



Woodrat Fire, 2015

2015 Fire Season – “The Perfect Storm”
Joint House & Senate Resource Committee Hearing
February 15, 2016

Presented by State Forester David Groeschl
Idaho Department of Lands

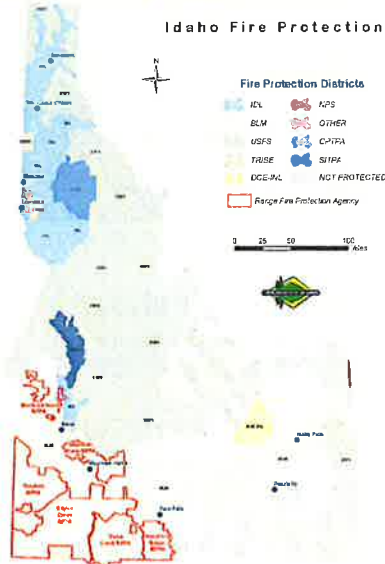
Content



- ▶ IDL’s Forest Protective Districts
- ▶ The Perfect Storm
- ▶ 2015 Fire Season Summary
- ▶ Fire Funding
 - ▶ Idaho
 - ▶ Other States

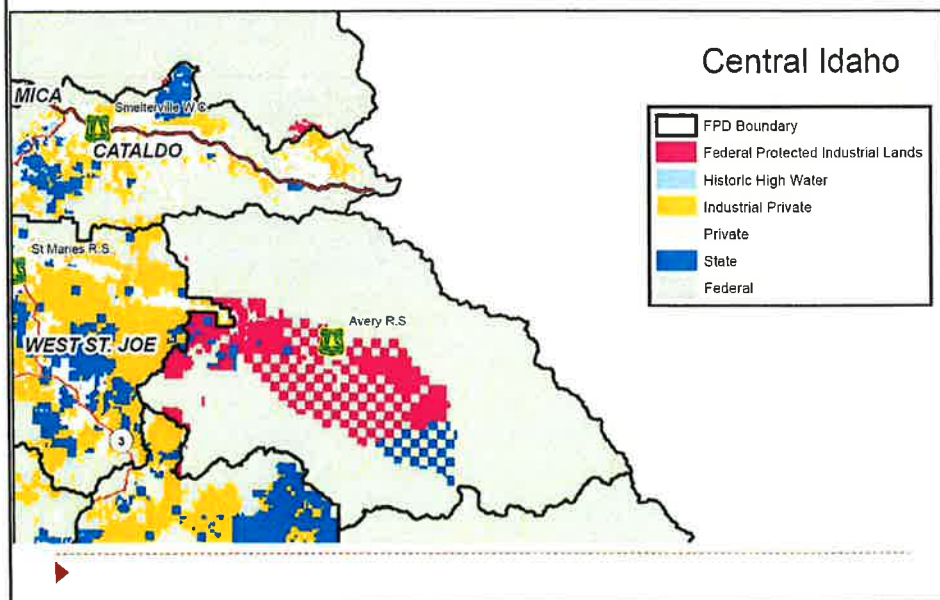


Wildfire Response in Idaho

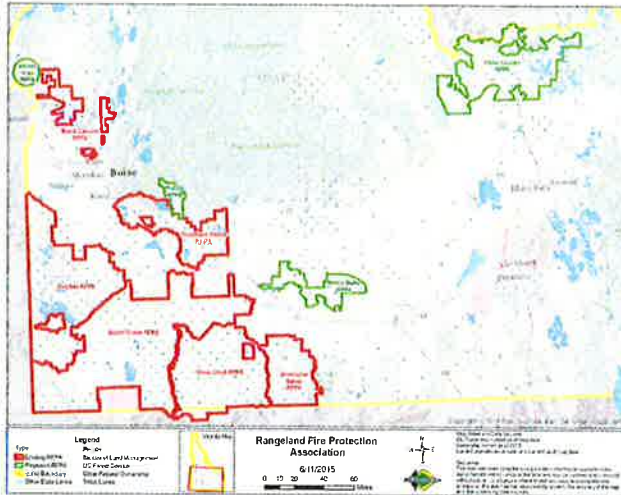


- ▶ 14 forest protective districts
 - ▶ U.S. Forest Service
 - ▶ Bureau of Land Management
 - ▶ Six rangeland fire protection associations assist BLM
 - ▶ State of Idaho
 - ▶ 10 IDL districts
 - ▶ 2 timber protective associations
 - ▶ 6.3 million acres of mostly privately-owned and State-owned forests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

