

# WILDERNESS FIRE MANAGEMENT: EASIER NOW OR LATER?

*USFS Perspectives on Wilderness Fire and Long-duration Fire  
Management*



Frankie Romero – Fire Use & Fuels Management Program Manager,  
US Forest Service, National Interagency Fire Center, Boise, Idaho



# USFS EMPHASIS AREAS

- **Active Management** –

- Wildfire Risk Reduction & Timber Harvest
- Have we prepared the surrounding land to accept fire?

- **Shared Stewardship** –

- Are our partners and communities there with us?
- Is this action part of a larger plan for managing fire across all jurisdictions, or is it just us talking to ourselves?



# WHAT'S THE BUZZ IN WASHINGTON, DC

- Compassion for human suffering – Camp Fire
- **Risk/Fire Transmission** -
  - Are we a net recipient or net distributor of fire?
  - How do our communities & partners feel?
- Alignment of FSM 5140 (Fuels & Rx fire) & 2320 (Wilderness)
- Value of Wilderness for Recreation on the Rise?
  - Ultra-endurance racing
  - WUI up on the border
  - Is Mt. Biking coming?



# RECENT EXAMPLES

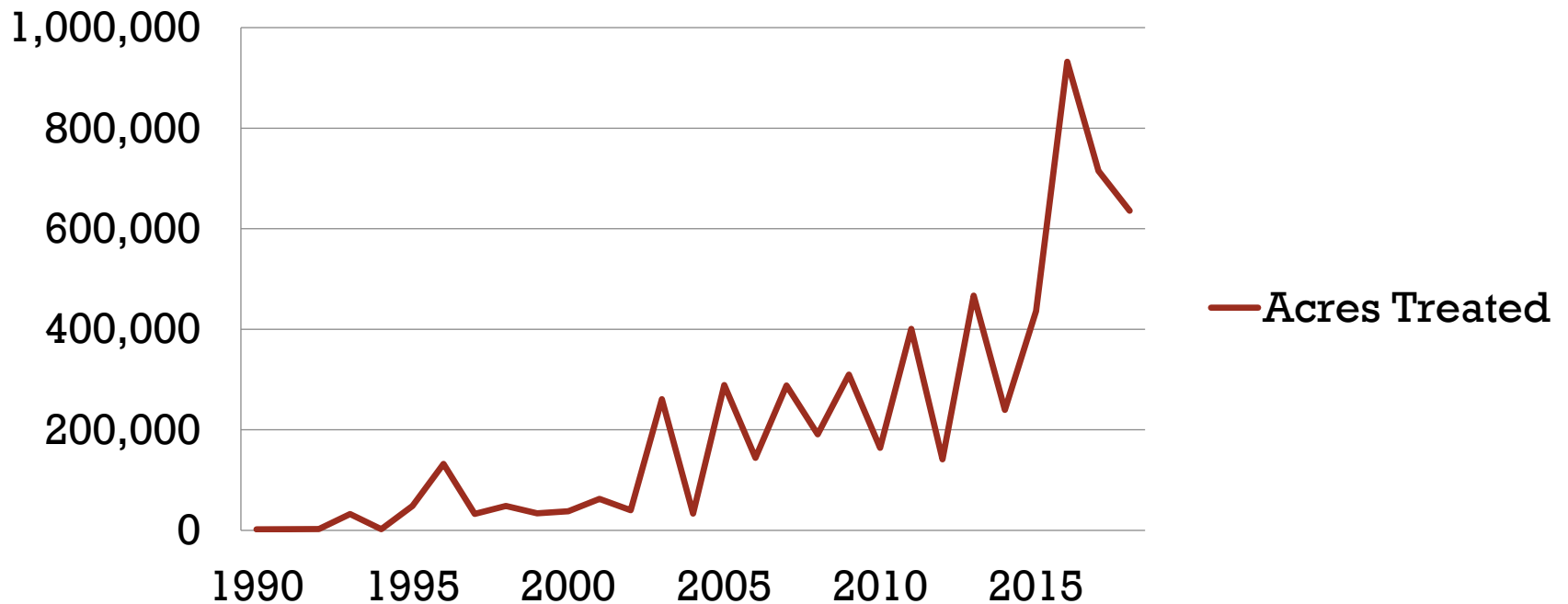
- R3 – Gila NF; Fire proof?
- R3 - Cibola NF (North Fire); preserving Ponderosa
- R4 – Pole Cr./Bald Mt (fire run out)
  - Monitoring what?
  - Predictive analysis lite?
- R5 – Lyons 2018, carry over into 2019
- R6 – Chetco Bar 2017; hazard to responders vs communities
- R8 – Rx fire in Wilderness





