

CWSF
COUNCIL OF WESTERN STATE FORESTERS

FY 2025

# WILDFIRE IMPACT REPORT

UT | Great Basin Team 3

**Wildfire activity** in the Western United States has **grown significantly in frequency, severity, and size**, creating pressing **challenges for land managers and communities**.

Extended fire seasons, hotter and drier conditions, and the expansion of development in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) all contribute to the **increasing complexity of wildfire response, mitigation, and recovery**.

## STATE FORESTRY AGENCIES LEAD THE WAY

> State forestry agencies are responsible for wildfire response on over **1.1 billion acres** of land and **respond to more than 80% of wildfires nationwide.**[1]

In fiscal year (FY) 2025, state fire protection covered **more than 392 million acres of private land** and **over 191 million acres of federal land** across the western states and Pacific Islands.

Nationwide, state forestry agencies provide local governments and volunteer fire departments with access to fire and emergency response resources, which in 2025 included over 225,000 firefighters, 100,000 fire engines, 2,900 dozers, and 620 aircraft.[1]

## CRITICAL INVESTMENTS

Investments in wildfire management, such as the **State Fire Capacity** (SFC) and **Volunteer Fire Capacity** (VFC) Programs, **provide essential financial and technical support to states and local communities**.



MT | Josh Birnbaum

### SFC AND VFC PROGRAMS:

- Support fuels reduction work
- Safeguard firefighting resources
- Enhance public safety
- Help to build overall response capacity

In FY25, **more than $35 million in federal funding was awarded through the SFC program and more than $8 million through the VFC program across the West**, each matched with an equal or greater investment from states.

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AZ | AZ DFFM Tucson Crew Captain Chris Rubio

## IN FY 2025,
## WESTERN STATES & PACIFIC ISLANDS PROVIDED SUPPORT TO:

**7,872**
VOLUNTEER & RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS

&

**1,424**
STATE FIRE COMMUNITIES

Targeted mitigation investments lead to healthier, more resilient forests and rangelands, which in turn reduce the costs of catastrophic wildfires. Every dollar invested in forest restoration can provide up to seven dollars of return in the form of benefits and provide a return-on-investment of 600% *(Hjerpe et al., 2024)*.

From 2019 to 2025, **the SFC WUI Competitive Grant program helped drive nearly $194 million in wildfire mitigation efforts**, supporting fuel treatments, education, and mitigation planning.

These efforts go hand in hand with proper defensible space, Community Wildfire Protection Plans, Firewise communities, and public outreach campaigns that help communities prepare for and live with wildfire.

## THE PATH FORWARD

Addressing the challenges of wildfire requires sustained collaboration and investment across all levels of government.

**Continued federal investments** and **interagency coordination are key** to strengthening mitigation, reducing long-term wildfire impacts, and ensuring the safety and resilience of communities across the West.

[1] National Association of State Foresters, https://www.stateforesters.org/where-we-stand/wildfire/

## STATE SPOTLIGHTS

The **Nebraska Forest Service** strengthened wildfire response capacity by managing over 1,000 surplus military equipment assets valued at over $110 million, supporting wildland engines and vehicles distributed to 323 volunteer fire departments, 21 county emergency managers, and three state agencies.

In FY 2025, **Arizona** welcomed 35 new Firewise communities, bringing the total to 215 communities. The renewal rate for these communities jumped to 97%, reflecting strong local commitment to wildfire preparedness.

The Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit membership organization comprised of 17 western State Foresters and six U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Island Foresters. Learn more about CWSF at www.westernforesters.org. *This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*