Offset Agreement



Rangeland Fire Protection Associations



- ▶ 6 established associations
- ▶ 4 add'l areas being considered
- ▶ 982,000 ac. private rangeland protected
- ▶ Secondary protection on 4.9 million ac. federal & state land
- ▶ 230 ranchers trained
- ▶ Assisted on 30 fires in 2015, including Soda Fire

The Perfect Storm – 2015 Fire Season

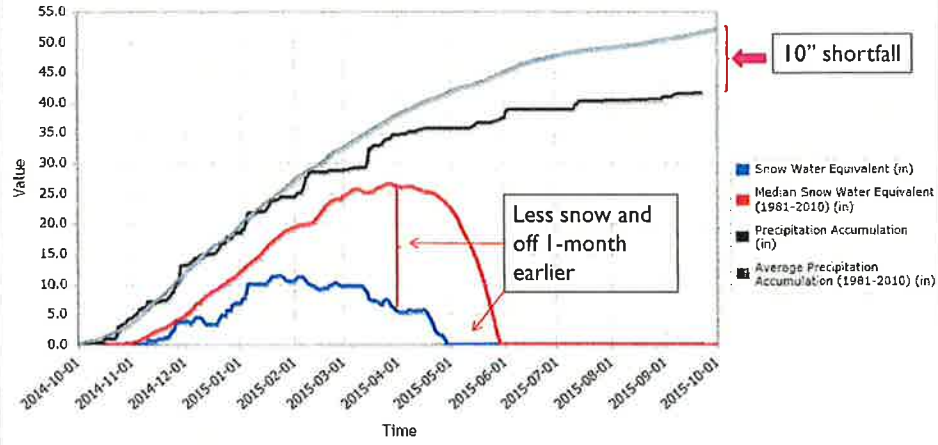


- ▶ Mild Winter - below normal snowpack (~50% of normal)
- ▶ Warm, Dry Spring and Summer
 - ▶ 2nd warmest year on record (3F above normal)
 - ▶ Warmest June in 120 years (11F above normal)
 - ▶ Extremely dry Apr-Aug in northern half of state
 - ▶ Normal precip in Southern Idaho
- ▶ Record low soil and fuel moisture levels
- ▶ Record low humidity levels
- ▶ Ignitions - August 9 - 11
- ▶ Probability of ignitions, fire indices, fire behavior
- ▶ Resource Shortage – Regionally & Nationally

Snowpack – North & South Idaho



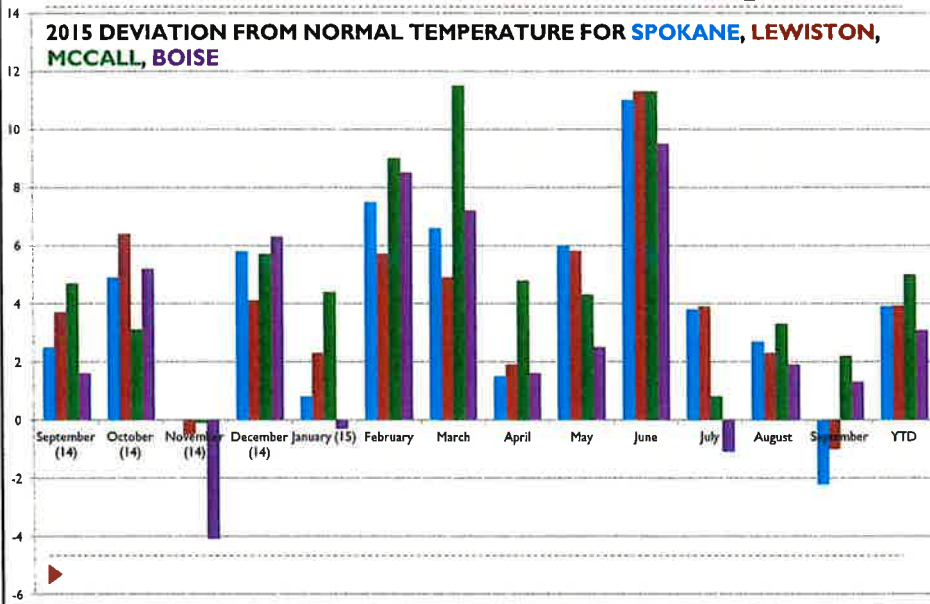
Lookout (594) Idaho SNOTEL Site - 5140 ft

