming needs of the WRNF, and extend the contracted period of performance through October 2024. Previously completed out-of-scope tasks and changes to the NEPA process were communicated to Susan Lee, former Town of Frisco Senior Planner, in a timely manner and are summarized in our monthly Project Progress Reports. Additional details regarding this Change Order Request are provided below.

## **REVISED SCOPE OF WORK**

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The cost estimate included at the end of this Change Order Request is based on modifications that the WRNF has made to the Study Plan as of August 15, 2023. The Study Plan is an internal WRNF/SE Group document that details roles and responsibilities, analysis methodologies and documentation, and the NEPA process required for the project. The following sections describe how the most recent Study Plan departs from the assumptions disclosed in our March 2022 Contract and why these changes are necessary. Any further modifications to the NEPA process by the WRNF beyond what are included in our March 2022 Contract and this Change Order Request may require a subsequent change order.

### **TASK 1: PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

As described previously, SE Group anticipates an increase in the project duration from 20 months to 32 months [i.e., from March 2022 through October 2023 to March 2022 through October 2024]). This increase requires an additional fee for biweekly calls with the WRNF for the additional 12 months, as well as time for contract and schedule management over these months. SE Group has also participated in separate Town of Frisco meetings, including meetings with Town staff, Town Council meetings, and meetings with individual council members, that are above the frequency disclosed in our March 2022 Contract. Additional fees are required for these past meetings and these fees assume a similar meeting frequency through October 2024.

### **TASK 2: PRE-NEPA / DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSAL**

This task was completed in 2022. During the pre-application meetings that SE Group facilitated with the WRNF and Town of Frisco, the WRNF requested extensive revisions to the Town of Frisco's preliminary Project Proposal Letter (PPL), specifically the trails proposal. A final PPL was submitted on July 22, 2022, and accepted by the WRNF on August 22, 2022. SE Group is requesting an additional fee for this task to cover actual costs spent as the number of PPL coordination meetings, drafts, reviews, and submissions exceeded the number disclosed in our March 2022 Contract assumptions.

### **TASK 3: GIS / MAPPING**

Activities within this task will be completed during the duration of the NEPA process. The following list details the GIS/mapping assumptions in our March 2022 contract, followed by either the actual services SE Group has provided or what we assume we will provide based on the Study Plan:

- One GIS map to accompany the PPL – SE Group prepared maps that were revised multiple times based on WRNF feedback on the proposal during the pre-application period, specifically for the trails actions. Trails were modified with revised GPS data provided by the Town of Frisco and following site visits between the Town of Frisco and WRNF recreation staff.
- Disturbance Theme – SE Group revised the proposed disturbance calculations commensurate with the PPL map revisions described in the bullet above.

- Maps for inclusion in the Notice of Proposed Action (NOPA), EA, and Decision Notice (DN) – The WRNF modified the NEPA process to use a scoping notice instead of a NOPA, and SE Group prepared a scoping notice map. The WRNF has identified that a Draft EA and separate Final EA for public release are necessary, and SE Group will need to prepare maps for the additional out-of-scope EA document.
- Prepare an Online Story Map – SE Group prepared a Story Map for public scoping. Because the NEPA process now requires both a Draft EA and Final EA, we require an additional fee to update the Story Map during this extra public involvement step. We also require additional fees in order to incorporate a new third alternative in this online platform (see Task 4 below).

In addition, SE Group has prepared several rounds of internal maps for the WRNF alternatives development team, including for use during the June 13, 2023, post-scoping interdisciplinary team (IDT) meeting. It will be necessary for SE Group to continue to provide spatial data, maps, and calculations to the WRNF during the alternatives development phase described below; fees are included in this Change Order Request for these anticipated tasks. We assume alternatives will be limited to the No Action alternative, refined Proposed Action alternative, and an Alternative 3.

#### **TASK 4: SCOPING AND ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT**

This task was originally titled “Scoping” in the March 2022 Contract and is anticipated to be completed in fall 2023. Out-of-scope tasks that were completed prior to submission of this Change Order Request include:

- Processing 44 comment submissions more than the 20 described in our March 2022 Contract assumptions, for a total of 64 comment submissions received during the scoping period.
- Facilitating a post-scoping IDT meeting on June 13, 2023, including preparing meeting materials such as comment processing memos for IDT review as well as an interim draft Study Plan. This IDT meeting was identified in our March 2022 Contract assumptions as a potential out-of-scope activity.

