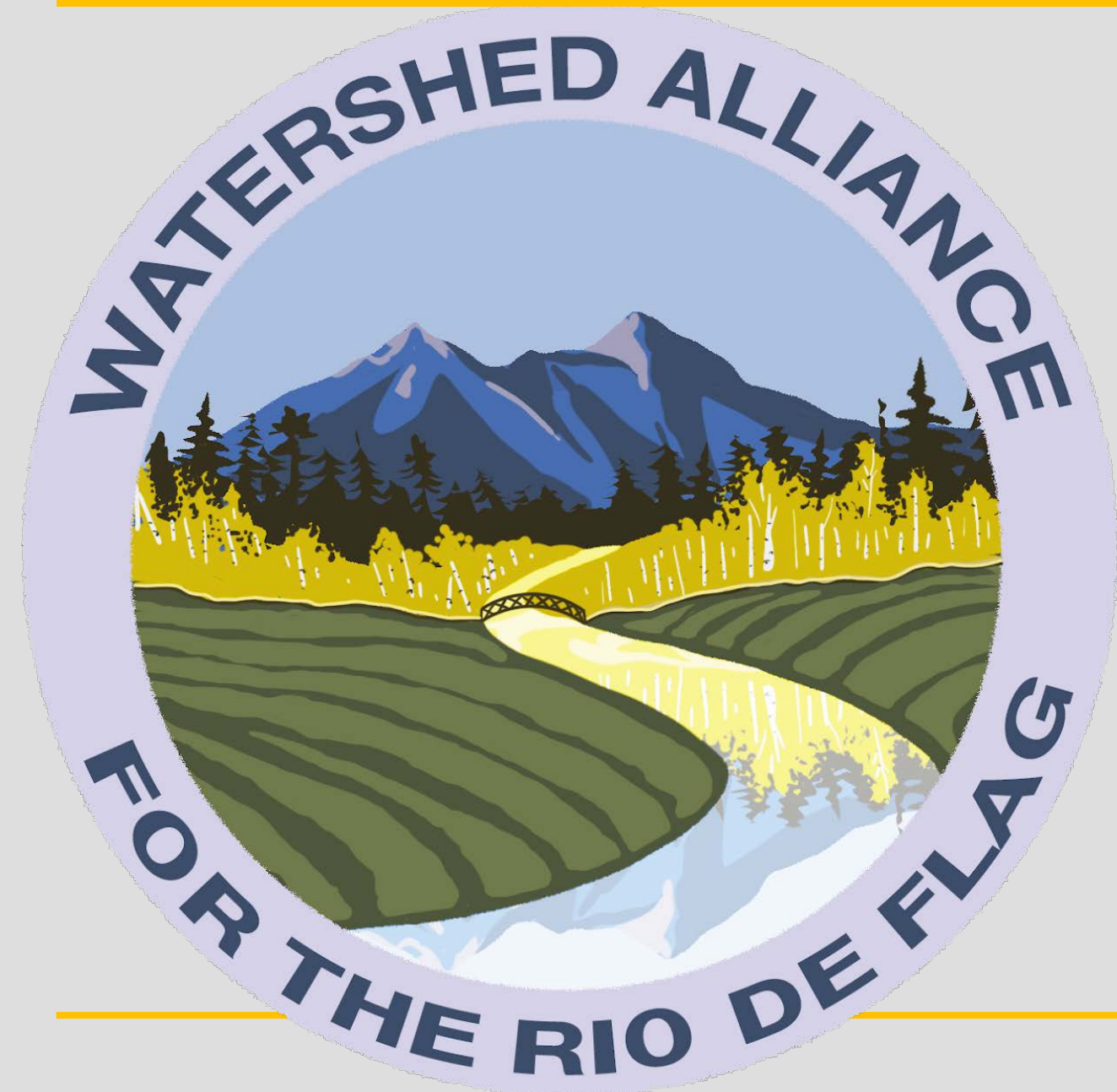




Rio de Flag Watershed Planning



The Rio de Flag Watershed Planning Project resulted from a Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Grant awarded to the Friends of the Rio de Flag



This WaterSMART Grant has two primary objectives:

1. Creating a Watershed Stakeholders Group (i.e. the W.A.R.F.)
 2. Developing a Watershed Plan
- The W.A.R.F. is comprised of stakeholders from Northern Arizona University, Hopi Tribe, City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, Coconino National Forest, Friends of the Rio de Flag, Wild Arizona, and private citizens with interest and expertise.

