

# Utah's

## **"Comprehensive, Statewide Wildland Fire Prevention, Preparedness and Suppression Policy"**

(SB 56, 2015)

Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment  
Interim Committee

October 19, 2016

Brian Cottam, Director/State Forester  
Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands



# PRESENTATION OUTLINE

1. A Shift in Philosophy
2. System Goals
3. System Components

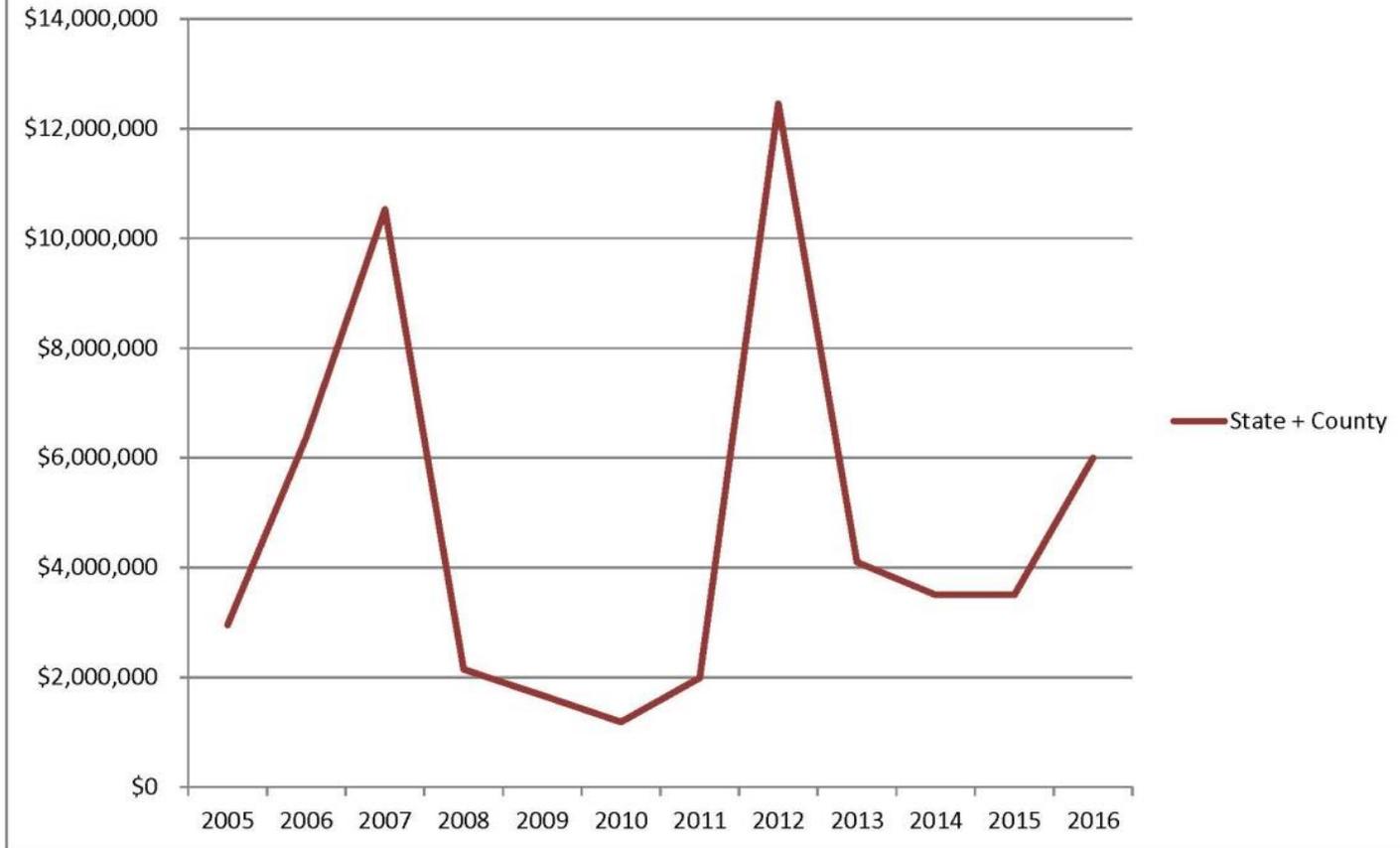
But first, a quick look at  
the 2016 fire season...



