

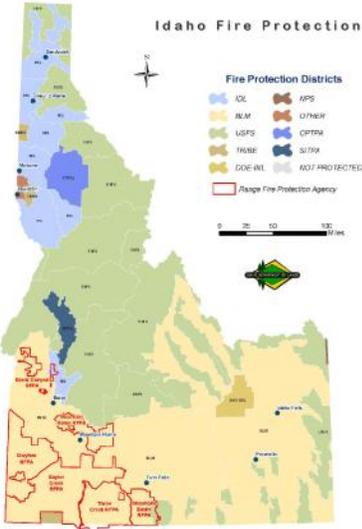
# Wildfire in Idaho

## and Resilient Landscapes (Good Neighbor Authority)

Idaho Department of Lands Director Tom Schultz  
Western States Land Commissioners Association  
March 1, 2016



## Wildfire Response in Idaho



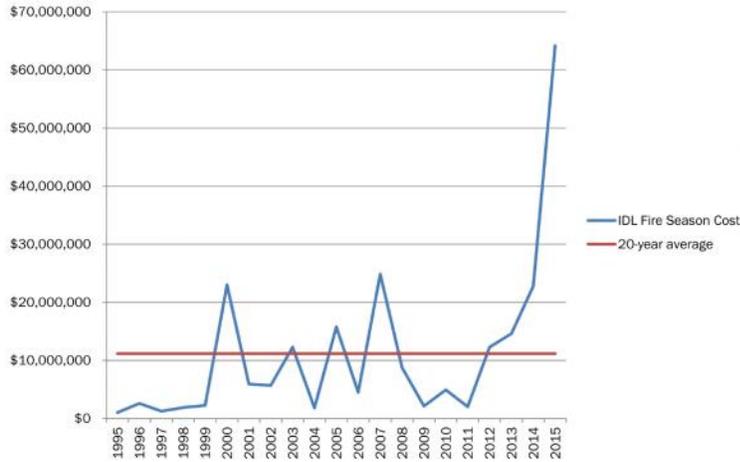
- ◎ 14 forest protective districts
  - U.S. Forest Service
  - Bureau of Land Management
    - Six rangeland fire protection associations assist BLM
  - State of Idaho
    - 10 IDL districts
    - 2 timber protective associations
    - 6.3 million acres of mostly privately-owned and State-owned forests (78% WUI)
- ◎ >200 local/rural fire districts provide structure protection in non-urban parts of state





