

A person with long dark hair, wearing a purple backpack and dark clothing, is wading through a shallow river. The river is surrounded by lush green vegetation and tall evergreen trees. In the background, a large, light-colored rock formation or cliff face is visible. The scene is peaceful and scenic.

Northern Arizona Forest Fund

Annual Report 2019 ~ 2020

“Happiness is being surrounded by fresh air, rivers, mountains, green trees, and good weather.
Thank you National Forest Foundation for all you do to protect these incredible places!”
—Benita Hogue, Sonoran Insider, @capturing_the_outdoors

The Northern Arizona Forest Fund (NAFF) is a partnership-oriented investment fund that improves forests and watershed conditions within the Salt and Verde Watersheds for the benefit of local communities and downstream cities.



The NAFF focuses on projects that:



Reduce wildfire risk



Repair erosion and sedimentation



Improve function of degraded streams, springs, and wetlands



Plant native trees along rivers, streams, and springs

Cumulative Results to Date 2015-2019

The NFF has successfully implemented 27 high-priority restoration projects investing over \$6.2 million dollars in the NAFF since 2015. Restoration accomplishments include:

Over 13,600 acres of fuels reduction projects within ponderosa pine and pinyon-juniper forests on the Coconino, Kaibab, and Prescott National Forests.

Over 170 miles of erosion control and drainage improvements on roads and trails on the Coconino and Tonto National Forests.

Over 2,600 acres of stream and wetland protection on the Apache-Sitgreaves, Prescott, and Tonto National Forests.

Over 90,000 trees planted along streams, meadows and wetlands on the Tonto, Coconino, and Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests.

As we enter into our fifth year of project investments,

we face new hurdles with COVID-related impacts, ensuring the people we work with on the ground are safe, and the communities that benefit from these projects can remain connected.

Despite this strange new world, we are pleased to report that we continue to generate tremendous cumulative benefits; benefits that are tangible, meaningful, quantifiable, and local to Arizona.

Over the past five years we have invested over \$6.2 million dollars, partnered with 37 organizations, and completed 27 restoration projects. In turn, these investments have leveraged additional acres treated, catalyzing benefits beyond the project footprint, and adding capacity to take on additional and more complex efforts.

With your investment in the NAFF, you can celebrate these accomplishments as your own, and know that together, we are protecting our water, the air we breathe, the fish and wildlife that rely on the forests and of course the special places that provide refuge from 'the real world'.

But we are not taking a breather. There is no shortage of restoration need—work that couldn't otherwise be funded by traditional commercial operations or traditional funding structures. And in order to continue meeting this challenge, we need your continued support.

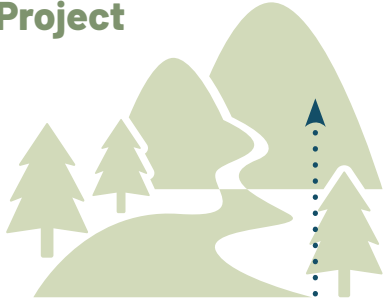
On behalf of the National Forest Foundation, we are grateful for your dedication to the health of our forests, and thus, the health of our communities and our individual wellbeing. Thank you for your contributions, guidance, and partnership. We can't wait to see what we can accomplish together over the next five years.



 National Forest Foundation

2019 Project Results, \$3.5 Million

Bill Williams Forest and Watershed Restoration Project



300

acres of
steep slope
treatment



Fuels
Reduction Tool



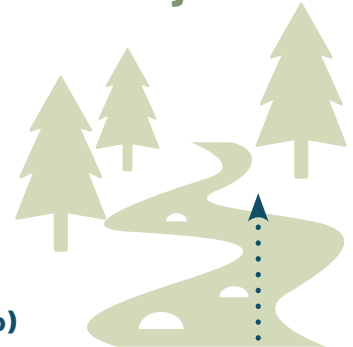
30%
Fire risk
reduction

Lower Salt River Riparian Restoration Project



87,000
native trees
planted

120 acres restored (removal of
non-native tamarisk and arrundo)



89 Million gallons
restored

Hart Prairie Forest and Meadow Restoration Project

340 acres of thinning



Banning Creek Forest Restoration Project

180 acres of thinning

Houston Draw Meadow Restoration Project

5 Million gallons
restored : 6 acres of
meadow
improved

In 2020 the NFF aims to complete six projects within the Salt and Verde River watersheds

Over 1,000 acres of fuels reduction projects, reducing fire and flood risk on Bill Williams Mountain and Granite Basin.

More than 2.8 tons of sediment reduced from downstream movement into Oak Creek.

