



Volunteer Firefighter Challenges

Wildfire Matters Review Committee

Collin Isenhardt
Fire Chief

VFD of Big Elk

chief@vfdofbigelk.org 303-823-5717

David Wolf, Ph.D., CFO
Fire Chief

Estes Valley Fire Protection District

chief@estesvalleyfire.org 970-616-2165

Brad White
Fire Chief

Grand Fire Protection District #1

bwhite@grandfire.org 970-887-3380

VFD of Big Elk- Chief Isenhart



Top 2 Challenges

Funding Recruitment



100% Volunteer



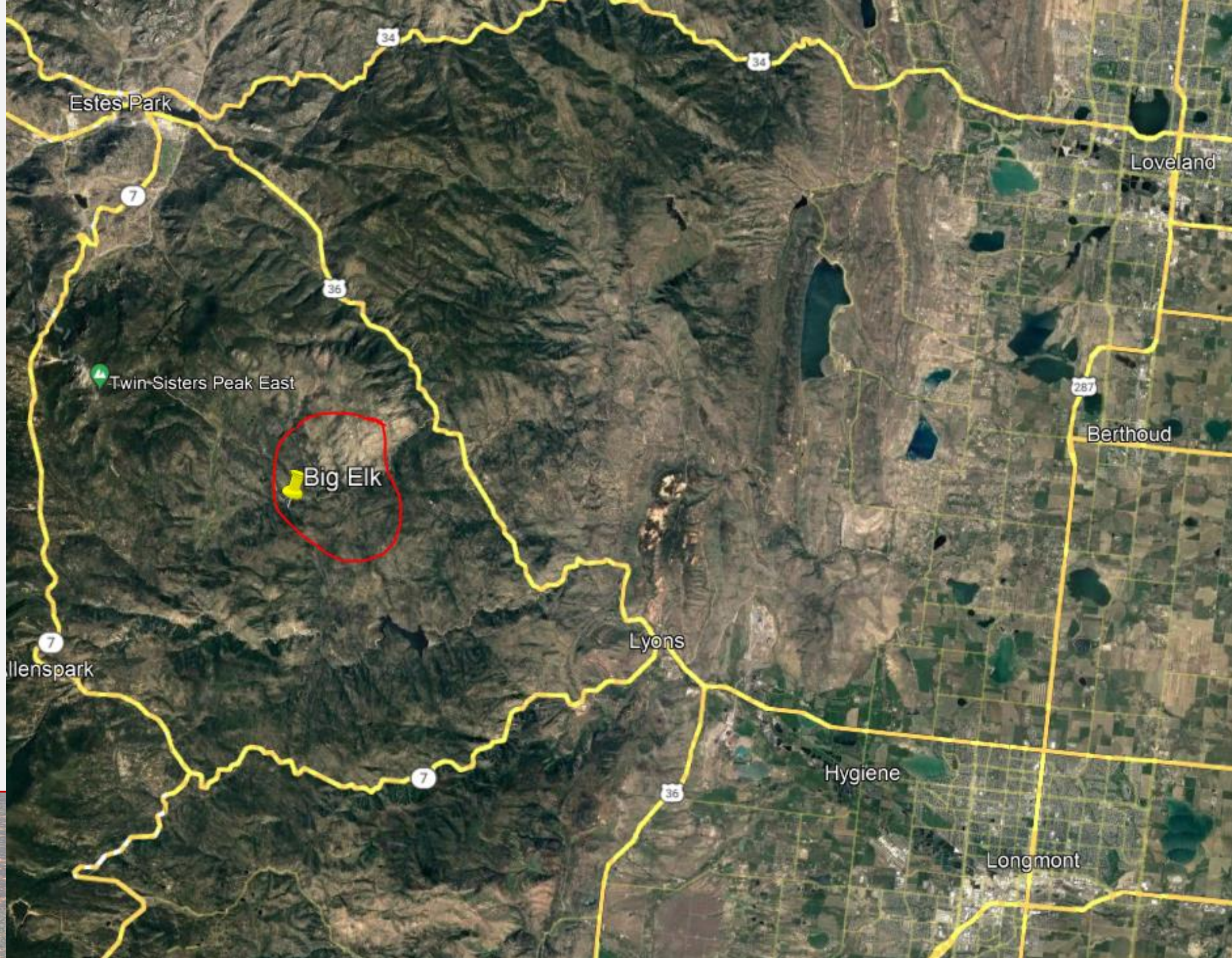
501c3 No Tax Revenue





2003 Big Elk Fire





Funding

2021-2022 budget \$46,860.12

Annual donations from residents

Fund raisers

Donations from other departments

Grants





4th of July Lunch





1978 Tender Donated by Estes Park



1986 Structure/ Wildland Engine





Fourmile Canyon Fire Gold Hill 2010





COLORADO
Strategic Wildfire
Action Program
Department of Natural Resources



Johnny Park

COSWAP Workforce Development Grant





Larimer County Fire Mitigation Grant





🇺🇸 **Official U.S. Government Website**
100% Free

The Official U.S. Government System for:

Contract Opportunities

(was fbo.gov)

Contract Data

(Reports ONLY from fpds.gov)

Wage Determinations

(was wdol.gov)

Federal Hierarchy

Departments and Subtiers

Assistance Listings

(was cfda.gov)

Entity Information

Entities, Disaster Response Registry, and Exclusions

Entity Reporting

SCR and Bio-Preferred Reporting

[Learn More](#)

Register Your Entity or Get a Unique Entity ID

Register your entity or get a Unique Entity ID to get started doing business with the federal government.

Get Started

Renew Entity



Check Registration Status

Already know what you want to find?

Select Domain...

e.g. 1606N020Q02



Announcements

Have Questions about SAM.gov?



13 reserves / Support firefighters.

10 active emergency responders. 9 have some level of wildland cert (red card)

5 don't live in district (1hr response)

2 are home during the day. 8 work in the valley

70% over the age of 50





Recruitment



“How do you do it with only volunteers?”

We don't...

