



Annual Report on Emergency Firefighting Expenditures

Fiscal Year 2025

01/15/2026



Camp House Fire, St. Louis County, May 2025

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Summary

This report details the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' (DNR's) wildfire response activities and costs for Fiscal Year 2025 (FY2025). The DNR expended \$40,346,328 from the General Fund in FY2025 for wildfire protection and emergency response. This includes \$32,800,070 from the Emergency Firefighting Open Appropriation.

FY2025 fire expenditures exceeded the 10-year average of expenditures by 47%. This increase is attributable to the greater-than-average amount of staff time and equipment needed for fire preparedness and suppression during the very dry fall of 2024 and the unprecedented fires that occurred during May 2025 across the state, including three significant fires in Northeastern Minnesota – the Camp House, Jenkins Creek and Munger Shaw fires.

In FY2025, the DNR responded to 1,124 wildfires that burned 27,781 acres in Minnesota. This is greater than the 20-year annual average of 910 fires and 20,207 acres. The majority of the acres burned in May 2025 in St. Louis County. The uptick in fire occurrences corresponded to a very dry fall period and an unusually hot, dry, windy May. The Division responded to over 80 fires on the weekend of May 10-11, 2025, alone.

Wildfire expenditures are related to 1) the number and size of fires, 2) the level of fire potential/risk and the associated preparedness and staffing levels needed so the DNR is ready to respond to a wildfire should one start, and 3) the DNR's strategy of responding aggressively to fire starts when risk is high to quickly contain the blaze and thereby minimize the number of acres burned.

In FY2025, the DNR once again used a variety of ground and aerial resources to prepare for and suppress wildfires. The ground fleet consists of 179 firefighting engines and 60 tracked vehicles (including bulldozers) designed to access off-road and remote areas. The DNR uses a mix of state-owned and contracted aircraft plus aircraft from interagency and state partnership agreements. Firefighting aircraft responded to 240 requests on 141 wildfires where the DNR was the primary response agency.

In cooperation with partner agencies, the Minnesota Incident Command System (MNICS) rostered three Type III Incident Management Teams (IMTs) in FY2025. A MNICS Type III team responded to three incidents during FY2025.

Purpose of this Report

The costs for state-led emergency wildfire response are borne by the General Fund via both direct and open appropriations. The DNR is required by statute to submit a report to the legislature by January 15th each year identifying all firefighting costs incurred and reimbursements received in the prior fiscal year.¹ This report addresses that statutory requirement.

State Funding for Emergency Firefighting

Minnesota statutes charge the Commissioner of Natural Resources with preventing and extinguishing wildfires in the forested and prairie areas of the state. Although these statutes have been adjusted several times over the years, the initial charge adopted in 1911 remains, and current laws outline the funding sources to meet the requirements of the statutes.

Funding Authorized

Emergency Firefighting Direct Appropriation: Laws 2025, special session 1, chapter 1, article 1, section 3, subd. 4, appropriated \$7,521,000 the first year and \$7,521,000 the second year for prevention, presuppression, and suppression costs of emergency firefighting and other costs incurred under *Minnesota Statutes*, section 88.12.

Emergency Firefighting Open Appropriation: Laws 2025, special session 1, chapter 1, article 1, section 3, subd. 4, further states “the amount necessary to pay for presuppression and suppression costs during the biennium is appropriated from the General Fund.”

Expenditures

During FY2025, the DNR expended \$7,546,258 from the Emergency Firefighting Direct Appropriation, including FY2024 carryforward dollars of just over \$25,000, and \$32,800,070 under the Emergency Firefighting Open Appropriation authority, for a total FY2025 expenditure of \$40,346,328 for state-led wildfire response. The ten-year average annual expenditure is \$28,778,521.

The greater-than-average expenditure in FY2025 was a result of the greater-than-average amount of staff time and equipment needed to provide fire suppression and preparedness during the very dry fall of 2024 and the significant fire weather and fires that occurred in May 2025.

This includes \$3.42 million in expenditures made from the open appropriation for firefighting costs that were incurred in FY2021 and FY2022 that were subsequently billed and paid in FY2025. These delayed billings can occur due to the amount of time it takes to reconcile costs from larger fires that have cost share agreements and timing differences between federal and state fiscal years.

Wildfire expenditures are related to 1) the number and size of fires, 2) the level of fire potential/risk and the associated preparedness and staffing levels needed so the DNR is ready to respond to a wildfire should one start, and 3) the DNR’s strategy of responding aggressively to fire starts when risk is high to quickly contain the fire and protect life and property.

Appendix 1, FY2025 Emergency Fire Direct and Open Appropriations/State Expenditures by Category,

¹ See Laws of Minnesota 2025, SS 1, Ch. 1, Art. 1, sect. 3, subd. 4.

summarizes state firefighting expenditures by salary and operating costs.

