

## STATEMENT REGARDING THE PROPOSED ADDITION OF CAMPSITES TO THE SANDSTONE RANCH OPEN SPACE

Many members of our community have reached out to the leadership of the Larkspur Fire Protection District (LFPD) to discuss recent discussions by Douglas County officials regarding the possibility of adding campsites to the Sandstone Ranch open space. To our knowledge, no other open space in Douglas County permits overnight camping. As initially described, we have been informed that these sites would not be allowed to have campfires. Combined with the courage and fortitude of our constituents, the LFPD seeks to build upon that strength and resilience to educate and discuss our concerns with County decision-makers.

Local residents are rightfully concerned that these campsites may pose an unacceptable risk to their families, homes, and properties. We at the LFPD share these concerns, and we used the initial open house held by Douglas County to share our deep and well-founded beliefs with county officials. We have a commitment to building the relationships needed to educate the county officials about the risks and concerns we have. Though we were told there would be no campfires or other open sources of flame, we question whether the county will have the resources or commitment to enforce this prohibition. The southern areas of Douglas County are unique and distinctly different from our northern neighbors, and our residents live daily with the risk of a wildland urban interface fire racing through our Fire District during fire season – a season that we have seen increase in size due to evolving weather patterns. We have a great professional firefighting and EMS staff that will be ready to serve the community in any situation. However, the risk posed by a human-caused fire escaping from county owned lands is very concerning to us all.

While we have not seen a formal proposal regarding the addition of campsites to the Sandstone Ranch, the LFPD Board of Directors will formally consider and pass a resolution at their meeting on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025. This resolution will express our reservations regarding the proposed creation of Sandstone campsites. Given that there is no formal plan to review at this time, the LFPD's resolution will not serve as a formal evaluation of the County's stated desire to add campsites to the Sandstone Ranch, and it will not be our last word on the subject, but we strongly believe passage of this statement will establish a record that the LFPD has fundamental concerns and serious issues with the County's informal proposal. We strongly believe that a plan of this nature requires substantial contemplation, the solicitation and receipt of all public comments, a comprehensive identification and understanding of the risks involved, and the objective consideration and substantive resolution of all relevant concerns.

To conclude, **we are your Fire Department**, we are your neighbors and friends, and we are the ones who answer your emergency calls on the worst days of your life. We will have the integrity to ensure the county is thinking of all the risks involved. We share your concerns regarding this new risk to our District, and we understand the community's apprehensions and worries. We are dedicated to our community through quality services, compassion, and excellence. A copy of the Board's resolution will be posted to our website once formally passed (and a copy of the draft will be posted once it is available).