

Western Water Threatened by Wildfire:

It's Not Just a Public Lands Issue



Water Scarcity is a Major Concern

- Persistent Western drought
- 2015 - record low snowpack; low reservoir storage levels
- 2015 – record 9.1 million acres burned
- Protecting the West’s limited clean water supply is vital



At least

64

million Westerners

depend on surface water for their
clean water supply that comes
from or is filtered by

**forested
watersheds.**



Healthy forests are key to clean water

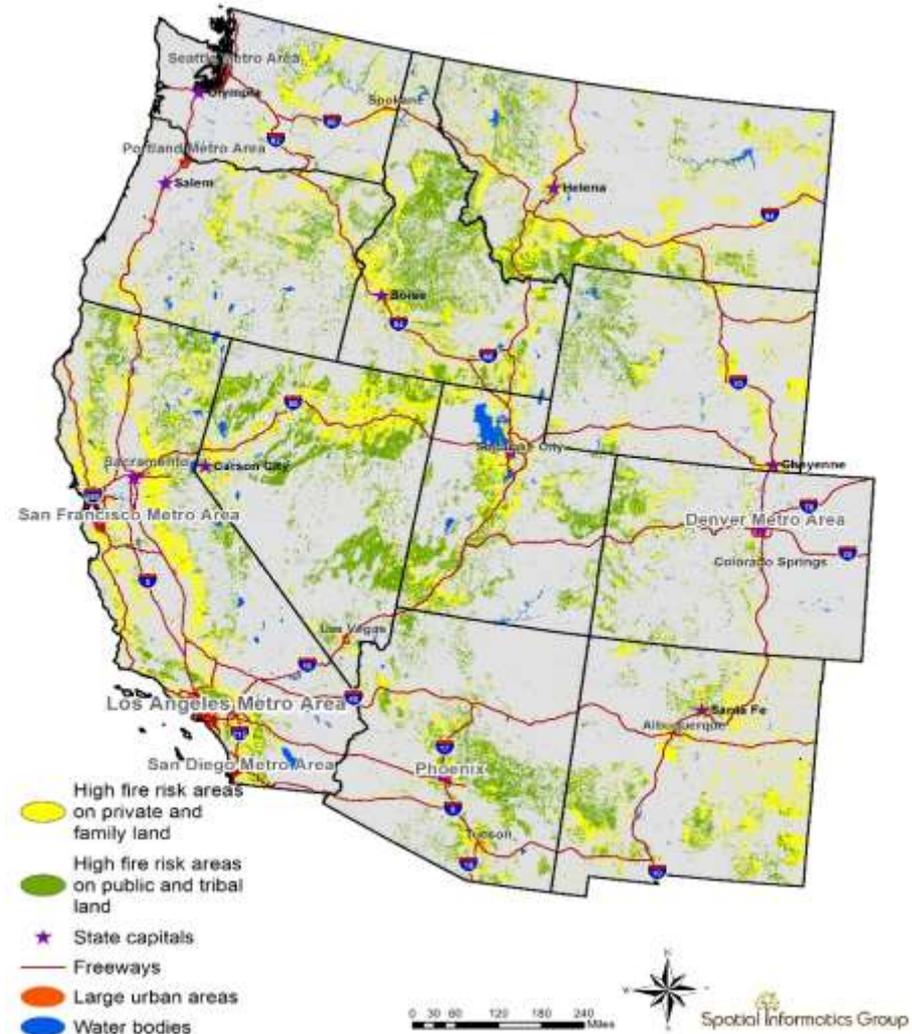
- Natural filter and water storage system, regulates streamflow, reduces flooding
- While only **31% of West is forested**, **65% of the water** supply to the West comes from these forested lands
- Catastrophic high severity fire is a significant threat to clean water



The Threat of Fire

- Fire is not a public lands-only issue
- High fire threat on 93 million acres of public lands
- More than 52 million acres at high fire threat on private lands

