

Eagle River Fire Crew Facility - Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund

FY2023 Request: \$13,856,439
Reference No: 63885

AP/AL: Appropriation

Project Type: Construction

Category: Natural Resources

Location: Eagle River (Eagle River)

House District: Eagle River/Chugach State Park (HD 14)

Impact House District: Eagle River/Chugach State Park (HD 14)

Contact: Jashryn Mendoza

Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2022 - 06/30/2027

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Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

The Eagle River Fire Crew Facility will provide adequate, safe, mission-specific facilities to support the Division’s crucial wildland firefighting responsibilities, including: office and storage space for the Division’s existing firefighting crews based in Mat-Su and safe warehouse storage space for valuable equipment.

Funding:	<u>FY2023</u>	<u>FY2024</u>	<u>FY2025</u>	<u>FY2026</u>	<u>FY2027</u>	<u>FY2028</u>	<u>Total</u>
1265 COVID Fed	\$13,856,439						\$13,856,439
Total:	\$13,856,439	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$13,856,439

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
Totals:	0	0

Prior Funding History / Additional Information:

Project Description/Justification:

The Division of Forestry is Alaska’s fire department which protects the lives and property of Alaskans on over 150 million acres of land. Due to budget reductions and decades of cost-cutting, the Division’s fire crews, fire operations staff, and expensive firefighting equipment lack adequate facilities statewide. Meanwhile, the demand for fire suppression has increased in Alaska due to:

1. increasing length and intensity of fire seasons, and
2. Alaskans’ desire to live in the wildland/urban interface.

This new reality requires an increasingly large-scale fire suppression program strategy, including infrastructure to support and house firefighting staff and equipment. Fire danger is a long-term problem for Alaska, but by completing work on mission-specific, efficient, and utilitarian facilities to support the Division’s wildland fire program into the future, the State can help ensure Alaskans’ public safety.

In Palmer, the facility that the Division has used for two fire crews will no longer be available in 2022,

so a replacement facility must be procured.

Funding is needed to complete the design and construction of adequate, safe, secure, mission-specific facilities to support the Division's crucial wildland firefighting responsibilities, including:

1. Administrative, training and gear storage space for fire crews;
2. Initial attack and extended dispatch facilities; and
3. Warehouse storage space for over \$16 million of capital gear and firefighting equipment.

Acting now to fund the remaining phases of design and construction for this critical facility will increase public safety statewide. Investing in this facility will benefit the state by allowing the Division of Forestry to fully meet its legislative responsibility in AS 41.15 of protecting the lives and property of Alaskans.

Specifically, this investment will:

1. Support the Division of Forestry's long-term strategic plan to provide wildland fire protection for Alaskans during a regime of increased wildland fire risk, both nationally and in Alaska;
2. Build capacity by providing adequate fire facilities that support aggressive initial attack of wildland urban interface fires, as well as supporting workforce development through training;
3. Improve retention of employees by providing them with adequate facilities to support this professional workforce vital to public safety;
4. Save money by protecting and extending the useful life of firefighting equipment from wear and damage caused by outdoor storage; and
5. Reduce facilities costs through energy efficient heating and properly insulated buildings.

DOF's lease on the existing wildland fire crew facilities in Palmer will expire in June 2022. New facilities must be completed for two 20-person crews.

Phase 1: Land acquisition. **COMPLETE**

The facility will be built on a parcel of DNR-owned land located in Eagle River.

Phase 2: Engineering assessment of existing facilities. **COMPLETE**

DOT/PF engineers assessed the earthquake damage to the existing facilities in 2019. Some of the buildings were deemed too damaged to be safely used, and uneconomical to repair.

Phase 3: Site assessment. **COMPLETE**

In 2020, ECI Alaska conducted a site assessment, comparing three alternative sites. The Eagle River site was selected because it could best support wildland firefighting operations and would be the least costly. It is centrally located and near a major jetport for rapid response to fires around the state. The location is secure, shared with the Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation, and can be used immediately. Several existing DOF-managed buildings are located on the property, including a 6,000 square foot pre-engineered metal building that is currently used by the Division for wintertime fire truck storage.

Phase 4: Conceptual Plan and Estimate. **COMPLETE**

ECI Alaska Architecture provided a conceptual plan and budget for the project in 2020. (See attached plan.)

Phase 5: Design services and fees. \$1,807,362

Through a competitive bid process, the Department will select a design/engineering firm with experience building facilities in Alaska using modern energy-efficient concepts. The design will be mission specific and ready to execute after review by user groups to ensure desired project goals and long term capabilities.

Phase 4: Demolition of earthquake-damaged structures \$551,900.

Existing damaged structures that were deemed uninhabitable by engineers must be removed prior to construction.

Phase 5: Construction of new facilities. \$11,497,177

The new facility will provide crew-specific gear storage caches, lockers, and maintenance shops, as well as space and equipment for exercise to enable firefighters to be ready to work in the physically demanding environment of wildland firefighting. That space will be used in the winter months to store wildland fire engines. Two lecture hall style training/ready rooms will facilitate in-person and remote/online training capacity and can be used by the Division for other training needs. Office space for crew superintendents and shared workstations for crew members will be provided. A secure and monitored fenced area will protect crew vehicles. On-site secured and monitored storage in a dedicated and physically isolated shed for all engine fuels and hazardous materials will also be included.

Line 1000	
Line 2000	
Line 3000	\$3,856,000
Line 4000	
Line 5000	\$10,000,439
Line 7000	
Total	\$13,856,439