

# COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSISTANCE FOR WILDFIRE

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## IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES



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# ABOUT

## ***Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire Program***

The Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire (CPAW) program works with communities to reduce wildfire risks through improved land use planning. The CPAW program is a partnership between Headwaters Economics and Wildfire Planning International. It is funded by grants from the USDA Forest Service and private foundations.

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# ACRONYMS

AIM	Action and Implementation for Mitigation
AFG	Assistance to Firefighters Grants
AHAL	All-Hands All-Lands Burn Team
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BRIC	Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities
CES	Cooperative Extension Service
CFLRP	Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program
CFSC	California Fire Safe Council
COCO	Coalitions and Collaboratives, Inc.
CPAW	Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire
CWPP	Community Wildfire Protection Plan
CWSF	Council of Western State Foresters
DOI	Department of the Interior
DRRA	Disaster Recovery Reform Act
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
FAC Net	Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FMAG	Fire Management Assistance Grant
FP&S	Fire Prevention and Safety
FRWRM	Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation Grant Program
GNA	Good Neighbor Authority
HMA	Hazard Mitigation Assistance
HMGP	Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
IAFC	International Association of Fire Chiefs
NASF	National Association of State Foresters
NFP	National Fire Plan
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NMFSA	Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Services
PDM	Pre-Disaster Mitigation
PILT	Payment in Lieu of Taxes
SFA	State Fire Assistance

SGSF	Southern Group of State Foresters
SRS	Secure Rural Schools
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
WUI	Wildland-Urban Interface



# IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES

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## *Introduction*

The successful implementation of local wildfire mitigation activities relies heavily on financial and technical resources that are not often readily available to communities. Many programs to support wildfire prevention are administered through state forestry agencies, which depend on pass-through federal funding. These funds typically favor large-scale treatment of fuels in forests or other public lands versus community-driven risk reduction efforts in the wildland-urban interface (WUI). However, as the frequency and severity of wildfire disaster events continue to increase, additional resources and creative funding strategies for communities are emerging.

This report provides a list of implementation resources and examples to support Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire (CPAW) communities that are exploring ways to build program capacity and advance CPAW recommendations. This support package compiles information from previous CPAW reports and includes additional information that may benefit CPAW recipients and other interested communities. This report is not intended to serve as an exhaustive list of resources for all wildfire preparedness and mitigation needs, such as new equipment purchases or watershed management projects, but rather is meant to showcase a range of tools which can support land use planning and mitigation activities.

The report includes a brief description of some existing resources and examples from around the United States, organized under the following categories.

- Federal Resources
- State-Oriented Solutions
- State-Specific Programs
- Local Funding Examples

Due to the myriad risk reduction techniques and resources, communities are strongly encouraged to contact their State Forester, State Hazard Mitigation Officer, regional and local wildfire councils, and other applicable federal, state, and local agencies to further explore the types of assistance that may be available and specific to their current wildfire needs. More information on these and other potential resources is provided at the end of this report (see Additional Resources).



## **Federal Resources**

*The following programs and resources are authorized and administered through federal agencies, often in close coordination with state agencies and other cooperating partners.*

### **National Fire Plan (USDA and DOI)**

The National Fire Plan (NFP) is a long-term strategy for reducing the effects of catastrophic wildfires throughout the nation. The NFP was developed in August 2000, following a landmark wildland fire season, and addresses five key points of intervention: firefighting, rehabilitation, hazardous fuels reduction, community assistance, and accountability. NFP uses the authorities of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act and continues to provide invaluable technical, financial, and resource guidance and support for wildland fire management across the United States. Successful grant programs initiated under the NFP have facilitated assistance for communities at risk of wildfire in the WUI.

For more information: <https://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/resources/overview/index.shtml>

### **National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (USDA and DOI)**

The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy is a collaborative process with active involvement of all levels of government and non-governmental organizations, as well as the public, to seek national, all-lands solutions to wildland fire management issues. The Cohesive Strategy builds on the successes of the NFP to address the nation's wildfire problems by focusing on three key areas: (1) Restore and Maintain Landscapes; (2) Fire Adapted Communities; and (3) Response to Fire. It recognizes that successful implementation will take place locally, through programs and projects to reduce wildfire risk across jurisdictional boundaries, building cooperation and coordination between agencies and stakeholders.

For more information: <https://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/strategy/index.shtml>

### **Wildland Urban Interface Community Fire Assistance (BLM)**

To help implement the National Fire Plan, Wildland Urban Interface Community Fire Assistance funds are awarded to states and local governments, Indian tribes, public and private education institutions, non-profit organizations, and rural fire departments serving a community with a population of 10,000 or less in the WUI. Annual grants range from \$10k to \$200k and eligible uses include wildfire risk reduction activities for locations of risk in the WUI. Risk reduction activities are restricted to federal lands, or adjacent non-federal land for activities that benefit resources on federal land. Assistance can be used for helping BLM support community-based efforts to address defensible space and fuels management and to increase the effectiveness of rural fire protection. Proposed projects are reviewed at BLM state and field offices and funding recommendations are made through each state's annual work plan.

Interested communities should contact their state BLM office for further information:

<https://www.blm.gov/locations>

### **Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (USFS)**

The Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) was established in 2009 and reauthorized under the 2018 Farm Bill. The program is aimed at collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes. One of the central purposes of CFLRP is to facilitate "reduction of wildfire management costs including through reestablishing natural fire regimes and reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire." Risk reduction may be

considered in the context of community and valued resource protection, improvement in landscape resilience to stressors and disturbances, and/or other risks such as the risk of habitat loss. Regional USFS offices are tasked with evaluating and nominating proposed projects for implementation as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture. Funds are up to \$4 million annually per project.

For more information: <https://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/CFLRP/>

### ***Secure Rural Schools (USFS)***

The Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program, enacted by Congress in 2000, provides financial assistance to rural counties and school districts affected by the decline in revenue from timber harvests on federal lands. Eligible counties rely on SRS payments to provide numerous critical services including infrastructure, conservation projects, and fire prevention programs. SRS Title II funds (Special Projects) are allocated to the USFS to be earmarked for habitat restoration or other public land infrastructures on federal land or where projects would benefit the resources on federal land. SRS Title III funds (County Funds) authorize additional uses relevant to wildfire including the following activities:

- (1) To carry out activities under the Firewise Communities program;
- (2) To reimburse the participating county for search and rescue and other emergency services, including firefighting and law enforcement patrols;
- (3) To cover training costs and equipment purchases directly related to the emergency service; and
- (4) To develop and carry out community wildfire protection plans (CWPPs).

Many counties in the Mountain West have utilized Title III funding for CWPP implementation, including counties in Colorado and Oregon.

For more information: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/pts>

### ***Environmental Quality Incentives Program (NRCS)***

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to landowners to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, and improved or created wildlife habitat. The program is aimed at larger landowners (approximately 40 acres or more) and as of 2018 the program applies to any landowner, not just agricultural producers. Among the program's priorities is "forest health," and funding is available through EQIP to landowners impacted by or interested in preventing/mitigating wildfire. Successful projects for wildfire risk reduction have occurred in Colorado, Montana, and Arizona among others.

For more information:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/>

### ***Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (FEMA)***

The Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) is a new federal grant program authorized under Section 1234 of the 2018 Disaster Recovery Reform Act (DRRA). BRIC will replace and expand upon the previously authorized Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant program in order to reduce risk nationwide by funding plans and projects that increase community resilience before a disaster impacts an area. While BRIC funds must be applied for

by states, territories, and federally recognized tribes (applicants), eligible sub-applicants include local governments and communities. Individual homeowners, businesses, and private non-profit organizations may also apply for funding through eligible sub-applicants.

Unlike the PDM program, which was funded through annual appropriations from Congress, BRIC will be funded through the Disaster Relief Fund as a six percent set-aside from estimated total disaster grant expenditures for the previous calendar year. As such BRIC will provide a more stable and ongoing source of pre-disaster funding for local hazard mitigation initiatives. FEMA estimates that annual BRIC funding will average \$300-\$500 million per year, with significantly greater amounts following years with catastrophic disasters.

FEMA and its partners are working on the development and implementation of BRIC, and it is expected that funding will be available for disbursements beginning in 2020.

For more information: <https://www.fema.gov/drra-bric>

### ***Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (FEMA)***

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) provides funding to states and local communities to implement hazard mitigation measures following a Presidential disaster declaration. The key purpose of the program is to enact mitigation measures that reduce the risk of loss of life and property from future disasters. States, territories, and federally recognized tribes (applicants) have the primary responsibility for prioritizing, selecting, and administering hazard mitigation projects in coordination with local governments/communities (sub-applicants). Individual homeowners, businesses, and private non-profit organizations may also apply for funding through eligible sub-applicants. In order to receive HMGP funding applicants and sub-applicants must have a current, FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan.