In response to the public comments received on the project, as well as the designation of the Frisco Backyard area as a National Monument, the WRNF has asked that the SE Group assist with substantial alternatives development. Alternatives development was identified in our March 2022 Contract assumptions as a potential out-of-scope activity. Anticipated alternatives development will include refinement of the Proposed Action, development of a third alternative designed in response to public comments received, and both virtual and in-person meetings with members of the IDT through October 2023. Development of additional alternatives or modifications to existing alternatives after October 2023 or after the Study Plan has been signed by the Dillon District Ranger, whichever comes first, may require a subsequent change order.

## **TASK 5: FIELDWORK, DATA COLLECTION, AND REPORTING**

The fieldwork portion of this task is nearing completion and reporting is anticipated to be largely completed in early 2024. As previously noted, our March 2022 Contract assumed a fuels treatment area of 230 acres; therefore, the costs associated with fieldwork, data collection, and reporting were based on 230 acres. Fees for most previously-identified resources have increased in order to accommodate the increase of fuels treatments to 1,250 acres.

Due to the designation of the Frisco Backyard as a National Monument, combined with a lack initial public support for the fuels treatment elements of the project as scoped, additional resource analyses are necessary to inform a legally defensible decision by the WRNF. Additional analysis is also required to document the anticipated effects of a new third alternative (refer to Task 4 above). Details specific to each resource are provided below.

### **Subtask 1: Botany and Wetlands**

Fees have been increased for botany and wetlands surveys and reporting due to the increase in fuels treatment acreage and the inclusion of a third alternative. In addition, Peak Ecological attended onsite meetings with the WRNF hydrologist and botanist in July 2023.

### **Subtask 2: Cultural**

Fees have been decreased for cultural resources. The March 2022 Contract assumed that Metcalf Archaeological Consultants (Metcalf) would conduct a full Class III inventory (i.e., field survey) of the entire original 230 acres. Following the increase in fuels treatment acreage and designation of the CHCDNM, WRNF archaeological staff informally consulted with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on a fieldwork and analysis approach. Because the CHCDNM was designated based on sites of historic and scientific significance, the effects to historic properties within the Frisco Backyard area from the proposed project are of particular local and national concern.

To offset the substantial increase in costs associated with cultural resources surveys of the larger project, the WRNF will be funding the field surveys for the project by including the surveys in a separate forest-wide contract. SE Group has retained fee in our contract for Metcalf to continue assisting the WRNF archaeological staff on an as-needed time and materials basis; this support may include preparing a Class I inventory, drafting letters for SHPO consultation, and analyzing LiDAR and high-resolution orthophotography (see Subtask 10 below) for determining effects to historic properties within the Frisco Backyard area of the CHCDNM. Any support that exceeds the time or materials fee specified in this Change Order Request would require an additional change order.

### **Subtask 3: Wildlife and Fisheries**

Fees have been adjusted for Rocky Mountain Ecology's wildlife and fisheries surveys and reporting. While boreal owl surveys are no longer required and the WRNF will be conducting many terrestrial and all aquatic species surveys in-house, the overall fee for this subtask has increased due to the increase in the fuels treatment acreage and addition of a third alternative. In addition, the BA/BE Short Form specified in the March 2022 Contract is no longer adequate to document effects and both a Biological Assessment and a Biological Evaluation will be prepared. These reports require additional fees and are included in this Change Order Request.

#### **Subtask 4: Forest Health and Fuels**

Fees have been increased for ERIA Consultant's (ERIA) forest health and fuels surveys and reporting. Specifically, this fee increase is due to the increase in fuels treatment acreage from 230 acres to 1,250 acres, which required additional fieldwork in fall 2022 to maintain a 1 percent sample density by forest stand. In addition, ERIA has assisted the WRNF with alternatives development tasks such as interim cover type modeling and maps and subwatershed delineation. Future out-of-scope tasks included in this Change Order Request are the preparation of a separate standalone Forest Vegetation Report and a Fuels Report, delineation of new treatment unit boundaries during upcoming alternatives development, and reruns of Forest Vegetation Simulation (FVS) and FlamMap models using the final revised treatment unit boundaries.

While the March 2022 Contract had included the use of an unmanned aerial system (UAS, i.e., drones) to collect multispectral imagery for 129 acres, the use of UAVs has been moved to Subtask 10 below. To support Subtask 10, Subtask 4 of this Change Order Request includes the installation of approximately 20 ground control points (GCPs), creating the mosaic, and orthorectifying optical imagery.