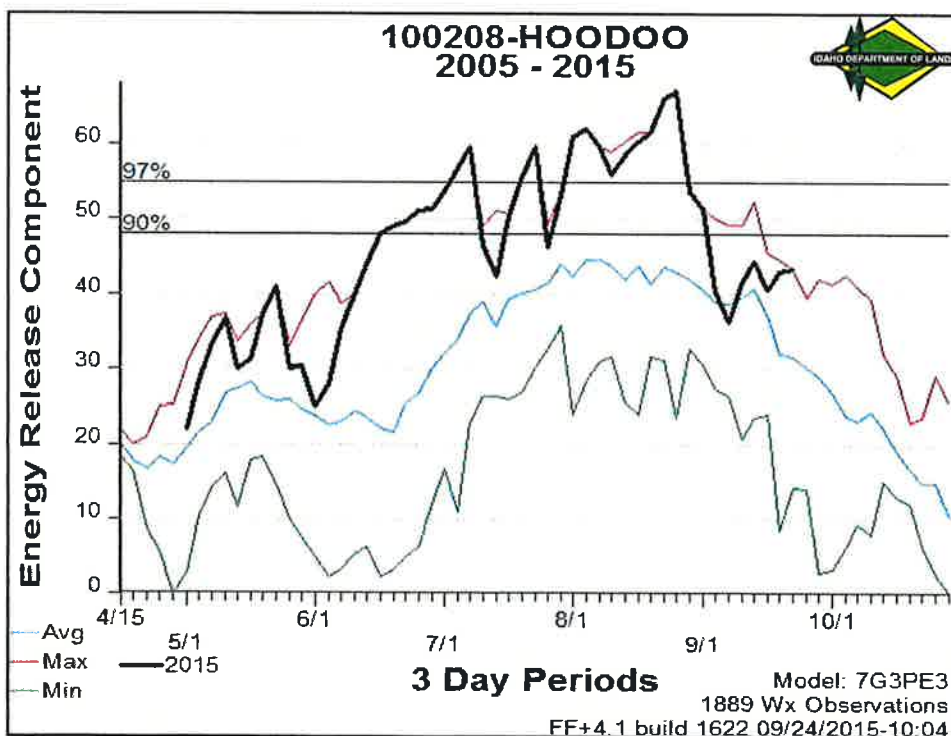
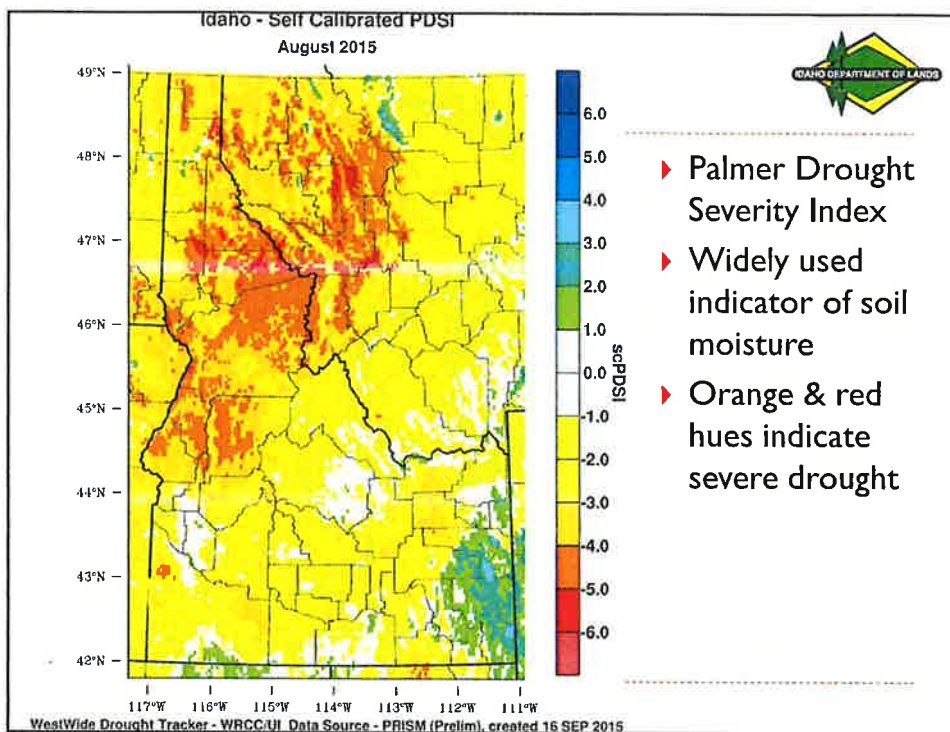