Approved uses of HMGP grant funds include wildfire hazard mitigation projects such as defensible space measures, ignition resistant construction, hazardous fuels reduction, erosion control measures, slope failure prevention measures, or flash flood reduction measures. Also, as it relates to wildfire, Section 1204 of the DRRRA now authorizes FEMA to provide “HMGP Post Fire” grants in any area that received a Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) declaration even if no major Presidential disaster declaration was declared.

For more information on HMGP: <https://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-grant-program>

For more information on HMGP Post Fire: <https://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-grant-program-post-fire>

### ***Fire Prevention & Safety Grants (FEMA)***

Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grants are part of FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) and support projects that enhance the safety of the public and firefighters from fire and related hazards. The primary goal is to reduce injury and prevent death among high-risk populations. Under recent funding cycles priority has been given to community-appropriate comprehensive risk assessments and risk reduction planning. These assessments and planning projects focus on the whole community (versus individual home risk reduction/mitigation) and include risk assessments for wildland fire and WUI areas, CWPPs, and wildfire education and awareness programs. Fuel reduction demonstrations, in a targeted location as part of an awareness and education effort, are also considered. Another stated priority are projects that focus on first time or reinstatement of code adoption and code enforcement, including WUI codes for communities with an identified WUI-wildfire risk.

For more information: <https://www.fema.gov/fire-prevention-safety-grants>



## ***Payment in Lieu of Taxes (DOI)***

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) are federal payments to local governments that help offset losses in property taxes due to the existence of non-taxable federal lands within their boundaries. The law recognizes the financial impact of the inability of local governments to collect property taxes on federally-owned land, and PILT payments may be used by recipients (usually counties) for any governmental purpose – including wildfire mitigation. Annual PILT payments often help local governments carry out such vital services as firefighting and police protection, construction of public schools and roads, and search and rescue operations. Using a statutory formula, PILT payments are calculated based on the number of acres of federal land within each county or jurisdiction and on the population of that county or jurisdiction. Since these payments began in 1977, DOI has distributed approximately \$9.2 billion dollars in PILT payments to 49 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.

For more information: <https://www.doi.gov/pilt>

## ***Shared Stewardship (USFS)***

In 2018 the USFS announced the Shared Stewardship Strategy, a framework for increased collaboration between federal, state, county, and private actors on a range of urgent challenges faced by today's forest land managers – including wildfires. The vision espoused by the USFS is to set landscape-scale priorities to implement projects, manage risk, and build capacity to adequately address wildfire. Funding provided through federal sources is to be matched at the state and local level as to represent the shared responsibility of land management stewardship. The rollout of Shared Stewardship nationally is ongoing. In March of 2019, the State of Utah became one of the first states to enter into a Shared Stewardship Agreement with the USFS and now has an established framework to work collaboratively with USFS to “improve forest health and target treatments in areas with the highest payoffs.” The Utah State legislature recently allocated \$2 million dollars for wildfire risk reduction which will be enhanced through the federal Shared Stewardship funding provision.

For more information: <https://www.fs.fed.us/managing-land/shared-stewardship>

## ***State-Oriented Solutions***

*While the resources described below are authorized and funded through the federal government, they are administered by state agencies and/or non-profit organizations in ways that are specific to various regions of the country.*

### ***State Fire Assistance (USFS)***

Established in 1978, the State Fire Assistance (SFA) program is the primary federal mechanism that provides states and communities financial and technical assistance for wildland fire management. It remains a fundamental building block for state forestry agencies nationwide. SFA serves to help states and local communities with wildland firefighting response, capacity building, fire prevention education, and wildland fire mitigation. SFA funds are provided directly to state forestry organizations but may be passed through to other organizations approved by the state to conduct special projects including fire departments, local governments, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations. Projects include supporting state-coordinated hazard mitigation activities in the WUI focused on reducing property loss, decreasing fuels hazards, increasing public awareness, developing fire plans, and sponsoring citizen-driven solutions in rural communities. Grants provided under the SFA program are on a 50-50 cost-share basis and allow state and local matching funds to leverage the federal investment.

For more information, contact your designated state forestry organization:  
<https://www.stateforesters.org/who-we-are/our-membership/>

### ***Western Wildland Urban Interface Grants (Council of Western State Foresters)***

Supported by NFP and administered through the Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF), the Wildland Urban Interface Grant Program was developed to assist interface communities in the West manage the unique hazards they find in WUI areas. The program provides financial assistance towards hazardous fuels reduction and public educational projects within the four goals of improved prevention, reduction of hazardous fuels, restoration of fire-adapted ecosystems, and promotion of community assistance. Entities eligible to receive funding include state and local governments, native corporations, and non-profit organizations, but only state/Pacific Island government agencies/organizations can submit applications directly to CWSF. All other interested applicants must submit their forms to their appropriate state/Pacific Island government agency/organization by the deadline established by each state/Pacific Island government agency/organization given to them.

For more information: <https://www.westernforesters.org/wui-grants>

### ***Good Neighbor Authority (USFS and BLM)***

The Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) allows the USFS and BLM to enter into agreements with state forestry agencies to do the critical management work to keep our forests and rangelands healthy and productive. The GNA intends to expand federal capacity to plan and implement forest, rangeland, and watershed restoration projects by facilitating cooperative partnerships with state agencies. GNA agreements allow a state to perform restoration services on federal land, including habitat improvement, fuels management, fire-related activities, insect and disease control, project planning, project preparation work, and commercial timber removal. Since GNA was first authorized, 32 states have broken ground on more than 130 GNA projects. As a result of GNA's success, Congress expanded Good Neighbor authorities to allow necessary road reconstruction and repairs and to empower counties and tribes to enter into GNA agreements, setting the stage for more growth in cooperative forest management.

For more information: <https://www.fs.fed.us/managing-land/farm-bill/gna>

## ***State-Specific Resources***

*The following resources are examples of how state agencies or other entities have developed their own programs or initiatives to support the implementation of wildfire mitigation activities. Although specific to each state, these resources are not necessarily dependent on federal assistance and may be transferable or replicable to other areas of the country.*

### ***California Fire Safe Council (California)***

The California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) is a California non-profit corporation that maintains a web-based "Grant Clearinghouse" to provide the latest information on existing grants and funding for wildfire prevention activities. CFSC manages large master grants from the USFS, BLM, and other federal agencies for community-led projects to reduce hazardous fuels and prepare for wildfire events. Their work is accomplished through subgrants to local governments and other community groups such as local Fire Safe Councils, homeowner associations, fire departments, and other entities working on wildfire prevention activities such as defensible

space, community fire planning, and education. CFSC also provides technical assistance to its grantees to ensure successful projects. Since its first grant cycle in 2004, CFSC has provided over 900 grants totaling over \$100 million to organizations and agencies located throughout California.

For more information: [www.cafiresafecouncil.org](http://www.cafiresafecouncil.org)

### ***California Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance Program (California)***

In October 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom signed a series of bills aimed at improving California's wildfire prevention and mitigation activities. This includes Assembly Bill 38 which provides mechanisms to develop best practices for community-wide resilience against wildfires through home hardening, defensible space, and other measures. Under the bill, California will establish a five-year pilot program that will require California's Office of Emergency Services and CAL FIRE to work together to utilize a broad range of potential funding, including federal funds, to proactively support at-risk communities through the first-ever statewide fire retrofit program to help owners of homes built prior to updated building codes in 2008 harden their homes and make them more likely to survive future fires. This funding will be used to encourage cost-effective structure hardening and retrofitting along with vegetation management practices to improve the fire resistance of homes, businesses, and public buildings.

For more information:

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201920200AB38](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB38)

### ***Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation Grant Program (Colorado)***

The Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation Grant Program (FRWRM) was established by the Colorado General Assembly in 2018, effectively consolidating two earlier grant programs focused on forest restoration and wildfire risk reduction. The newly combined grant program is designed to assist with funding community-level actions across the entire state to reduce the risk to people, property and infrastructure from wildfire in the WUI, as well as to promote forest health and encourage forest restoration projects. FRWRM applicants can apply for two types of projects: (1) Fuels and Forest Health Projects, which includes a range of fuel reduction activities; and/or (2) Capacity Building, which includes the purchase of equipment to increase implementation of fuel reduction projects. The program is administered by the Colorado State Forest Service and all grant funds must be utilized on non-federal land within the state. Grant recipients may include local government entities, local community groups, public or private utilities, state agencies, and non-profit groups.

