

The Cost of Protecting Homes from Wildfires in Oregon

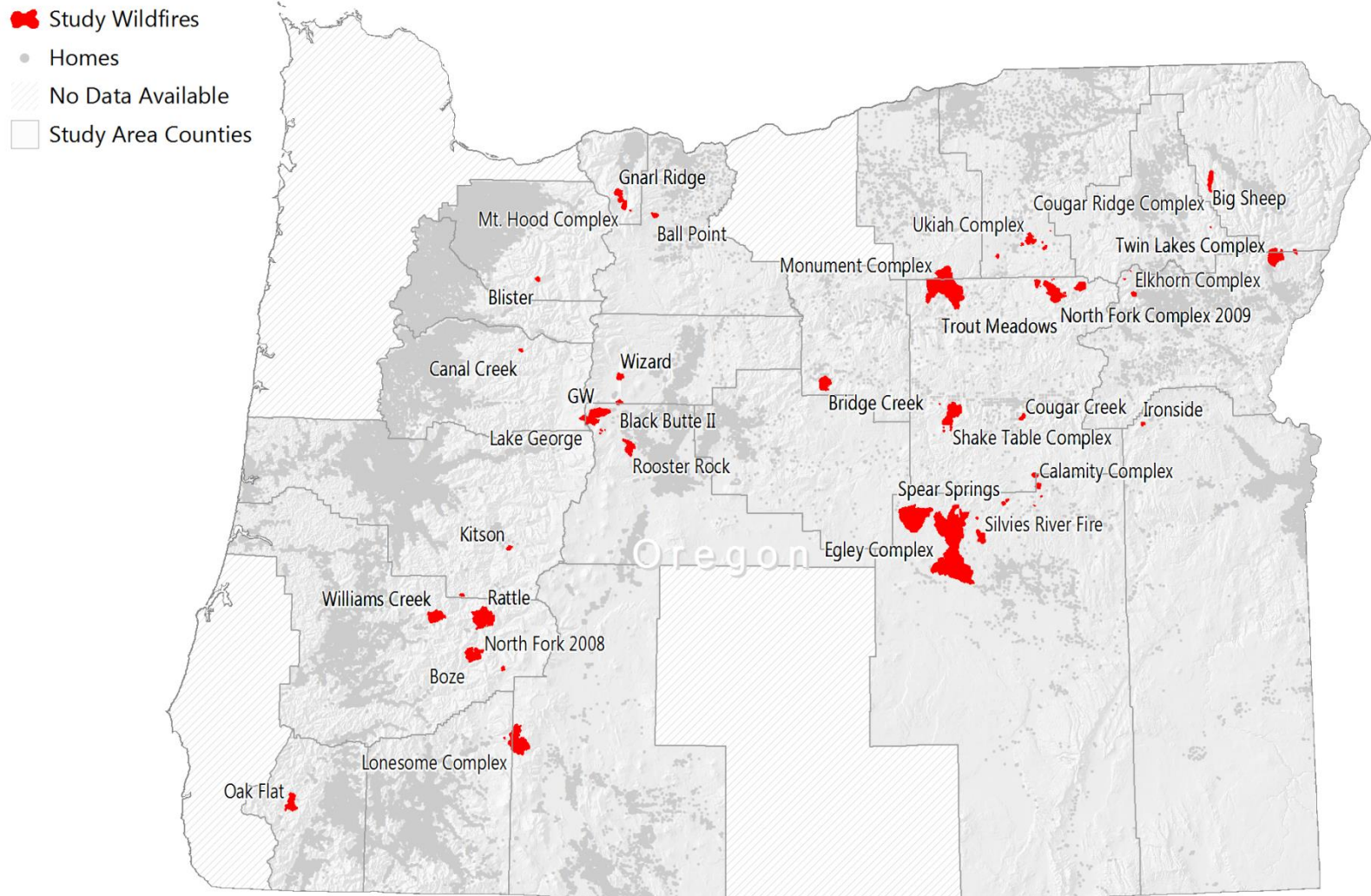
Full research paper at <http://headwaterseconomics.org/wildfire>



