



Overview of Local Funding for Improving Forest Health in the West

March 25, 2019

As local concern over forest health and resilience increases with every severe wildfire summer in the West, interest grows in how local governments can engage to protect their backyard. The purpose of this document is to identify and describe available federal grant programs and provide examples of local community expenditures to improve the health of nearby federal forests.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Local governments can and do use local funds to complete projects that improve the health of nearby federal forests. There are several ways by which a local government may partner with the U.S. Forest Service or a congressionally-chartered nonprofit partner¹ in order to complete the desired forest treatment. Covered in more detail below, these include:

1. challenge cost-share agreements,
2. collection agreements,
3. participating agreements, and
4. stewardship agreements.

The local government ordinarily partners with an experienced organization, such as the National Forest Foundation, in order to determine which type of agreement is best suited to the proposed project and to ensure all requirements of the agreement are met.

To supplement federal funding, innovative local governments have also recognized the need to provide funds for wildfire mitigation and watershed protection through improved forest health on federal lands. For example, Denver Water in Colorado has long had a successful forest-to-faucet program and the City of Santa Fe, NM, has long partnered with the Santa Fe National Forest to protect its watersheds. Also, after a 2010 wildfire that affected their water supply, voters in the City of Flagstaff approved a \$10 million bond measure in 2012 to thin forests and undertake prescribed fire operations in watersheds located in the Coconino National Forest and state lands that provide water to the city. The City of Flagstaff partnered with the U.S. Forest Service and the Arizona State Forestry Division on the forest health projects. Other case studies include actions taken in Ashland, OR, and Chaffee County, CO.

PARTNERING WITH THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE

To accomplish its mission, the U.S. Forest Service partners with land management agencies across all levels of government, nonprofit and for-profit entities, universities, and communities, large and small. The Forest Service works with three congressionally-chartered nonprofit partners:

- National Forest Foundation (www.nationalforests.org)

¹ A congressionally chartered nonprofit is an organization that was created by Congress and receives some federal funding, as well as private donations. These organizations can help negotiate agreements between local governments and federal agencies.

- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (www.nfwf.org)
- National Environmental Education Foundation (www.neefusa.org)²

Many local governments across the country are helping pay for projects on Forest Service land, either by partnering with the agency directly or with an organization such as the National Forest Foundation, which was created by Congress to support the national forest system.³ The National Forest Foundation (NFF) engages Americans in community-based and national programs that promote the health and public enjoyment of the 193-million-acre National Forest System, and administers private gifts of funds and land for the benefit of the National Forests.⁴ NFF uses local and private funding to implement restoration and other forest projects. There are several requirements, such as ensuring the project complies with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA),⁵ archeological clearances, and budget readiness, that must be met before work can begin through an agreement with the Forest Service, so an experienced organization such as NFF is well positioned to assist a local government through the agreement process.

Typically, a local government will grant money to NFF, which then uses those funds to complete work on forest land. In this arrangement, NFF, and not the local government, serves as a general contractor to the Forest Service.

Agreements are usually at the specific forest level (e.g., between the City of Flagstaff and Coconino National Forest); however agreements can be regional in scope (e.g., the Rocky Mountain region). There are four main types of agreements to use local funds for work on Forest Service land:

1. **Challenge Cost-Share Agreements:** These cost-share agreements are used when the Forest Service partners to develop, plan, and implement projects that enhance Forest Service activities. As the agreement name implies, both the Forest Service and its partner contribute funds to the direct costs of shared projects. Partners' matching funds may originate from fundraising, individuals, institutions, organizations, and/or other non-Federal governments. Besides cash funds, partners may satisfy the matching requirement of typically not less than 20 percent by providing real or personal property, services, and/or in-kind contributions, such as volunteer labor. Challenge Cost-Share Agreements allow the Forest Service to reimburse organizations for the cost of their materials and/or labor. The Interior and Related Agency Appropriations Act of 1992 authorizes this agreement type.