Lack certifications

Resources are not in resource management databases

Don't attend meetings

Equipment isn't properly maintained

Longer response times

Station needs painting

Trucks need washing



Estes Valley FPD- Chief Wolf



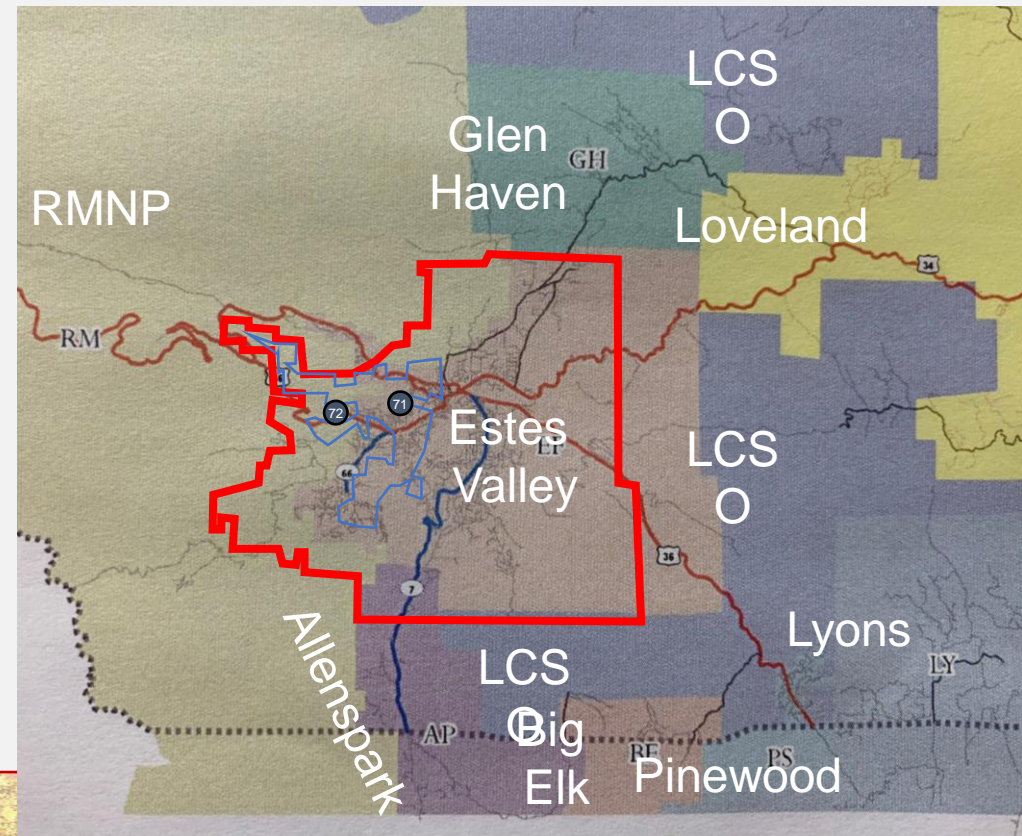
District Origins

- Estes Park Volunteer Fire Department – founded in 1907
- Estes Valley Fire District – formed 2010

- 70 square miles
- 2 Stations / 9 Apparatus
- ISO 3/10

- 7 Full Time employees
1 Part Time employee
35 volunteers

- Property Tax – 1.958 Mills
Sales Tax – 7% from TOEP

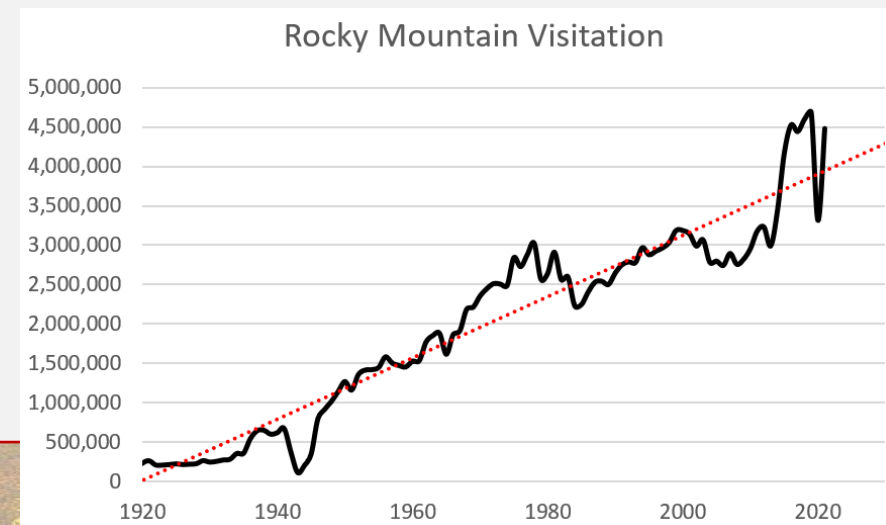


Who Do We Serve?

- Estes Park & surrounding County
 - Full time 11,500
 - Half in Town, half in County
 - Up 21% in 10 years
- Visitors
 - Gateway to Rocky Mtn National Park
 - 4,600,000 visitors
~80% through Estes
 - Up 65% in 10 years

Current Population 11,504 Estes Valley Fire Protection District	2010 Population 9,540 Estes Valley Fire Protection District
6,504 Estes Park, CO	5,901 Estes Park, CO
350,523 Larimer County, CO	299,631 Larimer County, CO