Reimbursements to the General Fund

Payments and Collections

The DNR receives payments for certain fire-related activities. These receipts are from supplies sold to local government units (e.g., fire departments) through the Interagency Fire Cache (cache sales are authorized under *Minnesota Statutes*, section 88.065), and collections from parties responsible for starting illegal or negligent fires (reimbursement for suppression costs is mandated under *Minnesota Statutes*, section 88.75). These receipts are deposited directly into the General Fund.

<u>FY2025 Receipts</u>	
Cache Sales	\$100,797
Fire Cost Collections	\$556,468
Total	\$657,265

Emergency Fire Special Revenue Fund

This fund provides an avenue for reimbursement for expenditures related to fulfilling interagency agreements regarding wildfire suppression. The DNR provides firefighters, equipment, and aircraft to help federal partners within Minnesota; mobilizes firefighters to assist national wildfire emergencies in other states; and aids Great Lakes Forest Fire Compact (GLFFC) partners (adjoining states and Canadian provinces). These costs are charged to the Emergency Fire Special Revenue Fund, and partners are invoiced for reimbursement as soon as practical. The federal government reimburses federal costs and GLFFC partners reimburse their costs. During FY2025, the DNR expended \$8,908,171 from the Emergency Fire Special Revenue Fund on reimbursable costs for national mobilizations and GLFFC support.

Reimbursements to the Special Revenue Fund include 1) the actual costs of out-of-state deployments, 2) a portion of the fixed costs associated with any mobilized equipment, such as wildland fire engines and aircraft, and 3) costs associated with operational and administrative staff time. Reimbursements related to resources originally funded from the Open Appropriation are transferred to the General Fund annually. In FY2025, the DNR transferred \$2,864,000 from the Emergency Fire Special Revenue Fund to the General Fund.

Total Reimbursements

Total reimbursements include payments and collections as well as transfer of cost recovery. As indicated in the table below, the total reimbursements to the General Fund in FY2025 were \$3,521,265.

<u>Total FY2025 Reimbursements to the General Fund</u>	
Cache Sales	\$100,797
Fire Cost Collections	\$556,468
Special Revenue Fund	\$2,864,000
Total	\$3,521,265

Planning and Readiness

Weather patterns, fuel conditions, and actual fire occurrence affect wildfire preparedness and response costs. Before each wildfire season, the DNR trains firefighters, maintains and secures equipment, establishes contracts for aerial detection and suppression, supports rural fire departments in securing equipment, and engages in fire prevention efforts. Together, all these efforts encompass preparedness activities.

To guide its level of readiness from week to week, the DNR uses a tiered system to determine potential wildfire risks and establish fire-planning levels. [Appendix 2](#), A Guideline for Statewide Planning Level Determination shows the criteria and planning levels currently in use. These guidelines are used to determine the current planning levels statewide and by DNR Region and on conference calls with fire managers from all cooperating agencies that suppress Minnesota wildfires. Conference call frequency is dependent on fire conditions and ranges from daily to weekly.

The planning level, in combination with daily fire danger indices, establishes the staffing level necessary to effectively respond to wildfires. Historically, about 80% of the state's wildfires happen during Planning Level III. Major fires can and do occur at Planning Level III.

FY2025 had 239 days of possible wildfire danger (i.e., at least one DNR Region at Planning Level II or higher). Of those days, 148 were at statewide Preparedness Level II, 74 days were at statewide Preparedness Level III, 10 days were at statewide Preparedness Level IV, and 7 were at statewide Preparedness Level V.

Each Region and Area needs to have enough equipment and staffing available that is sufficient to respond to wildfires based on the likelihood of occurrence (planning level). Thus, some Regions and Areas may be at a higher staffing level than others and require presuppression expenditures when the overall state is not anticipating high fire activity.

Various factors and requirements affected Area staffing needs in FY2025, with local weather conditions (e.g., precipitation, temperature, wind speed, and relative humidity) influencing each Area's planning and staffing levels.

Fire Suppression and Presuppression

The success of the DNR's fire suppression program is largely due to aggressive initial attack to keep fires small. Once a wildfire escalates beyond initial attack, risk of the fire spreading, risk to firefighter safety, damages to property, and overall costs all increase significantly.

Preparedness (prevention and presuppression) and suppression activities work together to reduce the number of wildfires and potential damages. Presuppression actions are those taken before a wildfire starts to ensure the safest, most effective, and efficient direct suppression response. These activities include overall planning, recruitment and training of personnel, procurement of firefighting equipment and contracts, and maintenance of equipment and supplies. Suppression activities directly support and enable the DNR to suppress wildfires, including the prepositioning of staff and resources. As fire danger and occurrence increase, the number of resources positioned for immediate response also increases.

