

# Delivering data for a decade and counting



2014 marks LANDFIRE's 10th year. In 2004, the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) signed the charter that launched LANDFIRE - an innovative effort considered critical to natural resource and fire management programs. The USDA Forest Service and the Department of the Interior fund LANDFIRE. Principle production partners are the U.S. Geological Survey, Forest Service, and The Nature Conservancy; other partners include the Bureau of

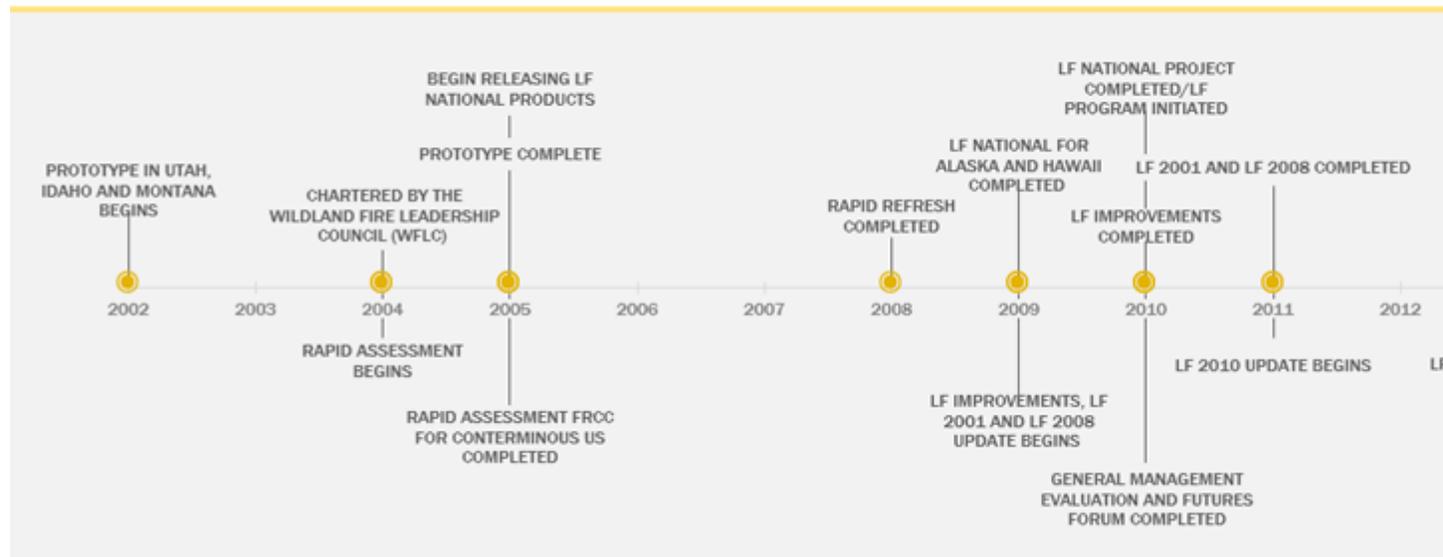
Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. New partners and collaboration contribute to the program's success, and partnerships are continually being formed.

Since its inception, LANDFIRE's application has extended beyond its original intent of natural resources and fire management support. LANDFIRE applications now include those involving climate change research, carbon sequestration planning, habitat analysis and protection, state forest assessments and more.

An overview of major highlights offers a glimpse at the LANDFIRE Program's depth and strength and explains why this innovative approach to science-based land management continues to succeed and serve a broad spectrum of users.



## LANDFIRE Milestones



## Hit the ground running

In 2002, two separate General Accounting Office reports found that adequate evidence was not available to make informed decisions regarding fuels reductions and stated "...on the basis of our review, LANDFIRE is the only proposed research project so far that appears capable of producing consistent national inventory data for improving the prioritization of fuel projects and communities."

Within the year, LANDFIRE selected two prototype areas where scientists researched, developed, evaluated, and tested methods to determine how best to map the United States. Visionaries imagined the impact a national effort could have and set about designing a project with high expectations. Before the prototype was fully finished, WFLC approved national implementation of LANDFIRE. Over months and meetings, teams and individuals developed a plan of action that would take five years and cost \$40 million.

While the completion of LANDFIRE National in 2009 was a significant accomplishment, LANDFIRE leadership focused on data updates and a remap to provide land managers and decision makers with the most current and accurate suite of data products to support management planning and decision making. Since the original product suites (circa 2001) were developed, the LANDFIRE Program has created and provided five additional spatial product versions (see LANDFIRE Milestones) to improve data usability and provide more current information. LANDFIRE 2012 (the sixth version) is in production and will be completed for the conterminous US in late 2014. Alaska, Hawaii and the insular areas will be completed in early 2015.



Rapid Assessment Development



LANDFIRE applications extend beyond natural resources and fire management support



New partners and collaboration contribute to LANDFIRE's success

## Development and Applications

Land managers across the U.S. are using the suite of LANDFIRE data and tools to work with colleagues and stakeholders, set priorities, examine alternative management strategies, and develop action plans. A broad spectrum of data [applications](#) is continually expanding as people address land issues ranging from protecting habitat for birds and bears, to climate change, state assessments and [more](#). In 2005, Tim Sexton, serving as incident commander on the [Dammeron and Valley Road Fires](#), indicated that "millions of dollars were saved on these fires due to

modified tactical decisions based upon better informed fire progression and spread predictions using LANDFIRE data."

In 2011, Andrew Beavers (Colorado State University) assisted managers in Hawaii with an [endangered species and critical habitat](#) analysis. He indicated that "the data provides a good starting point, which did not exist previous to LANDFIRE, from which manipulations can be made to produce respectable datasets."

In 2013, The Nature Conservancy's Katherine Medlock served on a steering committee working on [land management challenges in Tennessee's Cherokee National Forest](#). She notes that LANDFIRE "was a real game changer." Says Medlock, "Real time querying and testing pushed the steering committee to discuss values across the landscape, test their ideas and have conversations that had previously been impossible."

Hundreds of publications, reports, journal articles, case studies, white papers, conference presentations and workshops attest to the incalculable value of LANDFIRE's suite of products for large land management activities.

### **10th Anniversary Reflections**

In addition to tangible milestones and applications, the LANDFIRE Program has supported intangible and critical outcomes for successful large landscape planning, including:

- improved working relationships among scientists, managers and the public
- increased scientific capacity for modeling public and private land and management planning alternatives
- reduced barriers to implementation through an improved scientific foundation for planning
- accelerated integration of LANDFIRE data and models into land and fire management data through proactive dissemination to support planning, lessons learned, training, and decision support throughout the innovation and production process
- increased public support of natural resource and fire management decisions through engagement of diverse partners during development of models and data
- exceeded and expanded LANDFIRE's original fuels reduction activities and goals to unlimited application across the landscape



During the last decade LANDFIRE provided a new, effective way for agencies to manage land, reduce fuels and restore ecosystems. The Program remains dedicated to continual improvement through forming valuable partnerships, listening to customers and developing new products and innovations to support future needs.