Partners who tend to work under Challenge Cost-Share Agreements include corporations, institutions, individuals, nonprofit organizations, and public and private agencies. A Challenge Cost-Share Agreement could be used to support a wildlife habitat study with a regional nonprofit partner, enable riparian or other ecosystem restoration efforts, or engage a local educational partner to develop an outdoor summer education program.⁶

2. **Collection Agreements:** Authorized by the Cooperative Funds Act of 1914 or the Granger-Thye Act of 1950, Collection Agreements allow the Forest Service to collect cash contributions from partnering organizations to perform work benefitting partners on either National Forest System land or land adjacent to or with direct impact to National Forest System land. Collection Agreements are used when the Forest Service accepts funds from non-Federal partners to enable

² U.S. Forest Service, <https://www.fs.fed.us/working-with-us/partnerships/who-are-partners-are>, accessed January 8, 2018

³ Quinton, Sophie. "Towns Pick Up the Tab for U.S. Forest Service Staff" The Pew Charitable Trusts, Published September 19, 2018 (<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2018/09/19/towns-pick-up-the-tab-for-us-forest-service-staff>, accessed Feb. 7, 2019)

⁴ National Forest Foundation, <https://www.nationalforests.org/who-we-are>, accessed Dec. 6, 2018

⁵ NEPA requirements may apply to forest treatment projects on federal lands.

⁶ Excerpted from USDA Forest Service Partnership Guide – 2013 – Chapter 5

on-site conservation projects focused on land administration, evaluation, improvement, management, protection, or reforestation. Partner financial contributions may cover all or part of the work costs. A balance of responsibilities enables both entities to use their organizational strengths in concert. The Cooperative Funds Act of 1914 supports the following:

- Construction and maintenance of National Forest System improvements such as fences, range, recreational areas, and roads.
- Protection of National Forest System land from diseases, fire, and insects.
- Forest investigations on National Forest System land, such as timber surveys or water monitoring.
- Wildlife habitat improvement on National Forest System land.

The Granger-Thye Act of 1950 supports the following:

- Cruising, marking, scaling, and helping manage Federal and non-Federal timber stands.
- Administering forest resources in accordance with sound conservation practices on non-Federal forest lands.
- Conducting wildlife activities on non-Federal lands under agreements with state game commissioners or others.
- Surveying to establish common boundaries.

Partners who tend to work under Collection Agreements include tribal governments, conservation districts, nonprofit organizations, watershed councils, schools, private landowners, counties, municipalities, states, and other non-Federal entities. Examples of work for which Collection Agreements are often used include a land exchange survey with a neighboring property developer, construction and maintenance, tree planting on Forest Service lands, and concessionaire operations.⁷

3. **Participating Agreements:** These mutual benefit agreements are used pursuant to two authorities: the Cooperative Funds and Deposits Act and Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Act (Wyden Amendment). Participating Agreements citing the Cooperative Funds and Deposits Act of 1975 are focused projects involving four specific program areas: development, job training, and manpower programs; environmental education and forest history materials; forestry protection; and pollution abatement. When citing the Wyden authority (P.L. 111-11), Participating Agreements can be used to enhance, protect, and restore fish and wildlife habitat and other natural or cultural resources on public or private land – so long as the activities benefit National Forest System land within a watershed or reduce natural disaster risk where public safety is threatened. All work is cooperatively performed between both partners. Partner contributions may include cash, in-kind contributions, personal or real property, and/or services (such as volunteer labor).

Examples of Participating Agreement use include the following:

- Working jointly with a local watershed organization where the Forest Service and the organization plan and produce a conference (environmental education and forest history).

⁷ Excerpted from USDA Forest Service Partnership Guide – 2013 – Chapter 5

- Working with a State-run youth rehabilitation center to provide training and tools for residents to create wildlife openings on a nearby national forest (development, job training, and manpower programs).
- Contributing to a local government for the construction, operation, and maintenance of a recycling center which the Forest Service as well as the municipality can mutually use (pollution abatement).
- Partnering with the local branch of a national conservation organization to hand-pull noxious weeds in a national forest wilderness area (forest protection).⁸

Eligible **partners** under Participating Agreements include educational institutions or nonprofit organizations; local, state, and tribal governments or other public entities; and landowner or private organizations and agencies.

4. **Stewardship Agreements:** Stewardship agreements are used to achieve mutually-shared objectives and land management goals on the national forests, such as forest restoration, watershed protection, and wildlife conservation. Designed to promote closer working relationships with local communities on projects that meet local and rural needs, these instruments allow Federal agencies to contribute to sustainable development and restore and maintain healthy forest ecosystems. These agreements are authorized by Section 8205 of Public Law (P.L.) 113-79, the Agricultural Act of 2014.

Forest Service staff may use Stewardship Agreements as tools to achieve restoration objectives identified through forest planning and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes. Stewardship Agreements are often used for assessing timber conditions, forest stewardship and restoration activities, timber removal, or timber salvage in disaster conditions.