# UTAH'S 2016 FIRE SEASON

- 713—and counting—wildland and urban-interface fire responses across all jurisdictions (nearly the same as 2015)
- 34,000+ total acres burned (250% more acres than 2015)
- 89% caught in initial attack (<10 acres)
- 62% human-caused, 38% lightning (increase in human-caused from 2015)
- **ESTIMATED \$5.8 million** in state costs (\$3.5 M in 2015)
- FFSL certified 2,476 wildland firefighters statewide

## Wildland Fire Suppression Costs



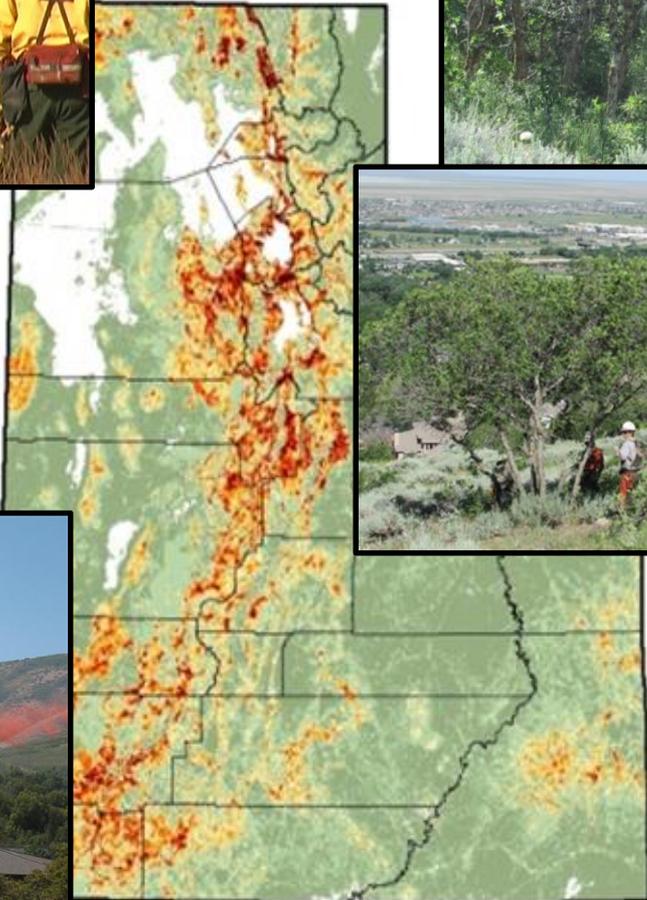
# PRESENTATION OUTLINE

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**REDUCE THE RISK OF WILDFIRE!**



# Cornerstones of a Successful Policy Change

- Emphasize wildfire risk reduction—*prevention, preparedness & mitigation*—not just suppression.
- Everyone shares in paying the total costs of wildfires; therefore, we should all play a role in the reduction of wildfire risk & costs.
- Mutually agreeable solution for state, counties and cities/towns.
- LEAD TO LOWER TOTAL COSTS!



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# Wildfire Risk Reduction Goals

as found in 65A-8-103 (from 2015's SB 56)

Improving wildfire prevention, preparedness and mitigation through:

- *Restoring and maintaining landscapes*, ensuring landscapes across the state are resilient to wildfire-related disturbances...;
- *Creating fire-adapted communities*, ensuring that human populations and infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life or property;
- *Improving wildfire response*, ensuring that all political subdivisions can participate in making and implementing safe, effective and efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions.



