

An aerial photograph showing a landscape affected by a wildfire. A winding asphalt road curves through the center of the image. To the left of the road, the terrain is dark and charred, with many dead, blackened trees. To the right, the landscape is greener, with some houses and a small cluster of buildings. The background shows more forested hills.

WILDFIRE

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Wildfire Planning International | Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network
Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute – March 2015

Myth: The wildfire “problem” is relatively new for our communities.



Waldo Canyon Fire, Colorado Springs, CO 2012

Source: National Interagency Fire Center Photo Library/ Kari Greer USFS

Reality: Wildfires have been affecting our communities for centuries.



The Great Peshtigo Fire of 1871

Source: Deana C. Hipke; www.peshtigofire.info/

Myth: The bigger the fire, the worse the consequences.



East Basin Complex, CA Fires 2008

Source: National Interagency Fire Center Photo Library

Reality: Wildfire size and impacts are not always related.

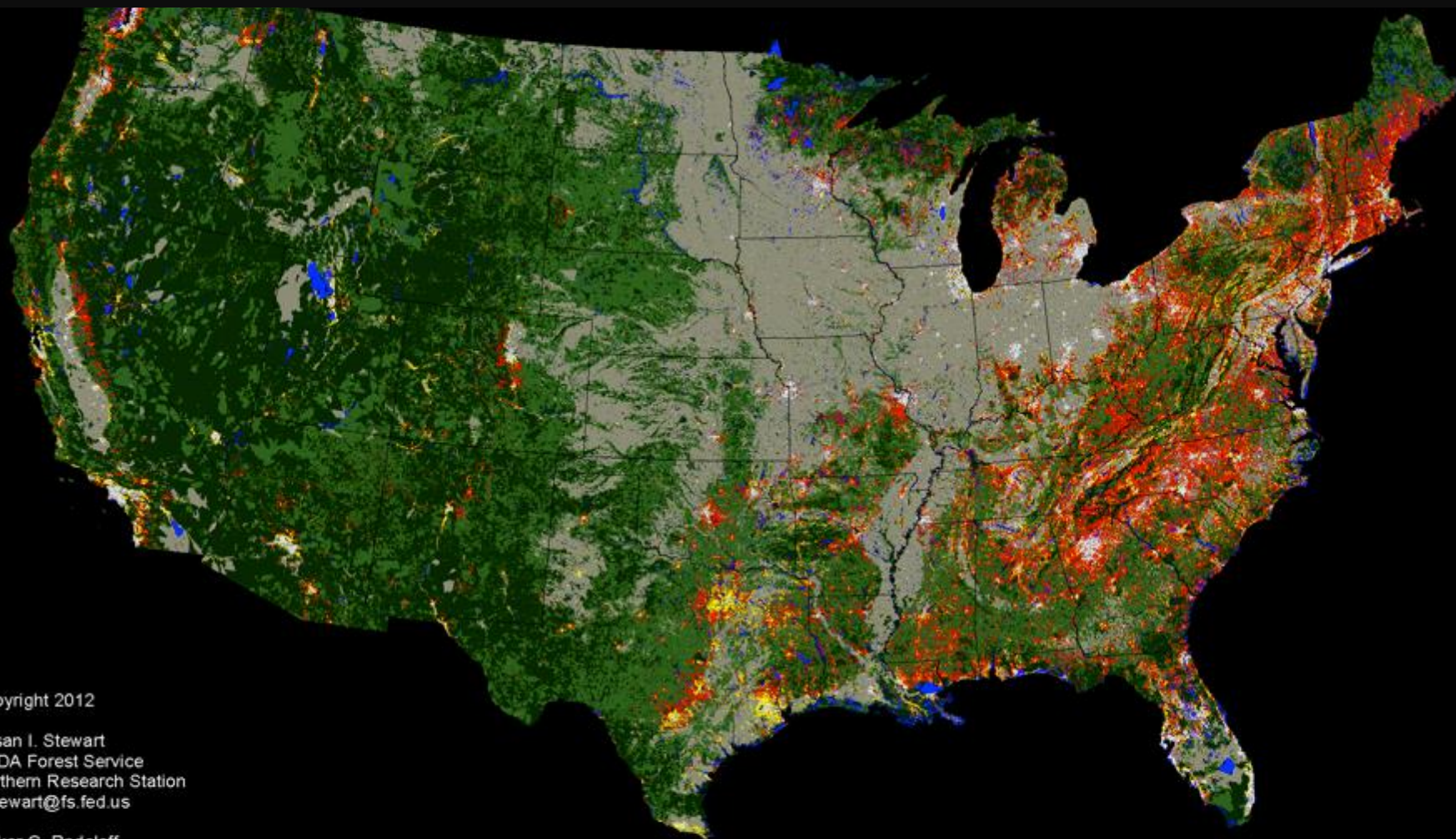


Pigeon Forge Fire, TN 2013

Myth: If people just didn't live "there" we wouldn't have a wildfire problem.



Reality: The vast majority of the US is wildfire prone.



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WUI 2010 based on the 2010 Census,
2006 National Land Cover Database (NLCD),
and the Protected Areas Database version 1.1

WUI

- Interface
- Intermix

Non-WUI Vegetated

- No Housing
- Very Low Density Housing

Non-Vegetated or Agriculture

- Medium and High Density Housing
- Low and Very Low Housing Density
- Water

Myth: Wildfires won't affect me because I live in a city.