Sketch map of the Rio de Flag Watershed



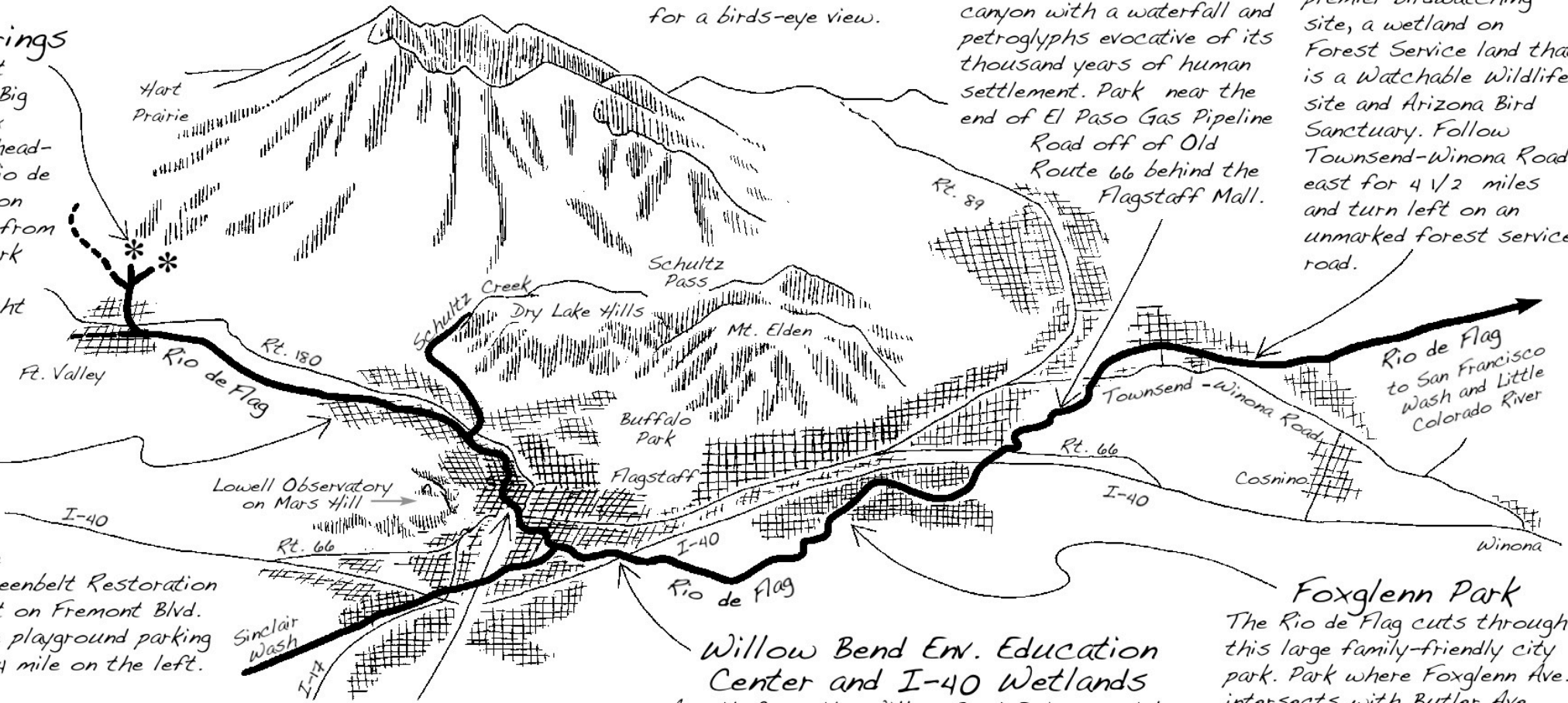
San Francisco Peaks
 With the highest point in Arizona at 12,633 feet, the Peaks' melting snow and heavy summer rains give the Rio de Flag periodic flows. Drive up the Snowbowl Road and ride the lift for a birds-eye view.