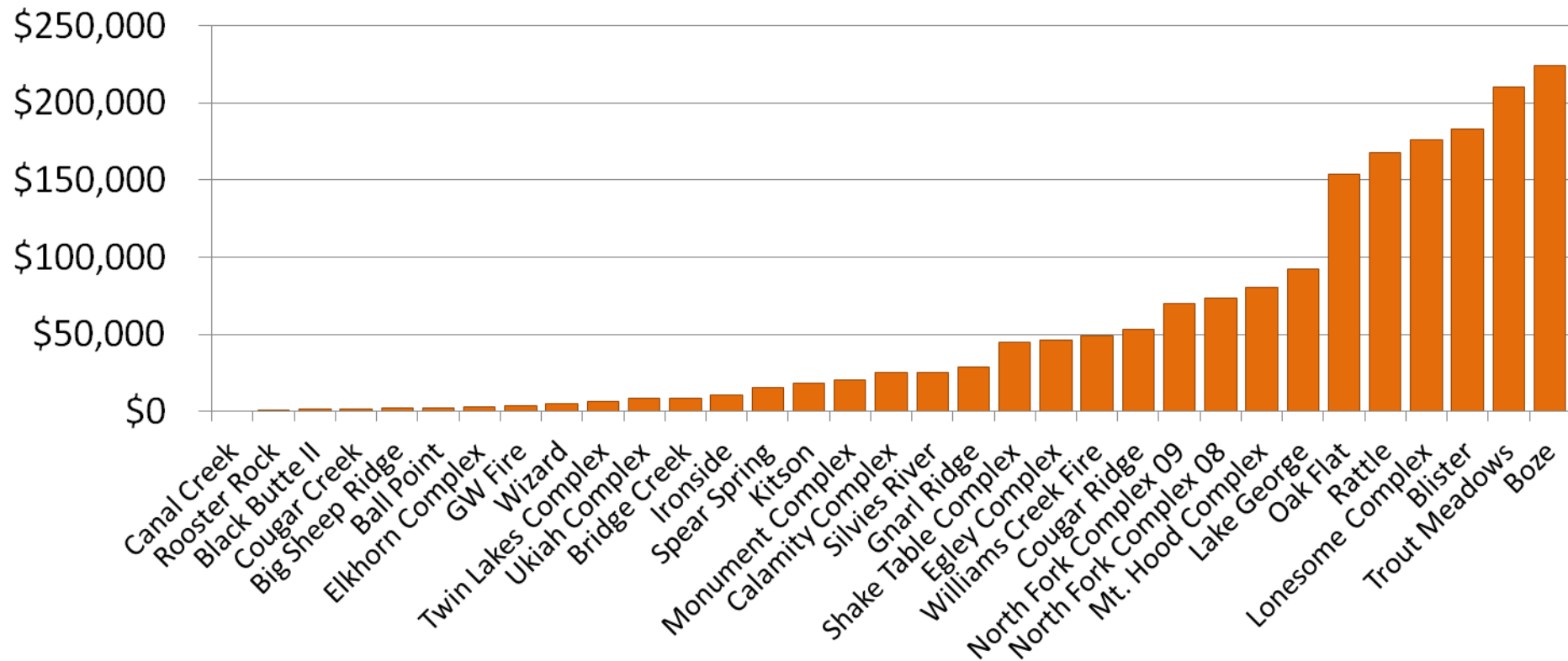
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This research focused on 33 wildfires fought by the USFS and BLM during 2006-2010.