2015 Deviation from Normal Temps



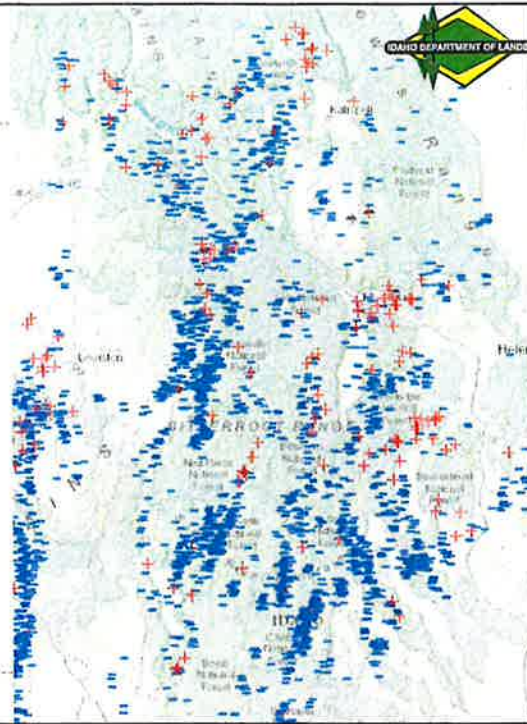
2015 DEVIATION FROM NORMAL TEMPERATURE FOR SPOKANE, LEWISTON, MCCALL, BOISE





August 11, 2015

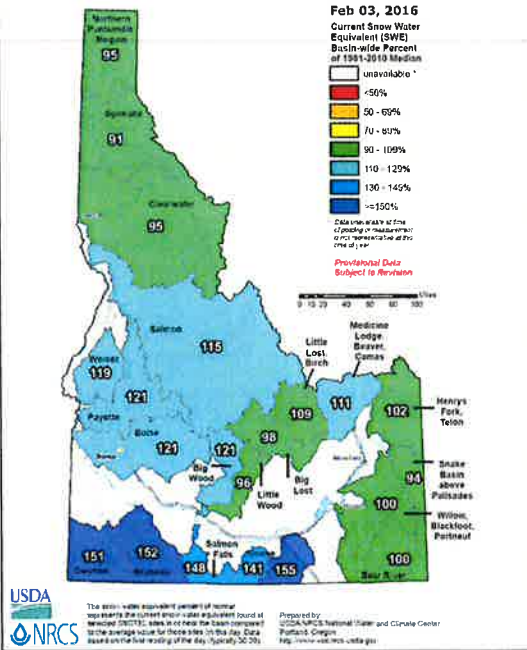
- ▶ 24-hour Lightning Strikes – 8:00 am August 10 to 8:00 am August 11
- ▶ 135+ starts on IDL & USFS protection



Drought Relief?