Picture Canyon Natural and Archaeological Preserve
 Trails lead to a narrow canyon with a waterfall and petroglyphs evocative of its thousand years of human settlement. Park near the end of El Paso Gas Pipeline Road off of Old Route 66 behind the Flagstaff Mall.

Logan's Crossing
 This stretch of the Rio de Flag is Flagstaff's premier birdwatching site, a wetland on Forest Service land that is a Watchable Wildlife site and Arizona Bird Sanctuary. Follow Townsend-Winona Road east for 4 1/2 miles and turn left on an unmarked forest service road.

Leroux Springs
 Named for scout Antoine Leroux, Big and Little Leroux Springs are the headwaters of the Rio de Flag. Turn right on Snowbowl Road from Route 180 and park where the road turns sharply right after 1 mile.

Cheshire Wetland
 A riparian restoration project of the Rio de Flag Greenbelt Restoration Plan. Turn left on Fremont Blvd. and park in the playground parking lot about a 1/4 mile on the left.



Frances Short Pond
 The abundance of birds at this pond stocked with fish has earned it the designation of a Watchable Wildlife site. Park near the intersection of Thorpe Road and Bonito Street.

Willow Bend Env. Education Center and I-40 Wetlands
 A path from the Willow Bend Environmental Education Center joins the FUTS trail through Sinclair Wash—a major tributary of the Rio de Flag—to the I-40 wetlands. Park in the Willow Bend parking lot on Sawmill Pkwy.

Foxglenn Park
 The Rio de Flag cuts through this large family-friendly city park. Park where Foxglenn Ave. intersects with Butler Ave.

Detailed directions at friendsoftheriodeflag.org/visit

We began with a series of interviews with stakeholders in the watershed and then expanded to:

Explore the Watershed: Speaker Series (public meetings)

Video Recordings Available on WARF homepage watershedalliancefortherio.net

November 10, 2020 - Hosted by: Friends of the Rio de Flag

Understanding Our Changing Watershed

December 2, 2020 - Co-hosted by: City of Flagstaff Sustainability Program

Let's Get on Down to the Rio de Flag - Community Awareness, Celebration, and Engagement

December 16, 2020 - Co-hosted by: Wild Arizona

Nature Elevated: Benefitting Native Ecosystems of the Rio de Flag Watershed

January 6, 2021 - Co-hosted by: NAU School of Earth and Sustainability

Sustaining and Healing Our Watershed

January 20, 2021 - Co-hosted by: Southside Community Association

Rio for the People

February 3, 2021 - Co-hosted by: Arizona Hydrological Society

Implementation and Beyond...Creating Stewardship

Goal 1: Increase integrated cultural, scientific, and historical understanding of the Rio de Flag watershed.

Goal 2: Protect and enhance Rio de Flag watershed health to deliver ecosystem services to future generations.

Goal 3: Benefit human communities of the Rio de Flag watershed.