Las Conchas Fire, New Mexico, 2011

Source: National Interagency Fire Center Photo Library/ Kari Greer

Reality: Wildfires have many impacts to communities – including cities.



Source: City of Austin online data forum: <http://www.city-data.com/forum/attachments/texas/84548d1315433472-texas>

Myth: Nothing can be done to prevent wildfire losses.



Fourmile Canyon Fire, CO 2010

Source: National Interagency Fire Center Photo Library/ Matthew Slaby

Reality: There's a lot we can modify in our environments to reduce wildfire losses.



Waldo Canyon Fire, Colorado Springs, CO 2012

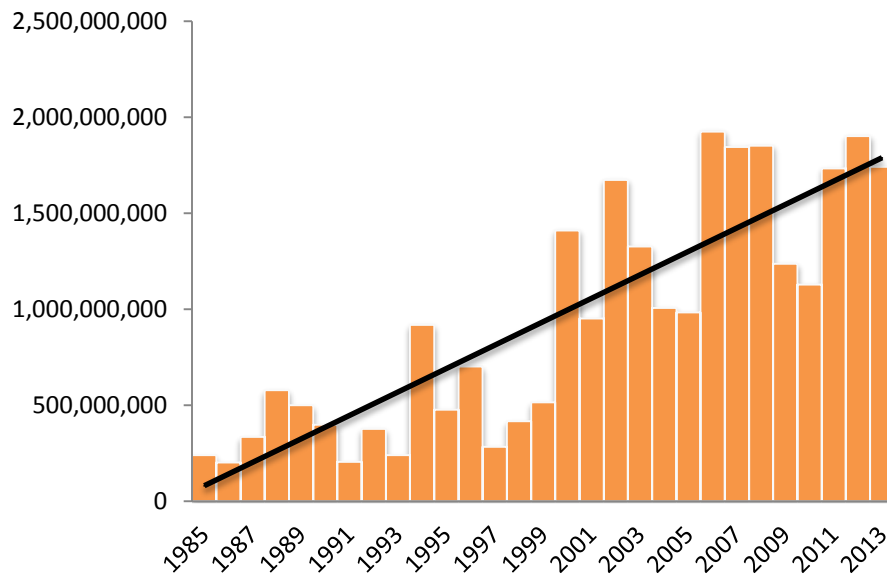
Source: National Interagency Fire Center Photo Library/ Kari Greer USFS

Myth: More resources will make the problem go away.

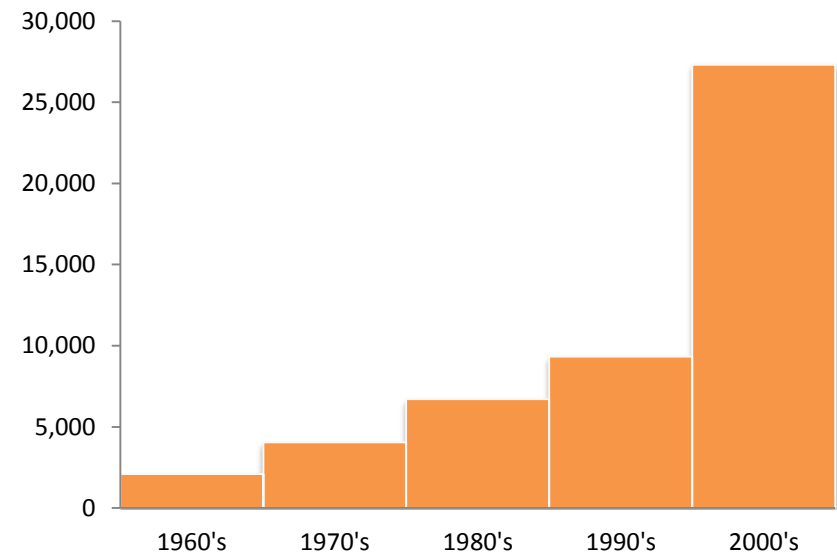


Reality: Spending continues to increase but we are still losing homes.

Federal Wildfire Suppression Cost



Structures Lost to Wildfires



Wildfire Legal Framework (for Communities)

A lot of national policy and guidance:

- Healthy Forest Restoration Act (2003)
- Quadrennial Fire Review(s)
- Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement (FLAME) Act (2009)
- National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy



Wildfire Legal Framework (for Communities)

Many national education & outreach programs:

- Smokey Bear
- Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network
- Firewise Communities
- Ready, Set, Go! Program

.... But NO national regulations



State and Local Solutions

State of California

- Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps
- Wildand-Urban Interface State Building Code Requirements
- Fire Safe Councils



State and Local Solutions

State of Oregon

- Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act (Senate Bill 360)
 - Identifies & classifies lands
 - Requires property owners to comply with fuel-reduction standards



State and Local Solutions

City of Austin/ Travis County, TX

- Community Wildfire Protection Plan
 - City-county collaboration
 - Neighborhood engagement
 - Innovative risk mapping
 - Roadmap for future risk reduction



State and Local Solutions

Summit County, CO

- Plan, policy, code review for land use planning & wildfire risk reduction
 - Reconciliation of conflicts
 - Recommendations for improving land use / wildfire connection



State and Local Solutions

Colorado Springs, CO

- Codes and standards
 - Hillside Design Manual
 - City (WUI) Ordinance 12-111
- Wildfire hazard ratings map
- Community outreach and assessments



State and Local Solutions

Boulder County, CO

– Wildfire Partners Program

- Voluntary program
- Customized property assessments for homeowners
- Property certificates
- Ability to continue insurance coverage



Thank you

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