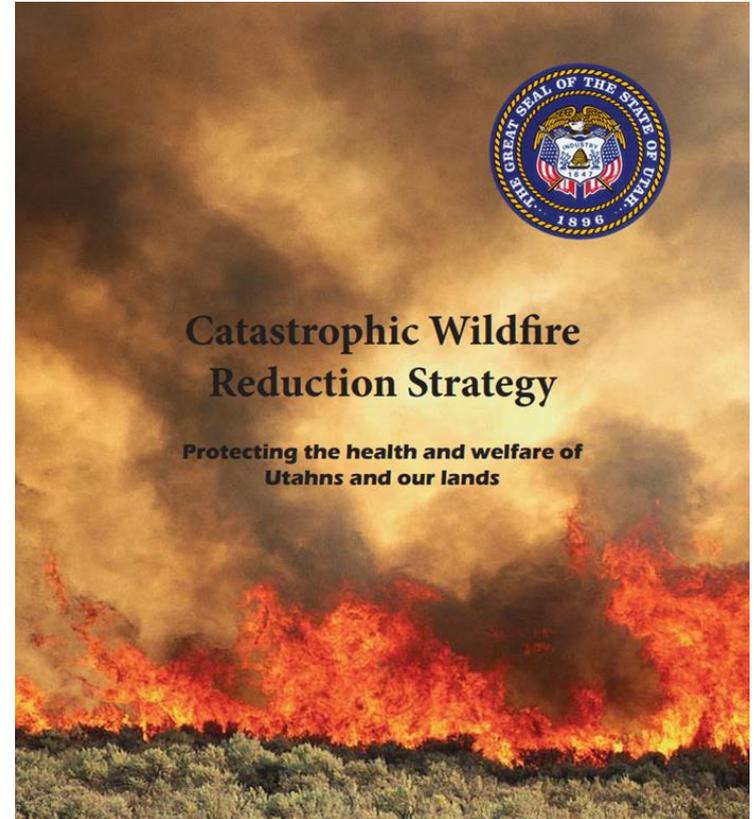
# PRESENTATION OUTLINE

1. A Shift in Philosophy

2. System Goals

## 3. System Components

- a. Watershed Restoration Initiative (“WRI”)
- b. Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy (“CatFire”)
- c. Utah Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal (“UWRAP”)
- d. New Wildland Fire Statutes (“fire policy”)



# Comprehensive, Statewide Wildfire Management System

**Wildland Fire  
Policy**

**Catastrophic  
Wildfire  
Reduction  
Strategy**



**Wildfire  
Risk Assessment**

**Watershed  
Restoration  
Initiative**

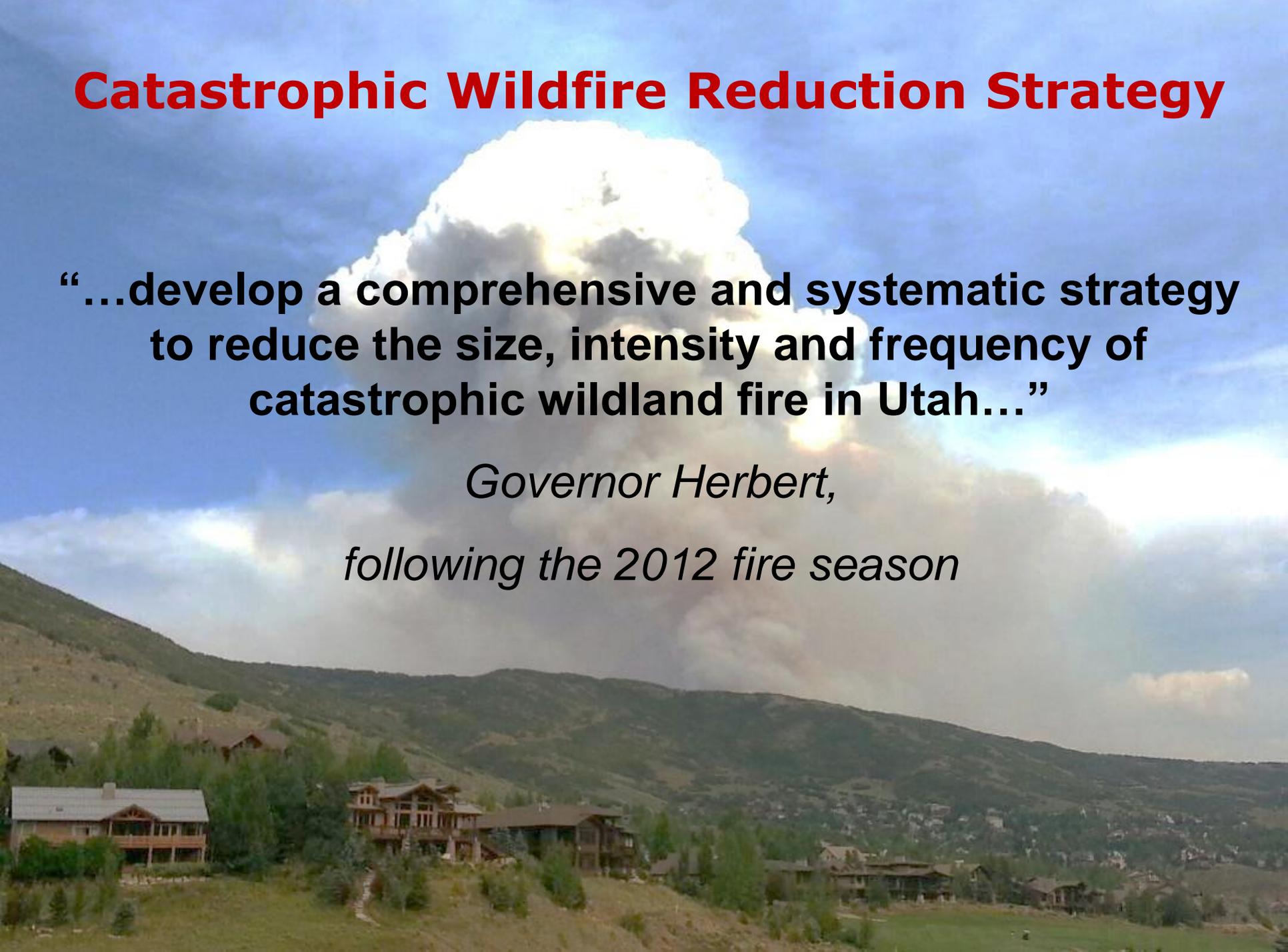
# Watershed Restoration Initiative

- Landscape scale
- Watershed and land health
- Multiple benefits (wildlife habitat, fire mitigation, sage grouse, etc.)



