

Policy Analysis Group

Jay O’Laughlin, Director

(208) 885-5776 jayo@uidaho.edu

www.cnrhome.uidaho.edu/pag

University of Idaho

College of Natural Resources

Kurt Pregitzer, Dean

(208) 885-6442 kpregitzer@uidaho.edu

Fact Sheet #10 – 2012 Wildfire Statistics (revised)

With more than 9.3 million acres burned, 2012 was a big fire year by almost any measure except the number of wildfires. These were below the 10-year average; however, the average-sized wildfire in 2012 was 45 percent greater than the 10-year average (**Table 1**).

Why? On western federal lands fuels have been accumulating for decades, plus drought and longer fire seasons create hazardous wildfire conditions.

In the western states, 2012 was the worst fire season on record (**Figure 1**). Western wildfires accounted for almost 91 percent of the total acreage burned in the U.S., with the average-sized western wildfire at least 14 times larger than in the Southeast or Northeast (**Table 2**, the West includes 6 states not depicted in **Figure 1**).

Table 1. U.S. wildfire statistics, 2012 & 10-year average.*

	2012	10-yr. avg.
Number of wildfires	67,774	74,686
Acres burned by wildfires	9,326,238	7,024,600
Average wildfire size	138 acres	94 acres

Acres burned (millions)

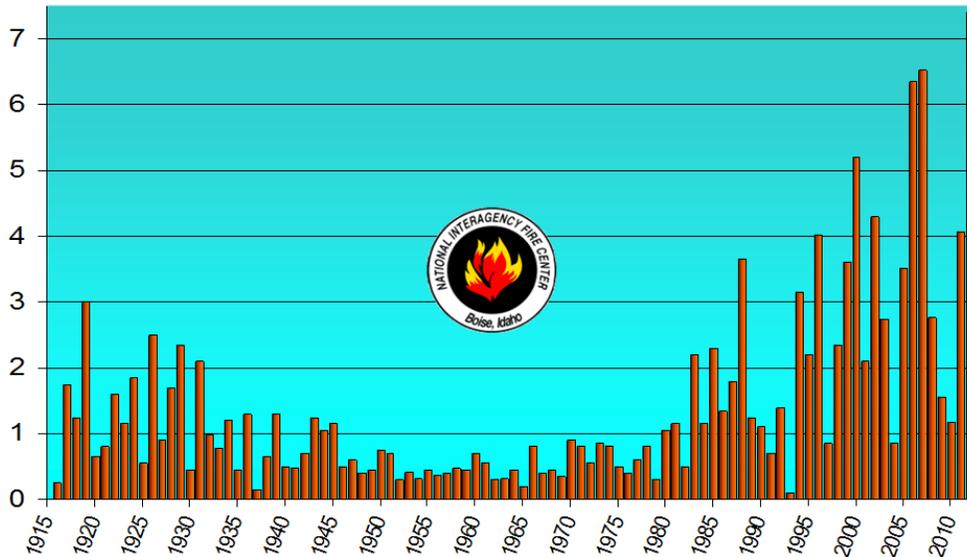


Figure 1. Acres burned by wildfires in eleven western states, 1916-2012 (Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming).*

Table 2. U.S. wildfire statistics by region, 2012.*

	Northeast	Southeast	West	Total U.S.
Number of wildfires	10,690	31,454	25,630	67,774
Acres burned by wildfires	137,505	727,761	8,460,972	9,326,238
Average wildfire size	13 acres	23 acres	330 acres	138 acres

* Data from National Interagency Fire Center; 10-year average (**Table 1**) is for 2002-2011. Acres burned by state and landowner group are available online at http://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/fireInfo_statistics.html. In 2012, Idaho had 1.67 million acres burned, followed by Oregon (1.26 mm ac.), Montana (1.22 mm ac.), and California (0.87 mm ac.).