For more information: <https://csfs.colostate.edu/funding-assistance/>

### ***Wildfire Mitigation Measures Tax Subtraction (Colorado)***

Administered by the Colorado Department of Revenue, this program authorizes a \$2,500 state income tax deduction for wildfire risk reduction measures on private property located in the WUI. Mitigation measures may include defensible space, fuel breaks, thinning vegetation, and secondary treatment of woody fuels by lopping and scattering, piling, chipping, removing from the site or prescribed burning. Initially the program was designed for homes within CWPPs, but this requirement no longer applies. The tax subtraction is available to individuals, estates and trusts for out-of-pocket expenses incurred while performing the mitigation measures.

For more information: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/Income65.pdf>



### ***2-3-2 Cohesive Strategy Partnership (Colorado and New Mexico)***

The 2-3-2 Cohesive Strategy Partnership (2-3-2) is a cross-state, interjurisdictional organization aimed at developing resilient landscapes and communities that can co-exist with fire and work collaboratively across public and private lands with the support of state, federal, and tribal entities and established collaborative groups. 2-3-2 was launched in 2016 out of a collective public and governmental interest to address concerns in Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico through cross-boundary forest and fire management, collaboration, and planning. More than 5.1 million acres make up the 2-3-2 regional footprint – approximately the size of Delaware and Connecticut combined. The organization strives to implement a cohesive approach to manage wildfire risk, recognizing that public-private partnerships across geographic boundaries will deliver integrated results that cannot be accomplished when working separately. 2-3-2 works collaboratively to pursue joint funding opportunities and to date has secured over \$5 million to improve the health of its forests, watersheds, and communities. This includes \$1.5 million for the development of a Firewise program and forest thinning treatments, and \$750,000 for advancing resilient landscapes, fire adapted communities, and a safe and effective wildfire response under the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. Partnerships formed through 2-3-2 have resulted in new businesses, thousands of treated acres, numerous outreach and educational campaigns, and a multitude of training events.

For more information: <https://232partnership.org/>

### ***Minnesota Firewise Project (Minnesota)***

Through this initiative the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources works with local partners in support of various on-the-ground activities including homeowner mitigation education, home site assessments, and access improvement. This is primarily done by passing USFS funds through to local communities via Firewise Community Mitigation Grants, a cost-share program which provides financial assistance for up to 50% of project costs. Eligible activities include assessing the current wildfire hazard, the mechanical removal of hazard fuels, and other mitigation strategies to enhance public safety in the WUI. The Minnesota Firewise Project involves community groups, including fire and emergency services, local schools, municipal staff (e.g., foresters, planners, etc.), and local interest groups.

For more information: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/firewise/community.html>

### ***Community Firewise Grants (New Jersey)***

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection administers Community Firewise Grants for the purpose of meeting goals for wildfire risk reduction as described in the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. Using funding provided through USFS, these grants are intended to provide counties, municipalities, and homeowner associations a cost-share incentive to (1) obtain Firewise Community/USA designation; (2) implement hazard mitigation activities; (3) train community Firewise liaisons; and (4) conduct outreach and awareness activities in the community. Eligible projects must be located in documented wildfire risk areas that have met the criteria for Firewise Communities/USA designation. Funding is limited to 50% of project costs, up to \$5,000.

For more information: [https://www.nj.gov/dep/grantandloanprograms/nhr\\_firewise.html](https://www.nj.gov/dep/grantandloanprograms/nhr_firewise.html)

### ***Rio Grande Water Fund (New Mexico)***

The Rio Grande Water Fund is a public-private partnership with a goal of generating sustainable funding for a 20-year program of large-scale forest and watershed restoration

treatments—including thinning overgrown forests, managing fire, restoring wetlands and streams, educating youth, providing research to policy makers, and creating forestry and wood products jobs. Established by The Nature Conservancy in 2014, the partnership protects forests and water for one million people in northern New Mexico and boosts local economies by creating jobs and wood for products. The program provides payment for ecosystem service that include clean and secure water, outdoor recreation and tourism, jobs in rural communities, and reduced wildfire risks. Since it began in 2014 more than 140,000 forested acres have been treated with thinning, controlled burns and managed natural fires. Today, the Rio Grande Water Fund is governed by a collaborative charter and an executive committee. Currently, 83 signatories—a diverse mix of private and public organizations—have signed on to the charter.

For more information: <http://riograndewaterfund.org/>

### ***All Hands All Lands Burn Team (New Mexico)***

The All-Hands All-Lands Burn Team (AHAL) is a collaborative effort between the Rio Grande Water Fund, The Nature Conservancy of New Mexico, the Forest Stewards Guild, and many others to accelerate the return of fire to the frequent fire ecosystems in the Rio Grande Water Fund landscape. The goal of the AHAL is to get ahead of prescribed fire backlogs on federal, state, and tribal lands and support private landowner's use of prescribed fire. To do this the AHAL was created to add capacity to existing efforts and to serve as a stand-alone organization that can complete burns with insured and qualified burn bosses. It also mobilizes seasonal burn teams consisting of a mix of red-carded contractors, staff, and volunteers to amplify knowledge, skills, and abilities. It also engages the public through stories, photos, and opportunities for involvement to raise awareness for forests and watersheds.

For more information: <https://facnm.org/our-projects/all-hands-all-lands-burn-team>

### ***Wildfire Risk Reduction for Rural Communities Grant (New Mexico)***

The Wildfire Risk Reduction Program for Rural Communities was established in 2005 under the National Fire Plan to assist communities throughout New Mexico in reducing their risk from wildland fire on non-federal lands. The program is administered by New Mexico Counties (NMC), a nonprofit community foundation, through a partnership with BLM to manage the program and distribute awards. The program targets at-risk communities by offering seed money to help defray the costs of reducing wildfire risk to non-federal WUI areas in New Mexico. Funding for this grant program directly benefits communities that may be impacted by wildland fire initiating from or spreading to BLM public land. Programs funded include fuels reduction, outreach and education projects, and the development, updating, and implementation of CWPPs. This grant program is only applicable WUI areas and a completed and approved CWPP is a pre-requisite for funding awards. Eligible applicants include counties, municipalities, non-profits organizations, statutorily recognized political subdivisions, or Native American tribes working on behalf of one or more communities at risk of wildfires in New Mexico. All project proposals require a minimum 10% cost-share which can be met through cash or in-kind contributions.

For more information: <https://www.nmcounties.org/services/programs/>

### ***Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program (Tennessee)***

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry, in partnership with the non-profit Appalachian Resource Conservation & Development Council, administers and manages wildfire prevention grants through its Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) program. Eligible

applicants include local communities that have developed or are in the process of developing a CWPP. The 100% reimbursement grant offers up to \$20,000 in funding for communities to implement wildfire prevention practices and community education projects as identified in their CWPP. The HMA program provided nearly \$280,000 in 2018 to assist in the development of 15 new CWPPs, and implement projects to reduce dense, hazardous flammable vegetation, and facilitate best practices for Tennessee Fire Adapted Communities.

For more information: <https://www.burnsafetn.org/hma.html>

### ***Forest Health Assistance for Small Forest Landowners (Washington)***

As part of the state's 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan, the Washington Department of Natural Resources makes financial assistance available for landowners who have up to 5,000 acres of forest and want to make their forests healthier and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires. The program offers a free consultation with a local forester to gauge wildfire and forest health risks, and then shares in paying for the cost of treatment with qualified landowners. Recommended treatment activities may include fuels reduction and other strategies to make forested properties better prepared for wildfire. Projects funded through this program directly contributed to the preservation of homes and forested properties during recent wildfire events.

For more information: <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/cost-share>

## ***Local Funding Examples***

*Most of the costs associated with wildfire prevention and mitigation activities are borne by federal agencies and supported through state-level investments as described in previous sections. However, as wildfire risks and disasters are becoming more severe, new and creative financing mechanisms for local communities are beginning to emerge. This section provides several examples of communities which have recently established their own revenue sources to support the implementation of local wildfire risk reduction projects.*

### ***Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project (City of Flagstaff, Arizona)***

In 2012, Flagstaff voters overwhelmingly approved a \$10 million bond referendum to support the *Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project* – a partnership effort between the City, state, and Coconino National Forest to help reduce the risk of devastating wildfire and post-fire flooding within key local watersheds. This is one of only a handful of examples in the country where forest restoration work in National Forests is being funded by a municipality, and the only known instance where such an effort is funded from municipal bonds. The City of Flagstaff has since pioneered wildfire mitigation efforts within the community and has worked proactively with various regional partners, including the Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership (GFFP), and land management agencies for years to restore forests and reduce fire risk to the community at-large. Public involvement is a large and important component of this project given the importance and proximity of the area to Flagstaff residents, the complexity of the issues, and the unique nature of the funding.