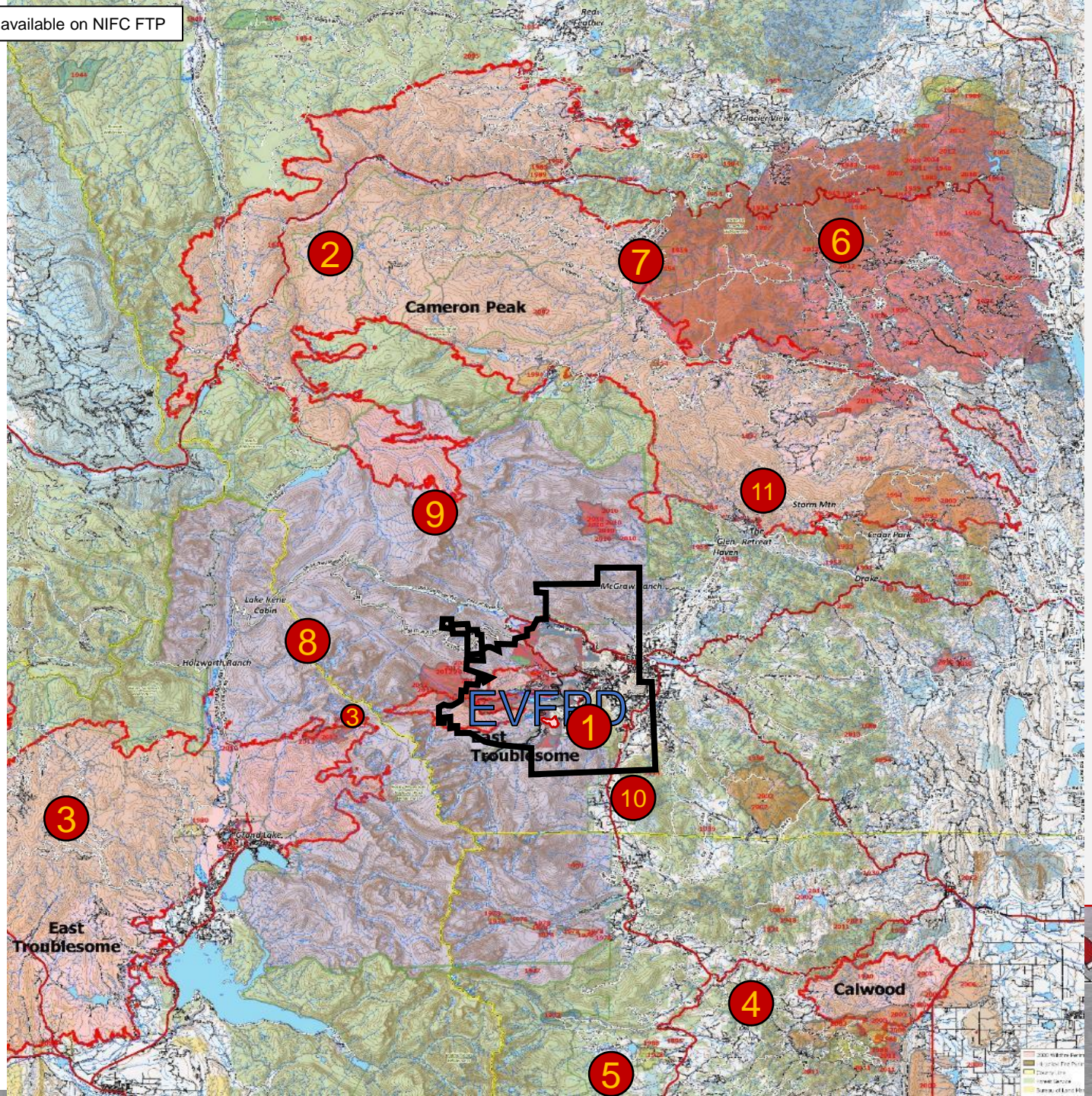
Sources: US Census Bureau 2010; US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2016-2020



Long History

- 2021
 1. Kruger Mountain 147
- 2020
 2. Cameron Peak 208,663
 3. East Troublesome 192,560
 4. Calwood 10,106
 5. Lefthand Canyon 460
 6. Lewstone 165
- 2012
 7. High Park 87,284
 8. Fern Lake 3,500
- 2010
 9. Cow Creek 1,500
- 2002
 10. Big Elk 4,800
- 2000
 11. Bobcat Ridge 10,599

(EVFPD ≈ 45,000 acres)