Stewardship Agreements are unique in that they can use a combination of forest product revenue and appropriated funding to carry out stewardship activities. In addition, retained receipts (the amount collected from forest product sales over the amount spent on stewardship programming) can be used for future stewardship projects. Since there is a mutual benefit to the parties, cooperators should not financially profit from Stewardship Agreements. Cooperators shall document the sale of any forest products and, if profits are realized, the funds are either used for additional service work or paid back to the Forest Service as retained receipts. The proper use and management of Stewardship Agreement receipts must be assessed as a normal part of regional and forest renewable resource programs and activity reviews.⁹

Forest Service staff collaborates to build community **partnerships** with cooperating nongovernmental organizations; Federal, local, and state government agencies; tribal governments; and any interested groups or individuals to develop projects. Unlike other partnership agreements that are limited to a five-year performance period, stewardship agreements can last up to ten years because of the long-term planning and programming that takes place with these projects. Examples of interested groups or individuals include conservation groups, fire safety councils, resource advisory committees, resource conservation districts, and watershed councils.

⁸ Excerpted from USDA Forest Service Partnership Guide – 2013 – Chapter 5

⁹ Excerpted from USDA Forest Service Partnership Guide – 2013 – Chapter 5

LOCAL FUNDING FOR IMPROVING FOREST HEALTH ON FEDERAL LAND

Local governments across the country are recognizing the need for local funding to augment the stewardship of state and federal public forests. Warmer summers and shorter winters have diminished forest health and increased management needs not being met as federal land managers grapple with tight budgets. The growth in tourism in many communities has resulted in more people visiting public forests and has led local governments to dedicate local dollars for the purpose of strengthening and supporting backyard forests.

In recent years, more than half the Forest Service budget has been diverted to fighting wildfires, leading to so-called “fire-borrowing,” when the agency raids its other programs’ accounts to pay for fighting wildfires. However, in March 2018 Congress passed legislation creating an off-budget disaster fund starting in 2020 to cover firefighting costs, which should help address the fire-borrowing problem. Still, more people are visiting public lands every year. In 2009, 143 million people visited national forests for recreation. In 2016, that number rose to 148 million. Yet funding for the U.S. Forest Service has remained stagnant at around \$5 billion per year over the past decade, in inflation-adjusted dollars. The combination of forest health management backlog, increasing visitation and stagnant funding has led the Forest Service to rely more than ever on volunteer and financial assistance from local communities.

For example, Denver, Colorado’s water utility; the city water division of Santa Fe, New Mexico; and the Town of Ashland, Oregon, are helping to fund tree-thinning projects on federal land to protect the local water supplies from wildfire. Additionally, voters in Flagstaff, Arizona, approved a \$10 million bond measure in 2012 to remove trees from the area watershed, including on national forest lands.¹⁰ In 2018, voters in Chaffee County, Colorado, approved a local sales tax which includes funding for forest health.

Denver, CO

As the water provider to 1.4 million people in the Denver metropolitan area, Denver Water directly depends on healthy forests and watersheds. Denver Water’s key collection and delivery infrastructure receives water from snowpack and streams on U.S. Forest Service lands.

Denver Water and the U.S. Forest Service have a shared interest in improving forest and watershed conditions to protect water supplies and water quality, as well as to continue providing other public benefits, such as wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities. The U.S. Forest Service administers more than 14.5 million acres of National Forest System lands in Colorado, and nearly 90 percent of these lands are located in watersheds that contribute to public water supplies. So the two organizations work together to benefit From Forests to Faucets, a watershed management partnership.

The From Forests to Faucets partnership began in 2010 between Denver Water and the U.S. Forest Service — Rocky Mountain Region as a response to the costly impacts from a series of wildfires, including the 1996 Buffalo Creek and 2002 Hayman wildfires, which required expenditures exceeding \$27 million for restoration and repairs to Denver Water’s collection system. More than 48,000 acres of National Forest System lands have been treated so far, accomplishing important fuels reduction, restoration and prevention activities. That original five year, \$33 million memorandum of understanding expired on August 11, 2015.

A renewed and expanded five year, \$33 million partnership program was signed on February 27, 2017. The new memorandum includes the Colorado State Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation

¹⁰ Quinton, Sophie. “Towns Pick Up the Tab for U.S. Forest Service Staff” The Pew Charitable Trusts, Published September 19, 2018 (<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2018/09/19/towns-pick-up-the-tab-for-us-forest-service-staff>, accessed Feb. 7, 2019)

Service as partners to emphasize the importance of watershed and forest health across ownerships. The goal of the new program is to treat approximately 40,000 acres within the critical watersheds and to maintain, as needed, the 48,000 acres previously treated under the original memorandum.