**WRI helps meet the risk reduction goal of “restoring and maintaining landscapes.”**

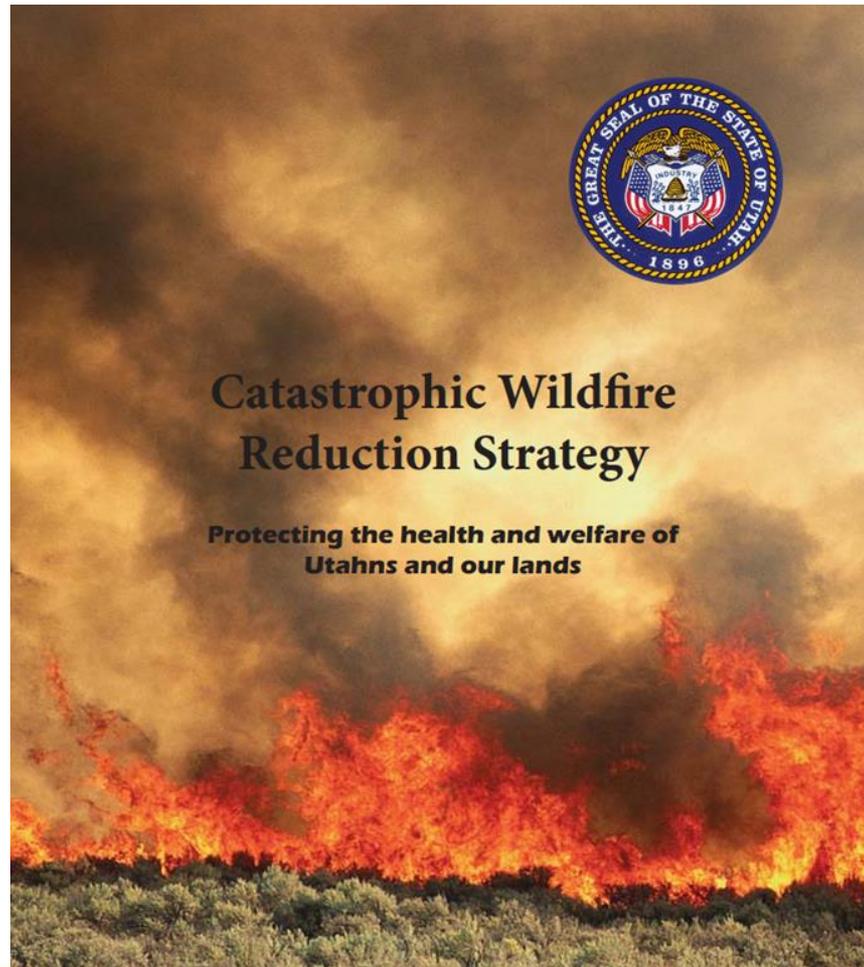
# Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy



**“...develop a comprehensive and systematic strategy to reduce the size, intensity and frequency of catastrophic wildland fire in Utah...”**

*Governor Herbert,  
following the 2012 fire season*

# Completed and Presented to Governor Herbert December 2013



# “CatFire”



## Process

- Statewide Steering Committee
- Regional Work Groups
- Risk-based decisions of priority areas, values at risk, and actions to reduce risk

## Outcomes

- All partners invited to participate
- Unique statewide prioritization
- Wildfire risk reduction funding and projects
- *Measurably reduced risk*





