



Addressing Wildfire Risk And Related Issues Together.

July 17th, 2025

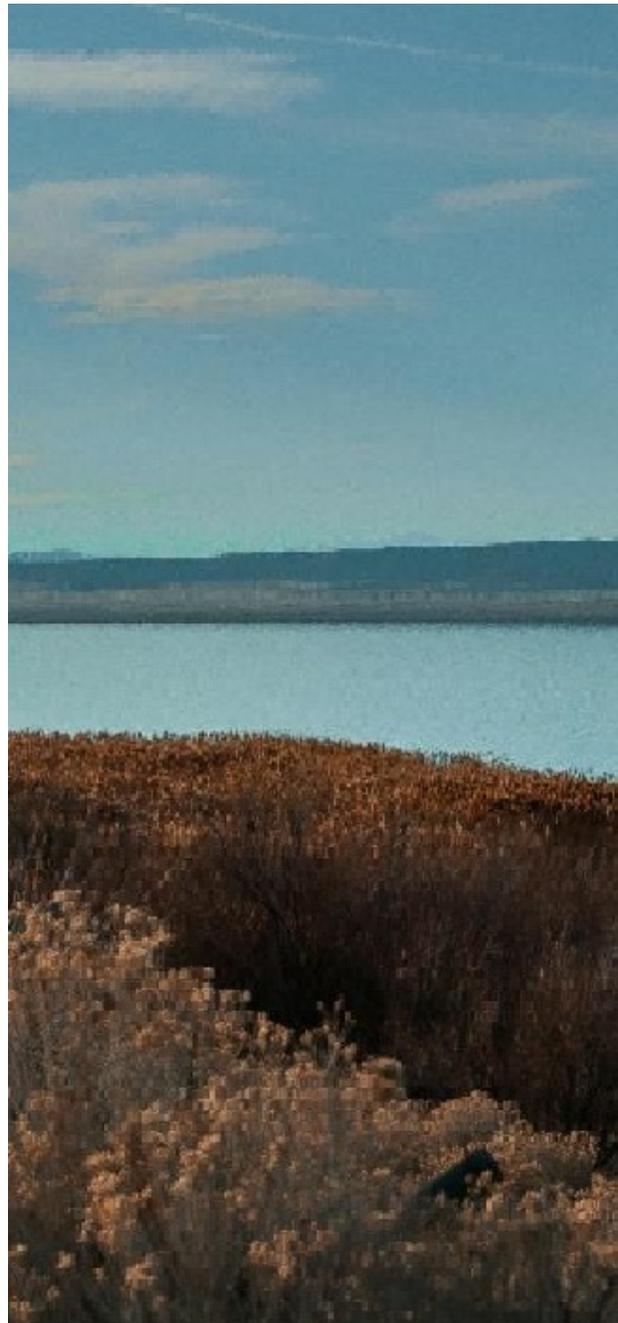
Member Spotlight

This week's member spotlight features the **Utah Lake Authority!**

The Utah Lake Authority, which manages the lake in central Utah, is dedicated to protecting and enhancing Utah Lake while fostering community and recreation. Guided by three pillars—thriving ecosystems, vibrant communities, and world-class recreation—the organization works to preserve the lake's natural beauty, educate the public, and create welcoming spaces for connection and adventure.

As one of the largest fresh water lakes west of the Mississippi, the Utah Lake Authority is concerned about how wildfires impact water quality, especially as the community has taken significant steps to revitalize the lake after years of neglect.

Reporting on the impact of wildfire smoke on freshwater lakes shows



there is verifiable concern, and scientists and policy makers alike are looking for solutions.

Regional Wildfire Differences

The Rocky Mountains is the spotlight this week, as we highlight regional challenges from a wildfire outlook **report** from the **National Interagency Fire Center**.



Wildfire activity across the Rocky Mountain Area is expected to stay mostly near normal through October, though a few regions are facing increased risk. Northwest Colorado and southwest Wyoming are forecast to see heightened fire potential in July, with concern shifting to northeast Wyoming later in the summer for August and September.

June brought contrasting conditions across the region—hot, dry weather dominated west of the Continental Divide, with limited precipitation, while cooler temperatures and frequent thunderstorms to the east provided some drought relief. Specifically, the Front Range and San Juan Mountains received above-average rainfall, which helped ease dry conditions across parts of eastern Wyoming, eastern Colorado, Nebraska, and Kansas.

Looking ahead, warmer-than-average temperatures are expected to persist through October, and most of the region will continue to see below normal precipitation. Fire managers will be closely monitoring areas of concern as the season intensifies.

