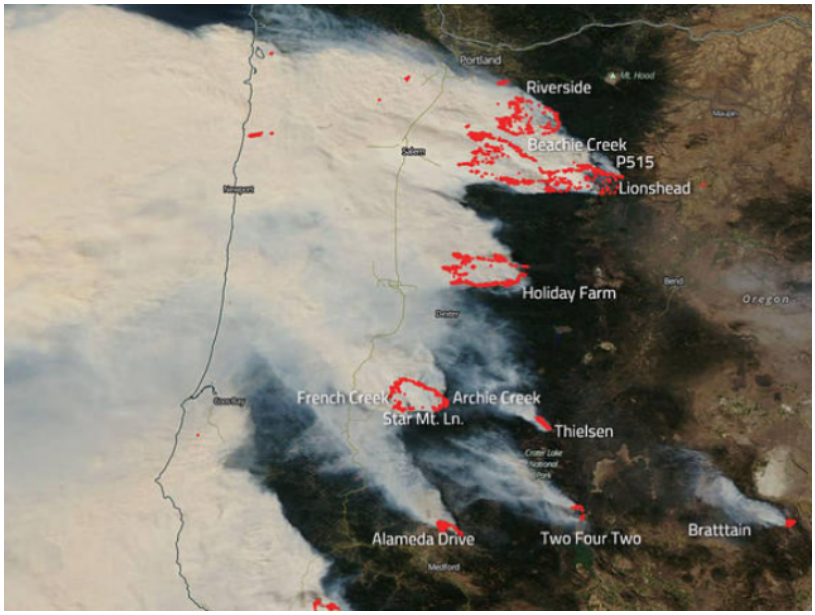
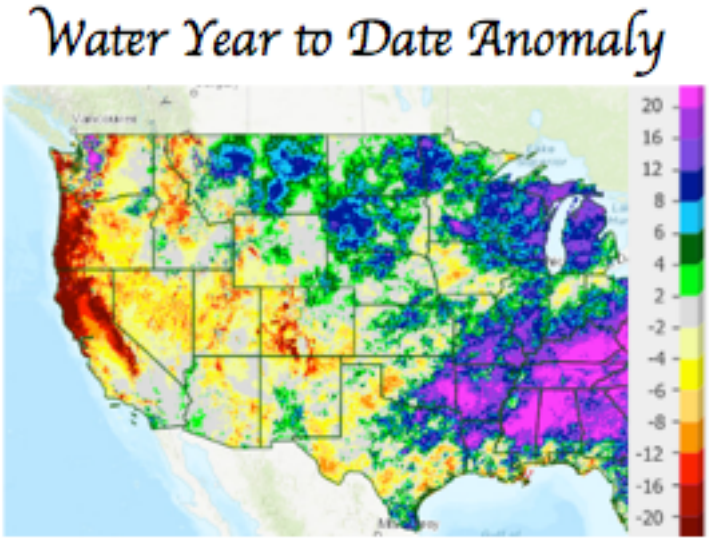
Update: Fire Season in the West 2020