# UTAH DNR WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT PORTAL

FORESTRY

HOME

ABOUT

SUPPORT

CONTACT

SIGN IN / REGISTER

## APPLICATIONS

Public Viewer



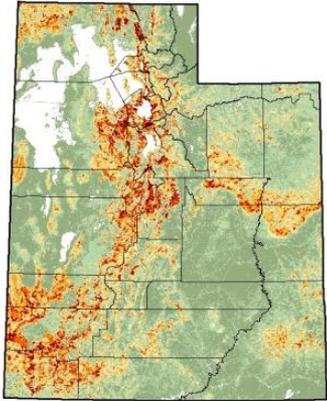
Professional Viewer



## Nate Barrons

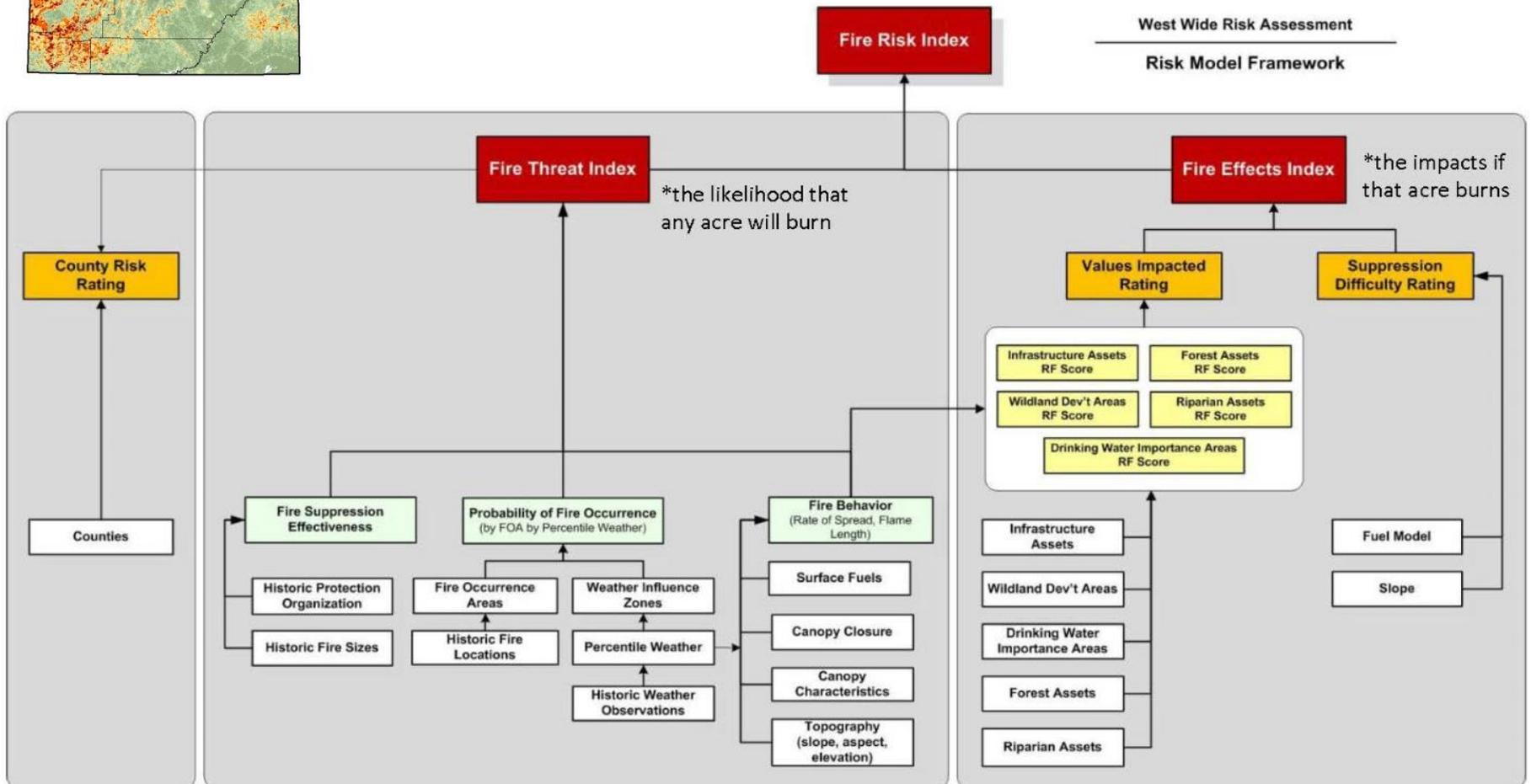
Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy Coordinator  
and UWRAP project manager