For more information: <https://flagstaffwatershedprotection.org/>

### ***Common Ground Fund (Chaffee County, Colorado)***

Voters in Chaffee County recently passed a sales tax measure to support strengthening forest health, conserving and supporting working landscapes, and managing the impacts of growth. Approval of the ballot measure increased the local sales tax by 0.25% in perpetuity with the



additional revenue going to the *Common Ground Fund*. This new fund, projected to capture around \$1 million per year, will provide for the improvement and preservation of the county's natural resources, including wildfire risk reduction. Initially the tax will provide an estimated \$250,000 annually to be allocated to wildfire prevention through funds that are earmarked for landscape-scale treatment projects, including fuel breaks and removal of beetle-infested pine trees. Prior to the Common Ground initiative, the USFS treated approximately 1,200 acres per year of forested public lands. Through this new tax measure Chaffee County seeks to increase the treatment area to 4,000 acres per year. The County will also seek to leverage the Common Ground Fund to provide matching cost-share funds for state or federal grants for wildfire risk reduction, enabling further extension of the services the County can currently provide.

For more information, see the complete narrative case study for Chaffee County in the next section (Local Case Studies).

### ***Strong Future Fund (Summit County, Colorado)***

Summit County voters recently passed a mill levy called the *Strong Future Fund* to support wildfire risk reduction and other public services. The fund allocates about \$1 million per year to support wildfire mitigation programs and strategies including fuel breaks around neighborhoods, hazardous fuels reduction, wildfire prevention patrols, public education on fire restrictions, cistern installation, road upgrades for firefighting equipment access, and other strategies. Summit County is a popular destination for second-home owners, who often own residences in the WUI. The property tax is aimed at taxing these residents whose presence in the WUI can increase the wildfire risk not only for their property, but for the broader community. The Strong Future Fund has already resulted in the implementation of priority fuel reduction projects that were delayed due to budgetary constraints, and more are being planned for the next few years with a focus on the WUI to ensure the greatest positive impacts to public safety are achieved.

For more information, see the complete narrative case study for Summit County in the next section (Local Case Studies).

## ***Local Funding Case Studies***

*This section provides two detailed case studies on the local funding examples provided for Chaffee County and Summit County, Colorado. As briefly summarized in the previous section, countywide or municipal taxation is a tool that can provide local communities with a method to generate additional revenue for wildfire risk reduction. While local governments generally do not favor increasing or creating new taxes, these two case studies describe how potentially controversial tax ballot measures were successfully passed to help fund ongoing wildfire risk reduction. These types of ballot measures are most likely to be approved for areas that are characterized by the increasing presence of tourists, rental or second-home properties, and recreational activity occurring in the WUI.*

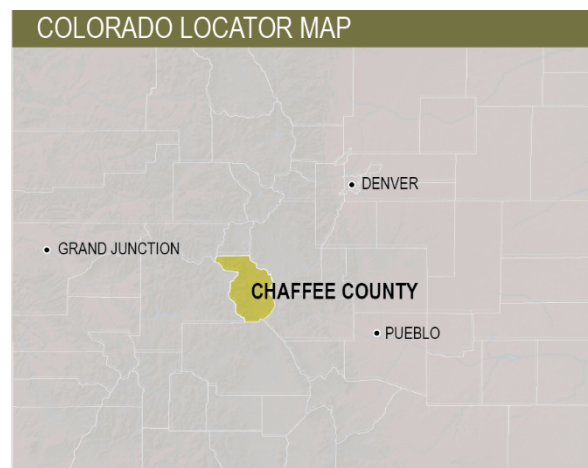
## ***Wildfire Risk Reduction Funding: Chaffee County, Colorado***

### **Executive Summary**

This case study describes funding strategies for wildfire preparedness and risk reduction in Chaffee County, Colorado. In 2018, Chaffee County voters passed ballot issue 1A, which provides funding for countywide wildfire mitigation and prevention through a sales tax. The measure provides an estimated \$250,000 annually to be allocated toward wildfire prevention. The campaign to promote the measure was driven by Envision Chaffee County, a citizen-run organization which formed to address a rapidly growing population, increased recreational tourism, and worsening wildfire seasons. These funds are earmarked for landscape-scale countywide risk reduction treatment projects, including fuel breaks and beetle kill pine removal. Chaffee Common Ground Citizen Advisory Committee will advise the allocation of the funds. Through this funding, Chaffee County aims to further enhance its wildfire risk reduction throughout its jurisdiction. The case study includes context regarding Chaffee County, the current funds, previous funding approaches, and concludes with recommended approaches applicable to other counties.

### **Chaffee County Context**

Chaffee County is located in central Colorado, nestled amongst the mountainous Sawatch Range and Mosquito Range along the Arkansas Valley. Chaffee County has a population of 18,800, which has grown by 5.6% from 2015 to 2017. The county density is 18.6 people per square mile.<sup>1</sup> The size of the county is 1,015 square miles, of which 80% is public land, managed by the United States Forest Service (USFS), Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), or the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The majority of private land is zoned rural for agriculture use, ranching, and open rangeland, which served as the initial economic base for Chaffee County.



**Figure 1:** Chaffee County Locator Map

### **Wildfire Funding History**

In 2002, Chaffee County adopted the National Fire Plan promulgated by the USFS and BLM. This plan provided funding for hazardous fuels reduction and forest health management. Under the plan, Chaffee County forest managers identified locations of risk and performed traditional fuels treatment of removing ladder fuels and mortality treatments due to the Ponderosa beetle. Chaffee County has funded wildfire risk reduction programs to date using USFS Secure Rural Schools Program (SRS) Title III funds. Enacted in 2000, the SRS provides financial assistance to forested rural counties impacted by the decline in harvested timber by the USFS. Historically, timber harvests provided a steady revenue source for rural counties yet changes to federal policy in the 1980s limited the forestry activity. SRS Title III payments provide funding to Chaffee County for the following available uses: search and rescue operations; Firewise Communities programs; and the planning and implementation of its Community Wildfire

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<sup>1</sup> ACS 2017 (5-Year Estimates); Social Explorer, US Census Bureau

Protection Plan (CWPP). The funding allocation for Chaffee County in 2018 was approximately \$21,000. These disbursements are expected to continue. The County has utilized these funds to perform the following wildfire preparedness procedures, managed by the CSFS:

1. **Development of CWPP:** Initial plan instigated in 2009
2. **Maintenance of alternative water supplies** including cisterns and dry hydrants
3. **Community Wildfire Risk Rating Program** provides improved mapping of wildfire risk at the parcel level for structures throughout the county
4. **Seasonal CFSF FTE** performs parcel risk assessments as part of the Community Wildfire Risk Rating Program
5. **Fire Mitigation Grant Program** makes funding available to eligible landowners in high risk zones for a 50/50 cost-share for (2) days of labor of fuels treatments and defensible space

## Current Wildfire Funding

The following describes Chaffee County's current approach to funding wildfire risk prevention. A citizen-based initiative fomented support for a countywide ballot measure to fund programs of importance to address the changing dynamics in Chaffee County.

### Envision Chaffee County (2017)

Significant population growth from 2015 to 2017 (+5.6%) coincided with increases in vehicular traffic on Highway 285 entering the county from the west, as an alternative route to I-70 for Front Range recreational visitors. Envision Chaffee County launched in 2017 as a growth planning initiative, aimed to 'sustain and improve our quality of life'. Formed by a group of community leaders, Envision received \$100,000 in grant funding from the LOR Foundation. The funding supported the development of a Community Action Plan by direct citizen involvement, inter-government coordination, and non-profit support.<sup>2</sup> The subsequent Community Action Plan espoused four vision statements, the first of which is 'Our forests, waters, and wildlife are healthy.' Under this vision, forest health is a top priority evidenced by the Fire and Healthy Landscapes Partnerships to increase fire resilience and watershed health.<sup>3</sup>

“ *Healthy lands, waters, and wildlife are the main reasons that people live here and visit. They are part of what citizens value most and are vital to the local economy.* ”

Envision Community Action Plan, 2018 ”

Envision Chaffee County was driven by organized citizens who performed extensive community outreach in order to select the items of importance to prioritize. Community town halls, listening sessions, surveys, and public education provided methods for reaching out to Chaffee residents. The outreach benefitted from a multitude of engaged stakeholders in addition to multi-levels of government agency involvement. The results of the stakeholder outreach determined that the primary concerns were increasing population, worsening wildfire seasons, and growing recreational tourism. Thus, the ballot measure 1A sales tax sought to address these issues by increasing funds for the items of importance. A history of wildfires in the county and region compounded with the wildfire events

<sup>2</sup> The Community Action Plan engagement included 1,500 citizens, 4 local governments, and 72 non-profit organizations, businesses and agencies.

