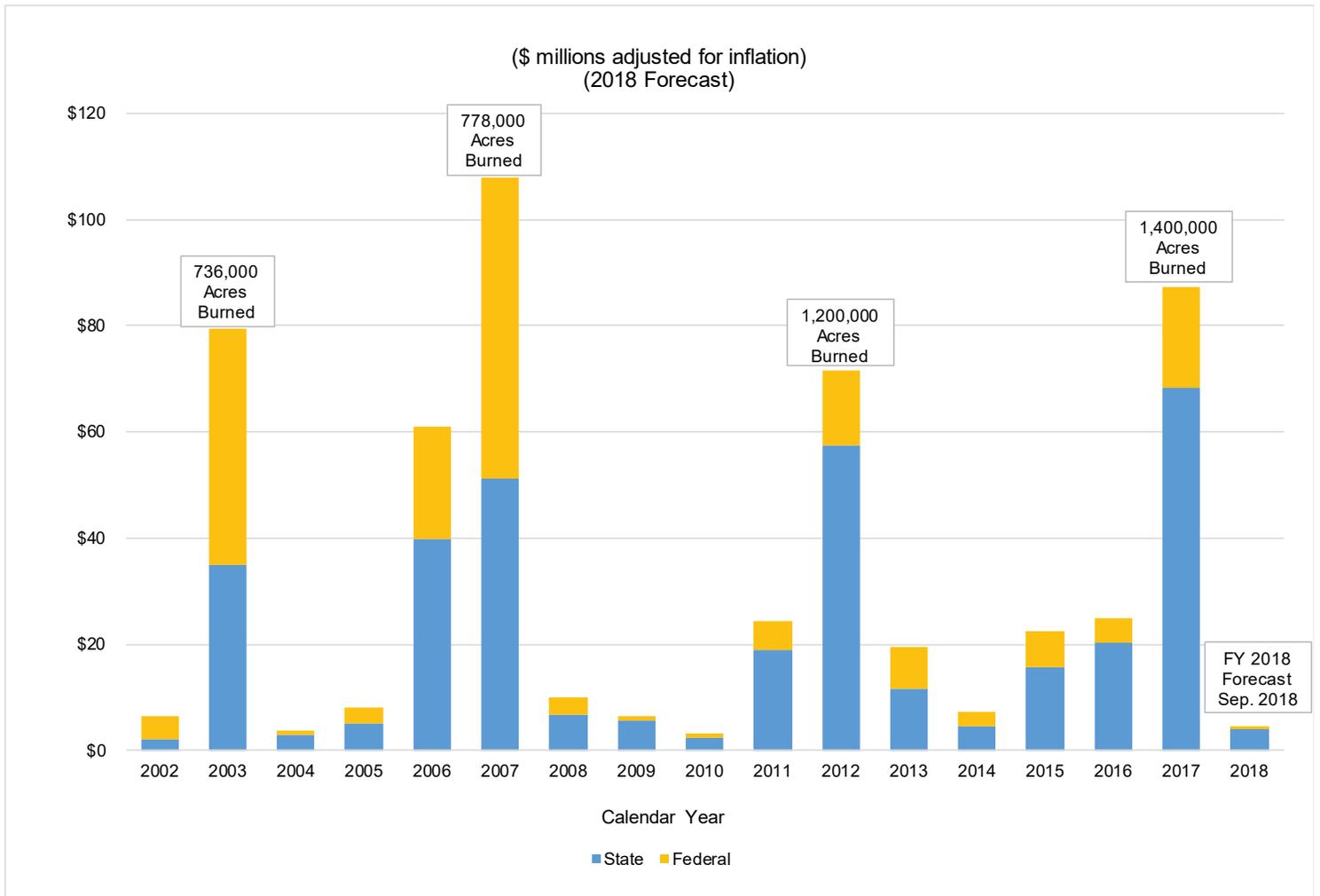


Annual Montana Fire Suppression Costs



In Montana, wildfires are expected. However, the location, severity, and ultimate cost to the state is difficult to predict.

The chart above shows that annual state fire costs range between \$2.0 million in 2002 to \$68.2 million in the summer of 2017, one of the worst fire years in recent memory.

The 2007 legislature established the fire suppression fund to provide funds dedicated to fire costs (76-13-150, MCA). The fund is administered by the Montana

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). In addition to fire suppression, DNRC may use up to \$5 million from the fund each biennium for fuel reduction and forest restoration.

In the summer of 2017, the fire suppression cost exceeded the available balance in the fire suppression fund. In November of 2017, the legislature convened a special session, in part, to provide additional temporary revenue to the fire fund. The legislature provided up to \$40 million in temporary sources of revenue to the fire fund.