



Wildland Fire Management

State Fire Assistance Program

Description: Fire has always been one of nature's tools for stimulating new plant growth and recycling nutrients. When fires are excluded from forests for long periods of time, however, fires that do start will burn more intensely, putting resources, lives, and property at greater risk. Because more people are moving into the countryside and building homes in heavily wooded lots, the potential for catastrophic wildfires is greater than ever. This wildland-urban interface also presents challenges to wildland firefighters from State and Federal agencies, as well as the local firefighters who are responsible for protecting threatened homes and property. State wildland fire suppression agencies reported an average of 14,890 wildfires annually across the 20 Northeastern and Midwestern States during the past 10 years.

The Cooperative Fire Protection Program protects lives, homes, and improved property from wildfires on State and private lands, and maintains healthy forests and grasslands. The financial, technical, educational, and related assistance this program provides helps States and local entities use leading-edge prevention, mitigation, fire control, and management techniques to protect their communities. Cooperative Fire Protection Program grants and assistance for the 20 Northeastern and Midwestern States help to support State wildland fire programs that serve 40 percent of the Nation's population.

Key Issues:

- Federal assistance is critical to effective fire management programs across multiple jurisdictions.
- State and local volunteer fire organizations are key to wildland fire suppression in the Northeast and Midwest.

State Fire Assistance Grant Program: This program provides financial and technical assistance to help States and local fire organizations in these ways:

- Improve their capacity to fight wildland fires;
- Complete treatments that mitigate hazards, such as fuel reduction;
- Collaborate with local communities and partners to develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans;
- Implement fire prevention, Firewise, and fire-adapted community initiatives; and
- Acquire small equipment.

The emphasis is on aggressively attacking all wildfires initially to keep fires small and manageable, which reduces public safety risks, prevents damage and losses, promotes firefighter safety, and minimizes overall fire suppression costs. This program requires a 50/50 match by the States.

Benefits:

The State Fire Assistance Program offers these benefits:

- Complements Federal firefighting forces to optimize fire protection across ownerships.
- Enhances hazardous mitigation efforts across ownerships to protect communities.
- Provides a fire protection training link for local volunteer fire departments.
- Enhances State and local fire protection capacity and capabilities.
- Engages communities and homeowners in recognizing fire hazards and opportunities to develop local solutions.

Accomplishments for FY 2016:

- Treated 68,832 acres with prescribed fire.
- Treated 2,000 acres mechanically with equipment to reduce hazardous fuels.
- Completed 95 community protection plans or equivalent plans.
- Delivered 3,081 educational programs.
- Trained 15,671 people in Incident Management and wildland fire suppression topics.
- Delivered specialized assistance to 2,160 communities at reduced risk for training, enhancing rural water supplies, and defensible space/Firewise activities in high-priority watersheds.



Budget History:

State Fire Assistance Program

(dollars in thousands)

Fiscal Year	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016
Funding	\$14,082	\$13,032	\$12,748	\$12,454

Future Direction:

- Emphasize effective, efficient, and coordinated use of Federal, State, and local resources.
- Promote the integration of fire management into landscape-scale management planning and implementation.

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