<sup>3</sup> This includes: developing a standard for community wildfire risk mapping, a homeowner engagement process designed to encourage forest treatments on private lands, controlled burns, and the next generation of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

of 2017 contributed to the prioritization of this topic for the public. Notably, 95% of those surveyed placed the managing wildfire risk as a top priority.<sup>4</sup>

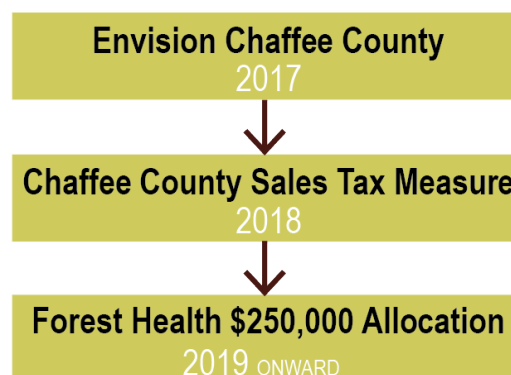
### Ballot Sales Tax Issue 1A (2018)

In November 2018, the residents of Chaffee County passed Issue 1A, a sales tax to support: strengthening forest health, conserving and supporting working landscapes, and managing the impacts of growth. These initiatives are now bundled into a countywide program called Chaffee Common Ground. The measure will increase sales tax in Chaffee County by 0.25% in perpetuity to raise funds for the improvement and preservation of the county's natural resources.<sup>5</sup>

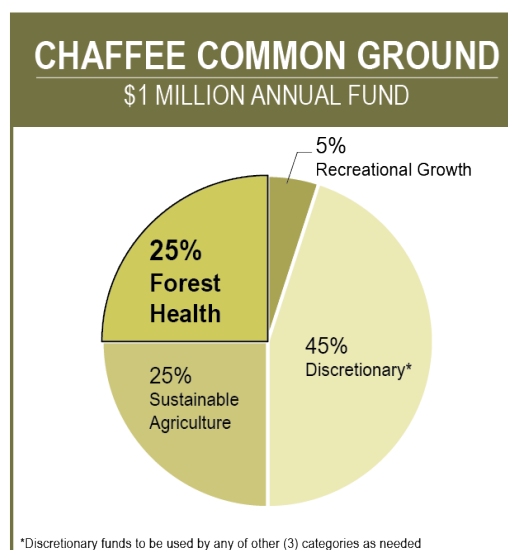
The measure targets issues of growth management to protect the natural assets of agricultural lands, balanced recreation, water and forest health, and wildfire protection. The total sales tax revenue is projected to be one million dollars annually of which residents anticipate paying \$30-40 per year. Tourist and visitors will pay for the bulk of the sales tax, as the tourist economy accounts for 33% county gross product. The funding goes into effect in 2019 and will continue in perpetuity. The measure passed by a 52% majority. It is estimated that \$250,000 annually will be allocated toward wildfire prevention and mitigation activities.

### Fund Allocation and Priorities

The Chaffee Common Ground program funding will be allocated into the following funds: 25% for forest health (wildfire risk reduction), 25% for working lands and sustainable agriculture, and 5% for managing impacts of recreational growth. These pre-determined allocations allow for guaranteed funding for each focus area. The additional 45% will go toward discretionary use into any of the other three areas based on need and opportunity. Each of these allocation funds relate to the improvement and preservation of natural resources in Chaffee County. The ballot language allows flexibility in the funding to cover grants and/or partnerships. The 25% funding allotted to forest health is earmarked for landscape-scale countywide treatment projects for wildfire prevention and mitigation, including fuel breaks and beetle kill pine. Prior to the Chaffee Common Ground initiative, the USFS treated approximately 1200 acres per year of forested public lands. The measure seeks to increase the treatment area to 4000 acres per year, about 2% of Chaffee County's public forested lands.



**Figure 2:** Chaffee County timeline for recent funding allocation for wildfire



**Figure 3:** Chaffee County 1A Funding Allocation

<sup>4</sup> 95% of 1,131 respondents indicated that managing wildfire risk is "important" to "very important."

<sup>5</sup> The sales tax is 0.25% per dollar, equivalent to 25 cents for every \$100 purchase.



In early 2019, Chaffee Common Ground conducted a countywide survey, the Chaffee County Wildfire and Forest Health Survey<sup>6</sup>, an online tool to engage residents on ranches, semi-rural areas, and in-town locations. This survey aimed to gauge public awareness of wildfire risk and preparedness, and help determine priorities:

1. Increase public awareness of mitigation resources;
2. Support regulations to reduce fire danger to homes by becoming a 'fire safe county';
3. Educate tourists to safe fire usage on public lands and short-term rentals;
4. Increase alert system technology to notify all residents of emergencies;
5. Inform private landowners how to reduce fuels along county evacuation routes;
6. Extend public education regarding state and federal fuel reduction efforts and water supply protection.

These results provide a helpful framework for county grants that will utilize the Chaffee Common Ground funding. One of the first initiatives by the fund managers is to update the CWPP from 2009. Additionally, the Wildfire Research (WiRê) team conducted a survey in the spring of 2019 on properties that have undergone wildfire assessment procedures by the CSFS.<sup>7</sup> The results are forthcoming and will also guide future activities.

### Fund Management

The fiscal agent for the sales tax is the Chaffee County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC). The Chaffee Common Ground Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) recommends the usage of the funds. This committee is comprised of seven members. The positions were selected by the BoCC as to represent the geographic diversity of Chaffee County and interest groups, including forest management, recreational management, agriculture, conservation, and wildlife. The responsibilities of the CAC are as follows: develop grant criteria, rank program opportunities, score criteria for funding based on an agreed-upon grant scoring matrix, and serve as the citizen liaison between the county and residents.

### Key Partnerships

While a multitude of stakeholders were involved in Envision Chaffee County, the following partners were critical to the organization of the forest health ballot language and subsequent forest management of Chaffee Common Ground.

#### **Public Entities and Committees**

Bureau of Land Management  
Colorado State Forest Service  
Fire Response Districts  
Office of Emergency Management  
US Forest Service  
Water Utilities (Salida Utilities, Denver Water)

#### **Non-profit / NGO**

Central Colorado Conservancy  
Colorado Forest Restoration Institute  
LOR Foundation  
The Gates Family Foundation  
The Nature Conservancy  
Trust for Public Land

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<sup>6</sup> Survey source: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ChaffeeWildfire2019>

<sup>7</sup> The WiRê (Wildfire Research) Team is a partnership between wildfire practitioners and researchers, integrating local social science into wildfire education and mitigation and prevention programs.

## Private

Development and Real Estate Partners

Recreational Industry Partners (rafting, fishing, hiking, tourism)

## Key Takeaways

Key takeaways from Chaffee County provide translatable guidance for other counties and communities seeking to secure wildfire risk reduction funding.

TABLE 1: KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM CHAFFEE COUNTY CASE STUDY	
Takeaway	Discussion
1 – Early engagement with diverse stakeholders is key to successful measure.	Envision Chaffee County relied heavily upon open conversations with countywide stakeholders. Representatives from agriculture, ranching, developers, conservation advocacy, recreational users, tourism, and wildlife gathered for public conversations about making improvements to natural resource management for the betterment of the county. All interviewed constituents underscored the critical public partnerships that enabled user groups to discuss and seek consensus on best management strategies.
2 – Community-based initiative expands stakeholder buy-in.	Envision Chaffee County began with nine concerned citizens taking on community leadership roles to shape the priorities of the county. Multi-levels of government agencies in addition to coordination amongst public and private partners has enabled dialogue and coordination of efforts. Much of the success of the Chaffee Common Ground is due to this organized effort to align focus and direction for Chaffee-based needs and actions.
3 – Recent wildfire events contribute to successful ballot measure.	The initiative for the county sales tax came on the heels of an increase in population growth to the county and an increase in tourist traffic moving through the highway corridors. The measure captured this public attention on growth management as a means to coordinate the Community Action Plan which envisioned several future visions for Chaffee County. The wildfire component, looped into the health landscapes vision, also came on the heels of an active wildfire season. Capturing public awareness of changes in Chaffee County propelled voters to recognize the importance of the initiative.
4 – Framing ballot measures as quality of life is effective.	The slogan for the 2018 Initiative 1A campaign was ‘support what you love about Chaffee County’. This framing sought to capture the collective benefit of the sales tax for Chaffee residents. The tone of the campaign was positive and more palatable in order to promote the benefits for well-being of supporting 1A, not the risk at stake for not supporting.