Presuppression costs were \$16,538,389, or approximately 41%, of expenditures from the Direct and Open Fire Appropriations in FY2025. Suppression costs were \$23,512,866, or approximately 58%, of FY2025 expenditures

from the Direct and Open Fire Appropriations. One percent of expenditures were dedicated to wildfire prevention efforts throughout the state. The DNR cost-coding structure provides accountability for wildfire-related costs. The fiscal system tracks expenditures by both the type of activity and location (down to the Area level).

[Appendix 3](#), FY2025 State Fire Cost Summary, illustrates the percentages of fire expenditures allocated to prevention, presuppression, and suppression activities. [Appendix 4](#), Wildfire Activities 10-Year Expenditure History, summarizes expenditures over a decade.

Fire Occurrence and Causes

In FY2025, the DNR responded to 1,124 wildfires within our jurisdiction that burned 27,781 acres. The number of fires was greater than the 20-year annual average of 910 fires. Additionally, the number of acres burned were greater than the 20-year average of 20,207 acres burned.

Number of Wildfires by Cause

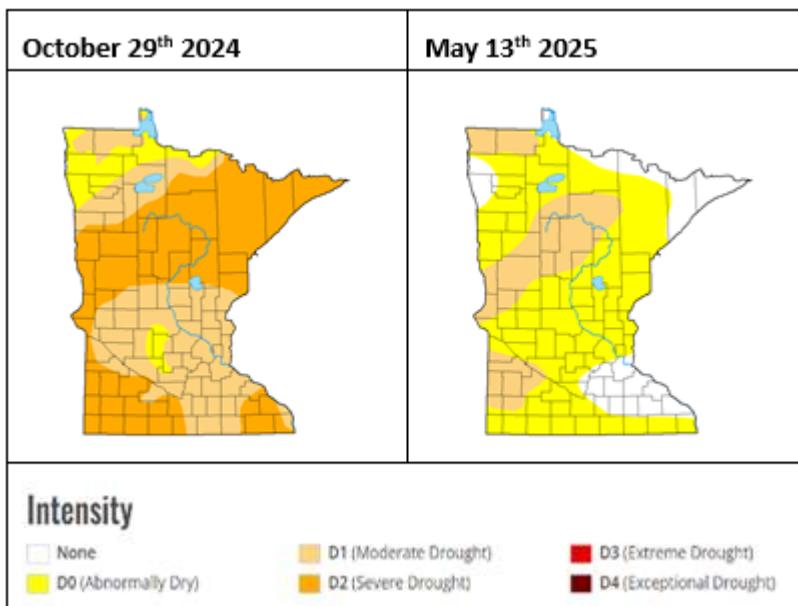
Cause type	FY 2025	%	20-Year Average	%
Debris Burning	411	36	320	35
Incendiary / Arson	32	3	177	19
Misc. / Unknown*	439	39	204	22
Equipment Use	134	12	114	13
Campfires	64	6	45	5
Lightning	31	3	19	2
Smoking	9	1	15	2
Railroad	4	0	16	2
Total	1,124	100%	910	100%

*Misc./Unknown includes items that usually do not account for a major percentage on their own such as electric fences, power lines, fireworks, fires started within a structure, prescribed fires, other sources like hot ashes, spontaneous combustion, and cause unknown.

[Appendix 5](#), Minnesota Fires, Numbers and Acres Burned and [Appendix 6](#), FY2025 Wildfires by Cause graphically illustrate fire history and causes.

Weather Summary

FY2025 (July 1, 2024) started out with no drought or abnormally dry conditions in Minnesota. As the summer progressed into fall, drought began to build. By late October the entire state was abnormally dry with half the state in severe drought. Winter brought cooler and wetter conditions, resulting in some improvement to the drought level across the state. However, drought remained into the spring. Though April brought some relief, abnormally dry to severe drought conditions persisted into mid-May. FY2025 ended with pockets of drought in the north central and the northwestern portions of the state with the remainder of the southern half of the state and arrowhead region drought-free.



U.S. Drought Monitor Maps

Cooperative Fire and All Hazard Response

Cooperative Fire Response

In-state cooperative fire response was active throughout FY2025. In cooperation with partner agencies, MNICS rostered three Type III IMTs, which all remained in active rotation through the fall of 2024 and were reactivated in the spring of 2025. The three MNICS Type III IMTs, an Eastern Area Complex IMT, and National Incident Management Organization (NIMO) were mobilized to four Minnesota incidents and one national incident during the fiscal year.