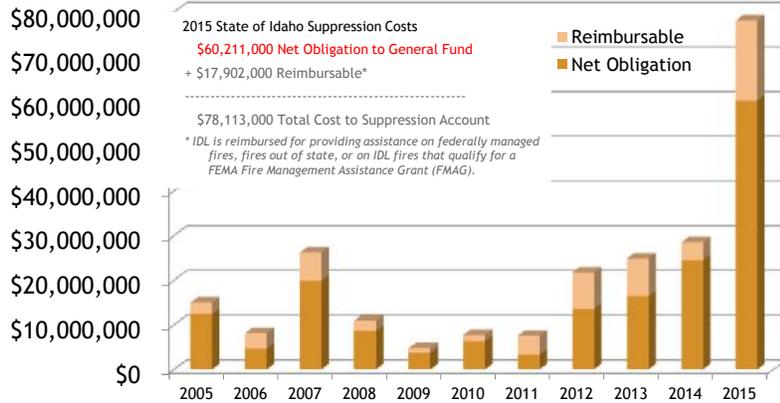
# Historic Year

IDL PROTECTION: Fire Season Cost



# Historic Year

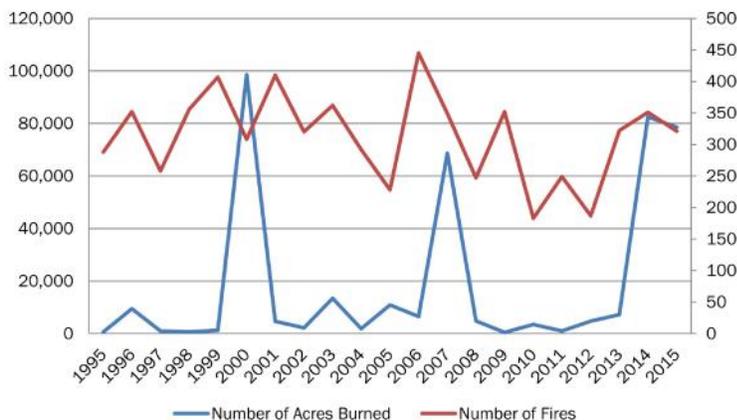
IDL PROTECTION: Suppression Costs



# Historic Year

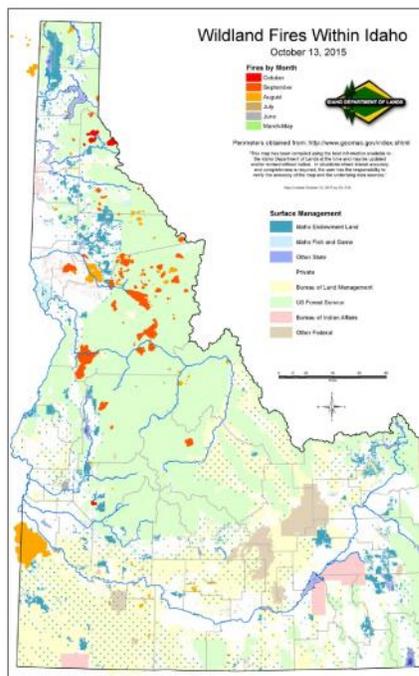


IDL PROTECTION: Acres Burned, Number of Fires



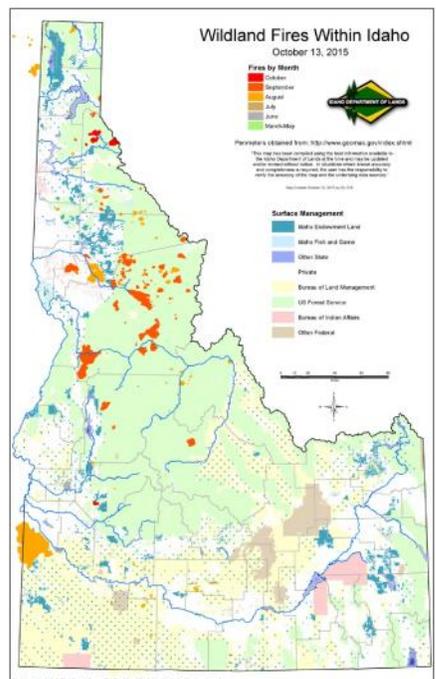
# 2015 Fire Season

- Total acres burned in Idaho = Approx. 742,000 ac.
- Acres burned by owner
  - USFS 351,000 ac.
  - BLM 230,000 ac.
  - Private 119,000 ac.
  - IDL 28,000 ac.
  - BIA 11,000 ac.
  - Other 3,000 ac.



## 2015 Fire Season

- Acres burned in IDL protection = 78,571 ac.
  - 391% of 20-year average
  
- 321 fires in IDL protection
  - 102% of 20-year average
  - Half human-caused



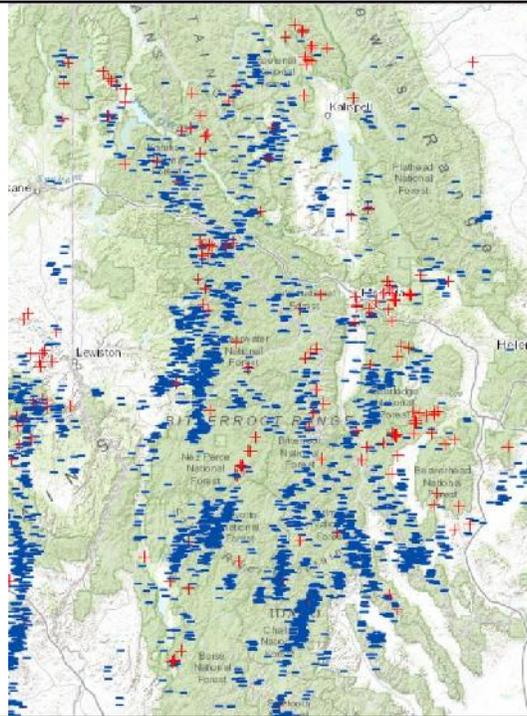
## **THE PERFECT STORM - 2015 Fire Season**