**TABLE 1: KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM CHAFFEE COUNTY CASE STUDY**

Takeaway	Discussion
5 – Fund allocation should be transparent for accountability.	The Chaffee Common Ground tax revenue utilization will be transparently communicated to the public throughout the allocation process. Chaffee County received feedback from other counties with similar measures that accountability in fund usage is critical to continued public buy-in. The failure to demonstrate responsible usage of funds could result in substantial public distrust.
6 – Bundling different topics has benefits and potential shortcomings for ballot measure.	In the case of Chaffee County, the wildfire component of the 2018 1A ballot initiative received no public pushback. On the heels of a summer of wildfire, the county was in support of increased forest health management. However, other components of the budget received public pushback, threatening the success of the measure. The bundling with other natural resource measures benefited the passage of more controversial issues, yet could have hindered the passage of the wildfire prevention funding had public opinion been poorly managed.
7 – County funds can be extended through financial matching initiatives.	Chaffee County seeks to utilize the funding gained from Chaffee Common Ground to extend the funding sources for wildfire risk reduction. Matching grants at the state or federal level would enable extension of the services that Chaffee County can provide. While some previous mitigation and prevention efforts have been matched 50/50 by landowners or homeowner associations, the aim is to leverage countywide projects for funding by public agencies (e.g. FEMA).

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## ***Wildfire Risk Reduction Funding: Summit County, Colorado***

### **Executive Summary**

This case study describes the funding strategies for wildfire risk reduction for Summit County, Colorado. In the fall of 2018, Summit County voters passed a mill levy called the Strong Future Fund to support wildfire risk reduction and other public services. The fund allocates \$10 million for wildfire mitigation and prevention over the next decade, sunsetting in 2029. The property tax revenue will support additional federal and state forest service staff, Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) implementation, and landscape-scale mitigation and prevention programs throughout the county. The Summit County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) spearheaded the measure to the ballot with the support of the Summit County Wildfire Council (SCWC), who will play an active role in the further development and implementation of the Strong Future Fund programs. The case study includes contextual demographic and land use information for Summit County, descriptions of previous wildfire funding and current property tax measures for wildfire prevention and mitigation, and some key takeaways applicable to other counties.

### **Summit County Context**

Summit County is located in central Colorado amidst the Rocky Mountains west of the Continental Divide. The county contains the Gore Range, Tenmile Range, and Mosquito Range. Summit County has a population of 29,700 with a density of 48.9 people per square mile of its total 619 square miles.<sup>8</sup> Public land makes up 80% of the county of which is National Forest, Wilderness Area, Colorado State Forest Lands or Bureau of Land Management lands. The majority of private land is zoned for residential use.



**Figure 1:** Summit County Locator Map

Summit County is a popular destination for recreational tourists, who ski and lodge at the four ski resorts within the county. The county is also popular location for second homeowners from the Colorado Front Range or out of state. Notably, Summit County has the highest longevity of any American county. “High education, high income, high access to medical care” are all factors contributing to the high life expectancy.<sup>9</sup>

### **Wildfire Funding History**

Summit County has experienced seasonal wildfires in the county over the past several decades. The County has taken an active role in response to the worsening wildfire events. Funding through federal and state sources have provided the basis for a robust wildfire risk prevention program.

<sup>8</sup> ACS 2017 (5-Year Estimates); Social Explorer, US Census Bureau

<sup>9</sup> Dr. Ali Mokdad is the head of U.S. research for the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington and co-author of longevity study.

## ***Federal and State Funding Support***

Summit County has received federal and state support of wildfire preparedness. The County applied for and received federal grant money in 2010 via FEMA's Pre-Hazard Mitigation (PDM) program. This provided funding for fuels reduction (75% funded by the grant; 25% funded by the County). At the state level, Summit County received funding through the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. The County received funds through the Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant (WRRG) Program in 2014, 2015, and 2016. This program, now consolidated with the Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation Grant Program (FRWRM), serves to reduce risk to people, property and infrastructure from wildfire in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), as well as to promote forest health and encourage forest restoration projects. These funding sources bolster the efforts of wildfire prevention in Summit County.

## ***Summit County Wildfire Programs***

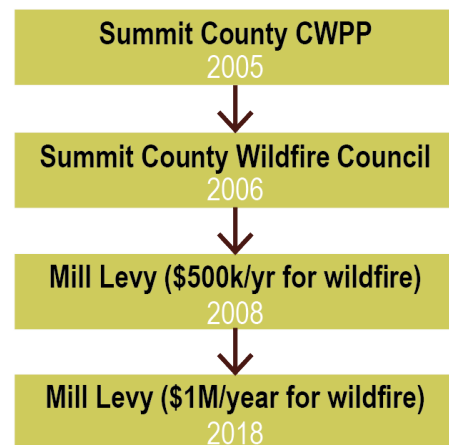
The following describes the proactive approaches that have built a strong foundation for public awareness of wildfire risk and a positive track record of spending money appropriately for mitigation and prevention.

### Formation of the Summit County Wildfire Council (2006)

In 2005, a multi-jurisdictional coalition of stakeholders met to form Summit County's first CWPP.<sup>10</sup> This joint agreement established the SCWC and the adoption of the CWPP in 2006. Summit County modeled the SCWC after the National Association of Counties as propagated by the congressionally authorized Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003. The prerogative of the SCWC was and is to provide oversight regarding wildfire risk reduction and forest health. Their duties include: direct the objectives of the CWPP, guide decision-making for the plan, evaluate the CWPP, recommend further action, and communicate proposed actions to general public and governmental agencies. The formation of the SCWC creates an effective collaboration between Summit County, local fire-protection districts, USFS, CSFS, and municipalities. SCWC meetings are publicly held and open to all attendees. See "Key Partnerships" under the next section for a list of SCWC partners.

### Summit County Tax Levy Adoption (2008)

The SCWC wildfire preparedness strategies include the funding and implementation of the CWPP. The SCWC report anticipates that 'aggressive funding at all public and private levels are necessary [in order] to significantly reduce the hazards of wildfire and impacts of wildfire to our communities and essential infrastructure.'<sup>11</sup> In 2008, Summit County passed Referred Measure 1-A which provides 12 years of funding for wildfire prevention through a property tax levy. 1-A provides funds for open space, affordable housing, renewable energy, and wildfire prevention.



**Figure 2:** Summit County wildfire risk reduction and program timeline

<sup>10</sup> The stakeholders include: local fire protection districts/departments, the USFS, Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management Unit, the Colorado State Forest Service, Northwest Colorado Council of Governments and the Summit County Board of County Commissioners.

<sup>11</sup> Objective D of the Summit County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, adopted in 2006, revised in 2016 and re-adopted in 2018.

Of this tax levy, \$500,000/year is allocated toward community wildfire prevention, and it is set to sunset in 2021. These programs support wildfire prevention on private property, municipal, and county-owned lands. Sources in Summit County noted interest to renew the 2008 ballot measure after the sunset. To date, funds from the 2008 mill levy support the three following initiatives:

- 1 - Hazard Fuels Reduction Grant (initiated in 2008)** – a 50/50 cost-sharing program in which homeowner associations or subdivisions elect to develop a fuels reduction program, funded by the 2008 1A levy. Applicants pay for project costs and are reimbursed for a 50% share after the project is complete.
- 2 - CWPP Implementation Grants (initiated in 2012)** – grant program to provide funding for projects not covered by the fuels program. This included cisterns, emergency water, evacuation route improvements, hazard tree removal, fire-resistant emergency signage, and other strategies. The cost of these programs is shared 90/10 on a sliding scale based on the BoCC approval; Summit County pays the majority share.
- 3 - Summit County Chipping Program (initiated in 2014)** – a free program for residents to support defensible space by providing chipping and disposal for branches, logs, and small trees.

## Current Wildfire Funding

Wildfire is the number one natural hazard for Summit County. After two high-profile fires in 2017 and 2018 and ongoing mountain pine beetle destruction, wildfire risk captured public attention.