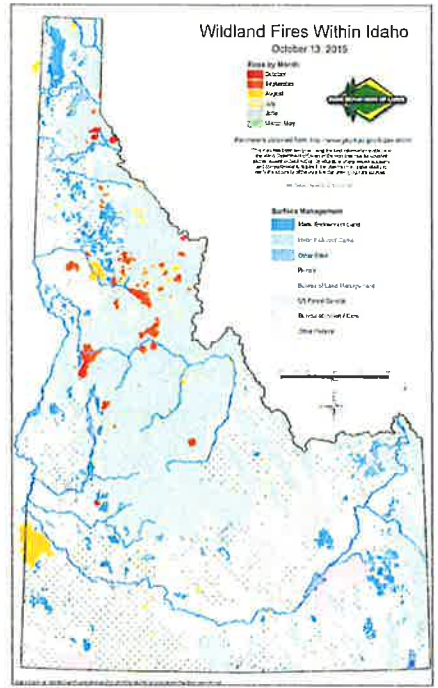
- ▶ Wet December/January
 - ▶ Tempered drought stress across northern Idaho
 - ▶ Snowpack recovery
- ▶ Strong El Nino in place
 - ▶ Subpar 2nd half of winter, particularly in North Idaho
 - ▶ Persistence of drought heading into summer 2016
 - ▶ Central Idaho mountains to fare better

Idaho SNOTEL Current Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) % of Normal

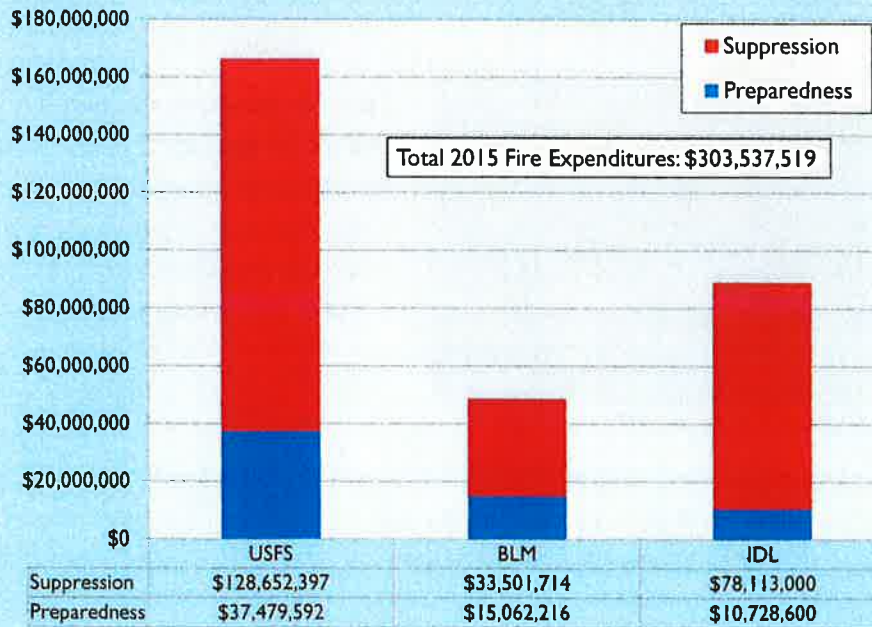


2015 Fire Season

- ▶ 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.

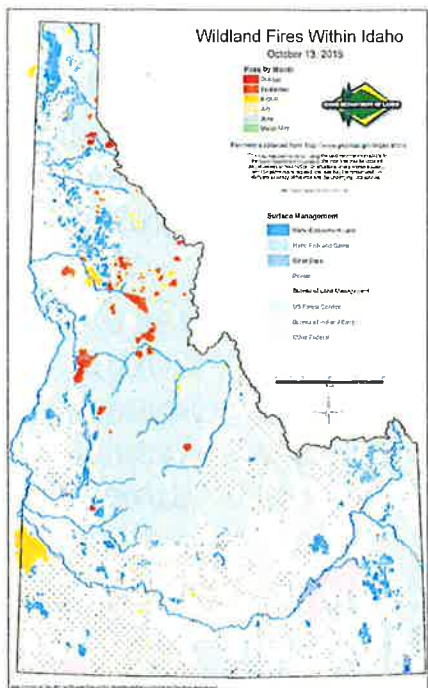


2015 Agency Fire Season Costs for Idaho



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



2015 Fire Season



Clearwater Complex Fire, 2015

- ▶ 16 IDL incidents required use of 27 incident management teams
- ▶ Emergency disaster declaration (FEMA) for portions of Clearwater Complex Fires, Municipal Fire, Cape Horn Fire
- ▶ Largest, most expensive fire = Clearwater Complex Fires
 - ▶ \$25.2 million and 68,100 acres burned
 - ▶ 62 residences, 211 outbuildings lost