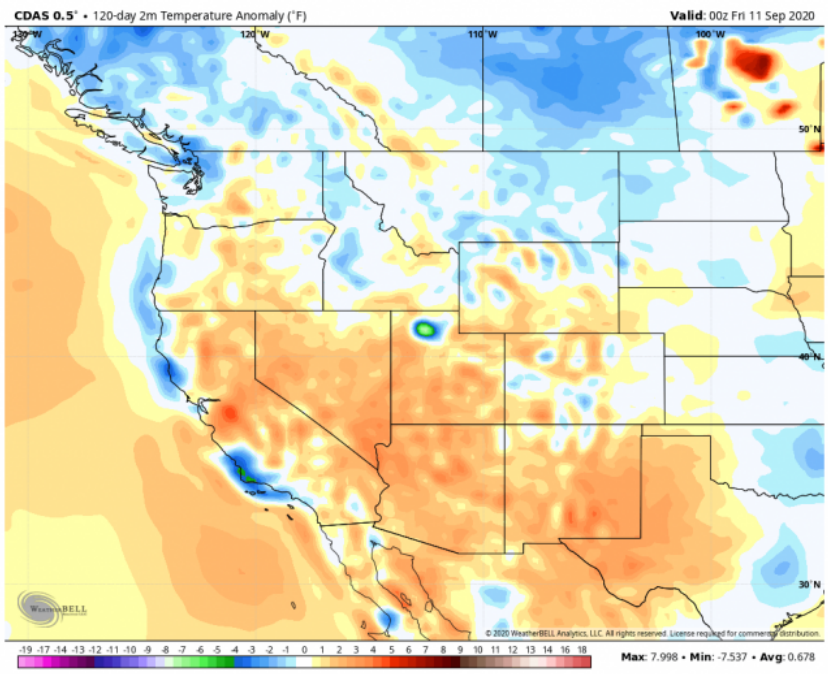


Fires are ablaze in the western states. It is an annual occurrence. The National Interagency Fire Center has recorded the number of fires and acreage affected since 1985.

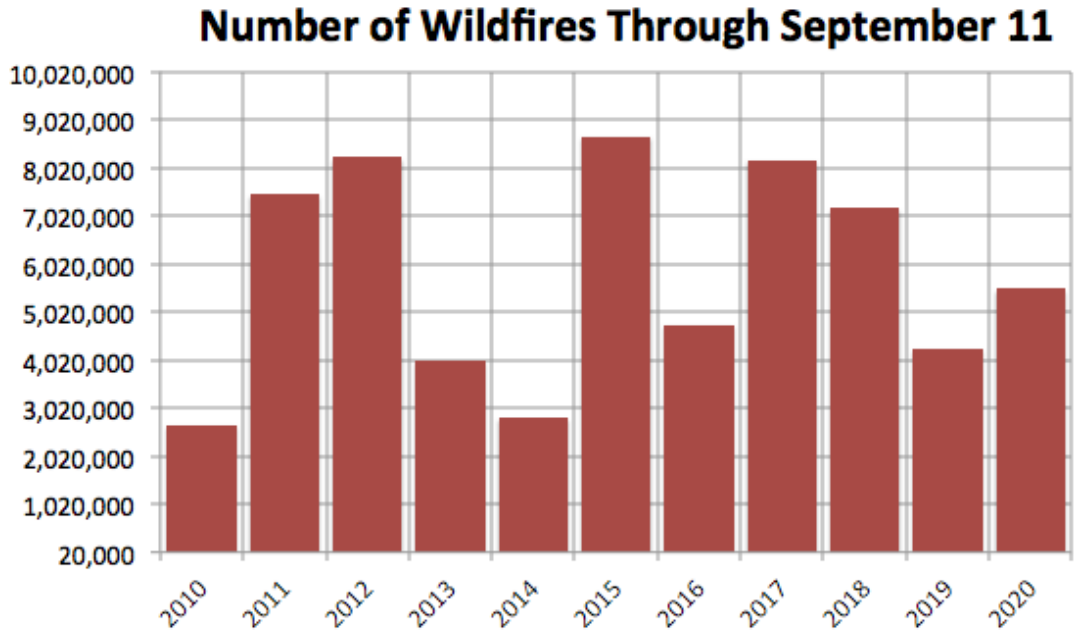
This year it is aggravated by drought and heat, but for the country as a whole, it is in the middle of the pack since 2010.



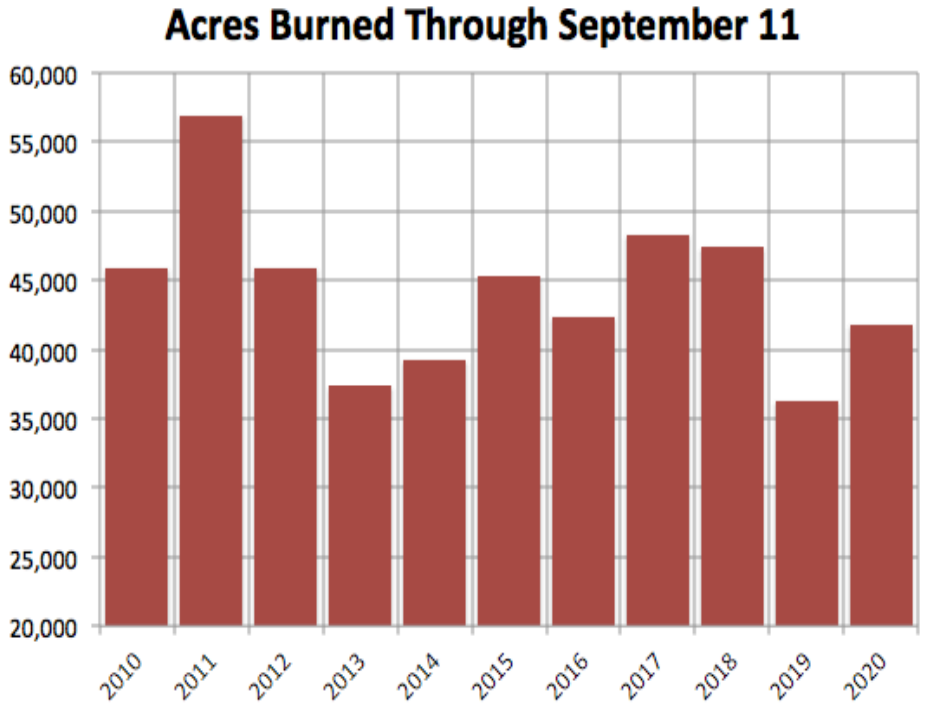
Last 4 months of Temperature Anomalies:



The number of fires is 6th most since 2010 in the NIFC [data base](#) (US fires).



Acres burned is 7th highest as of September 11.



90% of the fires are caused by humans though natural seasonal weather variations create conditions that are conducive to fires and the rapid spread of these fires west to increasingly populated areas.

In the past, lightning and campfires caused most forest fires; today most are the result of power lines igniting trees. The power lines have increased proportionately with the population, so it can be reasoned that most of the damage from large wildfires in California is partially a result of increased population. The increased danger is also greatly aggravated by poor government forest management choices.

"In the United States, wildfires are also due in part to a failure to thin forests or remove dead and diseased trees". In 2014, forestry professor David B. South of Auburn University testified to the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee that "data suggest that extremely large megafires were four-times more common before 1940," adding that "we cannot reasonably say that anthropogenic global warming causes extremely large wildfires."

In this Wall Street Journal opinion piece Only Good Management Can Prevent Forest Fires - There's nothing new about catastrophic blazes.

It's how nature has always dealt with overgrowth. The author, Tom McClintock writes:

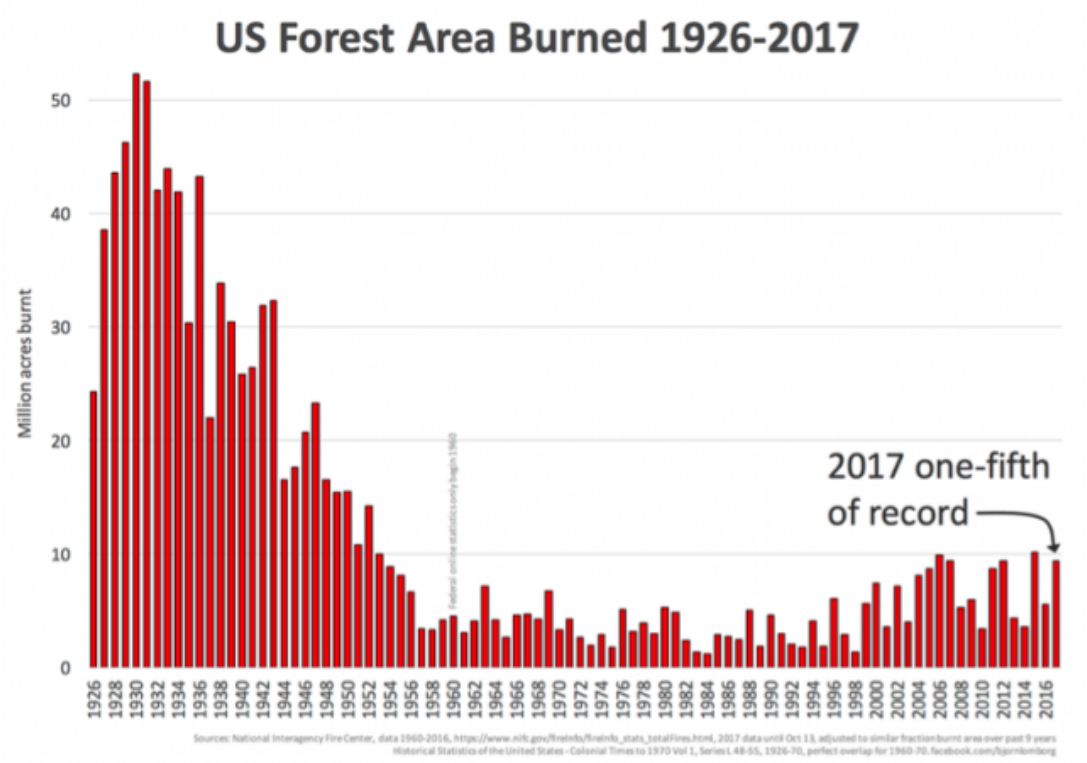
"Excess timber comes out of a forest in two ways—it gets carried out or burned out. For much of the 20th century, harvesting excess timber produced thriving forests by matching tree density to the ability of the land to support it. Foresters designated surplus trees, and loggers bid for the right to remove them at auction, with the proceeds going to the U.S. Treasury. These revenues were then put back into forest management and shared with local communities.