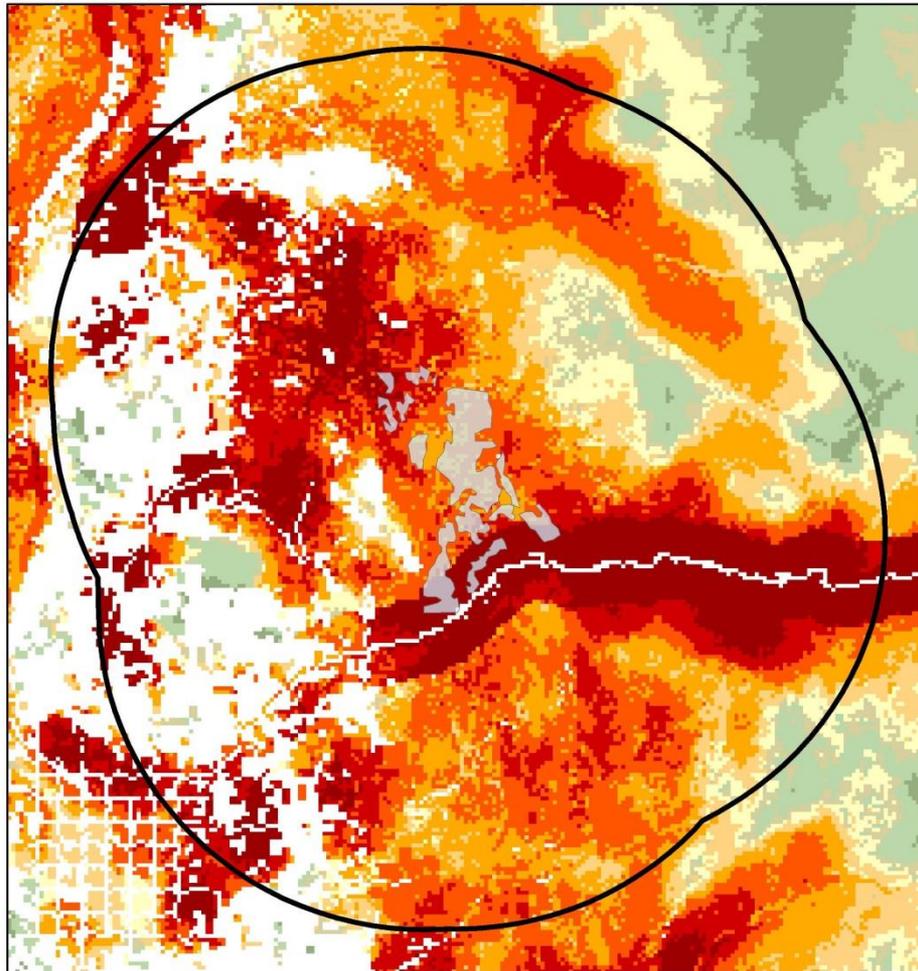


# How We Measure Wildfire Risk

## UWRAP Data Structure



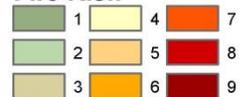
Based on the Interagency West Wide Risk Assessment



### Fairview Heights Phase 3 Project Analysis

Average Risk: 6.61

#### Fire Risk



#### Legend

Fairview Heights Phase III   
 (Fairview Heights Phase III (1.5 Mile Buffer for Analysis) 



# Wildland Fire Statutes



Enrolled Copy S.C.

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE WILDLAND FIRE PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS, AND SUPPRESSION POLICY**

2014 GENERAL SESSION  
STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Evan J. Vickers**  
House Sponsor: Joel K. Briscoe

**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**  
This concurrent resolution of the Legislature and the Governor expresses support for the recommendations in the Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy and strongly urges its implementation.

**Highlighted Provisions:**  
This resolution:  

- expresses the Legislature's strong desire to reduce catastrophic wildfires;
- expresses support for the recommendations in the Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy;
- strongly urges the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands to implement the recommendations in the Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy in partnership with the Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Steering Committee and guided by the report's recommendations;
- strongly urges the state forester to report to the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee regarding progress on implementing the strategy, particularly the progress of the "Regionally Significant Projects"; and
- strongly urges the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands to coordinate the development of a Comprehensive Statewide Wildland Fire Prevention, Preparedness, and Suppression Policy.

**Special Clauses:**  
None

Enrolled Copy S.B. 56

**WILDLAND FIRE POLICY**

2015 GENERAL SESSION  
STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Evan J. Vickers**  
House Sponsor: Joel K. Briscoe

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**  
This bill modifies the responsibilities of the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands.

**Highlighted Provisions:**  
This bill:  

- requires the director of the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands to:  
  - coordinate the development of a state-wide wildland fire policy; and
  - report to the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee on the director's recommendation for a state-wide wildland fire policy;
- describes the goals of a state-wide catastrophic wildfire reduction strategy; and
- states that the division may use funds to promote wildfire prevention, wildfire mitigation, and wildfire preparedness.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**  
None

**Other Special Clauses:**  
None

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

**AMENDS:**  
26 **65A-8-103**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2011, Chapter 342

**ENACTS:**  
28 **65A-8-103.5**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

Enrolled Copy S.B. 122

**WILDLAND FIRE POLICY UPDATES**

2016 GENERAL SESSION  
STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Evan J. Vickers**  
House Sponsor: Joel K. Briscoe

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**  
This bill modifies procedures surrounding the management of wildland fire.

