



## The Northern Arizona Forest Fund: *A Valuable Investment in our Watersheds*

Dear Valued Stakeholder,

***Did you know that the National Forests in Northern Arizona provide most of the water to the Salt and Verde Rivers, which are vital surface water supplies to downstream users in the greater Phoenix metropolitan areas?***

The **Northern Arizona Forest Fund (NAFF)** provides an easy way for businesses and residents of Arizona to invest in the lands and watersheds they depend on.

The Northern Arizona Forest Fund supports strategically integrated, high priority restoration projects on National Forests in the Salt and Verde River watersheds, including:

- *Forest Thinning and Prescribed Burning*
- *Stream and Wetland Restoration*
- *Sediment and Erosion Management*
- *Habitat Improvement and Re-vegetation Projects*

**2015-16 Projects:** In 2015-16, the Northern Arizona Forest Fund offers Arizona businesses and residents the opportunity to invest in six important projects on National Forest lands in the Salt and Verde River watersheds.

- **Stoneman Lake Watershed Health and Habitat Protection Project**
- **McCracken Woodland Health and Habitat Improvement Project**
- **Oak Creek Erosion Control Project (Schnebly Hill Road)**
- **Red Flat Meadow Restoration and Sediment Reduction Project**
- **Black River Stream and Riparian Protection Project**
- **West Pinto Trail Rehabilitation and Erosion Control Project**

Together, these six projects will improve the health of the larger Salt and Verde River watersheds by reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire, decreasing erosion and sedimentation into streams, rivers and important reservoirs, improving wildlife habitat, and enhancing recreation opportunities. The strategic vision for these projects integrates their value into a larger framework of landscape-based restoration. This means their geographic placement and project type enhances and facilitates improved forest conditions at a larger scale.

**A Valuable Investment:** Supporting these watershed restoration activities not only shows a commitment to environmental stewardship, but is also a valuable business investment.

**Proactive, comprehensive management of our forests and watersheds lowers water treatment and delivery costs, protects the reliability of water supplies, minimizes the risk of costly infrastructure damage caused by fire and flooding, sustains forest-based recreation and tourism markets, increases property value premiums, and supports restoration-based employment opportunities.**

To learn more contact Marcus Selig at (720) 437-0290, [mselect@nationalforests.org](mailto:mselect@nationalforests.org) or Rebecca Davidson at (602) 236-6617, [Rebecca.Davidson@srpnet.com](mailto:Rebecca.Davidson@srpnet.com)



## The Northern Arizona Forest Fund: *A Valuable Investment in our Watersheds*

### **A Critically Important Resource**

Most of Arizona's surface water resources are sustained by high-elevation forested watersheds that capture rain and snow and then carry surface water downstream. The National Forests in Northern Arizona provide most of the water to the Salt and Verde Rivers, which are vital surface water supplies to downstream users in the greater Phoenix metropolitan areas.

The water provided by Arizona's high-elevation forest watersheds is critically important to life and the Arizona economy. Unfortunately past forest management practices have created unhealthy forest conditions. Decades of fire suppression have created highly dense, overstocked National Forests. These conditions, in combination with ongoing drought, challenge the health of the forests and the sustainability of Arizona's water supplies and water quality.

### **The Cost of Unhealthy Forests**

The threats to Arizona's watersheds highlight the vulnerability of Arizona's water-dependent industries and municipalities. The economic impacts of catastrophic wildfire are staggering, with figures often totaling hundreds of millions of dollars for a single wildfire. A full cost accounting of the Rodeo-Chediski Fire, one of Arizona's largest wildfires on record, estimates the direct and indirect costs of wildfire suppression and recovery to be more than \$308 million. The Schultz Fire in Flagstaff's watershed, while significantly smaller than the Rodeo-Chediski Fire, burdened local residents and businesses with \$147 million in post-fire flood damage.

Water providers in the Phoenix Metropolitan area have seen significant impacts to the quality of water entering treatment facilities following wildfires in the Salt and Verde River watersheds. The 2015 Sunflower fire in the Verde River watershed resulted in 16 days of highly turbid water entering Valley water treatment plants. Requiring plants to increase chemical use by more than 50% over the two month period following the fire to compensate for effects seen in monsoonal runoff. During this same period Salt River Project was forced to spill ash and debris laden water that was untreatable to Valley water treatment plants.