### Public Outreach

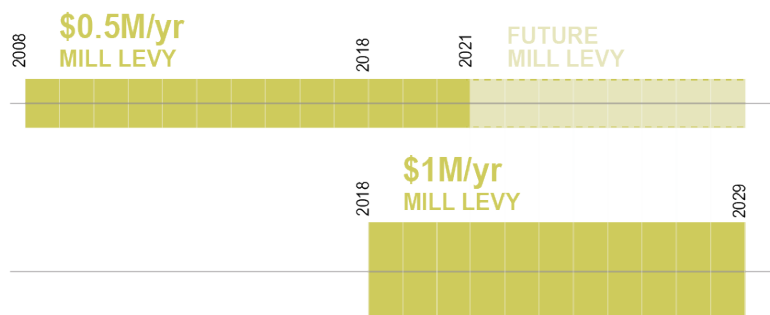
#### Garnering Public Support

The Summit County Manager's Office and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) take an active role to provide public education in the form of fire preparedness, prevention measures, and risk reduction strategies to the public. These public outreach programs raise awareness for wildfire risk and prevention through yearly media campaigns via radio, TV, pamphlets, web content, and bus advertisements. Public discussion about wildfire is present throughout the year. The content ranges from campfire safety to home hazard prevention. OEM routinely runs test public notification alerts for wildfires. Maintaining wildfire risk in the public eye is critical to ensuring the community is aware of the hazard and empowered to respond.

#### Messaging Risk Reduction Efforts as Success

In 2018, the Buffalo Mountain Fire threatened 1,400 structures in the Wilderrest and Mesa Cortina neighborhoods. Widespread evacuations vacated the neighborhoods as a precautionary measure. The wildfire reached the crowns of trees adjacent to development. Due to the fuel break adjacent to the subdivisions, the fire lost momentum and crews were able to suppress the fire. Summit County attributed the successful suppression to the \$1 million investment in the fuel break adjacent to the threatened homes. After the wildfire, Summit County increased the public

### Summit County Wildfire Funding Ballot Measures

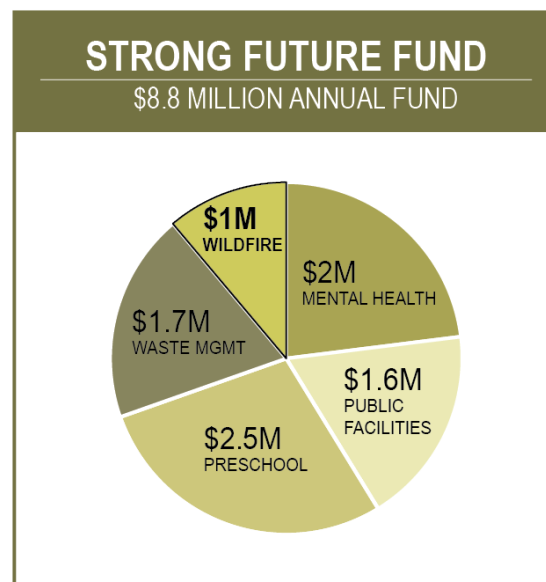


**Figure 3:** Summit County mill levy measures for wildfire mitigation and prevention

messaging about the success of the mitigation efforts, illustrating the essential achievement of preventative fuel breaks.

### **Strong Future Fund (2018)**

The Summit County BoCC identified wildfire as a prominent issue included in 2018 Ballot Initiative 1A. Summit County voters passed the mill levy package supporting the county's most pressing issues, deemed the Strong Future Fund with 61% in favor. The ten-year mill levy will raise \$8.8 million/year to support wildfire risk reduction, mental health, recycling, public facilities, and affordable preschool.<sup>12</sup> The funds from the 2018 Strong Future Fund allocated toward wildfire are aimed at proactive risk reduction measures. Although Summit County has reserve funding built up for fire suppression in the case of a large fire emergency, the ballot measure also allows the county to use the funds for response and recovery in the case of a larger fire. The SCWC is the primary vehicle for promoting wildfire mitigation and prevention strategies through inter-jurisdictional partnerships and supported the increase in funding.



**Figure 4:** An annual sum of \$1 Million will support wildfire risk reduction strategies over the next 10 years.

### **Fund Allocation**

Following the passage of Ballot Initiative 1A, wildfire risk reduction will receive \$10 million cumulative funds over the next decade. These monies are aimed at large-scale fuel reduction efforts and longer-term prevention, primarily on National Forest lands in Summit County; however, the funding has no restrictions for use on other federal, state, county, or private lands that reduce wildfire risk for the county.

The SCWC has an ongoing task list as a function of the CWPP. The 2018 Strong Future Fund will support pre-existing mitigation and prevention programs in addition to employing additional personnel. The ballot language does not limit the types of projects that the funding can be used for, opening the possibility for future uses for the funds.<sup>13</sup>

The funding is currently targeted as follows:

#### **1 – US Forest Service Personnel**

1 FTE GS9 Fuels Manager

Dispersed Recreation Patrollers (6-person crew) A seasonal crew to monitor campsites, patrol and ranger the Dillon Ranger District and educate visitors about fire-prevention.

#### **2 – Colorado State Forest Service Personnel**

1 FTE Manager

<sup>12</sup> \$2.83/month tax on properties valued above \$100,000.

<sup>13</sup> The County Manager's office noted that uses for funds beyond the 'Get it Done' list and personnel additions will be allocated through well-vetted community protection projects. These may include further maintenance of forests or extending preventative strategies further into National Forests.



### **3 – Wildfire Prevention Programs**

Including but not limited to fuel breaks around neighborhoods, hazardous fuels reduction, street-sign improvements for responder navigation, fire hydrant line improvements, cistern installation, road upgrades for firefighting equipment access, secondary egresses from subdivisions, wildfire prevention patrols and public education on wildfire prevention.<sup>14</sup>

#### ***Fund Management***

The Strong Future Fund is managed by the Summit County BoCC. The 2018 1A ballot language required the establishment of a citizen advisory group to advise funding allocation to proposed projects. This is a volunteer-based committee of 10 members who operate as a sub-committee to the SCWC. The advisory group will take an active role in the development and implementation of the Strong Future Fund wildfire risk prevention strategies.

#### ***Key Partnerships***

The following partnerships describe the multitude of stakeholders involved in wildfire risk reduction efforts across the county. The success of implementing local wildfire mitigation and prevention activities is due to the strong partnerships and capacity of the entities listed below.

##### **Summit County Wildfire Council**

- Summit County Government
- Summit Fire & EMS
- Colorado State Forest Service
- Colorado State University Extension
- Office of Emergency Management
- Red, White, and Blue Fire District
- Town of Blue River
- Town of Breckenridge
- Town of Dillon
- Town of Frisco
- Town of Montezuma
- Town of Silverthorne
- US Forest Service

##### **2018 Mill Levy Supporters**

- Colorado State Forest Service
- Colorado State University Extension
- Denver Water (Forest to Faucets)
- Dillon Reservoir Recreation Committee
- Forest Health Taskforce
- Friends of Dillon Reservoir
- Summit Association of Realtors (SAR)
- The Nature Conservancy
- US Forest Service

#### **Key Takeaways**

Key takeaways from Summit County provide translatable guidance for other counties and communities seeking to secure wildfire risk reduction funding.

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<sup>14</sup> As noted in the Summit County press release. 7 November, 2018.

**TABLE 2: KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM SUMMIT COUNTY CASE STUDY**

Takeaway	Discussion
1 – Foster collaborative partnerships between jurisdictions through formation of Wildfire Council.	Summit County built strong inter-jurisdictional partnerships through the SCWC established in 2006. The council extends its reach to federal, state, and local actors in public and private sectors. The SCWC utilizes the CWPP as a consistent playbook to guide collective stakeholder action. The county attributes its effectiveness due to its close collaboration between the above entities throughout Summit County. Partnerships with Denver Water's Forest to Faucets program in addition to homeowner associations allow for additional funding partnerships for wildfire mitigation and prevention.
2 – Build ballot measures upon previous public outreach.	Garnering public support for the 2018 Strong Future Fund established by continual public messaging about the risk of wildfire and the possible preventative measures. Prior to getting to the ballot box, voters received yearly messaging about the presence of the hazard in their community. The seasonal public messaging built a level of awareness and education of the public, motivating voters to support the 2008 and 2018 tax levies.
3 – Maintain consistent educational messaging.	Summit County utilizes consistent language throughout the county to communicate regarding fire prevention measures. The CWPP provides a collective framework that all municipalities agree to utilize, ensuring messaging and methods are comprehensive throughout Summit County. This strengthens the sense of collective ownership and buy-in of the CWPP.
4 – Incentivize public participation to create buy-in for defensible space.	The Chipping Program provides a benefit to homeowners to participate in mitigation efforts of creating defensible space. The program allows the County to extend out into the community to property through the curbside pickup service, increasing the visibility of the countywide mitigation efforts. Further educational material is provided to homeowners who participate, increasing the resident's awareness and capacity to prevent wildfires through defensible space.
5 – Keep up to date zoning and building codes.	Summit County has consistently updated zoning code and building codes to account for defensible space in rezoning and subdivision approvals. The adoption of the new codes has been ongoing over the past 15 years, requiring homeowners to utilize fire-resistant materials and provide defensible space. These requirements must be met for any new construction prior to receiving a Certificate of Occupancy.
6 – Leverage policy windows.	The high-profile fires of 2017 and 2018, coupled with the mountain pine beetle epidemic alerted the public to the natural hazard of wildfire. The Summit County BoCC identified wildfire as a top priority and successfully secured funding with the passage of the 2018 Strong Future Fund.