The Challenge

- Call volume increasing in last 20 years
 - Full time population up 21%
 - Visitation up 65%
 - Call volume up 51%
- Volunteer numbers remain stagnant
 - Since 2000, no change in volunteer membership
 - Demands on volunteers continue to increase
 - 2021 average volunteer
 - 93 emergency response calls
 - 131 hours of training



The Challenge

- Increasing cost of living in resort communities
 - Home values up 50% in last 3 years (Realtor.com)
 - Median home price \$725,000
- Available Volunteer Workforce
 - Older median age that other communities
 - Age range targeted for volunteer firefighters <33% of population

Median Age

58

Estes Valley Fire Protection District

61

Estes Park, CO

36

Larimer County, CO

37

Colorado

Age Dependency Ratio

80%

Estes Valley Fire Protection District

82%

Estes Park, CO

54%

Larimer County, CO

57%

Colorado



What's Being Done

- Increasing resources to the problem
 - Increasing percentage of budget towards recruitment & retention (20% of 2022 Operating Budget)
 - Full time employee dedicated to volunteer management
- Changing Standards / Expectations
 - Reduction of requirements / standards
 - Seeking volunteers from out of District
- Communicating Expectations
 - Ensure community has realistic expectations on response time, staffing, and capabilities



Requested State Assistance

- Assistance in increasing volunteer numbers
 - Incentives for serving as volunteer firefighter
 - Encouraging all communities to implement PTO similar to Executive Order D2022-036
 - Reduction in State Taxes for eligible volunteers
- Funding – remove the barriers
 - Ensure state funding to support volunteer & combination agencies gets where it is intended
 - Reduce administrative hurdles for agencies without administrative staff (100% volunteer)



Requested State Assistance

- Prevention – State Challenge
 - Have state agencies take on more of this role
 - Ensure landscape scale work is happening in all communities, not just ones with large fire agencies
 - Work with federal partners to address Wildland Urban Interface areas



Grand FPD - Chief White



About Grand Fire

- Established 1939, became a Special District in 1951
- 152 sq miles in District/ 356 sq miles “First Due”
 - Additional 486 sq miles “Second Due”
- Two Stations/ 12 apparatus
- ISO Classification 3/5/10
- Mills- 7.049 Operating, 2.69 General Obligation Bond
- Revenue- \$1.3M Operating, \$550K GO Bond
- Supplement with Grants and Wildland Assignment income
- 31 Firefighters (5 staff, 23volunteers, 3 Seasonal Wildland)
- Fire/ Rescue/Hazmat/ Community Risk Reduction/ Wildland Program/ EMS assist



Colorado Fire Service

- **Protects Colorado's** business, critical infrastructure, natural resources, economic viability
- About **375** Fire Departments
 - 67% Special District, 28% Municipal, 5% Non-Profits or other
 - 15% Career, 45% Volunteer, 40% Combo
- **14,000** Firefighters
 - 30% Career, 60% Volunteer



Reported Challenges

CSFC Survey

- Volunteers
 - Recruitment of volunteers
 - Maintaining quality of Volunteers
- Increasing Call Volume/
Growth
- Engine Replacement
- PPE/ Equipment needs
- Funding solutions
- Capacity Assistance

DFPC Survey (on going)

- Anticipated Staffing Needs
next 48 months
 - 821 Volunteers/ 591 Career
- PPE
- Engines
- Facilities to accommodate
growth
- Training