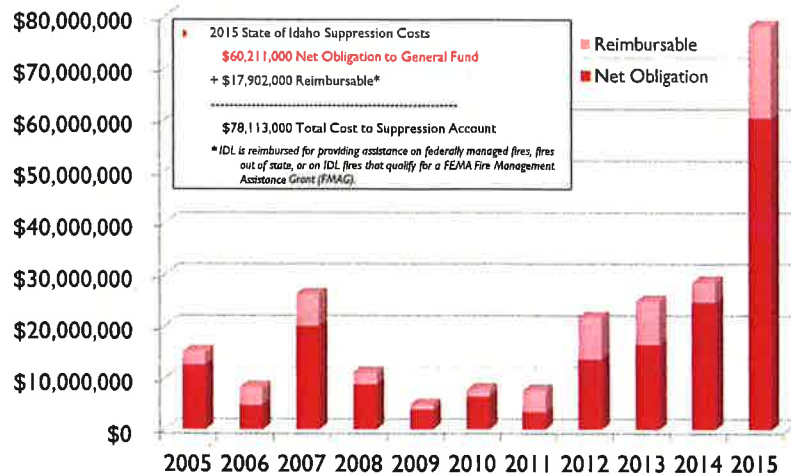


2015 Fire Season

- ▶ **Additional 2015 Fire Season Highlights**
 - ▶ IDL hosted fire safety training for loggers and other contractors mid-season
 - ▶ Rare large scale closure of endowment land for public safety (11,248-acre block in Silver Valley)
 - ▶ Extended “closed fire season,” requiring fire safety burn permits past October 20
 - ▶ Worked with industry to put in place voluntary measures for loggers in areas covered by stage 2 fire restrictions
 - ▶ IDL required extra steps for agricultural burners in northern Idaho
 - ▶ Firewood cutting limitations placed on endowment lands in areas covered by stage 2 fire restrictions
 - ▶ 3,080 “man days” of help from Canadians through the Northwest and Northeast Firefighting Compacts



IDL Suppression Costs





Preparedness vs. Suppression Costs

Preparedness Costs

- ▶ Includes cost to hire, train and equip permanent and seasonal fire staff

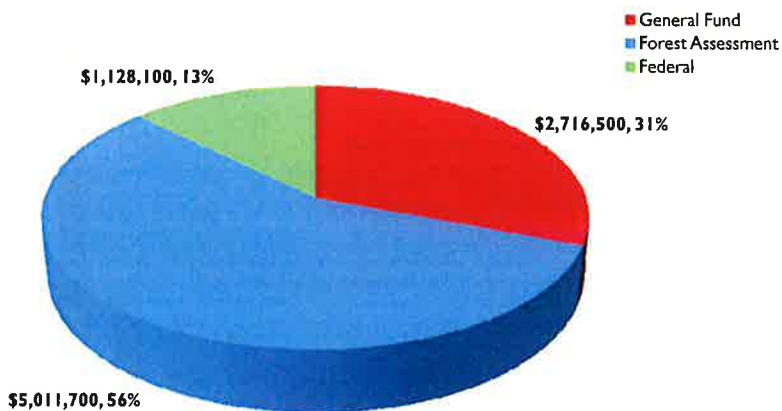
Funded by combination of:

- ▶ General Fund (31%)
- ▶ Federal funds (13%)
- ▶ Forest Assessments (56%)