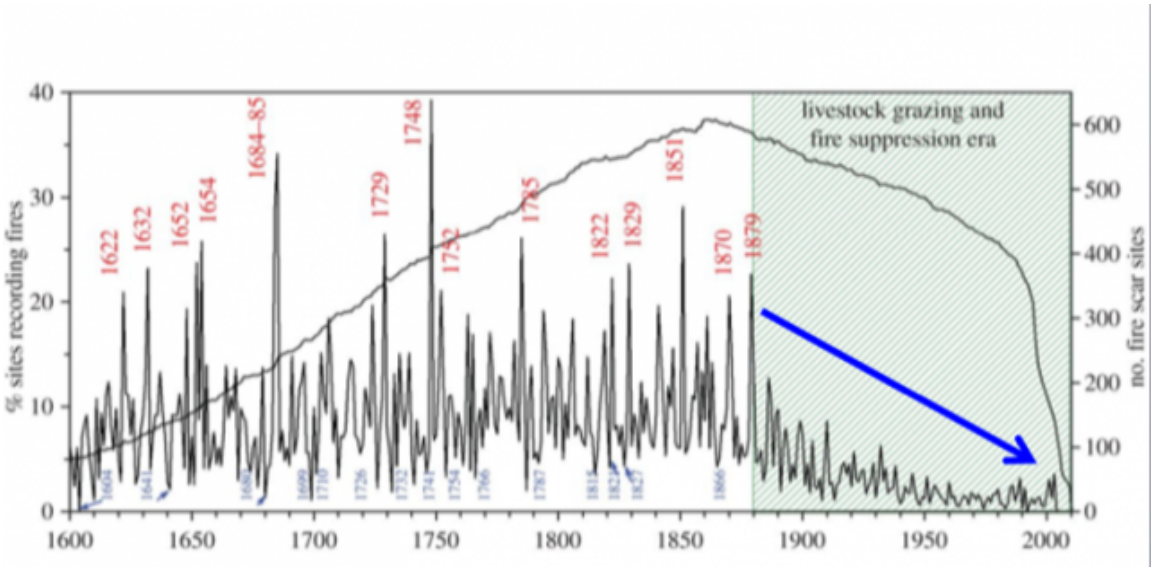
What went wrong? In the 1970s, Congress passed a series of laws subjecting federal land management to time-consuming and cost-prohibitive environmental regulations. Instead of generating revenues, forest management now costs the government money. As a result, timber harvested from federal lands has declined 80%, while acreage destroyed by fire has increased proportionally."

California's catastrophic wildfire seasons in recent years illuminated the years' long stalemate between those who want to cut back the overgrown, beetle-infested national forests and environmentalists who have axed efforts to fell more trees, blaming the destructive fires on climate change.

In December, 2017, the U.S. Forest Service announced that California had set a record with 129 million dead trees on 8.9 million acres, the result of a five-year drought and beetle-kill, but that its tree mortality task force had removed only about 1 million.

Meanwhile, the logging industry has continued its free fall, with timber harvesting dropping by 80 percent in the past 40 years, as projects in the national forests are killed or delayed by "frivolous litigation from radical environmentalists who would rather see forests and communities burn than see a logger in the woods," our Interior Department admitted. Before foresters were involved a century or more ago, the western fires were far more extensive.





Incidence in wildfires in North America 1600-2000

Sweetnam et al. 2016 Phil Trans B