

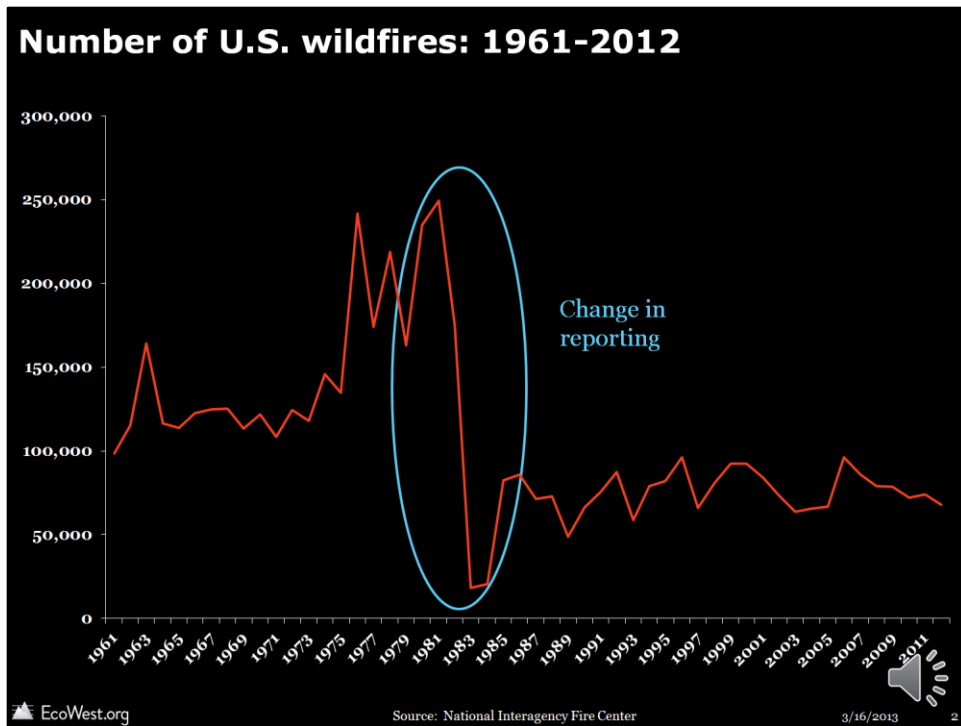
Trends in recent wildfire activity



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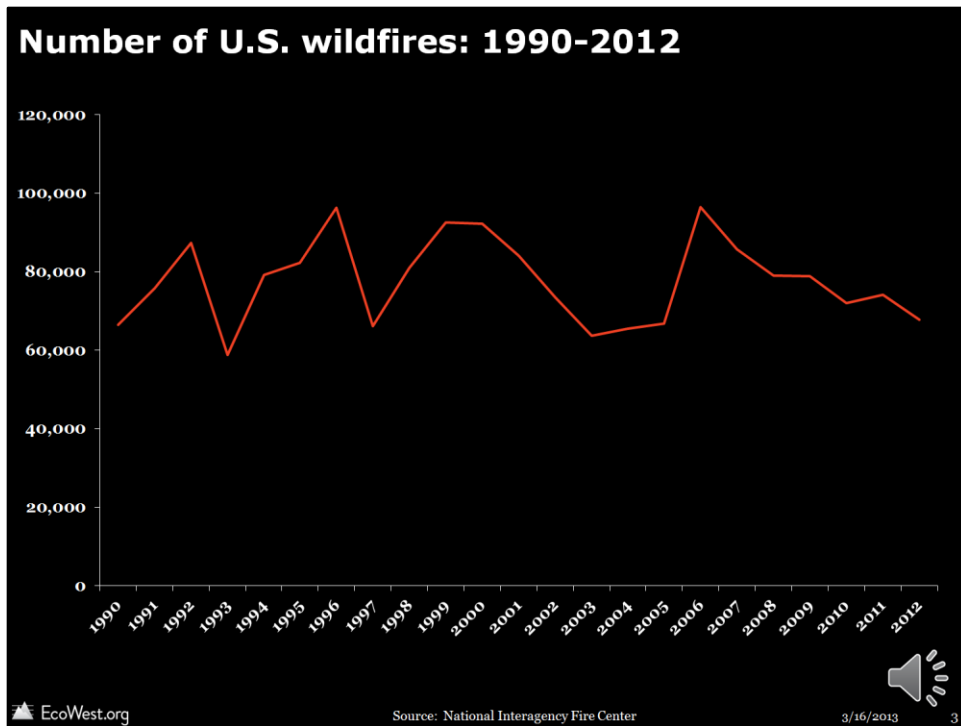
Narrative: The number of wildfires and acreage burned varies a lot from year to year. Although the government has reported these statistics for decades, the tracking methodology has varied over time, especially when it comes to small fires. As you can see, there was a major surge reported in the late 1970s and then a sharp dropoff in the early 1980s. Since then, there has been more consistent reporting.