The DNR provided staff to fill one roster of the Eastern Area Complex IMT (EA CIMT) within the U.S. Forest Service Eastern Area (EA). The EA CIMT is a specialized team tasked with managing complex incidents, particularly wildfires, in the EA and across the nation. It is composed of highly skilled personnel from various federal and state agencies. In FY2025 the DNR provided 212 personnel to assist with wildfire response in the following states: Arizona, California, Georgia, Idaho, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. The DNR also requested and received mutual aid support from federal agencies and other states during the fourth quarter of FY2025 due to the high fire risk and activity and the increasing drought conditions in Minnesota.

The assistance summarized above reflects the support and cooperation outlined in mutual aid agreements with federal agencies, other states, and adjacent Canadian provinces. These mutual aid agreements help Minnesota meet its fire suppression needs. These agreements also allow the DNR to respond to out-of-state requests for mutual aid when wildfire activity and risk is low in Minnesota, provide training opportunities, help maintain the DNR's response capabilities, and can help offset state costs.

Interagency All Hazard Response

Minnesota trains firefighters to national standards for wildfire and incident management response. DNR wildfire qualifications meet both federal wildfire standards and those of the Federal Emergency Management Agency

(FEMA). As a result, Minnesota wildland firefighters can respond to and manage incidents regardless of the cause (i.e., “all hazard”).

In FY2025, DNR personnel supported one in-state all-hazard response event. This was an extensive blowdown event that affected Beltrami and portions of Cass and Clearwater counties on June 21, 2025. Governor Walz issued Executive Order 25-06 on June 27, 2025, declaring a peacetime emergency and calling on all relevant state agencies to provide assistance to help local units of government respond to and recover from this emergency. A variety of DNR staff were called upon to support roads recovery, debris removal, and recovery operations in Clearwater, Beltrami, and Cass counties. The extensive blowdown will lead to heightened fire risk in future years.

Ground Fleet

The DNR firefighting fleet includes fire engines and tracked vehicles. Fire engines are medium- to large-sized pickup trucks, customized for wildland firefighting. Fire engines are deployed for firefighting on mostly dry, upland sites.

Tracked vehicles are custom-built firefighting units driven by two endless metal belts, or tracks. They are designed to fight fires on wet and difficult-to-access sites. These tracked vehicles are transported on trailers to active wildfires.

The complement of equipment varies among DNR Areas depending on vegetation type, topography, and soil conditions. The DNR strives to have reliable and efficient fire engines and tracked vehicles available that meet the needs of the firefighters. This requires an annual investment to specify, test, and secure equipment before older units become inoperable.

Engines

DNR engines vary in size and capacity. In general, a lighter vehicle is more maneuverable but hauls less water and fewer firefighters. Each DNR Area has a mix of engine types best suited to its location. There are 179 engines designated for wildfire response distributed across the areas.

The most common fire vehicle is a one-ton pickup, which can haul 200 gallons of water. Service body pickups are 1½-ton medium pickups. They are fitted with storage compartments that provide room for an assortment of firefighting equipment. Three-ton fire engines carry more than 750 gallons of water and are capable of towing large equipment, such as bulldozers, to a wildfire.

Tracked Vehicles

The DNR fleet includes 52 firefighting tracked vehicles. Tracked vehicles can access areas that would be difficult to reach with our normal engine fleet.

In addition, the DNR has eight Caterpillar bulldozers. These earthmoving machines have a powerful front blade or bucket, as well as continuous tracks for stability that minimize pressure on the ground. The DNR dozers are equipped with a Fesco-Mathis fire plow so they can quickly create fire lines, or firebreaks, which are cleared areas that serve as a defendable barrier to prevent the spread of a wildfire.

Firefighting Aircraft



Fire Boss at Brainerd Air Tanker Base.

The DNR uses several types of aircraft to provide tactical aerial firefighting suppression and real time fire information to firefighters on the ground. In FY2025, the DNR filled 240 aircraft requests on 141 state-led wildfire responses. DNR-owned and contracted aircraft were also deployed to wildfires in other jurisdictions; the cost of those deployments is reimbursed by the jurisdiction the DNR assisted.

In FY2025 the DNR Division of Forestry owned and operated two Kodiak 100 airplanes, which are used for fire detection, transportation, aerial photography, and logistical and tactical aerial supervision. During FY2025 the DNR relied on a mix of aircraft procured under Exclusive Use and

Call-When-Needed contracts, aircraft owned and operated by the DNR, and aircraft obtained through interagency and partnership agreements for fire detection and suppression efforts. Through Exclusive Use contracts in place for FY2025, the DNR had four single engine scoopers (airplanes that can hold and drop 800-gallons of water), two single engine air tankers (SEATs, ground-based airtankers on wheels), seven helicopters with water buckets, one light airplane used for aerial supervision, and 22 light airplanes available for fire detection and tactical intelligence. Call-When-Needed aircraft included three single engine scoopers and three helicopters. Additionally, the DNR Division of Enforcement provided aerial fire detection support with two agency-owned light airplanes.