**Highlighted Provisions:**  
This bill:  

- defines terms;
- requires a municipality to abate uncontrolled wildfire on private or municipality-owned land within its boundaries, under certain circumstances;
- authorizes a municipality, county, or certain special districts to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands;
- states that a city, town, county, or special district that enters into a cooperative agreement may be eligible to have the costs of catastrophic wildland fire suppression paid by the state;
- states that a city, town, county, or special district that does not enter into a cooperative agreement shall be responsible for wildland fire suppression costs within its jurisdiction;
- describes the requirements to enter into a cooperative agreement; and
- makes technical changes.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**  
This bill appropriates:  

- to the Department of Natural Resources – Forestry, Fire, and States Lands, as a one-time appropriation;

Enrolled Copy S.B. 122

**WILDLAND FIRE SUPPRESSION FUND**

2016 GENERAL SESSION  
STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Evan J. Vickers**  
House Sponsor: Joel K. Briscoe

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**  
This bill modifies the Wildland Fire Suppression Fund.

**Highlighted Provisions:**  
This bill:  

- creates a source of funding for the Wildland Fire Suppression Fund;
- modifies the structure of the Wildland Fire Suppression Fund; and
- makes technical changes.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**  
This bill appropriates:  

- to the Wildland Fire Suppression Fund, as a one-time appropriation:  
  - from the Mineral Bonus Account, \$2,000,000.

**Other Special Clauses:**  
None

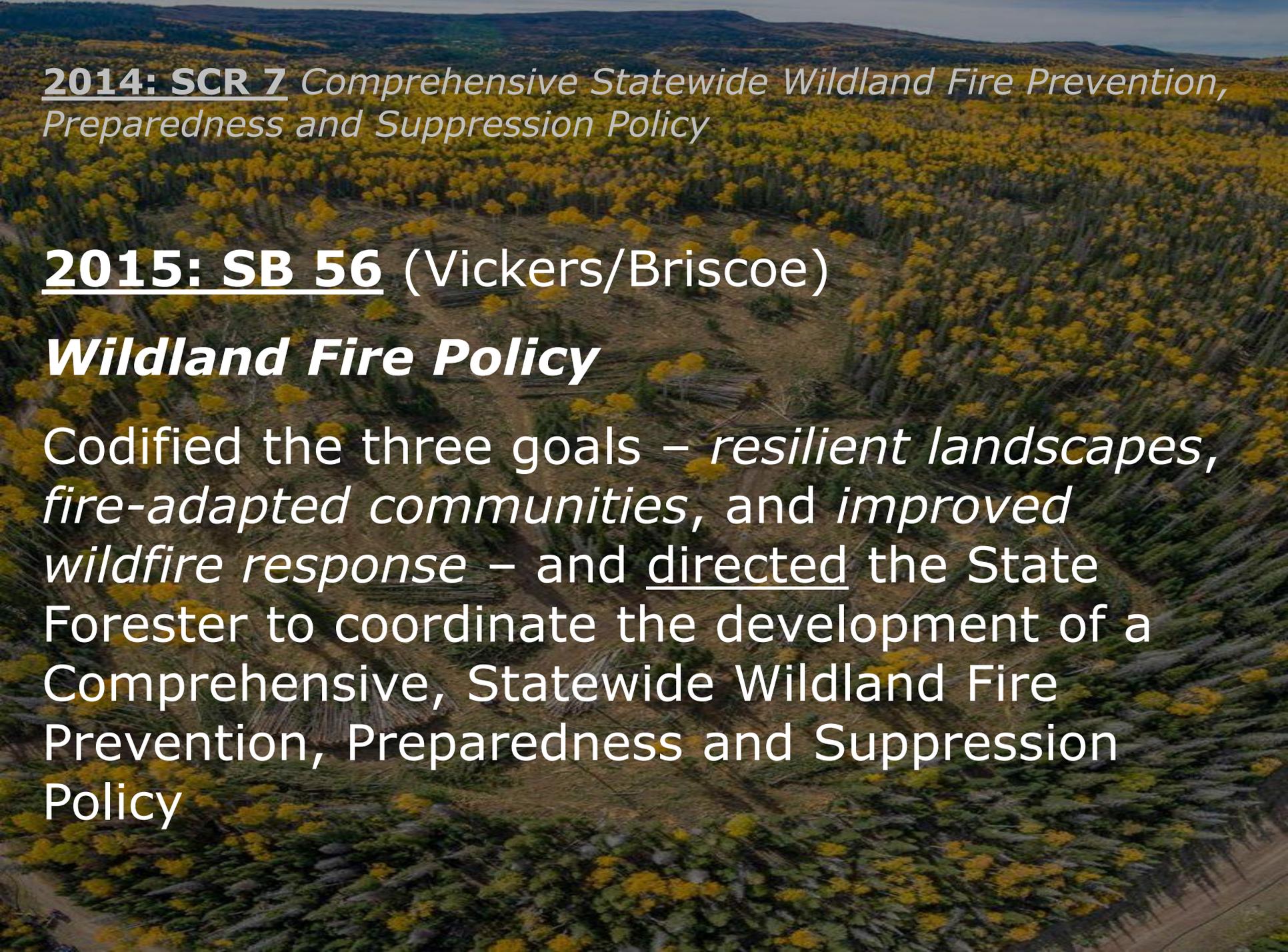
**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