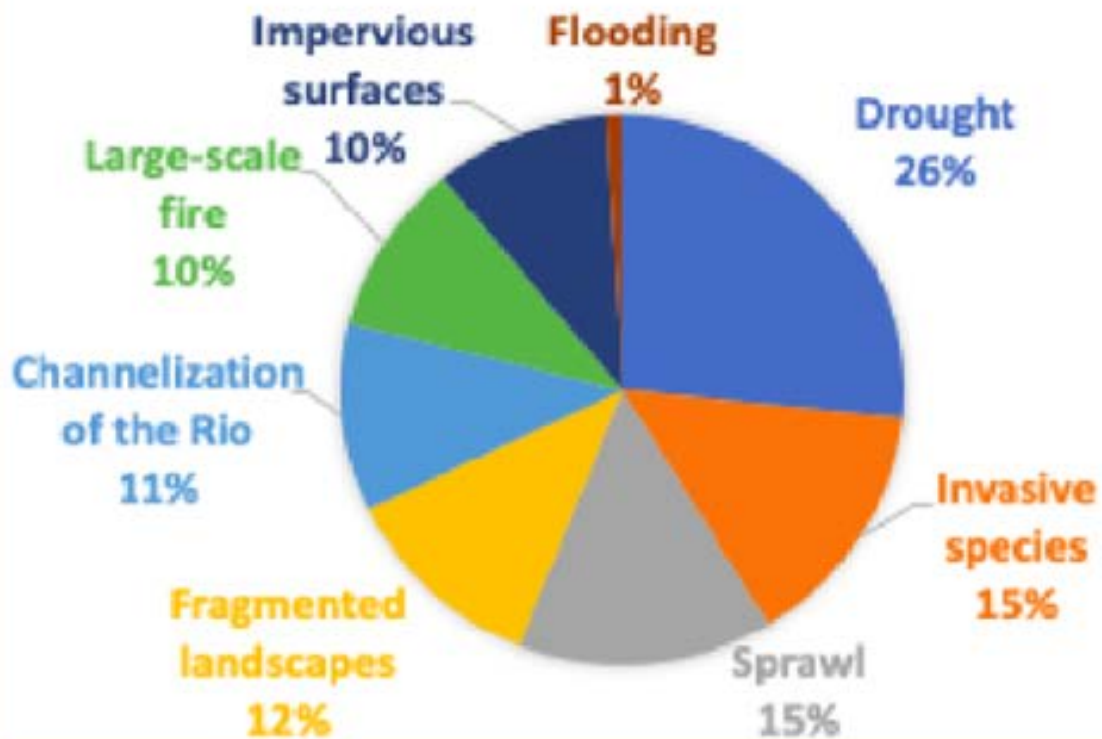
Goal 4: Benefit native ecological communities of the Rio de Flag watershed.

Goal 5: Increase public awareness and engagement to strengthen the community's connection to the Rio de Flag watershed.