Source: National Interagency Fire Center

URL:

http://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/fireInfo_stats_totalFires.html

Notes: 2004 fires and acres do not include state lands for North Carolina; figures prior to 1983 may be revised as NICC verifies historical data; stats after 1983 were compiled by states and agencies.



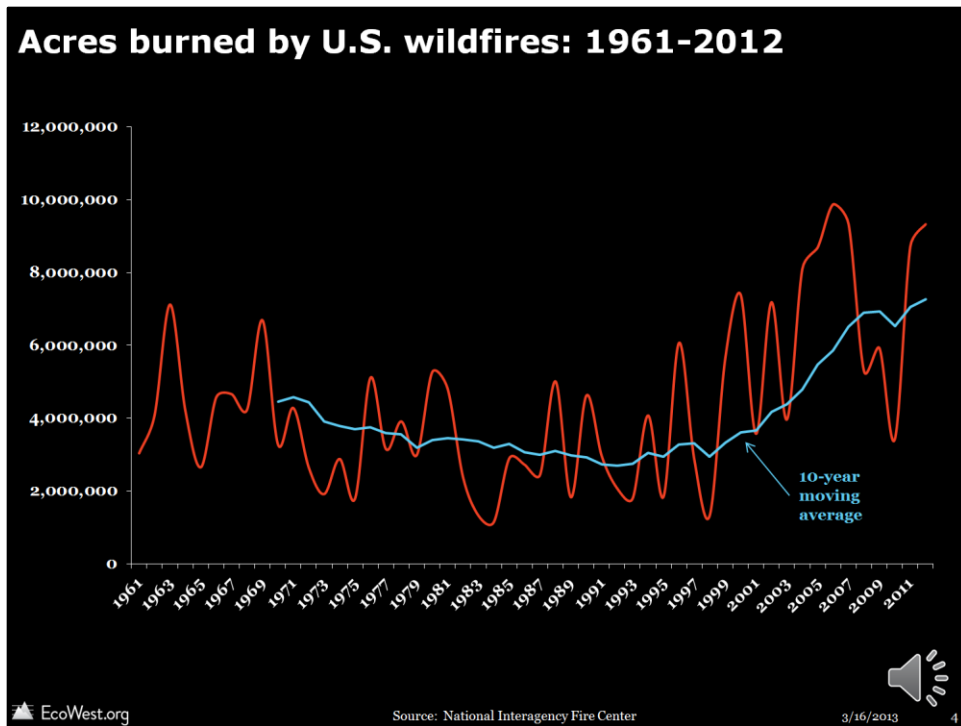
Narrative: Here's a close-up of the past quarter century. The number bounces around from year to year, but is more or less steady. In an average year, there are nearly 80,000 wildfires in the nation, but the vast majority of these are small blazes that are confined to a few acres or less. As a rule of thumb, wildland firefighters contain more than 95 percent of blazes in the so-called initial attack, but the relatively small number of fires that do escape are responsible for more than 95 percent of the acreage burned.