Denver Water will invest \$16.5 million in forest and watershed health projects within Denver Water's critical watersheds. The U.S. Forest Service will receive \$12.5 million of the total Denver Water investment and the Colorado State Forest Service will receive \$4 million. Denver Water's funding will be matched dollar for dollar by each agency for a total value of the partnership of approximately \$33 million. Additionally, the Natural Resources Conservation Service is pledging \$400,000 a year for forest projects in Denver Water's Zones of Concern.¹¹

Santa Fe, NM

The Santa Fe River Watershed is 182,400 acres and is a sub-basin of the Rio Grande Watershed with its headwaters below Lake Peak at 12,408 feet within the Sangre de Cristo range. The Santa Fe Municipal Watershed consists of 17,200 acres within the upper Santa Fe River Watershed and is located in the public lands of the Santa Fe National Forest, part of which is designated as the Pecos Wilderness. The Santa Fe Municipal Watershed is closed to the public pursuant to a 1932 order from the Secretary of Agriculture and through an updated Special Prohibition by the Forest Supervisor in 1991 due to the threat of erosion and wildfire.

The Santa Fe River begins in the upper reaches of the Santa Fe Municipal Watershed at Santa Fe Lake and runs 46 miles to the confluence with the Rio Grande. Downstream from the lake, the river picks up additional runoff from the watershed as it travels toward the City of Santa Fe's two man-made, potable water supply reservoirs. McClure Reservoir is located upstream of Nichols Reservoir. These reservoirs store surface water from the Santa Fe River for delivery to four acequias and for potable water treatment at the Canyon Road Water Treatment Plant. Treated water is conveyed to the City of Santa Fe Water Division's customers through the water distribution system.

The City of Santa Fe is taking a proactive approach to safe-guarding its municipal watershed, having learned a lesson from the tragedy of the Cerro Grande fire of 2000. Using mechanical thinning of vegetation and prescribed burns to maintain the forest around its own municipal reservoirs, Santa Fe hopes to maintain the health of the watershed and prevent what could be catastrophic damage to the forest, the surrounding community, and the City of Santa Fe's high-quality, drinking water supply.

Like many cities throughout the western United States, Santa Fe's water supply is dependent upon forest health and protection from catastrophic wildfire. The Municipal Watershed Plan provides a framework and recommendations for long-term management, outreach, and funding for the Santa Fe Municipal Watershed.¹²

Based on recent wildfires in the region, it is estimated that fire suppression and rehabilitation costs associated with a prospective 10,000 to 40,000 acre wildfire impacting some portion of the Municipal Watershed could be between \$11.9M and \$48M. The potential cost to dredge, haul and dispose of 2,000 acre-feet of sediment and ash from the City's reservoirs would likely be between \$80M and \$240M. These costs exclude increased water treatment costs, increased water utility operating costs associated with production of water from different water sources and impacts to the local economy from loss of tourism income. In comparison to these avoided costs, the cost to treat and maintain forests within the Municipal Watershed is expected to be \$5.1 million over 20 years, an average of \$258,000 per year.

¹¹ Denver Water, <https://www.denverwater.org/your-water/water-supply-and-planning/watershed-protection-and-management>, accessed February 21, 2019.

¹² City of Santa Fe, https://www.santafenm.gov/upper_watershed, accessed February 21, 2019.

Beginning in 2013, the Watershed Investment Program has been paid for by the City of Santa Fe Water Division, through direct support from the water utility's rate payers via rate increases adopted by the City Council. The financial management plan for the watershed services payments involves a phased approach. Initially, during the first year of implementation, after the public outreach plan had been conducted, the city included the watershed services fee in water bills where it listed the fee as a separate line item paid for by water trust board funding. In the second phase, the fee appeared on customers' bills, based on water use, and the customers were responsible for paying the fee. The average fee per customer is \$0.54 per month, which is deposited into a fund supporting forest restoration. Based on average household use for the water system, this would result in an annual cost of approximately \$6.50, which would provide nearly 50 percent of the funds required for forest health restoration projects in the watershed.¹³ In effect, this means that the beneficiaries of the healthy watershed (water customers) will pay for the important work to protect their water source.¹⁴ The watershed management plan lists the total cost to Santa Fe as \$230,210 for FY 2018-2019 and \$220,210 for FY 2019-2020.¹⁵

Ashland, OR

To protect Ashland watershed's abundant natural beauty and resources, on January 20, 2010, the Ashland City Council unanimously voted to form the Ashland Forest Resiliency (AFR) Partnership. Partners fill specific roles and borrow on each organizational strength to meet community goals for the reduction of fire hazard and protection of the municipal water supply.