# USFS FIRE USE TRENDS

*2018 – 610,000 ac.*



\*1972 to 1989: Avg. 9 PNF for 12,223 acres annually  
1972 to 2015: Total Acres Treated = **4,064,155**

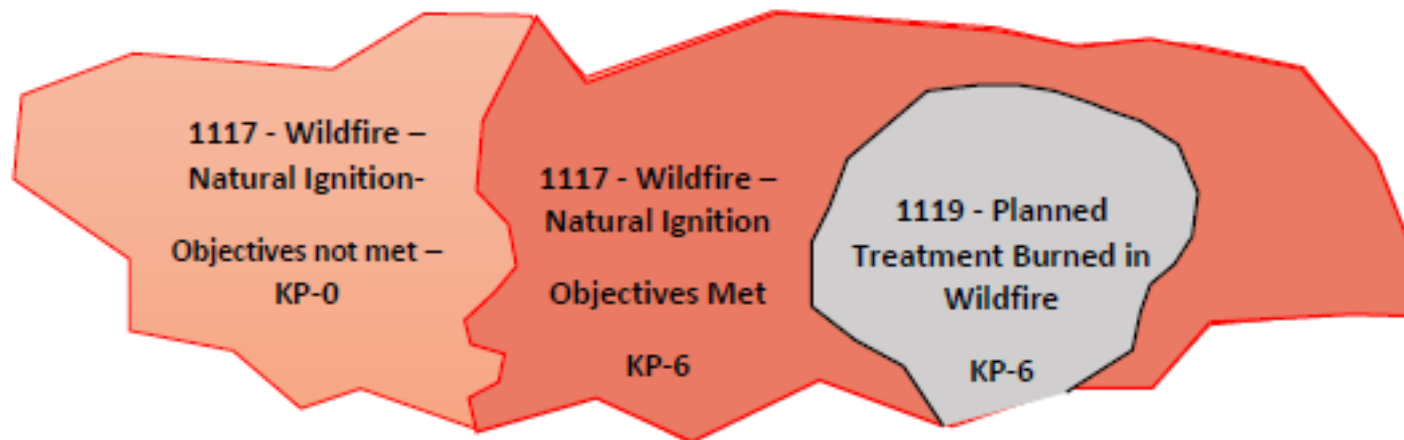


# R1 – TOP QUESTION

- Why don't my wildfire accomplishments count toward my forests/regional fuels target?
  - Don't want local target driven decisions or incentives
  - Do want right fire for right reason
  - Do need transparency on what HF \$ buys

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An existing activity record may be in FACTS for the original planned activity. If this is the case, users can edit or update the activity code and other relevant data fields to reflect the current status.



# REASONS FOR CONCERN

- WUI growing; Middle Ground shrinking
- Transmission of fire (and expense) to partners
- Relative Value – Life/Property vs Natural Fire Effects
- Long-term fire management planning apparatus diminished
- Snag hazards
- Climate: fewer mild years, more extreme years



# REASONS TO BE ENCOURAGED

- Better planning tools (WFDSS, PCL, SDI, etc.)
- Large fire scars to work from
- Number and connectivity of fuel treatments on the rise
  - Keeping fire where we want it and away from other values
- Long-Term (big box) Operational skills are higher today



# QUESTION TO CONSIDER

- Are we really realizing a “benefit”?
  - Or Mitigating Future Risk?



# TAKE HOME

- Keep in Mind: Meeting wilderness objectives only comes after we've dealt with protecting **against threats to people**
- Never say “we’re monitoring” - Always have a plan for control and communicate it