Latest on Capitol Hill

Senate Committee Hearing Shows Support and Pushback on Current Wildfire Policies

Last week, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a **hearing to review the President's budget request for the U.S. Forest Service** for Fiscal Year 2026. The hearing revealed some lawmakers'

concerns with the President's decision to consolidate wildfire services into a single agency known as the Wildland Fire Service. The respective agencies have until Sept. 10th per the executive order to accomplish the consolidation. Lawmakers have been concerned at the timing and adequacy of the plan, especially as the U.S. hits a record-high wildfire season. Testifying before the committee, U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Schultz said that while plans were being made and discussed, consolidation wouldn't be impacting current wildfire response efforts. Committee Chairman Mike Lee (UT) took time to discuss the **recently rescinded Roadless Rule**, with Chief Schultz commenting, "[the rule] doesn't help, for sure, and it definitely hinders".

Media Coverage



Wildland Fire Service Budget Breakdown

U.S Department of the Interior Releases Budget Justification of U.S. Wildland Fire Service

Citing the already 1.1 million acres burned so far this year, **the department's proposed budget justification** calls for \$6.55 billion, split into \$3.7 billion for the new USWFS Operations account and \$2.85 billion for the combined Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund (see the breakdown in detail below). The two separate Suppression Operations funds, while utilized for the same purpose, represent different timelines and authority. The Suppression budget under the \$3.7 billion Operations account must be used first, and the

discretionary Suppression budget in the Reserve fund requires a notification of Congress of its usage. Contained in the report is also a large vehicle procurement estimate for equipment costs and amounts that USWFS is hoping to obtain. Overall, while the budget isn't new, it's the most concrete step towards realization of the USWFS with attached legislative language for its enactment in the report as well.

**U.S. Wildland Fire Service
2026 President's Budget Submission (\$000)**

ACCOUNT/Activity/Subactivity	2024 Actual ¹	2025 Notional ¹	2026 Request ²
WILDLAND FIRE SERVICE OPERATIONS			
Preparedness	492,364	512,364	1,496,100
Total, Preparedness	492,364	512,364	1,496,100
Suppression Operations	383,657	383,657	1,394,657
Total, Suppression Operations	383,657	383,657	1,394,657
Fuels Management	214,450	228,150	770,050
Total, Fuels Management	214,450	228,150	770,050
Other Operations: Burned Area Rehabilitation	10,000	10,000	5,000
Other Operations: Facilities Construction and Maintenance	10,000	10,000	5,000
Other Operations: Joint Fire Science Program	3,000	3,000	0
Other Operations: Intelligence and Technology	0	0	28,500
Other Operations: Grants and Partnerships	0	0	2,800
Total, Other Operations	23,000	23,000	41,300
TOTAL WILDLAND FIRE SERVICE OPERATIONS (excluding Transfers and Supplemental Funding)	1,113,471	1,147,171	3,702,107
<i>Net Other Transfers</i>	<i>5,288</i>	<i>20,511</i>	<i>0</i>
TOTAL, WILDLAND FIRE SERVICE OPERATIONS (including Transfers)	1,118,759	1,167,682	3,702,107
<i>Supplemental Funding: Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58)</i>	<i>262,600</i>	<i>262,600</i>	<i>262,600</i>
<i>Supplemental Funding: Transfer to Office of Inspector General (P.L. 117-58)</i>	<i>-1,313</i>	<i>-1,313</i>	<i>-1,313</i>
<i>Supplemental Funding: Transfer from USDA Forest Service (P.L. 117-58)³</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>530,488</i>
TOTAL, WILDLAND FIRE SERVICE OPERATIONS (including Transfers and Supplemental Funding)	1,380,046	1,428,969	4,493,882
WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS RESERVE FUND			
Suppression Operations	350,000	360,000	2,850,000

Wildfire in the Data

New Report out of Stanford Shows Controlled Burns Can Reduce Wildfire Intensity and Smoke Pollution

With **recent movement in Congress regarding prescribed burn methods**, a new **report from the Stanford Wood's Institute for the Environment** supports similar methods broadly. The study estimates that prescribed burns

could decrease wildfire intensity by 16% and smoke pollution by 14% on average. Wildland urban interface zones (WUI) for instance, saw an 8.5% decrease in wildfire severity as compared to a 20% decrease when prescribed fires were used in non-WUI areas. With the most growth and development occurring in WUI zones, researchers accept that this method isn't a cure-all. The authors note that prescribed burns are one of many tools that can be used to combat increasingly intense wildfires, with different regions needing different treatments. While the method is generally well-received, accidents do occur, with the recent Grand Canyon North Rim fires an **example of changing conditions affecting firefighters abilities to control burns**.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Wildland Urban Interface Summit - Prescott, AZ | Oct. 28-30**
- **Southern Blueridge TREX - Blueridge NC & SC | Nov. 3-15**

Wildfire in the News

- **Washington Post** - What to know about the fires dotting the western U.S. and Canada
- **ABC** - Wildfire destroys historic Grand Canyon Lodge, North Rim closes for the season
- **The New York Times** - Cram Wildfire in Central Oregon Surpasses 60,000 acres
- **BBC** - Air quality alerts issued in Canada and US as wildfires continue to burn

About Us

Wildfire Alliance is a coalition of local governments and state entities working with Congress and federal agencies to address the rising threat of wildfires.



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