

## WRIP for Cohesive Strategy Newsletter

Flagstaff, Arizona is known for its sacred peaks and beautiful pine forests. Its economy and quality of life are linked to an intact, healthy natural environment. Unfortunately, nearly 150 years of fire suppression-based forest management has left the landscape at risk of uncharacteristic, high severity wildfire.

In 2012, the [Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project](#), a local bond initiative that raised \$10 million for forest treatments, was approved by Flagstaff's voters with 74% support. Northern Arizona University's 2014 report [Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project Cost Avoidance Study](#) estimated that the damages the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project hopes to mitigate are between \$573 million and \$1.2 billion.

The event that triggered this initiative is the 2010 Shultz Fire. The Ecological Restoration Institute's 2013 report [A Full Cost Accounting of the 2010 Shultz Fire](#) estimates that the economic impacts of the Shultz Fire are between \$133-147 million.

Research and reality are well aligned when it comes to economic impacts of undesirable wildfires. With roughly 40% of American homes located in the wildland urban interface, communities save money, properties and lives when they invest in The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy goals of resilient landscapes, fire adapted communities and safe and effective wildfire response.

This summer, the City of Flagstaff developed an innovative way to further invest in the prevention of undesirable wildfire impacts. On August 1, 2020, the Water Resource and Infrastructure Protection fee will be included for City of Flagstaff water services customers. Flagstaff's water supply is 100% local coming from surface water and wells. Protecting water quality and distribution infrastructure requires investing in the restoration and maintenance of a fire adapted forest. This fee will support the Flagstaff Fire Department's Wildland Fire Management Program's ability to protect Flagstaff and its priority watersheds from the effects of catastrophic wildfire. A fee of \$0.52 per 1000 gallons of water used will provide a reliable and stable source of funding for the Wildland Fire Management Program, the only fire management resource in Flagstaff that reports to locally elected leadership. This fee is part of a larger municipal services billing restructure based on consumption that will maintain monthly water costs for average water volume users while raising costs for large volume water users.

For additional info about the Flagstaff Fire Department's Wildland Fire Management Program and the Water Resource and Infrastructure Protection fee, please contact Neil Chapman at [neil.chapman@flagstaffaz.gov](mailto:neil.chapman@flagstaffaz.gov). The Water Resources and Infrastructure Protection financial plan and fee analysis report is available [here](#).