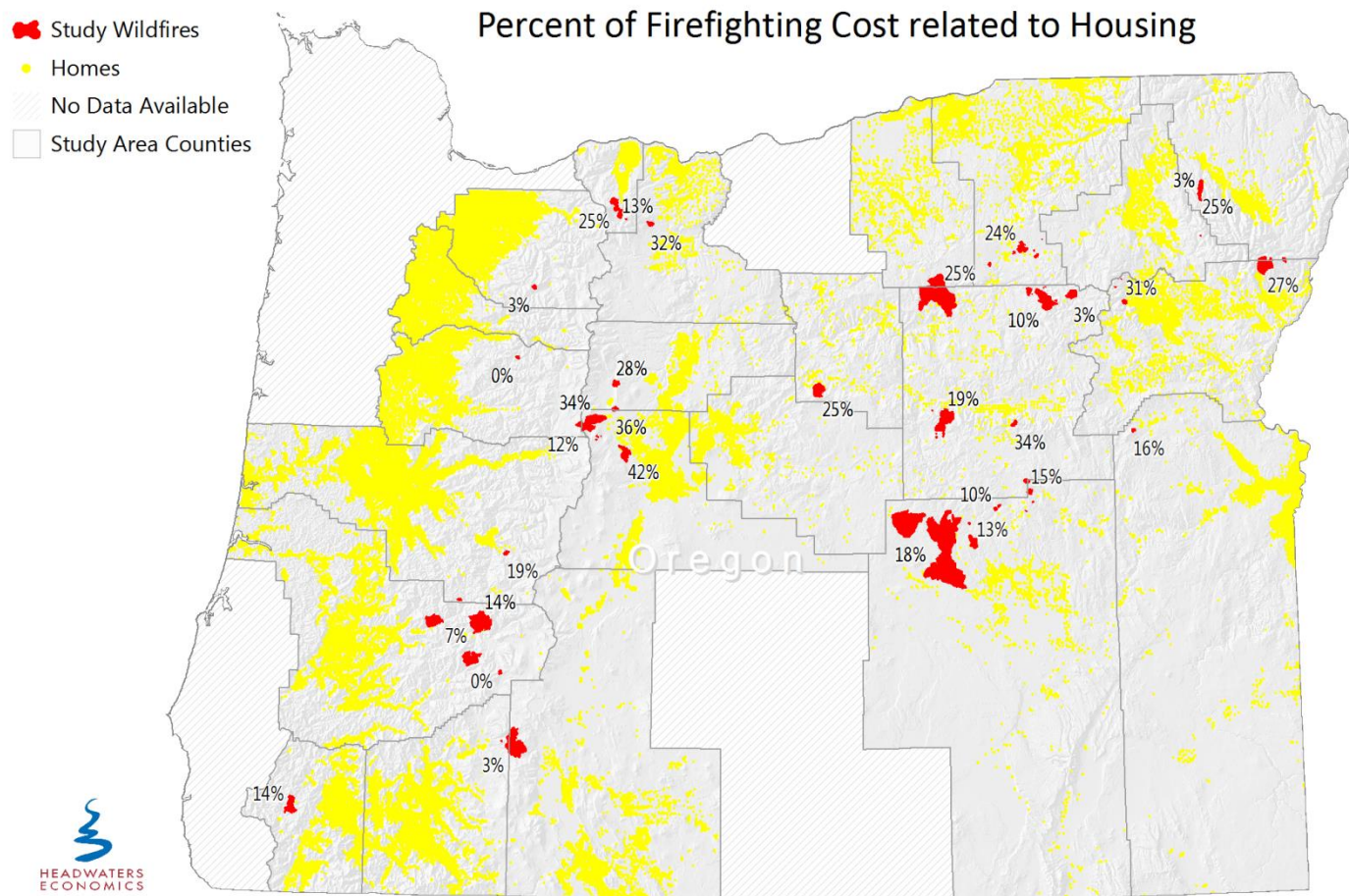


Average Wildfire Suppression Cost per Home



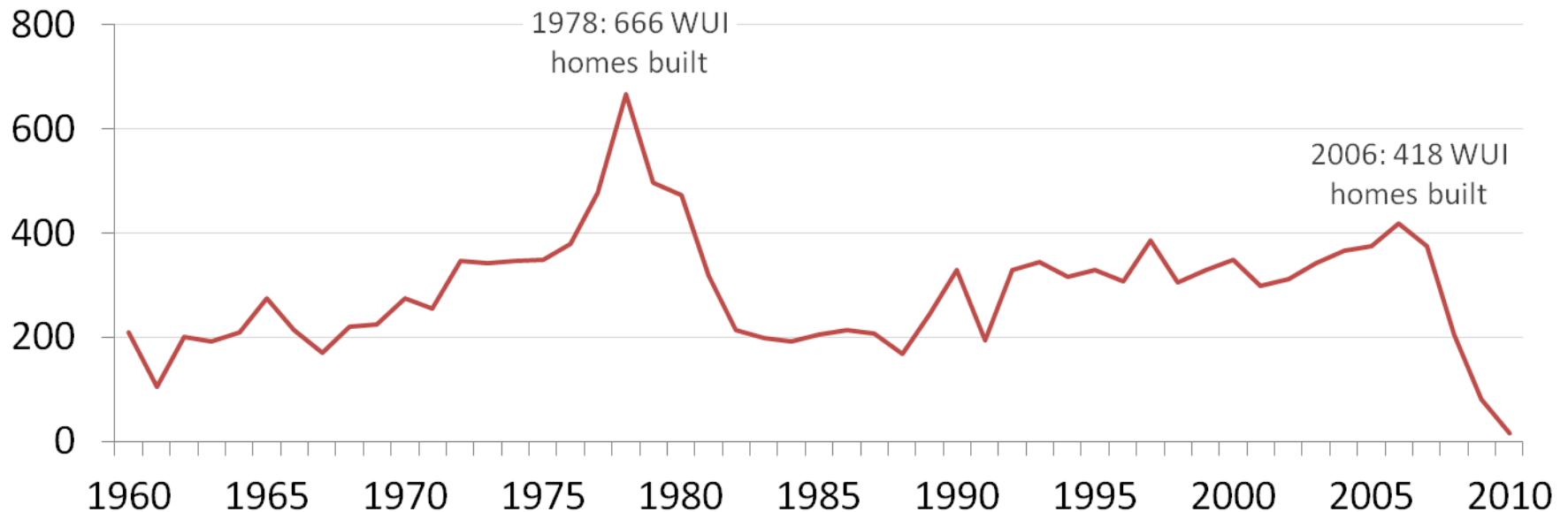
Of the 33 wildfires studied, the average cost to protect a home within 6 miles of the fire was \$56,614, but ranged significantly, in some fires costing more than \$200,000 per home.

The estimated firefighting cost related to housing for the study fires ranged from none to 42%, and averaged 17%.