Goal 6: Create a sustainable funding stream for the Rio de Flag watershed



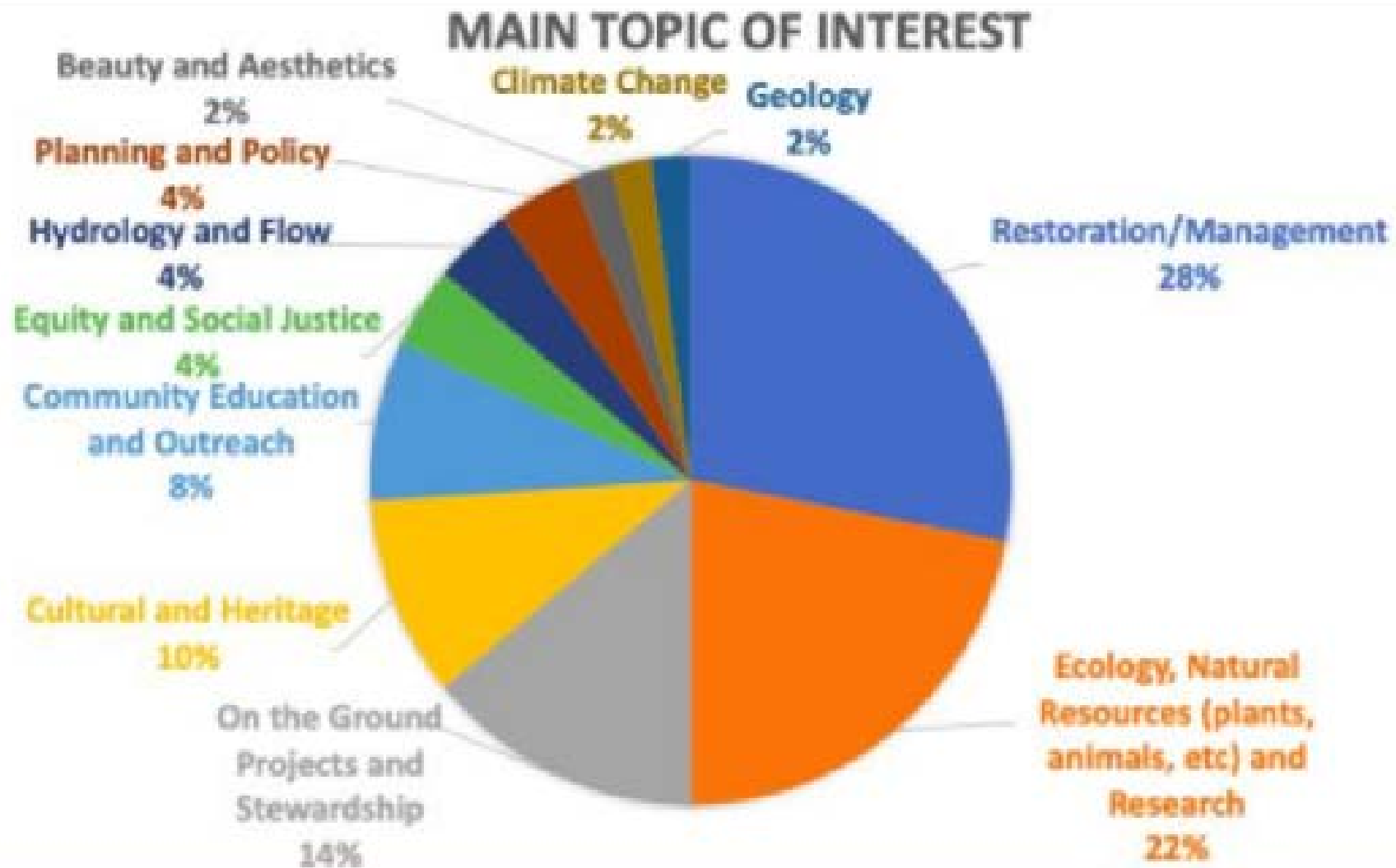
BIGGEST THREATS TO ECOSYSTEMS



