

Will Congress fix wildfire funding?

By Rebecca Worby, High Country News

The West is in the midst of another intense wildfire season.

With President Donald Trump proposing to cut the U.S. Forest Service's firefighting budget by nearly \$300 million, the question of how to manage and fund wildfire suppression on public lands has again reared its head.

Over the past decade, as wildfire season has lengthened and fires have grown more severe, firefighting has claimed more and more of the Forest Service's funds, accounting for 56 percent of its overall budget in 2016. Conservatives in Congress have long tried to push legislation that, though ostensibly geared toward wildfire risk reduction, would benefit the timber industry. And with a Republican majority and an administration intent on rolling back environmental review processes, such legislation may gain more traction this time around.

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