**AMENDS:**  
59-21-2, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2012, Chapters 212 and 242  
63J-1-314, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2013, Chapter 295  
63J-1-315, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2015, Chapter 283  
63J-3-103, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2014, Chapter 63  
63N-3-106, as renumbered and amended by Laws of Utah 2015, Chapter 283

## 2014: SCR 7 (Vickers/Briscoe)

### ***Concurrent Resolution on Comprehensive Statewide Wildland Fire Prevention, Preparedness and Suppression Policy***

“...expresses support for the Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy and strongly urges its implementation.” As well, “...the Legislature and the Governor strongly urge the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands to coordinate the development of a Comprehensive Statewide Wildland Fire Prevention, Preparedness and Suppression Policy.”



**2014: SCR 7** *Comprehensive Statewide Wildland Fire Prevention, Preparedness and Suppression Policy*

**2015: SB 56** (Vickers/Briscoe)

### ***Wildland Fire Policy***

Codified the three goals – *resilient landscapes, fire-adapted communities, and improved wildfire response* – and directed the State Forester to coordinate the development of a Comprehensive, Statewide Wildland Fire Prevention, Preparedness and Suppression Policy



**2014: SCR 7** *Comprehensive Statewide Wildland Fire Prevention, Preparedness and Suppression Policy*

**2015: SB 56** *Wildland Fire Policy* – three goals

**2016: SB 122** (Vickers/Briscoe)

## ***Wildland Fire Policy Updates***

Completely rewrote the Division's wildfire statute and creates the State's new comprehensive wildland fire management system ("fire policy") in partnership with UAC, ULCT and Utah Fire Chiefs Association.

# Wildland Fire Policy

- The State assumes suppression costs of large and extended-attack wildland fires on all lands other than federal;
- In exchange, local government maintains initial attack and implements prevention, preparedness and mitigation activities that are *proven* to reduce wildfire suppression costs.





**2014: SCR 7** *Comprehensive Statewide Wildland Fire Prevention, Preparedness and Suppression Policy*

**2015: SB 56** *Wildland Fire Policy – three goals*

**2016: SB 122** *Wildland Fire Policy Updates – new fire management system*

**2016: SB 212** (Vickers/Briscoe)

***Wildland Fire Suppression Fund***

Creates new funding sources for the Wildland Fire Suppression Fund.

# CatFire, Wildland Fire Policy & WRI together reduce wildfire risk and cost!

## GOALS FROM THE STRATEGY

### 1 Restore & Maintain Landscapes

- Fuels Treatments
- Prescribed Fire
- Forest Products Industry (Logging)
- Managed Wildfire



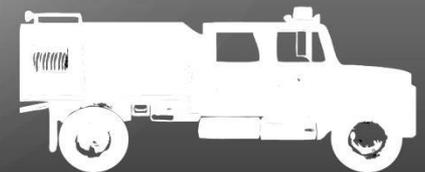
### 2 Create Fire-Adapted Communities

- Community Wildfire Protection Plans
- Prevention & Education Programming to Reduce Fire Ignitions
- Homeowner Incentives
- Ready Set Go! Program through Local Fire Departments
- Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Code



### 3 Improved Fire Response

- Local FDs with Wildland "INITIAL ATTACK" Capacity
- State Wildland Crews
- Protection of Homes and Infrastructure in Anticipation of Long-Duration Fires



Utah has created a model wildland fire management system that emphasizes **proactive risk reduction** and **more effective fire response.**

If implemented correctly, over time, this system will help slow the ever-increasing rate of **wildfire suppression costs** and the exponentially increasing **total costs of wildfire.**



Questions

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Thank You for saving our homes!



# **Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands**

**801-538-5555**

**[www.ffsl.utah.gov](http://www.ffsl.utah.gov)**