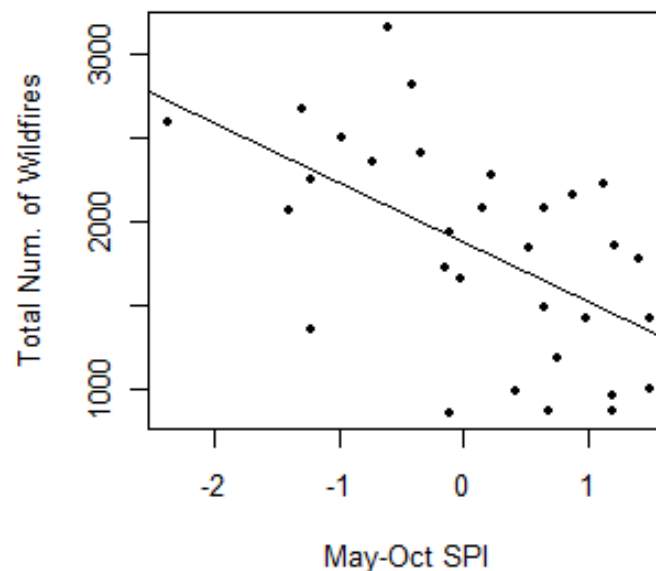
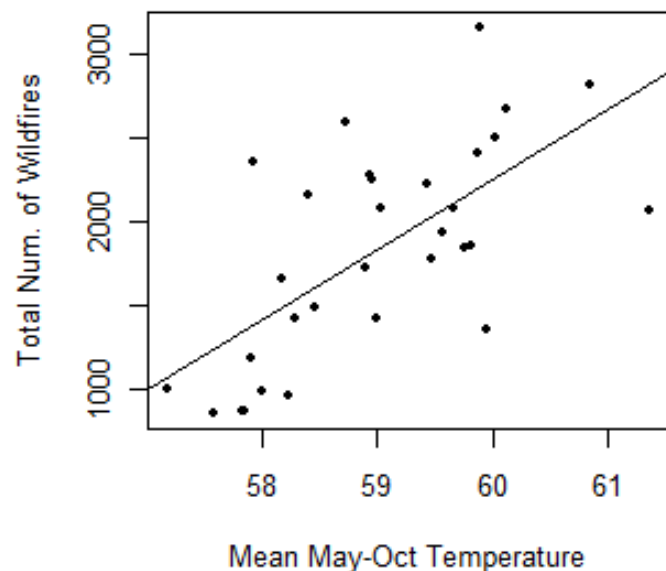


Based on data for 19 Oregon counties, home construction in the WUI was most rapid from 1977-1980. The next highest rate occurred in 2006, just prior to the recession.

Homes Built Per Year in the Oregon Wildland Urban Interface

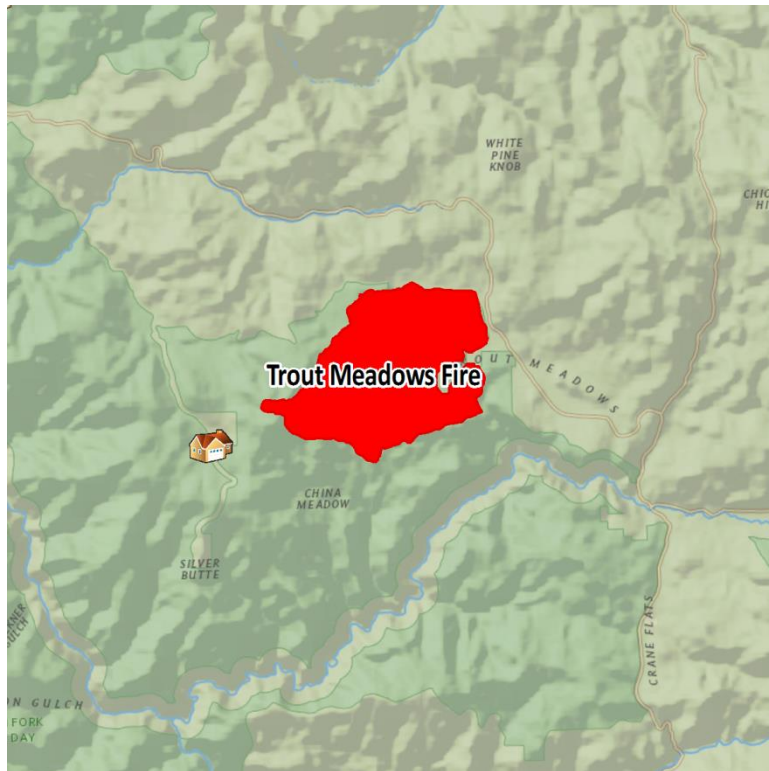


Warming temperatures and drought are strongly related to increases in wildfires.