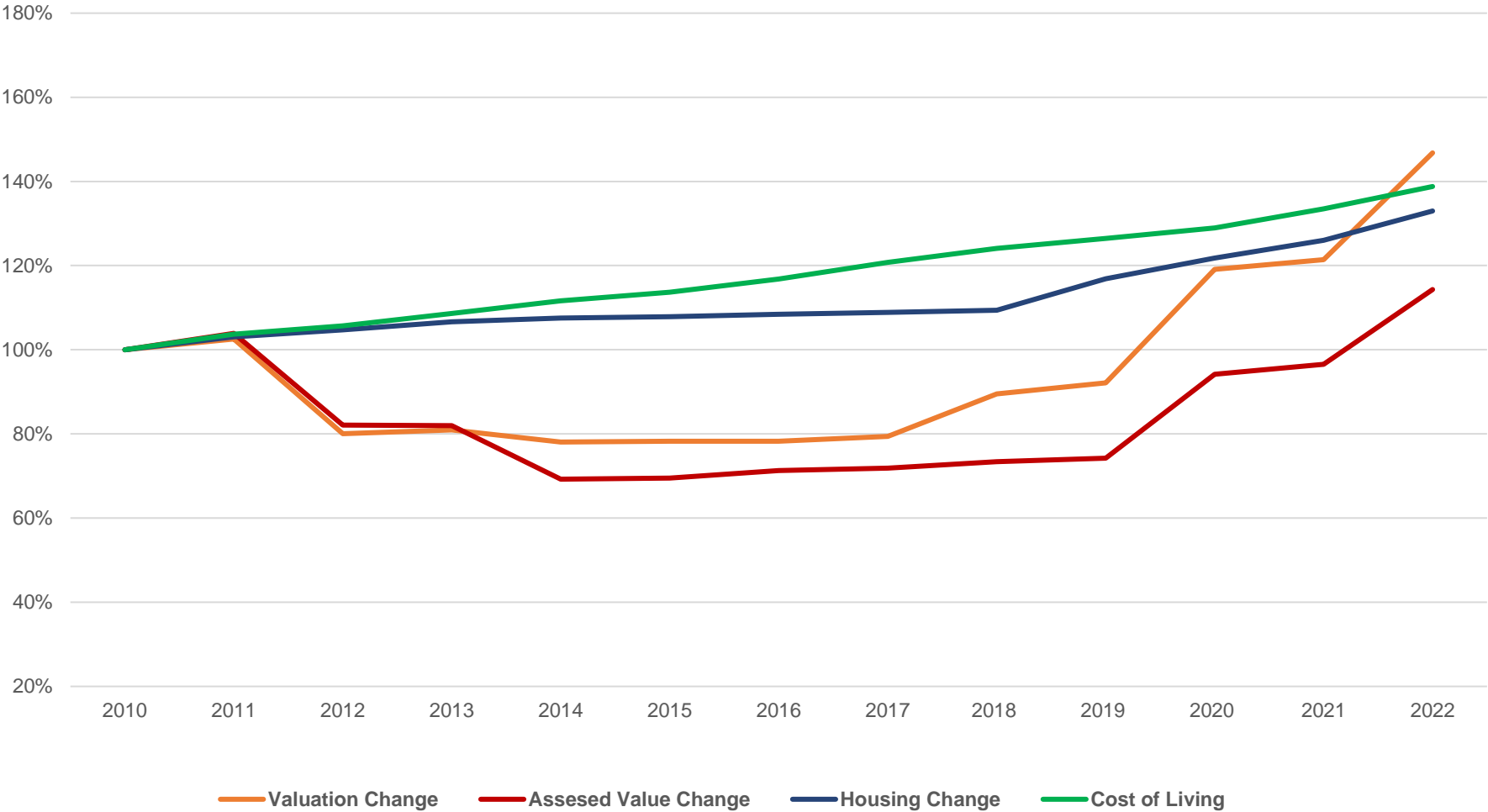
Colorado Fire Service

- **1528 Engines** in Colorado (WebEOC)
- **897 Wildland Engines** (Type 3-7)
 - 56 FEPP Engines (Fed owned, State supported, locally staffed)
 - 12 DFPC Engines
 - 829 Local Agency Owned and Operated