### **An Ecological and Economic Solution**

For the National Forests in Northern Arizona, wildfire is not a matter of if, but when. Proactive watershed restoration reduces the risk of catastrophic wildfires that cause widespread tree mortality and result in negative impacts to water supplies, such as those seen in Northern Arizona, and throughout the Western U.S.. Additionally, other comprehensive watershed improvement activities, such as sediment and erosion control and stream and wetland restoration activities, strengthen the health of watersheds and make them more resilient to unexpected watershed impacts, such as flood and drought. Investing now in "green infrastructure" through watershed restoration efforts will reduce future water treatment costs, minimize the risk of costly infrastructure damage, sustain forest-based recreation and tourism markets, increase property values, and support restoration-based employment opportunities.

*Investment in watershed restoration through the Northern Arizona Forest Fund protects vital water supplies and shows your commitment to environmental stewardship in the landscape that serves your business and community.*

By investing in the Northern Arizona Forest Fund, your business can be part of the solution.



# NORTHERN ARIZONA FOREST FUND

For more information contact:  
Marcus Selig at (720) 437-0290, [mseelig@nationalforests.org](mailto:mseelig@nationalforests.org)  
Rebecca Davidson at (602) 236-6617, [Rebecca.Davidson@srpnet.com](mailto:Rebecca.Davidson@srpnet.com)

## The Northern Arizona Forest Fund: *A Valuable Investment in our Watersheds*

### Be Part of the Solution

Developed by the Salt River Project and the National Forest Foundation, the Northern Arizona Forest Fund (NAFF) provides an easy way for businesses and residents of Arizona to invest in the lands and watersheds they depend on. With declining forest health and tighter federal budgets, local partnerships and active stewardship are more critical than ever. Northern Arizona Forest Fund's projects provide a comprehensive suite of on-the-ground watershed improvement projects that reduce wildfire risk, improve streams and wetlands, enhance wildlife habitat, restore native plants, and limit erosion and sediment into Arizona streams, rivers, and reservoirs in the Salt and Verde River watersheds. These projects fit into a larger strategy to enhance forest conditions on a landscape scale, while also creating jobs and providing volunteer opportunities in local communities through partnerships with local conservation and stewardship groups.

### How it Works

On a regular basis, funds are deployed to complete high priority restoration projects on National Forests in the Salt and Verde River watersheds that the U.S. Forest Service otherwise lacks resources to implement. Types of projects include:

- *Forest Thinning and Prescribed Burning* – Restore natural fire to the forest ecosystem by hand thinning small-diameter trees to reduce fuel loading, and introduce prescribed fire
- *Stream and Wetland Restoration* – Restore and stabilize stream banks, reconstruct and enhance wetlands, and install fencing to protect sensitive habitats
- *Sediment and Erosion Management* – Improve runoff and drainage conditions from roads, trails and other features to reduce sediment loading into springs, streams and wet meadows
- *Habitat Improvement and Re-vegetation Projects* – Improve and restore aspen forests, grasslands, wet meadows and other important forest and woodland habitats

Contributions to the Northern Arizona Forest Fund are collected by the National Forest Foundation, a congressionally chartered nonprofit organization. Those funds are then awarded to local non-profit stewardship organizations, local contractors, and the U.S. Forest Service to implement high priority projects on the Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, Kaibab, Prescott, and Tonto National Forests.

### Tangible Results

To provide participating contributors with clear expectations on how funds are spent and the benefits provided, the National Forest Foundation, the Salt River Project and other stakeholders work with the U.S. Forest Service to identify an annual list of priority projects that will improve the health and resiliency of National Forest lands in the Salt and Verde River watersheds. Each year, contributors receive official reports detailing stewardship accomplishments associated with these projects.

### Benefits of Participation

In addition to helping ensure the health and sustainability of Northern Arizona's forests, participating businesses can enjoy significant marketing benefits. Participating businesses receive marketing opportunities to show how their contributions have been used to protect Northern Arizona's National Forests and watersheds. Participating businesses can be recognized in the National Forest Foundation's magazine (distributed nationwide to 50,000 people), annual report, and Website. SRP and the National Forest Foundation will also work with your business to help develop marketing materials that communicate partnership information to your customers and the community. Lastly, through the National Forest Foundation's Friends of the Forest Days volunteer events, participating businesses can involve their employees in hands-on stewardship.