#### **Subtask 5: Recreation**

Fees have been added to this subtask to account for the increased project analysis area and to include the out-of-scope analysis of visitor use data, parking, and trailhead conditions. Based on comments received during public scoping, a robust analysis of the 'sense of place' of the Frisco Backyard will be included, as well as the effects of a third alternative.

#### **Subtask 6: Scenery**

Due to the public comments received during the public scoping period, a separate Scenery Technical Report will be prepared that was not included in the March 2022 Contract. In addition, the March 2022 Contract specified that no visual simulations were included in the scope of work or associated fees; however, two visual simulations from two locations (one middle/background simulation from one location and one foreground simulation from another location) are now necessary to assess the effects of the project on scenic resources. If the WRNF identifies additional visual simulation locations or if simulations are required for more than three alternatives, a separate change order may be required.

#### **Subtask 7: Specially Designated Areas**

This is a new subtask that was not included in the March 2022 Contract. Because the Frisco Backyard area is within the newly designated CHCDNM, a Specially Designated Areas Technical Report is now required that will assess the project's conformance with the CHCDNM Presidential Proclamation under all three alternatives.

#### **Subtask 8: Soils**

This is a new subtask that was not included in the March 2022 Contract. A Soils Technical Report will be prepared based on available desktop soil survey data and interpretive factors and will assess the effects to soils under all three alternatives. Fieldwork for soil resources, including detailed soil mapping, is not currently required and is not include in this Change Order Request.

### **Subtask 9: Air Quality and Climate Change**

This is a new subtask that was not included in the March 2022 Contract. Comments were received from the public requesting consideration and analysis of air quality and climate change, and recent Forest Service Washington Office guidance has been issued with requirements for air quality and climate change analysis. Specifically, SE Group will incorporate this guidance in a qualitative air quality and climate change analysis, including carbon sequestration, that will be documented in a technical report.

The Forest Service Rocky Mountain Regional Office has selected the Frisco Backyard Fuels and Recreation Project for the Climate Change Adaptation Workbook process. The Regional Office, Washington Office of Sustainability and Climate, and Colorado State University hosted two 3-hour workshops in August 2023. These workshops consisted of the WRNF IDT, including representatives from SE Group, and were intended to integrate climate change considerations into project planning and design. This Change Order Request includes SE Group's fees to participate in these workshops, as well as contribute to pre- and post-workshop assignments.

### **Subtask 10: LiDAR and Orthophotography**

This is a new subtask that was not included in the March 2022 Contract. In response to public comments received during the scoping period and designation of the Frisco Backyard in the CDCHNM, the collection and use of LiDAR (light detection and ranging) and high-resolution orthophotography has been identified as a cost-effective and legally defensive data collection technique. This data, collected in late August 2023, will aid the WRNF and SE Group during alternatives development and effects analyses through the winter. Schedule impacts may be mitigated should continued public outreach and internal alternatives development result in modifications to alternatives that locate project elements in areas that were not previously field surveyed (such as modifications to trail alignments) or require information not collected during previous field surveys.

LiDAR (2.5-centimeter resolution) and high-resolution orthophotography will be collected during a single 6-hour field event with a UAS operated by Frontier Precision. The data collected will be used to:

- Define fuels unit boundaries in greater detail than the 11 units depicted during public scoping, as the request for more detailed treatment units was a major theme of comments public comments received;
- More efficiently estimate fuel loading of these new units, resulting in a reduction in amount of fieldwork necessary to obtain statistically relevant fuel load data for the refined treatment units;
- Identify WRNF system trails and social trails not currently mapped, creating more accurate estimates of the effects to the overall trail system and providing spatial information that may be used to update WRNF and Town of Frisco trails databases;
- Map streams and wetlands, including sensitive fens, particularly if trail alignments are modified outside of currently surveyed corridors;

- Identify, delineate, and document historic properties and help inform project design features to protect sites of historic and scientific significance in conformance with the CHCDNM Presidential Proclamation;
- Allow for more accurate visual simulations; and
- Provide a baseline of existing conditions to compare to future conditions as part of post-implementation monitoring. This post-implementation monitoring could include the comparison of pre-and post-implementation revegetation and restoration rates, recreation experience metrics such as linear miles of shaded trail or width of actual trail vegetation buffers, and whether social trail decommissioning is successful.

