

NATURAL RESOURCES INTERIM COMMITTEE
November 8, 2017

2017 Fire Season Update

This 2017 fire season update covers acres protected by Idaho Department of Lands 10 Forest Protective Districts, and includes the Clearwater-Potlatch and Southern Idaho Timber Protective Associations. Together, our 12 forest protective districts cover 6.3 million acres of land owned mostly by private entities and the State of Idaho.

As of October 31, 2017, Emergency Fire Suppression expenditures are estimated to be \$22,081,000. The Suppression Account will recover an estimated \$5,632,000 of reimbursable costs, for a net obligation of \$16,449,000.

The largest fire in 2017 on IDL protection was the Craig Mountain Complex, consisting of the Corral Fire (1,826 ac) and the Powerline Fire (48,569 ac). Lightning started both fires, and a Type 2 Incident Management Team (IMT) managed the complex.

The Strychnine Fire, detected September 2 on the IDL Ponderosa District, was 1010 acres. The fire was five miles northeast of Harvard, and was managed by a Type 3 IMT. The cause of the fire is currently under investigation.

As shown in the table below, fire occurrence to date for 2017 is 70 percent of the 20-year average, while the acres burned is 237 percent of the 20-year average.

Fire Season Comparison to Date

| Year | # of Fires | | | Acres |
|----------------|------------|-------|-------|--------|
| | Lightning | Human | Total | |
| 2015 | 146 | 141 | 287 | 72,145 |
| 2016 | 44 | 122 | 166 | 1,525 |
| 2017 | 67 | 145 | 212 | 52,926 |
| 20 Yr. Average | | | 303 | 22,291 |

Last winter and spring saw an excellent snowpack and rain which provided for good soil moisture, and above average grass growth. The summer was hot and dry and fire behavior was above normal especially in the grass. Fire danger has now moderated statewide, and prescribed burning has begun.

All restrictions have been lifted.

The winter is predicted to have normal temperatures and a little above normal precipitation.

IDL employee accepted 338 assignments and 21 engine assignments outside IDL's protection area in: Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. These assignments represent reimbursable expenses and a savings to Dedicated and General Funds.

Image 7. Map, Idaho Wildfires, 2007-2017.