The City of Ashland, U.S. Forest Service, Lomakatsi Restoration Project and The Nature Conservancy collaborated to form the stewardship project's core partners to protect the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. The original project goal was to complete restoration work on 7,600 acres of land over 10 years to support, preserve and restore wildlife habitat, water quality and a healthy forest ecosystem, all while reducing the threat of wildfire. After nearly 7 years of implementation, the partners expanded the projects to include cross boundary forest restoration for both public and private land.¹⁶

The AFR plan prioritizes:

- saving the largest trees
- preserving habitat for wildlife dependent on older forests
- preserving stream-side habitat thereby ensuring water quality
- protecting unstable slopes and erodible soils

The resulting landscape will keep the community safer from the threat of severe wildfire and provides quality wildlife habitat and clean water for Ashland.¹⁷ The City charges a \$1.29 monthly fee to every water customer, generating about \$175,000 annually, which is matched by state and federal grants. This fee was enacted by the City Council.¹⁸

Flagstaff, AZ

In November 2012, Flagstaff voters overwhelmingly approved a \$10 million bond to support forest restoration work within key watersheds on the Coconino National Forest and on state and city lands.

¹³ Friends of the Verde River, <https://verderiver.org/case-study-santa-fe-municipal-watershed-restoration-project/>, accessed March 1, 2019

¹⁴ City of Santa Fe, https://www.santafenm.gov/municipal_watershed_investment_plan, accessed February 21, 2019.

¹⁵ Santa Fe Municipal Watershed Plan, 2010-2029, revised April 2013

¹⁶ Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship Project, <http://www.ashland.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=17421>, accessed February 21, 2019.

¹⁷ Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship Project, <http://www.ashland.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=12907>, accessed February 21, 2019.

¹⁸ Stebbins, Jane. "Analysis: Could forest collaborative work?" Curry Coastal Pilot, Published Feb. 27, 2018 (<https://www.currypilot.com/news/6046803-151/analysis-could-forest-collaborative-work>, accessed Dec. 6, 2018)

Identified on the ballot as the Forest Health and Water Supply Protection Project, this initiative has now become known as the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project - a partnership effort between the State, City and Coconino National Forest to help reduce the risk of devastating wildfire and post-fire flooding in the Rio de Flag and Lake Mary watersheds.

The Coconino National Forest, which surrounds Flagstaff, has invested considerable energy and resources in restoring forest ecosystems and reducing fire danger over the past decade, and has treated hundreds of thousands of acres. Likewise, the City of Flagstaff has pioneered efforts within the City itself, and has worked pro-actively with various 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.

There have been notable success to these efforts, both within and adjacent to Flagstaff in the past decade, where emerging wildfires entered treated areas and were effectively and safely suppressed with minimal damage. However, the experience of the Schultz Fire in 2010 demonstrated the potential for severe downstream impacts even when residential areas are spared from the fire itself. Following the Schultz Fire, severe and repeated flooding occurred in unincorporated neighborhoods just outside Flagstaff city limits, causing tens of millions of dollars of damage to infrastructure and private property.

Projections indicate that a wildfire on the steep slopes above Flagstaff (Dry Lake Hills) could cause similar impacts to large portions of the City of Flagstaff, and that a wildfire and subsequent erosion on the steep slopes of Mormon Mountain could render 50 percent of the City's water supply (Lake Mary Reservoir) unsuitable. These areas have not been treated in the past due to several complicating factors, including steep and rocky terrain, wildlife and social concerns, and economic infeasibility due to low timber value and the costs of treatments. The \$10 million bond provided an opportunity to work collectively on a solution to address these difficult but crucial areas affecting the Flagstaff community.¹⁹

The ballot measure language is reproduced below:

"To prevent flood damage to the City of Flagstaff ('City'), and to protect the City water supply from damages which occur from large-scale and/or severe wildfire(s) in two watersheds serving the City, shall the City be authorized to sell and issue general obligation bonds in a principal amount up to \$10,000,000:

- to expedite and conduct forest treatments in the Dry Lake Hills watershed north of town to reduce wildfire threat, thereby mitigating subsequent flooding to Sunnyside, downtown, the NAU campus, and neighborhoods bordering the Rio de Flag;*
- to plan and conduct forest treatments in the Lake Mary watershed south of the City to reduce wildfire threat, thereby protecting the storage capacity and water quality of Lake Mary; and*
- to pay all costs and expenses properly incidental thereto and to the issuance of bonds?*

The bonds may be issued in one or more series, will not mature more than 25 years from the date or dates of their issue, will bear interest at a rate or rates not to exceed 10% per annum, and will have such other provisions as are approved by the City Council. The following sentence has been included on this ballot as required by Arizona Revised Statutes §35-454(C): The issuance of these bonds will result in a property tax increase sufficient to pay the annual debt service on the bonds.