## **TASK 6: DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

This task is expected to be initiated in spring 2024 and was previously titled “EA and Draft Decision Document Preparation.” As previously described, the NEPA process required to analyze the project under the new CHCDNM designation has changed from the process assumed in the March 2022 Contract. This Change Order Request assumes that a Draft EA will be released to the public for public comment that SE Group will prepare, along with preparing a letter, legal notice, and mailing list for distribution. In addition, SE Group assumes we will prepare public meeting materials and support the WRNF for one public meeting that will take place within the public comment period for the Draft EA. This Change Order Request includes one single round of review and consolidated comments from WRNF specialists on the internal Draft EA and one IDT leader/District Ranger review of the ‘check’ Draft EA prior to public release.

## **TASK 7: FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, DECISION DOCUMENT, AND PROJECT RECORD**

This task is expected to be initiated in summer 2024 and was previously titled “Final Decision Document.” Following the close of the Draft EA public comment period, SE Group will process up to 65 comment submittals. A post-comment period IDT meeting is not included in this Change Order Request. SE Group will prepare a Response to Comments (RTC) document, a Final EA, and a Finding of No Significant Impact and draft DN, if appropriate. SE Group will also prepare a cover letter and legal notice for release to the public, initiating a 45-day pre-decisional objection period. Similar to the Draft EA process, this Change Order Request includes one single round of review and consolidated comments from WRNF specialists on the internal Final EA/RTC/FONSI/draft DN and one IDT leader/District Ranger review of the ‘check’ Final EA/RTC/FONSI/draft DN prior to public release.

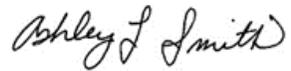
During the 45-day pre-decisional objection period, SE Group will compile and index the project record and deliver the record to the WRNF. At the close of the 45-day period, SE Group will update the DN at the direction of the WRNF. Assistance with any objection roadmaps, meetings, or responses would require a separate change order.

## CONCLUSION

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If this summary and the associated fees presented on the following page meet with your approval, we are prepared to sign the required contracting materials.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sno.engineering, Inc. (d/b/a SE Group)



Ashley L. Smith  
*Senior Project Manager*



Kent Sharp  
*President*

## REVISED FEES

All work performed on this project will continue to be billed on a time and materials basis. A breakdown of our fees is provided in the table below. This table includes our March 2022 Contract fees, fees requested in this Change Order, and revised total contract fees.

Task and Subtask		March 2022 Contract	August 2023 Change Order	Revised Total
<b>1 – Project Management</b>		\$19,500	\$35,500	\$55,000
<b>2 – Pre-NEPA / Development of Proposal</b>		\$17,500	\$2,124	\$19,624
<b>3 – GIS / Mapping</b>		\$10,000	\$32,000	\$42,000
<b>4 – Scoping and Alternatives Development</b>		\$9,000	\$69,000	\$78,000
<b>5 – Fieldwork, Data Collection, and Reporting</b>	<b>1 – Botany and Wetlands</b>	\$37,000	\$18,000	\$55,000
	<b>2 – Cultural</b>	\$67,000	(\$47,000)	\$20,000
	<b>3 – Wildlife and Fisheries</b>	\$13,000	\$15,000	\$28,000
	<b>4 – Forest Health and Fuels</b>	\$26,500	\$78,500	\$105,000
	<b>5 – Recreation</b>	\$4,500 (combined)	\$9,500	\$14,000
	<b>6 – Scenery</b>		\$11,500	\$11,500
	<b>7 – Specially Designated Areas</b>	-	\$9,000	\$9,000
	<b>8 – Soils</b>	-	\$10,000	\$10,000
	<b>9 – Air Quality and Climate Change</b>	-	\$12,000	\$12,000
	<b>10 – LiDAR and Aerial Orthophotography</b>	-	\$32,000	\$32,000
<b>6 – Draft EA (Formerly EA and Draft Decision Document Preparation)</b>		\$27,500	\$50,000	\$77,500
<b>7 – Final EA, Decision Document, and Project Record (Formerly Final Decision Document)</b>		\$6,500	\$40,500	\$47,000
<b>Direct Expenses</b>		\$2,500	\$3,500	\$6,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$240,500</b>	<b>\$381,124</b>	<b>\$621,624</b>

This proposed fee has been illustrated by tasks to depict the sequential steps and provide context. SE Group reserves the right to reallocate fee among tasks, as needed, as long as the total fee is not exceeded.