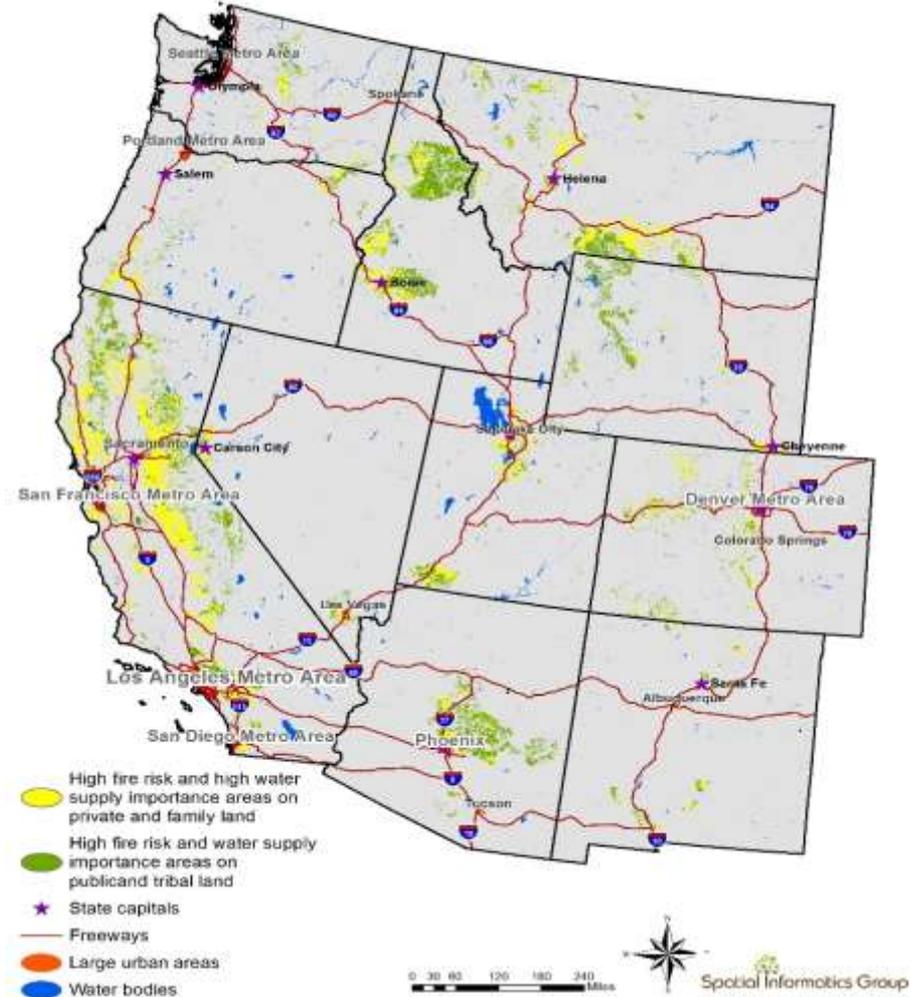
High Fire Risk Lands



The Threat of Fire to Clean Water

- On public lands – high fire threat on nearly **21 million acres** in important water supply watersheds
- On private lands - more than **13.5 million acres**
- Oregon, acre for acre, has more risk to public water supply on private lands

High Fire Risk and Important Water Supply Lands



What do private landowners think?

- Family forest landowners are worried about fire, now more than ever - **62%** say fire is their top concern
- But only **25%** will “definitely” take action in the coming year



Barriers to Action

high costs



77%

of landowners cite high cost as

**a barrier to
good forest
management**

and wildfire protection.



Barriers to Action

- **64% worry about the lack of action on neighboring land**
- **Family forest landowners are aware & motivated, but we need help!**



On the Ground

- Grow Western US project portfolio
- In NE Oregon - the Blue Mountains Project
- Collaborate with a broad range of partners
- Bring unengaged landowners to the table



Grizzly Complex Fire, Oregon, August 20, 2015



American Forest Foundation Recommendations

- **Increase on-the-ground cross-boundary efforts to engage private & family landowners**
 - Expand collaborative efforts to include private lands in addition to public lands
 - Embrace new tools and strategies to reach landowners



Recommendations

- **Improve policy and public funding to support on-the-ground action**
 - Fix the USFS wildfire suppression funding problem
 - Create and enhance authorities and funding to stimulate cross-boundary action
 - Prioritize cross-boundary activities in State Forest Action Plans



Recommendations

- **Catalyze markets to reduce treatment costs, resulting in economically viable, healthy forests**
 - Social capital investment solutions
 - Focus market investment where private and family lands can supply raw material



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Partner Communications Toolkit

WARNING
BURNED WATERSHED
NEXT MILE
RISK FROM FLASH FLOODS
ROCKFALL AND DEBRIS



Western Water Threatened by Wildfire: It's Not Just a Public Lands Issue, a new report from the American Forest Foundation, is a great tool to help raise the profile of private and family landowners in the West, and support them in reducing wildfire risk and protecting clean water. Creating awareness of these findings can help us towards our mutual goals in Washington, D.C., in our individual states and in our local communities.

Suggested Copy for Website/ Printed Newsletter/ Email Newsletter / or Community Bulletin:

A new report released from the American Forest Foundation reveals that contrary to popular thinking, wildfire is not just a public lands issue, particularly in terms of clean water that comes from our forests. In fact, 40 percent of the lands that are at a high risk to wildfire in important watersheds are actually private and family owned. The report also notes that these family woodland owners are motivated to help protect, not just their own property, but also the clean water that supports millions of Westerners. Recommendations for engaging these private and family land owners are included in the report. Read more the report *Western Water Threatened By Wildfire* at: <https://www.forestfoundation.org/western-water-forests-report>

Suggested Facebook Posts:

1. A new report from our partner the American Forest Foundation [tag to AFF Facebook page] unveils wildfire is not just a public lands issue. In fact, more than a 1/3 (36%) of the high wildfire risk across the West is on private and family-owned land. <https://www.forestfoundation.org/western-water-forests-report>
2. Check out a new report from our partner the American Forest Foundation [tag to AFF Facebook page] that highlights how wildfire threatens the clean water supply for 64 million Westerners and how private and family landowners present an immediate opportunity to protecting it. <https://www.forestfoundation.org/western-water-forests-report>

Questions?

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