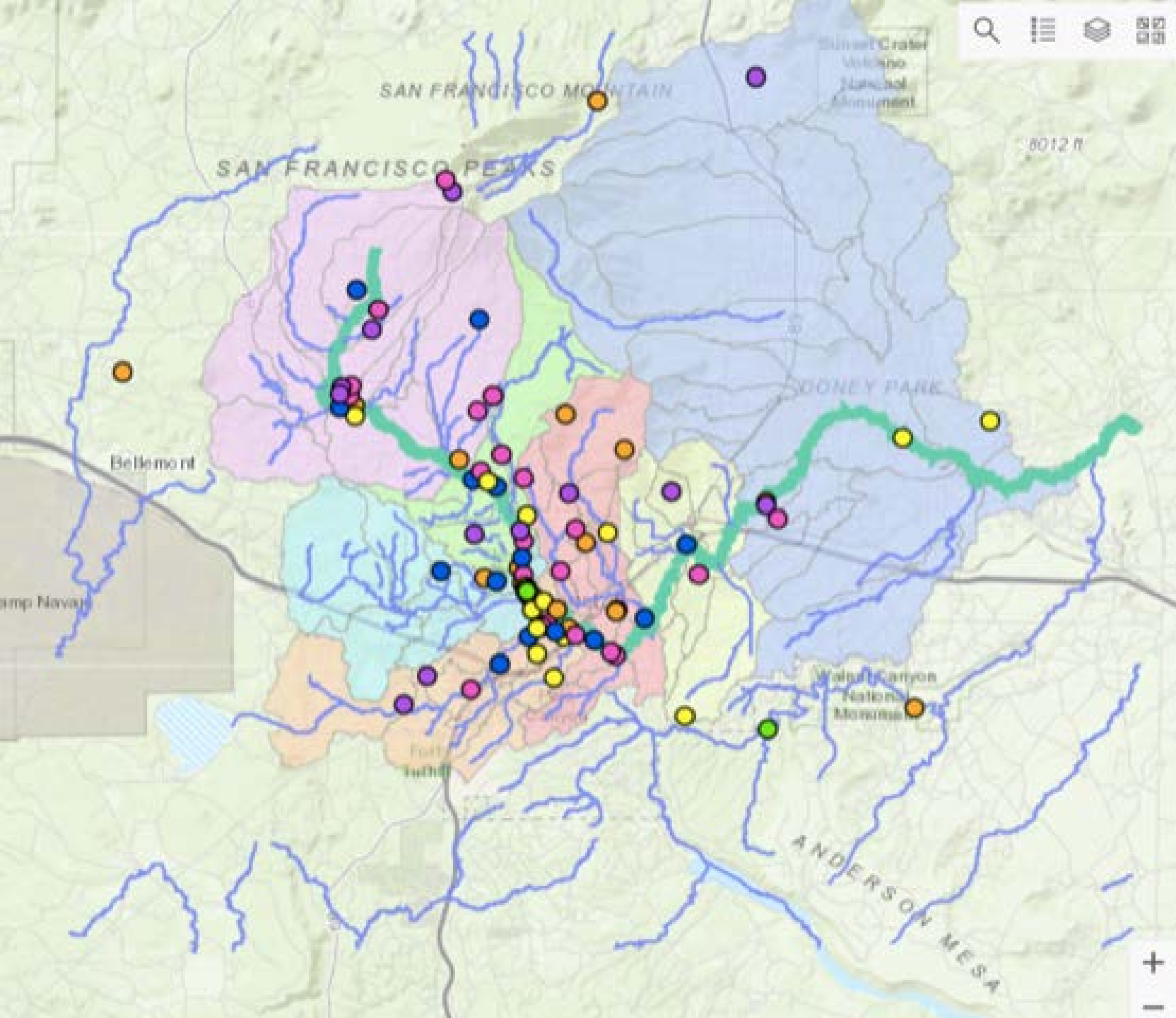
Above: Participants were asked the question “*what types of development or environmental changes do you feel are threatening these ecosystems?*”