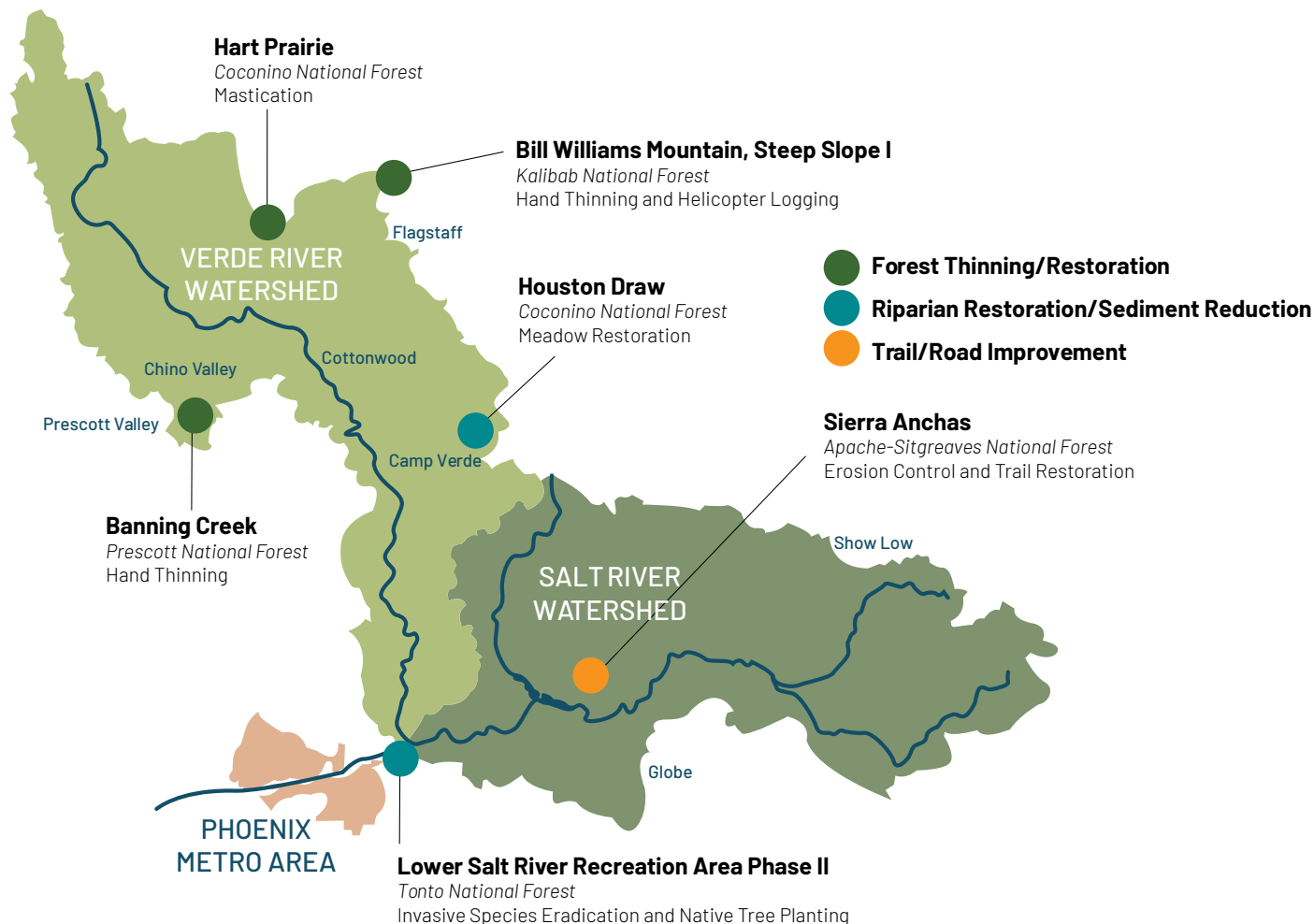
Over 12 miles of riparian habitat improvement on Fossil Creek.

Over 80 million gallons of water replenished on 70 acres of improved riparian habitat on the Lower Salt River.

More than 45,000 native trees and plants established within the Wallow Fire burn scar and on the Lower Salt River.

Connecting wood supplies from restoration sites to Navajo and Hopi communities for heating and cooking.