Interagency partnerships continued to be a key part of the DNR's aerial firefighting program in FY2025. The Red Lake Nation, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the U.S. Forest Service, and the Minnesota National Guard provided detection aircraft, aerial supervision planes, helicopters, Fire Bosses, SEATs, and large airtanker and CL-415 water-scooping air tanker support.

The DNR operates three primary airtanker bases and two SEAT bases that accommodate dispatchers, aircraft loaders and ramp personnel, flight crews, helicopters, and crew members, as well as equipment for loading water and fire chemicals. Minnesota's 2023 Capital Investment bonding package included a \$6.36 million appropriation to the DNR to support Wildfire Aviation Infrastructure. This funding is being used to replace the ramp (the area where aircraft park and are loaded) and the operations buildings at the Hibbing tanker base. The expected completion date is August 31, 2026.

Rural Fire Department Program

The DNR Rural Fire Program objectives are to obtain low-cost firefighting equipment, manage cost-share grants, and provide technical expertise for Minnesota fire departments.



Refurbished federal excess property engine for the City of Ada.

Federal Excess Property Program

The Federal Excess Property Program obtains surplus equipment and supplies from military bases across the country; the equipment and supplies are refurbished and made available to rural fire departments in Minnesota. The Federal Excess Property Program allows rural Minnesota fire departments to secure items to support their emergency response efforts, including items they are less likely to acquire on their own. In FY2025, 45 pieces of equipment were provided to Minnesota fire departments. This equipment included heavy-duty pickup trucks, Type 6 engines, water tenders, generators, all-terrain vehicles, and shipping containers used for live-fire training.

State Surplus Engines

In FY2025 the Rural Fire Program purchased 12 pick-up trucks, three type-6 fire engines, and three tracked vehicles from the State of Minnesota Fleet Program and sold them to rural fire departments at low cost. Although these trucks have met the criteria for replacement by state agency fleet managers, they still have service life and can be fitted with a pump and tank and used as a grass/brush truck to extinguish small fires. Demand from rural Minnesota communities far exceeds the availability of these trucks.

Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Program

The Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) 50/50 cost-share program is available to Minnesota fire departments that protect communities with populations of 10,000 or fewer. The VFA grant program received 359 applications for the FY2025 grant cycle and awarded 130 grants to Minnesota communities to complete projects or secure emergency response equipment. A total of \$464,106 in federal and state funds was granted to provide cost share for radios, pagers, wildland firefighting gear, personal protective gear, and water movement equipment.

Training

With the cooperation of MNICS and GLFFC, the DNR offered 79 courses in FY2025 to GLFFC partner agencies, fire departments, and affiliates during FY2025. Courses ranged from basic firefighting to advanced leadership and reached more than 2,100 students.

The 23rd Annual Wildland Fire Academy, held in June 2025, featured 18 nationally certified courses related to basic wildland firefighting, wildland fire planning, operations, and leadership. A total of 440 students registered for these courses. More than 80 instructors from MNICS agencies were also involved.

The DNR and partners offered an additional 27 fire-related training courses to 584 firefighters. Courses ranged from basic wildfire suppression to leadership and dispatch. Also, in FY2025, the DNR delivered 34 fireline refresher courses to 1,145 personnel from federal, state, and local agencies.

Wildfire Prevention

The DNR has long recognized the importance of providing consistent, statewide wildfire prevention messaging to reduce wildfire starts and improve Minnesotans' fire safety awareness and conduct. Delivering wildfire prevention and safety tips with current wildfire weather information helps Minnesotans avoid burning in unsafe conditions. Minnesota uses a variety of methods to reach residents, including news releases, social media, community events, workshops, classroom visits, parades, and the State Fair. Each activity seeks to provide targeted information to a given audience.

Prevention Activities

The DNR had a full suite of wildfire prevention activities and displays at the 2024 Minnesota State Fair. During the 12 days of the fair, the wildfire prevention building was open to the public to advance wildfire and safety knowledge. DNR staff participated in the annual Governor's Fire Prevention Day by hosting family activities, games, and engaging stage presentations on the DNR grounds. Smokey Bear's 80th birthday activities featured a special birthday celebration with a type-6 engine on display, a large imitation birthday cake, and special 80th birthday give-away items. A J-5 tracked vehicle, and a historic Model AA truck were also on display. Smokey Bear made multiple appearances each day and over 14,000 visitors climbed up the State Fair Interpretive Fire Tower.