Source: National Interagency Fire Center

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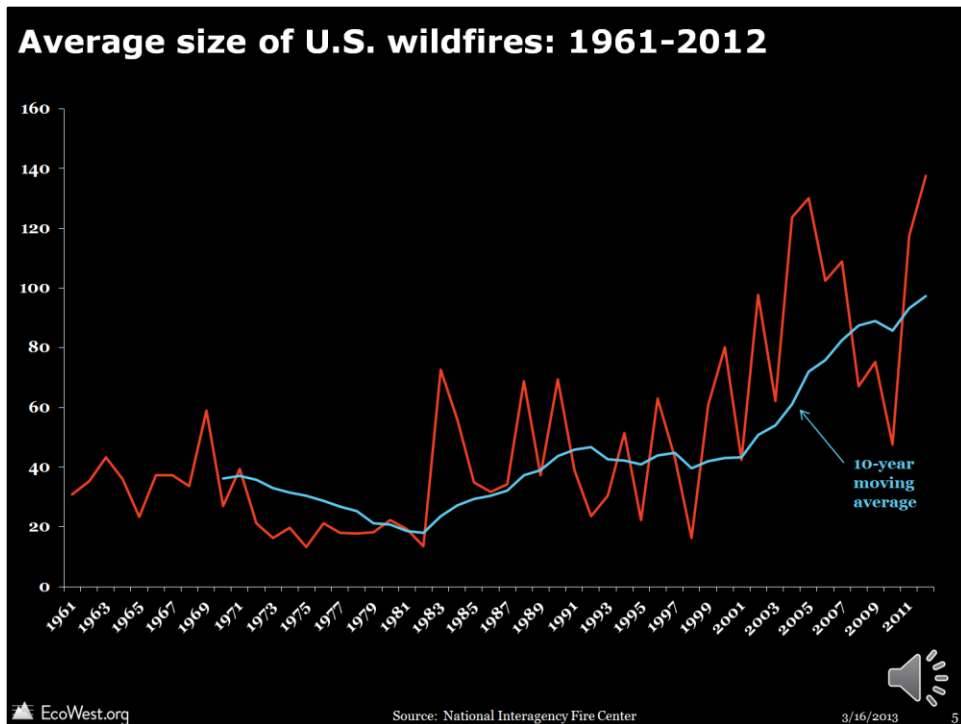


Narrative: If we turn to acreage burned, we can see that there's a lot of variability from year to year—from around 1 million to 10 million acres annually—but there has been an upward trend in recent years. The blue line represents a 10-year moving average.

Source: National Interagency Fire Center
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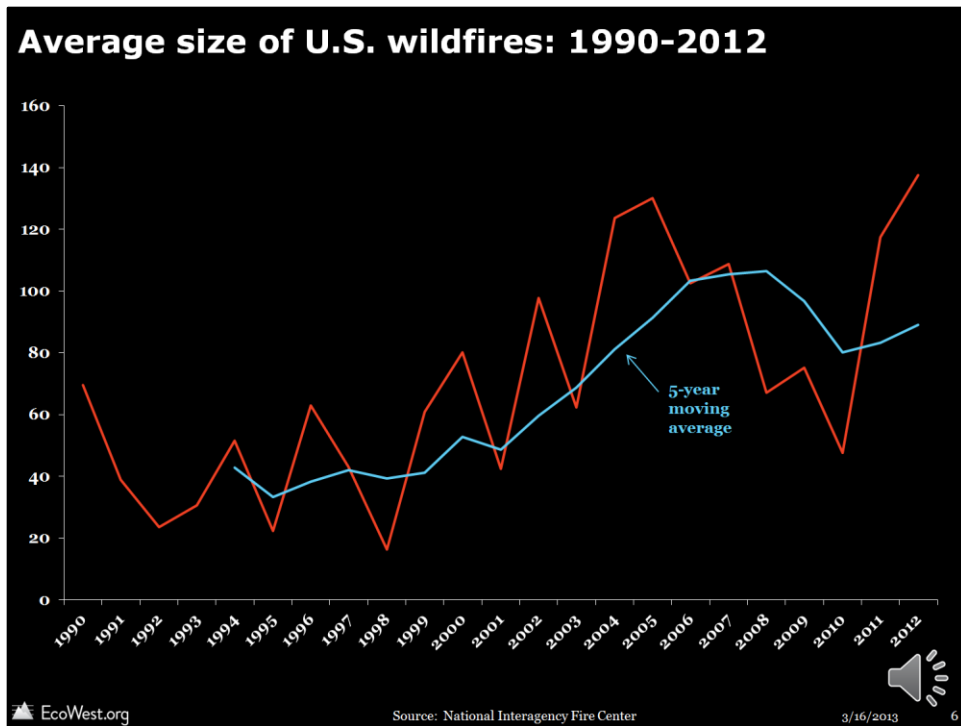
Narrative: Another way of looking at this data is to calculate the average size of fires. Because we're dividing the total acreage burned by the total number of fires, we run into the same problem with the change in reporting in the 1980s, but if you look at the past two decades or so, you can see that the mean size of wildfires has been increasing.