Suppression Costs

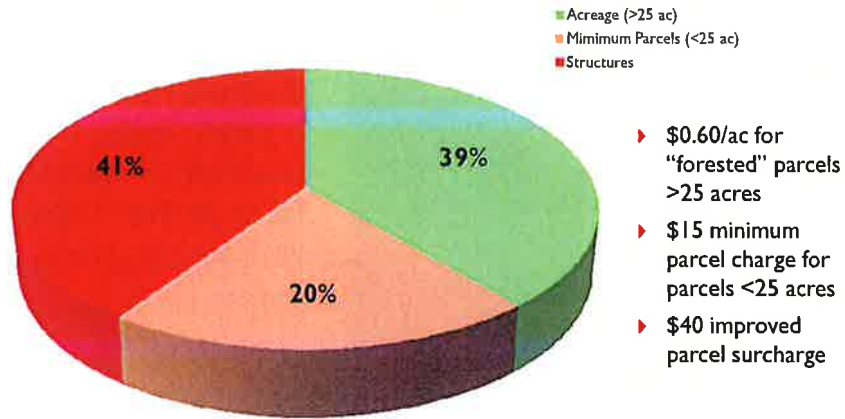
- ▶ Payment for resources used for initial attack of fire starts and for resources assigned to an IDL project fire; includes aircraft contracts
- ▶ Suppression costs paid by General Fund through deficiency warrant authority

2016 Preparedness Appropriation



Total FY16 Preparedness (includes FY16 Fire Supplemental): \$8,856,300

Annual Forest Assessment (IC 38-111)



- ▶ \$0.60/ac for "forested" parcels >25 acres
- ▶ \$15 minimum parcel charge for parcels <25 acres
- ▶ \$40 improved parcel surcharge

NOTE: Acreage assessment includes \$584,587 from endowment forest lands (974,587 acres x \$0.60/acre)



Why General Fund for Preparedness?

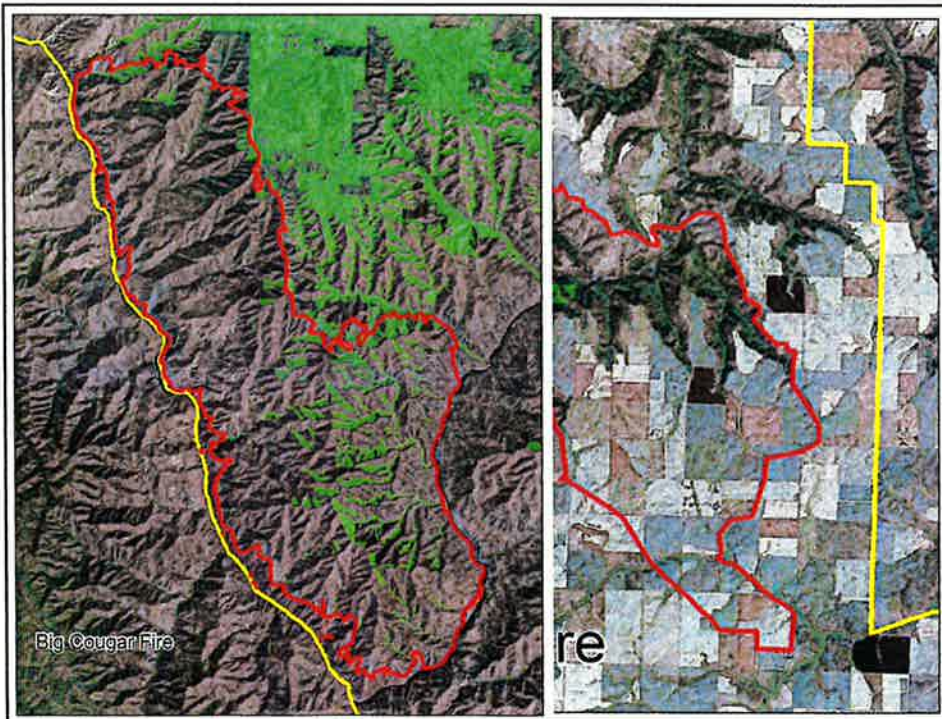
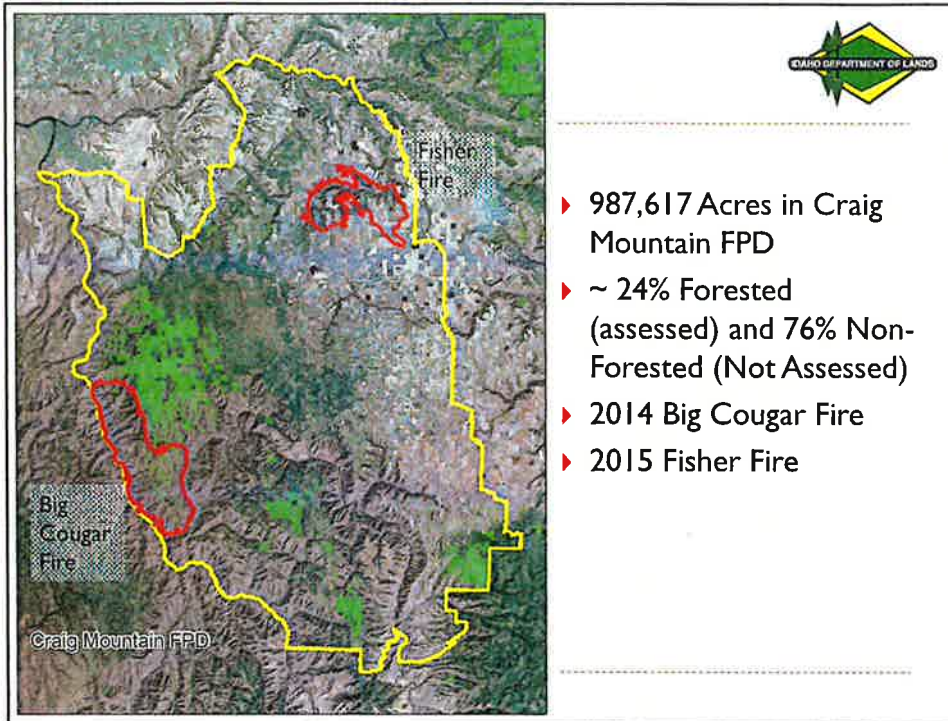