Additional response – Domestic cats hunting wild birds

Participants in the forums were asked a variety of questions – Their responses became part of the basis for the Watershed Plan – Here are few examples...



Above: Participants were asked what their main topics of interest were in the watershed.



116 SITE SPECIFIC
PROJECTS
SUGGESTED BY
PARTICIPANTS IN
OUR SIX PUBLIC
MEETINGS.

OF THESE, 25
PROJECTS WERE
WATERSHED-WIDE.

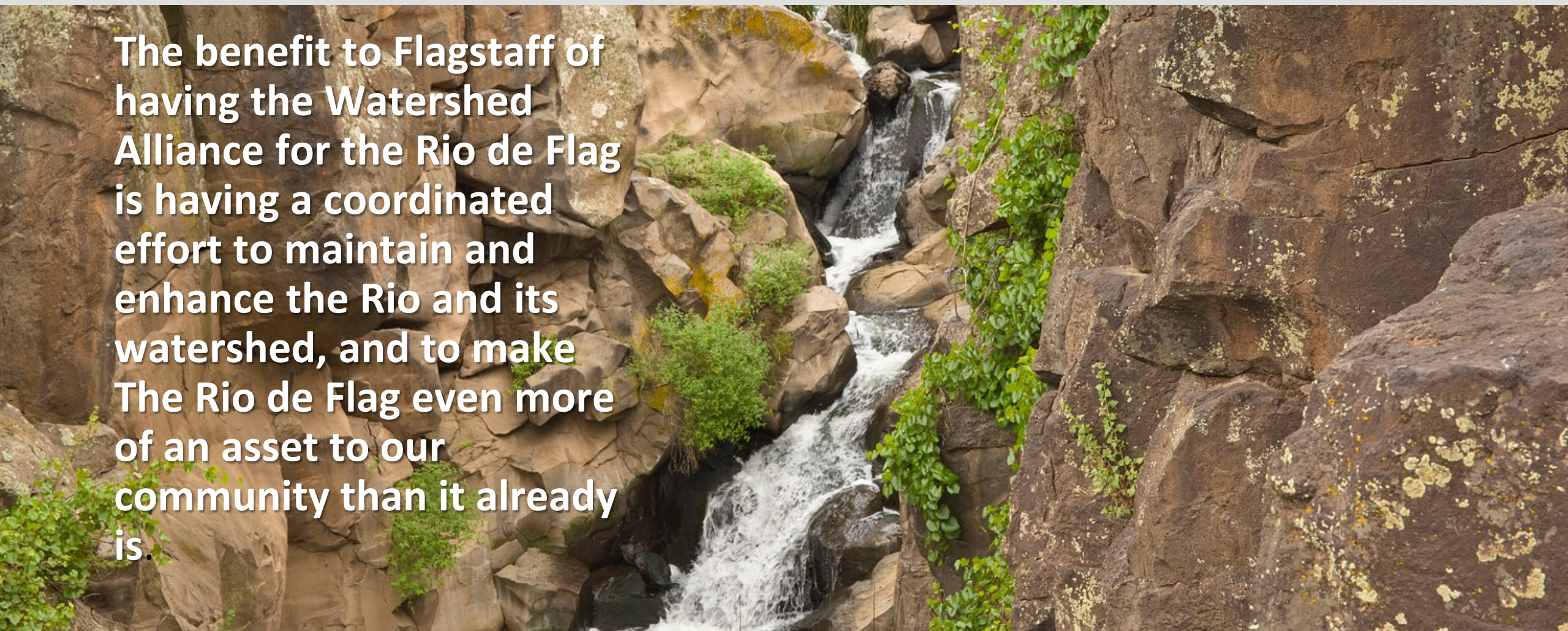
Priority Project	Description
Museum Fire Restoration	Restoration and rehabilitation in Museum Fire scar and areas that haven't been thinned
Trash and Weed Removal Watershed Plan and Implementation	Create a watershed scale invasive plant and trash removal plan and funding mechanism for treatments
Use of reclaimed water for riparian restoration	Use of reclaimed water for amenity value on stream reaches that have high diversity of native plants and wildlife and that run along highly-used FUTS trails.
Sinclair Wash connectivity/restoration	Sinclair Wash: improve channel function, prepare for more flows with increasing development, riparian restoration with cottonwoods and willows; Restore channel-floodplain connectivity in Sinclair Wash, address erosion and downcutting
Channel Maintenance Program for the watershed	Well funded open channel program: Trash, weeds, channel morphology, bank erosion

PROJECT NAME	DESCRIPTION
Water Rights Research	Research water rights for any waters needed for RDF watershed restoration.
Plan for Aesthetic and Riparian Values Along RDF	Create and implement a plan for improving aesthetic and riparian values in tandem with the RDF flood control project along its entire extent, particularly in the Southside neighborhood
Springs Studies	Increase springs studies within the watershed (e.g. LeRoux)
Springs Restoration in RDF watershed	Restore and protect the headwater springs.
Riparian Protection	Protect RDF riparian areas through new easements, green spaces, acquisition
Meadows	Preserve and restore meadows
Increase Awareness of Springs, Wetlands and Alluvial Plains	Increase awareness and protection of upper-watershed springs, wetlands and alluvial plains
State of the Watershed panel	State of the Watershed panel discussions between scientists and public
Annual Rio De Flag Festival	An Annual Rio de Flag Art Walk and Festival
Water Advisory Board	Create a Water Advisory Board with the political powers in the watershed to oversee implementation, provide financial oversight, respond to emergency situations, etc.
General Rio de Flag connectivity/restoration	Improve channel function, prepare for more flows with increasing development, riparian restoration with cottonwoods and willows; Restore channel-floodplain connectivity, address erosion and downcutting



Benefits of a Watershed Alliance

The benefit to Flagstaff of having the Watershed Alliance for the Rio de Flag is having a coordinated effort to maintain and enhance the Rio and its watershed, and to make The Rio de Flag even more of an asset to our community than it already is.





What we are asking of the City:

- Participation in the WARF, including some help in making the WARF work
- A Master Participating Agreement for the WARF patterned on other existing City agreements
- Cooperation on Projects of Interest to the City with appropriate levels of approval