A vote FOR the bonds shall have the effect of allowing the City Council to issue up to \$10,000,000 in general obligation bonds for planning and implementation of forest health and water supply protection projects.

¹⁹ Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project, <http://flagstaffwatershedprotection.org/about/background/>, accessed February 21, 2019.

A vote AGAINST the bonds shall have the effect of not allowing the City Council to issue up to \$10,000,000 in general obligation bonds for planning and implementation of forest health and water supply protection projects.”

Chaffee County, CO

More recently, in November 2018, voters in Chaffee County, Colorado, approved a sales tax increase, part of which will fund activities to improve forest health and protect the county from catastrophic wildfire. Colorado State Forest Service data indicates that the land annually impacted by wildfire has increased 400 percent statewide since the 1990s, resulting in a risk of severe fire in Chaffee County. Additionally, the County completed a year-long Envision Chaffee County visioning and planning process which engaged approximately 1,500 citizens and 72 businesses, nonprofit organizations and agencies. Through this process, the participants expressed desire for a ballot measure raising sustainable funding to protect the community, lands and waters from catastrophic fire, enhance the health of backyard federal forests, and protect working rural landscapes from the pressures of growth. The process identified a ballot measure as a top community priority.²⁰

In August 2018 the Chaffee County Board of Commissioners referred a 0.25 percent sales tax increase to the November 2018 ballot. The measure was approved with 52 percent voter support. This new local fund source will initially generate over \$1.1 million per year, with at least 25 percent intended to be devoted to execution of the local wildfire plan to protect the local San Isabel National Forest. This dedicated funding is in perpetuity.

The ballot measure language is reproduced below:

“SHALL CHAFFEE COUNTY’S TAXES BE INCREASED BY \$1,162,000.00 ANNUALLY (FIRST FULL FISCAL YEAR DOLLAR INCREASE), BEGINNING IN 2019, AND BY WHATEVER ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS ARE RAISED ANNUALLY AFTER THAT, FROM A SALES TAX RATE INCREASE OF 0.25 PERCENT (EQUAL TO TWO AND ONE-HALF CENTS ON A TEN-DOLLAR PURCHASE), TO BE USED SOLELY FOR:

- STRENGTHENING FOREST HEALTH TO PROTECT CHAFFEE COUNTY COMMUNITIES AND WATER QUALITY FROM SEVERE WILDFIRE AND TO ENHANCE WILDLIFE HABITAT;*
- CONSERVING AND SUPPORTING WORKING RANCHES AND FARMS AND RURAL LANDSCAPES; AND*
- MANAGING THE IMPACTS OF GROWTH TO PROTECT THE OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE, WATER QUALITY AND LANDSCAPES;*

WITH ALL EXPENDITURES SUBJECT TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF A CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AN ANNUAL INDEPENDENT AUDIT, AND A CAP ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES OF FIVE PERCENT; AND SHALL THE SALES OF FARM EQUIPMENT AND FARM EQUIPMENT UNDER LEASE OR CONTRACT TO THE EXTENT SPECIFIED IN SECTION 39-26-716(2)(B) AND (2)(C), C.R.S. BE EXEMPT FROM THE ADDITIONAL 0.25% SALES TAX; AND SHALL CHAFFEE COUNTY BE AUTHORIZED TO COLLECT, RETAIN, AND SPEND THE REVENUE FROM SUCH TAXES AND ANY EARNINGS FROM THE INVESTMENT OF SUCH TAX REVENUES AS A VOTER-APPROVED REVENUE AND SPENDING CHANGE NOTWITHSTANDING THE LIMITATIONS OF ARTICLE X, SECTION 20 OF THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION OR ANY OTHER LAW, ALL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CHAFFEE COUNTY AND AS SET FORTH IN RESOLUTION NO. 2018-46?”

²⁰ Chaffee County Resolution 2018-46