During the spring wildfire season, prevention efforts shifted to communicating wildfire risk through radio ads, news releases, television and radio interviews, social media, and billboards. Radio ads were used across a broad area in northwest, northeast, and west central Minnesota, including 1,602 wildfire prevention and burning permit promotional ads that were run on local stations throughout the fiscal year. A billboard campaign was developed to educate Minnesotans about wildfire prevention, promote safe behaviors, increase awareness of wildfire danger, and reduce wildfire starts. Seven billboards were spread over three major roadways that travel north from the Twin cities metro area. This campaign was then developed into social media images that were used during Minnesota Wildfire Prevention Week, which is the third week of April. Several Facebook and Instagram posts featured educational facts and prevention tips throughout the week. Social media platforms were used heavily in May to communicate Red Flag Warnings and elevated fire danger conditions.

Throughout the state, DNR Area and program staff attended dozens of fire department open houses and community events. At these events, wildfire prevention messaging and Firewise concepts were communicated to thousands of Minnesota residents. Partners, such as the DNR Division of Parks and Trails, U.S. Forest Service,

and MNICS, continued to amplify wildfire prevention messaging.

Firewise Program

The Minnesota Firewise Program supports Minnesota communities through a combination of grants and technical assistance to help communities reduce their risk, prepare for wildfires and mitigate potential damage. The program assists with wildfire assessment and planning, resulting in the establishment of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan. When implemented, this plan reduces fire risk by addressing known hazards or problems. Each plan identifies issues or areas where the community should focus its fire prevention and mitigation efforts.

The Minnesota Firewise Program also supports home risk evaluations and trains local emergency response staff to conduct evaluations. In FY2025, Firewise Program staff trained partners in the use of a newly developed Northeast/Midwest state's Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal (WRAP) that illustrates spatial wildfire risk data to inform public and professional audiences of local wildfire risk factors. Firewise Community Grants were awarded to Lake and Cook counties, Brimson and Clifton fire departments, Eagle's Nest Community near Ely and Deer Lake Association in Deer River. These U.S. Forest Service grants funded Firewise assessments, hazardous fuel reduction, and bolstered emergency response. Firewise Homeowner Kits were distributed upon request to residents throughout the state to increase risk awareness and empower homeowner implementation to achieve a Firewise property. Minnesota Firewise continued to support high school teachers and students with fire ecology, wildfire risk, and GIS lessons from the Firewise in the Classroom Program.

Fire Wardens and Burning Permits

The DNR manages its open burning permit system based on current conditions and the potential for wildfires. To ensure easy access, the DNR uses a combination of an electronic permit system and volunteer fire wardens. Individuals may obtain a permit in person from a fire warden or online in the electronic system. The online system was enhanced in FY2025 to send automatic alerts via SMS messaging (text) or email to permit holders that elect to receive alert notifications of changing conditions

When fire activity in Minnesota necessitates action, the DNR restricts open burning in the affected counties. If conditions worsen, additional restrictions (e.g., restriction of campfires) can be implemented through DNR Commissioner's Orders in counties of greatest concern. Each expansion or elevation of the restriction level is communicated through news releases, media interviews, and the [DNR's Fire Danger and Burning Restriction](#) web page. When conditions improve, restrictions are reduced or lifted, and those changes are communicated.

Conclusion

FY2025 began with no drought or abnormally dry conditions in Minnesota. Drought conditions began to build and peaked in October 2024 with half the state in severe drought. Winter brought some improvement, but below average snowfall led the state to experience some level of drought by spring, bringing extreme fire conditions in May. The very dry fall and the unprecedented fires in May 2025 led to expenses and acres burned in FY2025 that were higher than the 20-year average.

The DNR remains committed to protecting life, property, and natural resources for all Minnesotans. Strong relationships with local fire departments, MNICS partners, and communities in fire suppression efforts is key to overall success, along with promoting wildfire prevention and raising public awareness as the first line of defense.

Appendix 1: FY 2025 Emergency Fire Direct and Open Appropriations / State Expenditures by Category

Appropriations	
Direct Appropriation	\$ 7,546,258
Open Appropriation	\$32,800,070
Total Expenditures	\$40,346,328
Expenditures, by Category	
Salary Costs	\$19,377,393
Non-salary Operating Costs	\$20,968,935
Total Expenditures	\$40,346,328