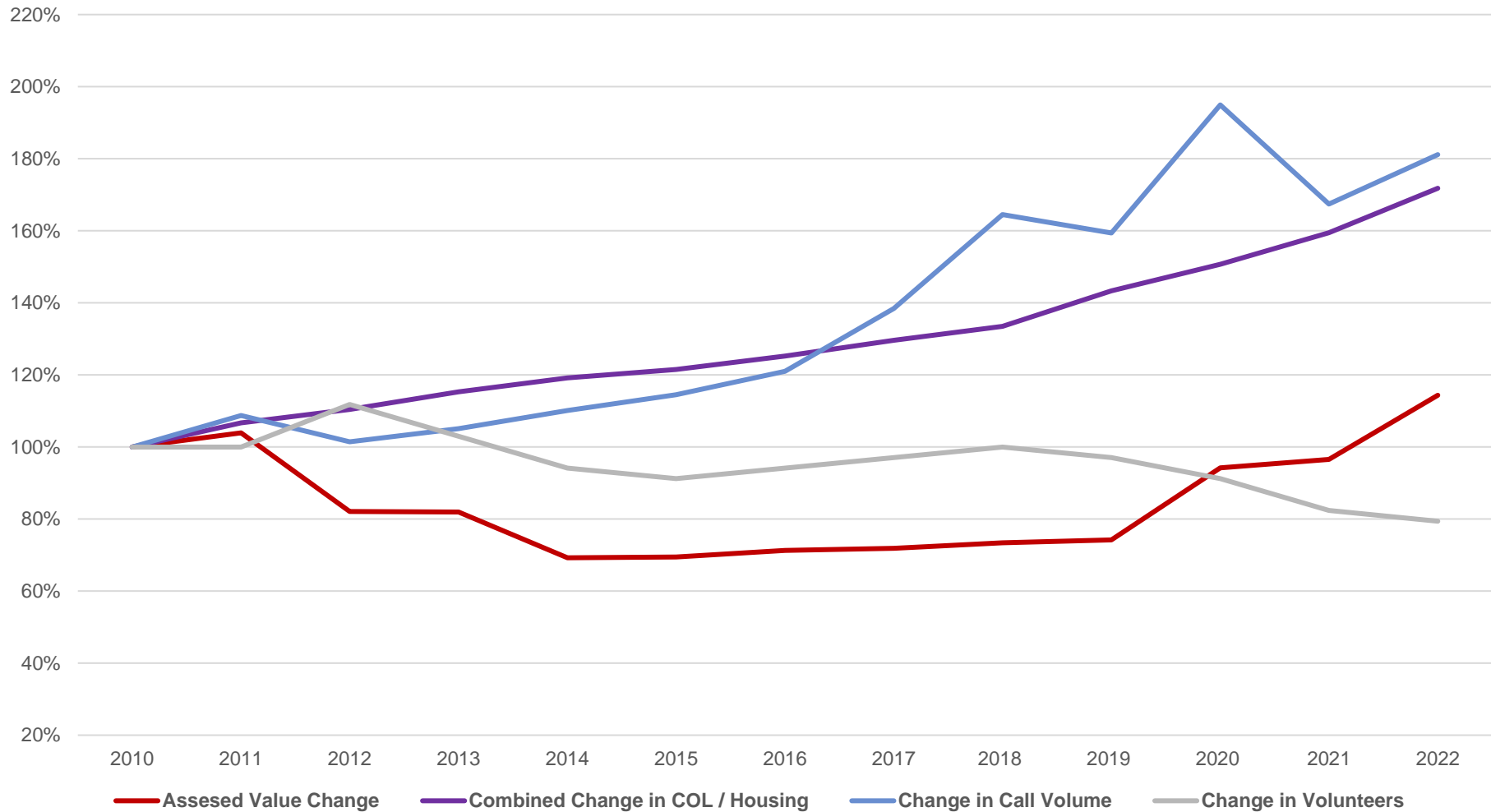
Engine Type	Budget	Life Span	Lead Time
Type 6	\$150-250K	15-20	24 Months
Type 3	\$400K	20	24 Months
Type 1	\$900K	25	33 Months



Grand Fire - Assessment History



Grand Fire - Change in Assesed Value vs. Combined Inflation/ Housing vs. Call Volume vs Volunteers



Questions?