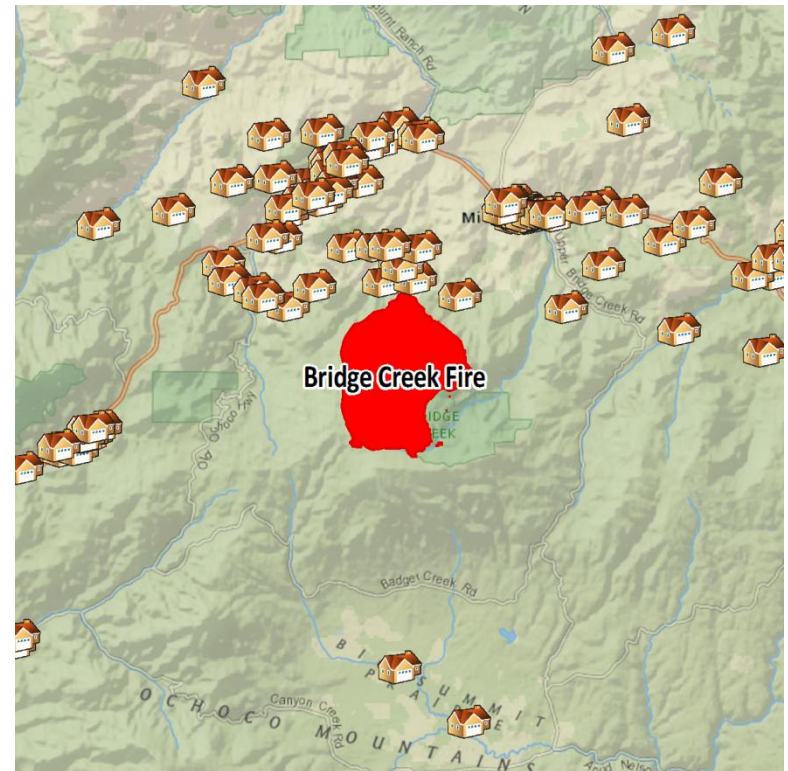


An increase in temperature of 1° F is associated with an increase of 420 wildfires.

Building new homes in otherwise undeveloped areas has the greatest potential to increase firefighting costs.



VS.




An avg. increase in firefighting costs of \$31,545 is expected if two homes instead of one were within 6 mi. of a wildfire.

By comparison, an increase of only \$319 is expected if 100 homes instead of 99 were within 6 mi. of the wildfire.

Policy Implications:

As firefighting costs rise, future policies will need to focus on covering the additional costs related to new housing.

If the costs were borne, in part, by those who build at-risk homes, or by local governments who permit them, rather than by the federal and state taxpayer, development rates in high risk areas may slow.


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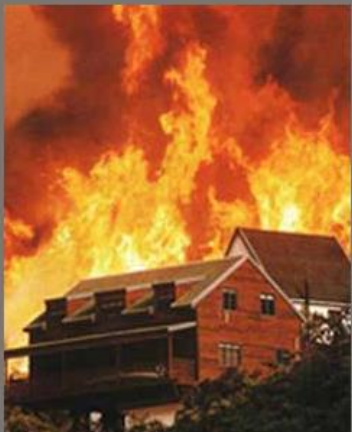
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IN FOCUS
Controlling Fire Suppression Costs

The rising expense of wildland firefighting, which now costs the federal government more than \$3 billion annually and is likely to increase dramatically.

[Download the white paper](#)
[Read news release](#)
[Read an article on wildfire costs](#)



Socioeconomic Profiles

Use EPS-HDT to compare your region to the rest of the country. Includes socioeconomic data pulled from several sources.

What We're Reading


Slave Lake Fire is Second Costliest Insurance Disaster in Canadian History

National Wildfire Coordinating Group

Journal Paper on Future Increased Fires in Yellowstone Region ([pdf link](#))

GAO: Agencies Must Do More for Wildland Fire Management


Featured Research



Northern California, Homes, and Cost of Wildfires

This Headwaters Economics study analyzes the impact of housing and climate on the costs of fighting forest fires in the twelve national forests of the Sierra Nevada.

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Montana Wildfire Cost Study- Technical Report

This report examines how residential development adds to the costs of fighting wildfires, using Montana as a case study.

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What's Coming

Study on how western counties performed during the recent recession.

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