Appendix 2: Guideline for Statewide Wildfire Planning Level Determination

	PLANNING LEVEL I	PLANNING LEVEL II	PLANNING LEVEL III	PLANNING LEVEL IV	PLANNING LEVEL V
BI (Q) spring, pre-green, floating 5-day average	Not applicable	0-45	46-70	71-95	96+
BUI (after June 1, floating 5-day average)	Not applicable	0-25	26-50	51-67	68+
ERC (Q) (alternate summer/fall indicator, after June 1, floating 5-day average)	Not applicable	0-15	16-29	30-36	37+
8-14 day Weather Forecast	Winter conditions, most of state snow covered, temps below freezing	Normal conditions for season, adequate precip. expected	Less than normal precip. and RH, higher than normal temps forecast	Dry weather patterns persisting, no change forecast	Dry pattern intensifying. Unstable weather forecast leading to extreme fire behavior conditions
MN DNR Regional Planning Levels	All DNR Regions/Agencies at P.L. I	One or more DNR Regions/Agencies at P.L. II	Two or more DNR Regions/Agencies at P.L. III	Two or more DNR Regions/Agencies at P.L. IV	Two or more DNR Regions/Agencies at P.L. V
Eastern Area Planning Level	I	I - II	I - III	I - IV	I - IV
National Planning Level	I - II	I - III	I - IV	I - V	I - V
Fire Occurrence (Initial Attack)	Rare, infrequent fire occurrence	Fires reported in scattered Areas. Generally less than 10 fires/day statewide	Multiple Areas/Agencies reporting fires. 10 to 20 fires/day statewide	Multiple Areas/Agencies reporting fires. 20 to 30 fires/day statewide	Multiple Areas/Agencies reporting fires. 30+ fires/day statewide
Fire Occurrence (Escaped fires)	None	None	1-2 fires requiring extended attack statewide (with active fire)	3-5 fires requiring extended attack statewide	5+ fires requiring extended attack statewide
Sociopolitical Considerations	Statewide or regional events such as fishing opener or the Fourth of July; natural events such as floods or windstorms; other unexpected or unusual events that may have large scale impacts should be considered.				
Resource Availability	Normal complement of personnel	No shortages expected	Moderate demand for some in-state resource types expected	Shortage of certain in-state resource types	Most in-state resources committed. Out-of-State assistance necessary
In-State Mobilization	None	Less than 5% of statewide resources assigned out of home unit	Some short-term movement occurring, 5-10% of statewide resources assigned out of home unit	10-20% of statewide resources assigned out of home unit	20%+ of statewide resources assigned out of home unit
Out-of-State Mobilization	If out-of-state mobilization is occurring or anticipated to occur, an "A" designator will be applied at the current Planning Level.				

- Once Planning Level III has been reached in the spring, preparedness will not drop below that level until May 31 or
- Terms used above, which are calculated daily from weather and fuel measurements:
 - BI (Q) = **Burning Index**, fuel model Q: A measure of fire danger based on the probability of ignition and fire spread in a specified forest type.
 - BUI = **Build Up Index**: An indication of the dryness of larger-sized woody fuels, which becomes a significant factor during a drought.
 - ERC (Q) = **Energy Release Component**, fuel model Q: A measure of the expected heat release from a fire, which will be experienced by firefighters on the fire line.

Appendix 3: FY2025 State Firefighting Cost Summary

FY2025 - State Fire Cost Summary by Type of Activity and Appropriation

Activity	Emergency Firefighting Direct Appropriation	Emergency Firefighting Open Appropriation	Total Open and Direct Combined
Fire Prevention	3.9%	0%	0.7%
Fire Presuppression	88.2%	30.1%	41.0%
Fire Suppression	7.9%	69.9%	58.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Wildfire Prevention activities include public information and education, fire permitting, and operation of the Township Fire Warden system, as well as advice and assistance to communities and homeowners about protecting their property in the event of a wildfire (Firewise).

State fire prevention activities are supplemented by annual grants from the U.S. Forest Service as follows:

- State Fire Assistance – approximately \$650,000 (supports fire prevention and readiness).
- Volunteer Fire Assistance – approximately \$460,000 federal support and \$8,000 state support through sales tax on fireworks (supports Rural Fire Department readiness).
- Cooperative Fire Assistance – approximately \$300,000 (Wildfire Risk Reduction grants support Firewise – Community Fire Protection activities).

Fire Presuppression includes activities undertaken before a fire happens to ensure more effective suppression. These activities include overall planning, recruitment and training, procurement of firefighting equipment and contracts, and maintenance of equipment and supplies.