Assessed vs Non-Assessed Acres



- ▶ GF provides 30% of Preparedness Funding while 50% of lands within IDL's protection are non-assessed
- ▶ Public benefits (recreation, clean air & water, jobs, habitat, etc.) to protect forested & non-forested







Suppression – Who Pays?



- ▶ Deficiency Warrants – General Fund
- ▶ Natural Disaster (Flood, Hurricane, Tornadoes, etc.)
- ▶ Example – Homeowner Structure Protection
- ▶ Endowment Distributions
- ▶ IC 38-111



Deficiency Fund Account

<p>- \$11MM <u>+\$27MM</u> +\$16MM</p>	<p>Actual Account (Deficit) Balance on 6/30/15 Actual General Fund Paid to Account 7/1/15 Actual Account (Positive)Balance at start of FY16</p>
<p>- <u>\$25MM</u> -\$ 9MM</p>	<p>Actual Bills Paid between 7/1/15 – 12/07/15 (for 2014 & 2015) Actual Account (Negative) Balance at 12/07/15</p>
<p>-\$16MM <u>-\$37MM</u> -\$62MM</p>	<p>2014 Season Approx NET Fire Debt still owed – Not yet paid 2015 Season Approx NET Fire Debt still owed – Not yet paid Projected Net (Deficit) Balance</p>
<p><u>+\$50MM</u> -\$12MM*</p>	<p>FY17 Governor’s Recommendation – GF to Deficiency Fund Projected Net (Deficit) Balance - After FY17 Appropriation and after all current outstanding obligations are paid.</p>

*Any costs incurred during the 2016 Fire Season will be in addition to this \$12MM.





Fire Billing Review/Audit Levels

- ▶ IDL Project Fires with T1-3 IMT's
 - ▶ IMT Finance Section Audit
 - ▶ IDL Local District
 - ▶ IDL Fire Bureau
 - ▶ Fiscal
- ▶ Small Fires (T4-5)
 - ▶ IDL Local District
 - ▶ IDL Fire Bureau
 - ▶ Fiscal
- ▶ Other Audits
 - ▶ IDL Fire Bureau & Fiscal
 - ▶ LSO Audits (every 2-3 years)



Fire Funding – Other States

- ▶ Montana
 - ▶ Preparedness – Assessments, GF & Federal
 - ▶ Suppression – Wildfire Suppression Fund (\$100 million cap)
- ▶ Oregon
 - ▶ Preparedness – Assessments, GF & Federal
 - ▶ Suppression – Assessments/GF, Fire Insurance, GF
- ▶ Washington
 - ▶ Preparedness – Assessments, GF & Federal
 - ▶ Suppression – GF
- ▶ White Paper – more details