- Mild winter: Below normal snowpack (~50% of normal)
- Warm, dry spring and summer
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> warmest year on record (3 degrees F above normal)
  - Warmest June in 120 years (11 degrees F above normal)
  - Extremely dry April-August in northern half of state
  - Normal precipitation in southern Idaho
- Record low soil and fuel moisture levels
- Record low humidity levels
- Ignitions - August 9 - 11
- Probability of ignitions, fire indices, fire behavior
- Resource Shortage, regionally and nationally



## August 11, 2015

- 24-hour lightning strikes
  - August 10, 8:00 AM to August 11, 8:00 AM
- 135+ fire starts on IDL and Forest Service protection



Clearwater River, 2015 Clearwater Complex Fires



## 2015 Fire Season

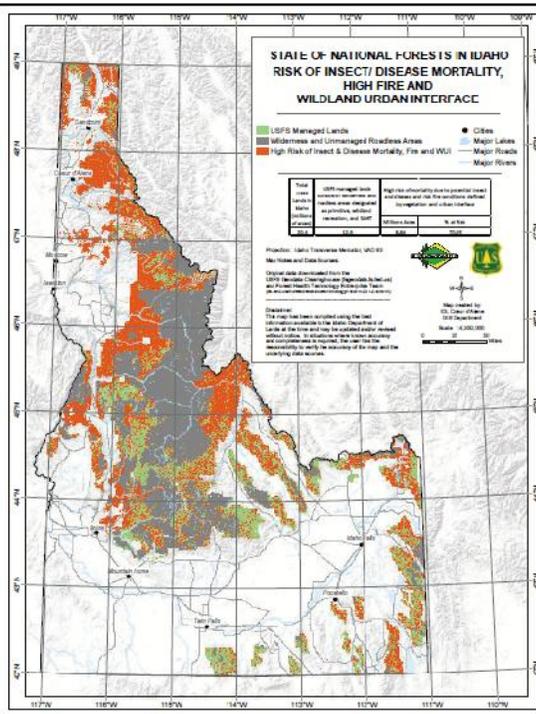
- 16 IDL incidents required use of 27 incident management teams
- Largest, most expensive fire = Clearwater Complex
  - ▶ \$25.2 million and 68,100 acres burned
  - ▶ 62 residences, 211 outbuildings lost



Clearwater Complex Fire, 2015

## 2014 Farm Bill

- Magnitude of issue
- Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) insect & disease designation process
- Proposed treatment areas





## Good Neighbor Authority

- ◉ States helping manage federal lands
- ◉ Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) enables the Forest Service to partner with states to achieve restoration and resilient landscape objectives across ownership boundaries through cooperative agreements
- ◉ Goal = Increase pace and scale of forest and watershed restoration activities on federal forests when similar and complementary actions are occurring on nearby state lands
  - Improve forest health
  - Reduce fuels and threats to communities and watersheds from catastrophic wildfires
  - Create more jobs, economic benefits



## 2014 Farm Bill - Idaho

- ◉ HFRA designations accepted (May 2014)
- ◉ IDL explores Farm Bill authorities (June 2014 - February 2015)
  - Working Group
  - Stewardship Contracting
  - Non-Profit Concept (2015 Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership)
  - Good Neighbor Authority (GNA)
- ◉ Passage of Senate Concurrent Resolution 126 (March 2015)
  - Aimed at increasing management activities on federal lands in Idaho through GNA
- ◉ Focus on GNA (March 2015 - Present)
  - Hired GNA contractor
  - FY 2017 IDL budget request (\$562,000)
    - Hire three positions, along with necessary equipment and supplies, to implement GNA in Idaho. The positions include a program manager, forester, and grants/contracts analyst. (\$262,000)
    - Contract with professional foresters to conduct surveys, stand exams, timber sale preparation and timber sale administration through GNA agreements. (\$300,000)



## GNA pilot states

- ◉ Colorado and Utah were pilot states for GNA projects
- ◉ After more than a decade of temporary authority limited to two states, 2014 Farm Bill expanded GNA authority to include all states with National Forest System land and BLM public land



## GNA - Next Steps in Idaho

- ◉ Develop statewide master GNA agreement
- ◉ Passage of IDL GNA budget request?
- ◉ Evaluate possible GNA projects
  - Role of collaborative groups, IDL, Forest Service
- ◉ Select pilot GNA project(s)
  - Develop Supplemental Project Agreement (SPA)
- ◉ Implement and evaluate pilot GNA project(s)
- ◉ Focus on “end results”