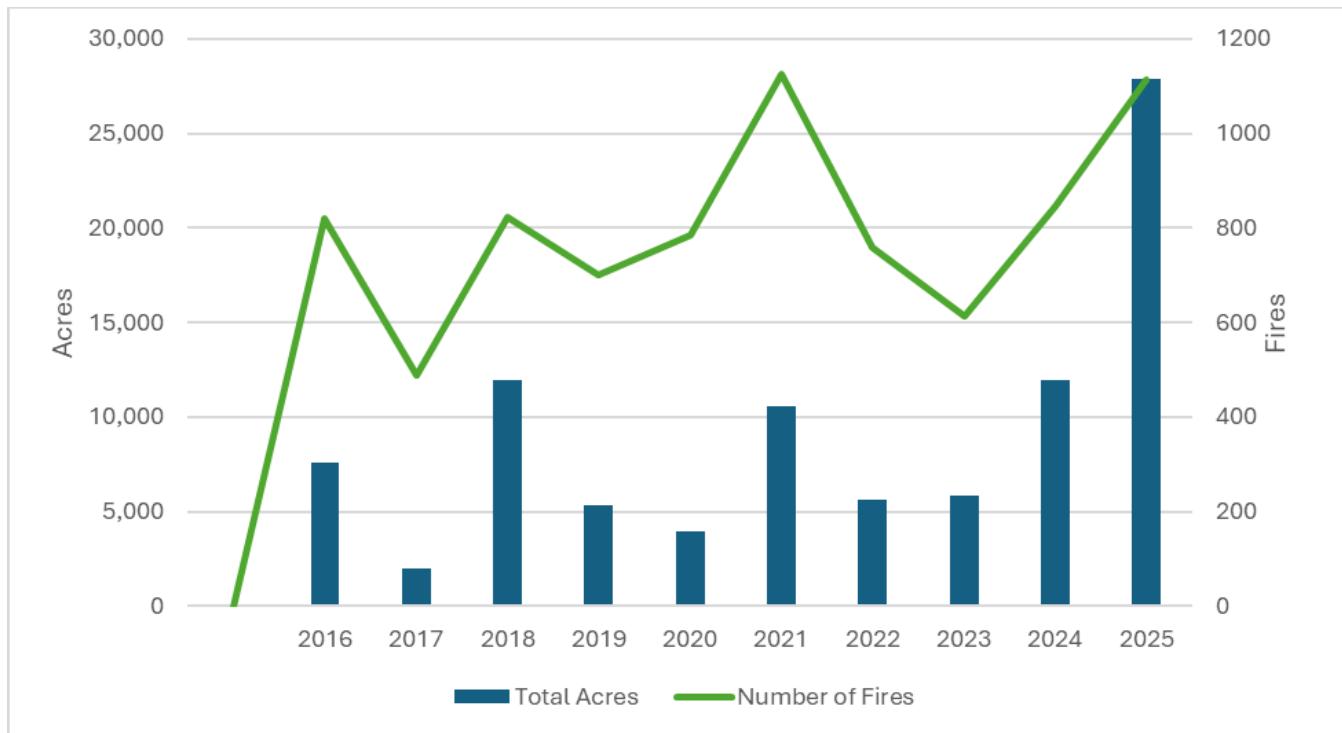
Fire Suppression includes direct action to suppress wildfires and other activities that support and enable the DNR to suppress wildfires, including the prepositioning of firefighting resources.

Appendix 4: Wildfire Activities 10-Year Expenditure History

Fire Fund Source	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	10 Year average
Emergency Fire -Direct	\$6,739,596	\$7,160,792	\$6,939,074	\$7,840,566	\$7,018,468	\$8,023,145	\$7,317,387	\$7,564,293	\$7,372,524	\$7,546,258	\$7,352,210
Emergency Fire-Open	\$17,709,549	\$16,271,730	\$16,487,420	\$15,312,697	\$16,811,184	\$22,659,658	\$30,562,459	\$20,450,933	\$25,197,410	\$32,800,070	\$21,426,311
Fire Funds Total	\$24,449,145	\$23,432,522	\$23,426,494	\$23,153,263	\$23,829,652	\$30,682,803	\$37,879,846	\$28,015,226	\$32,569,934	\$40,346,328	\$28,778,521
Reimbursement to general fund (a)	\$(628,660)	\$(262,871)	\$(1,626,745)	\$(1,458,506)	\$(467,535)	\$(231,512)	\$(155,116)	\$(313,736)	\$(1,267,705)	\$(3,521,265)	\$(993,365)
Net cost to general fund	\$23,820,485	\$23,169,651	\$21,799,749	\$21,694,757	\$23,362,117	\$30,682,803	\$37,724,730	\$27,701,490	\$31,302,229	\$36,825,063	\$27,785,156
Reimbursable mobilization costs (b)	\$4,370,469	\$3,423,285	\$4,558,888	\$3,722,193	\$1,701,859	\$1,401,104	\$7,227,090	\$3,344,322	\$2,903,092	\$8,908,171	\$4,156,047

(a) Reimbursement includes fire cost collections, fire cache sales and the special revenue fund.

(b) This is not a state expenditure. Costs are initially expended for the fire fund for assistance to federal partners and other states. Minnesota is reimbursed for all these costs.



Appendix 5: Minnesota Fires, Numbers and Acres Burned 2016 – 2025

Appendix 6: FY2025 Wildfires by Cause