**TABLE 2: KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM SUMMIT COUNTY CASE STUDY**

Takeaway	Discussion
7 – Carefully allocate funding through transparent and accountable means.	Summit County BoCC appointed a Citizen’s Advisory Board to advise the allocation of funding for wildfire prevention. This committee provides accountability from citizens to elected officials in order to ensure funding is responsibly allocated. An annual audit of the funding is conducted for further transparency. This confirms that there is no additional scope creep and funds are allocated as voters determined per ballot measure, strengthening public trust.

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## ***Additional Resources***

This report describes a variety of resources and examples for CPAW communities to consider as they explore ways to build program capacity and implement CPAW recommendations, but it is not an exhaustive list. This section provides some additional key organizations that focus on wildfire prevention and mitigation along with where to go for more information.

Communities are encouraged to contact their State Forester<sup>15</sup>, State Hazard Mitigation Officer<sup>16</sup>, regional and local wildfire councils, and other applicable federal, state, and local agencies to further explore the types of assistance that may be available to meet their specific needs. Communities should also look to other potential partners with a vested interest in reducing risk and building resilience to wildfires or other hazards. For example, these may include homeowner associations, special districts, non-profit organizations, or other community groups that may have the ability to leverage or provide additional assistance in support of wildfire prevention and mitigation activities.

### ***National Association of State Foresters***

Established in 1920, the National Association of State Foresters is a non-profit organization composed of the directors of forestry agencies in the states, U.S. territories, and District of Columbia. Its members manage and protect state and private forests, which encompass nearly two-thirds of the nation's forests.

For more information: <https://www.stateforesters.org/>

### ***Council of Western State Foresters***

The Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit membership organization comprised of state, territorial and commonwealth foresters whose role is to protect, conserve and enhance Western and Pacific Island forests. CWSF's membership is comprised of 17 Western U.S. State Foresters and six U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Island foresters.

For more information: <https://www.westernforesters.org/>

### ***Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance***

The Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance (NMFSA) membership is comprised of the state forestry agencies from 20 New England, Mid-Atlantic, and Midwestern states plus the District of Columbia. NMFSA support states in efforts to achieve joint forest management, conservation, and protection goals. Working closely with the Northeastern Area region of the USFS and other partners, NMFSA facilitates regional efforts related to forest health, invasive insects and pests, wildland firefighting, urban forestry, development of best practices for the protection of lands near rivers and lakes, and a variety of other areas.

For more information: <http://www.northeasternforests.org/>

### ***Southern Group of State Foresters***

The Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF) is a non-profit organization consisting of from 13 Southern states as well as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. SGSF provides leadership in sustaining the economic, environmental and social benefits of the South's forests, and work to identify and address existing and emerging issues and challenges

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<sup>15</sup> For listing of State Foresters, visit: <https://www.stateforesters.org/who-we-are/our-membership/>

<sup>16</sup> For a listing of State Hazard Mitigation Officers, visit: <https://www.fema.gov/state-hazard-mitigation-officers>



that are important to southern forests and citizens. It uses extensive research, in-depth analysis, and cutting-edge technology to develop systems to assess and analyze forest resources, such as Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment.

For more information: <https://www.southernforests.org/>

### ***National Fire Protection Association***

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is a global self-funded nonprofit organization, established in 1896, devoted to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards. NFPA's Firewise USA® program encourages local solutions for wildfire safety by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, firefighters, and others in the effort to protect people and property from wildfire risks. In recent years NFPA has partnered with State Farm to provide funding for wildfire safety projects such as its Wildfire Community Preparedness Day, a national campaign designed to help raise local awareness of risks and encourage individuals to take an active role in creating safer communities.

For more information: <https://www.nfpa.org/>

### ***International Association of Fire Chiefs***

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) represents the leadership of firefighters and emergency responders worldwide. Through its wildland programs, the IAFC raises awareness about wildland fire risks by educating members, residents, landowners and managers, local officials and planners. The IAFC is a partner in the Fire Adapted Communities Coalition and works with other organizations and departments that help people in the WUI and at-risk areas. In addition to a variety of online tools, the IAFC has specific programs, guidance, education and platforms that can support local prevention, mitigation and response efforts that achieve behavioral change in the face of wildland fire in a community. For example, through its "Ready, Set, Go!" program the IAFC supports developing and improving dialogue between the fire service and the residents they serve. The program helps local fire departments teach individuals who live in high-risk wildland fire areas and the WUI how to best prepare themselves, their families and their properties against outdoor fire threats.

For more information: <https://www.iafc.org/topics-and-tools/wildland>

### ***Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network***

The Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (FAC Net) is a national network of people working to build sustainable wildfire resilience capacity in fire-prone communities. The Network is the result of a partnership among The Nature Conservancy, the Watershed Research and Training Center and the USFS, as well as the many wildfire resilience practitioners who make up its membership. Network members are individuals and organizations across the U.S. that have committed to implementing, assessing and sharing the work that they are doing to increase their communities' resilience to wildfire. The purpose of FAC Net is to exchange information, collaborate to enhance the practice of fire adaptation, and work together and at multiple scales to help communities live safely with fire. This includes embracing resiliency concepts and taking action before, during, and after wildfires. Some states, including Arizona, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, and Washington, have developed state FAC learning networks that offer state-level resources and networking opportunities for wildfire practitioners and communities.

More information is available at: <https://fireadaptednetwork.org/>

## ***Cooperative Extension System***

The Cooperative Extension System (CES) empowers farmers, ranchers, and communities of all sizes to meet the challenges they face, adapt to changing technology, improve nutrition and food safety, prepare for and respond to emergencies, and protect our environment. CES is operated through the nation's Land-Grant University System in partnership with the federal and state and local government, and CES programs in some states can be very helpful in terms of implementing wildfire mitigation strategies. Find out who the NIFA land-grant partners are, and how to reach them with this Land-Grant University Partner Map. The tool allows you to discover the specific colleges and universities that make up this system and provides links to the institution's websites

To find your local CES partner, visit USDA's Land-Grant University Website Directory at: <https://nifa.usda.gov/land-grant-colleges-and-universities-partner-website-directory?state=All&type=Extension>

## ***Coalitions & Collaboratives, Inc.***

Coalitions and Collaboratives, Inc. (COCO) is a Colorado-based non-profit organization that fosters collaborative conservation initiatives with local partners. Through a co-sponsorship with the USFS and the National Association of State Foresters, COCO recently launched the *Action and Implementation for Mitigation (AIM)* program to help accelerate fire adapted community concepts and reduce the risk from wildfire in WUI areas across the United States. By increasing capacity for on-the-ground implementation, the program is designed to increase community resilience, restore fire adapted ecosystems, and create safer conditions for firefighters and communities. AIM funding is available for a wide variety of activities, including capacity building for personnel or equipment, planning efforts and wildfire risk reduction work (on non-federal lands only). Funding may be provided to a wide array of organizations including counties and municipalities, non-profit organizations, collaborative groups, fire departments, tribes, and others conducting or planning pre-fire mitigation activities aimed at protecting their communities, watersheds and ecosystems. Applicants must show how their project proposal fits into the bigger wildfire preparedness picture and are encouraged to coordinate with federal partners on nearby public lands projects. Applicants must contribute a 100% match, (cash or in-kind match is eligible) for a 1:1 grant to match ratio, and funding awards may range from \$5,000 – \$50,000.

More information is available at: <https://co-co.org/get-involved/grants/aim-grant/>