2019 Projects

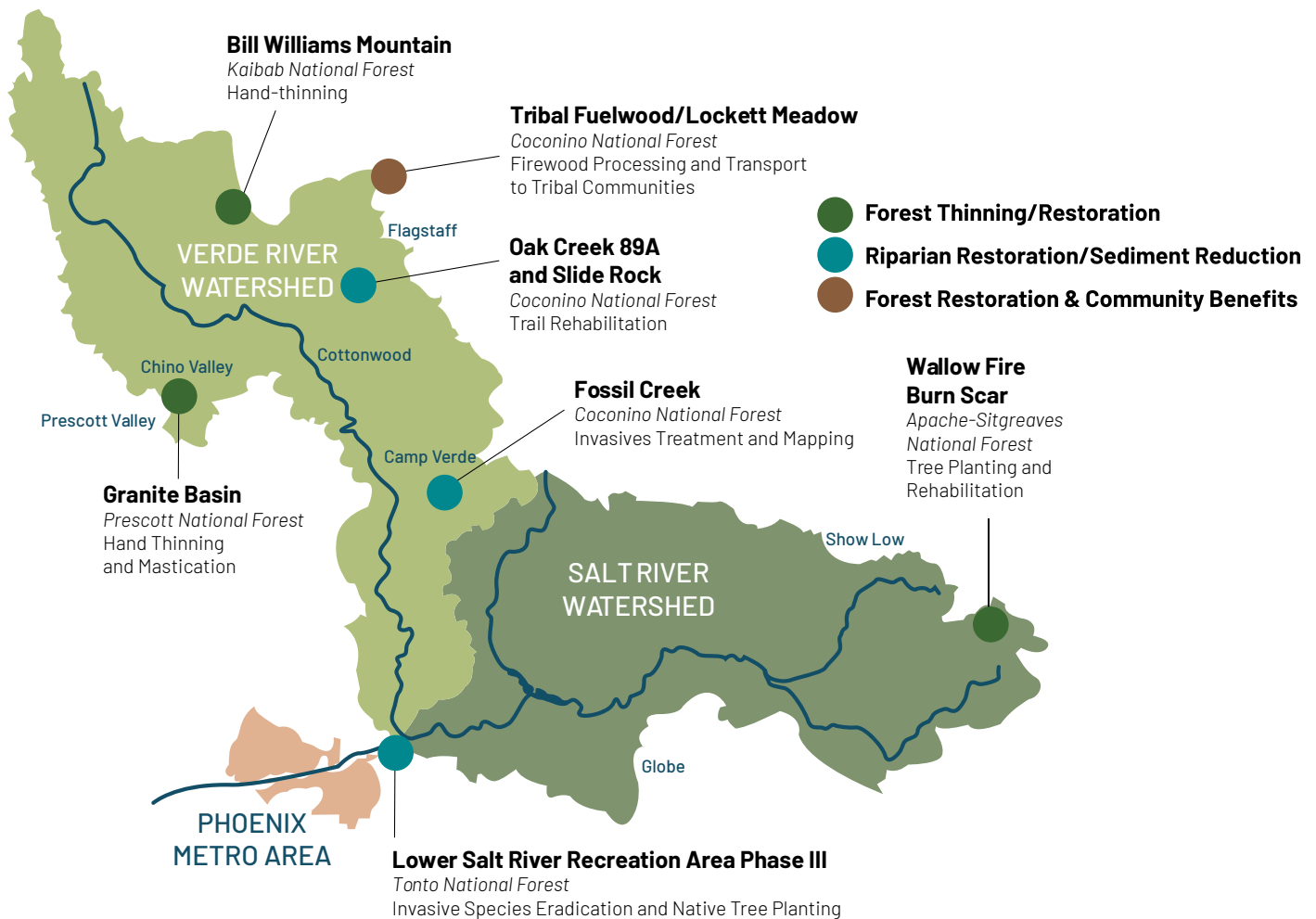


2019 Featured Project: Green Drone AZ

In 2019, we launched Green Drone AZ, a collaborative youth development program designed to engage diverse Phoenix area high schools students in STEM-focused activities addressing real community environmental challenges on our National Forests. The program incorporates the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (drones) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in ongoing conservation efforts on the Lower Salt River.

Partners include NFF, Northern Arizona University, Arizona State University, the Tonto National Forest and the Boeing Company. Although COVID-related school closures impacted our in-person curriculum training in 2019/2020, the team shifted its focus to an online platform, and now plans to engage an even broader audience in 2020/2021.

2020 Projects In Progress



2020 Featured Project: Bill Williams Mountain Restoration

In 2020, we will finish the first phase of a complex forest health project on Bill Williams Mountain outside of Williams, Arizona. As part of a multi-year, 15,000-acre program of work, the NFF is working to thin and remove hazardous fuels from 300 high-priority acres on the steepest slopes at the highest elevations of the mountain. While these acres are costly to treat, they are also the most important to protect downstream communities from extreme fire and flood risk.

Associated with this effort, we will also be taking on 600 acres of hand thinning on Bill Williams. Residual wood from this related effort will be shared with Navajo and Hopi communities in need of fuelwood for cooking and heating as part of our Tribal fuelwood initiative.





In 2019, the NFF and its partners were ecstatic to be the recipient of the Arizona Forward's Environmental Excellence, Landscapes and Preserves Award for its work to restore the health and function of the Lower Salt River.

Benefits of this multi-year initiative include protecting water supplies, enhancing the sustainability of the riparian area, and increasing quality of recreation opportunities. The effort also focuses on youth experience and hands-on citizen science.

We are proud to have:

- **Engaged over 200 individuals, spending over 1,000 hours** restoring the site in 2019.
- **Engaged over 150 high school students** through the newly created Green Drone AZ program and Arizona Audubon's River Pathway Program.
- **Planted more than 80,000 native trees**, including a variety of willows, cottonwoods, mesquite, palo verde, and ironwood.

The NAFF's 2019-2020 strategic partners include:



City of Phoenix



Audubon



ARIZONA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF YAVAPAI COUNTY



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