Source: National Interagency Fire Center

URL:

http://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/fireInfo_stats_totalFires.html

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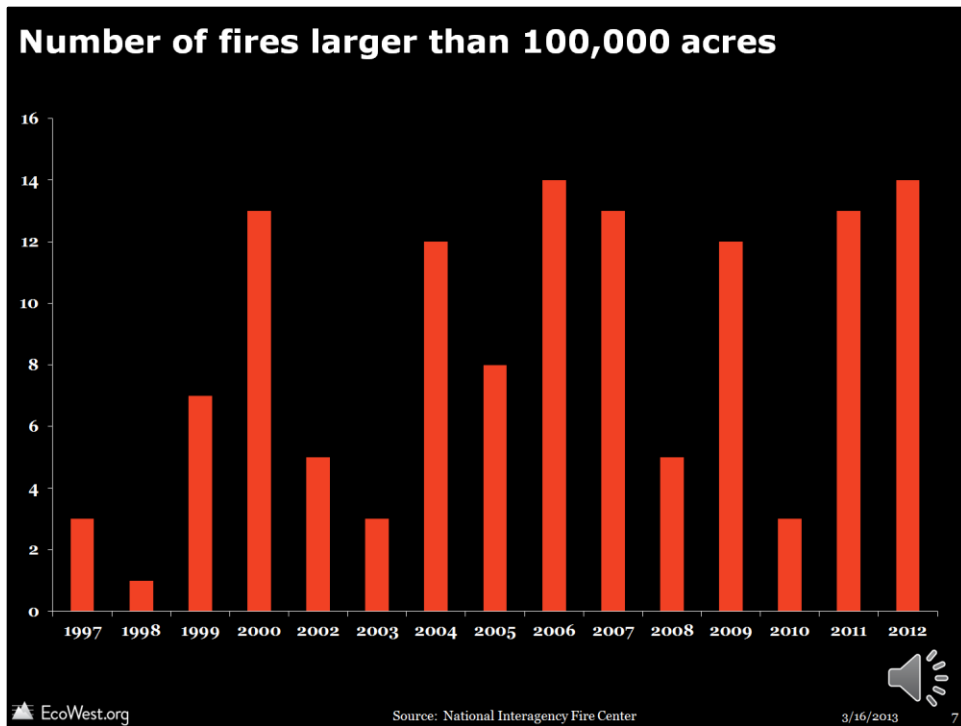
Narrative: Here's a close-up of the past two decades.

Source: National Interagency Fire Center

URL:

http://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/fireInfo_stats_totalFires.html

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Narrative: This slide only looks at really big fires—those exceeding 100,000 acres. Since 2000, it has been common for there to be a 10 or more such fires each year.

Source: National Interagency Fire Center

URL: http://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/fireInfo_stats_lgFires.html

Notes: See also http://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/fireInfo_stats_histSigFires.html

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