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AIR RESOURCES BOARD

Mitigating Wildfire Impacts: A Call To Action

Mary Nichols, Chair
California Air Resources Board

Wildland Fires: Towards Improved Understanding and Forecasting of Air Quality Impacts – A Workshop

September 25, 2020

Record Wildfires in the West

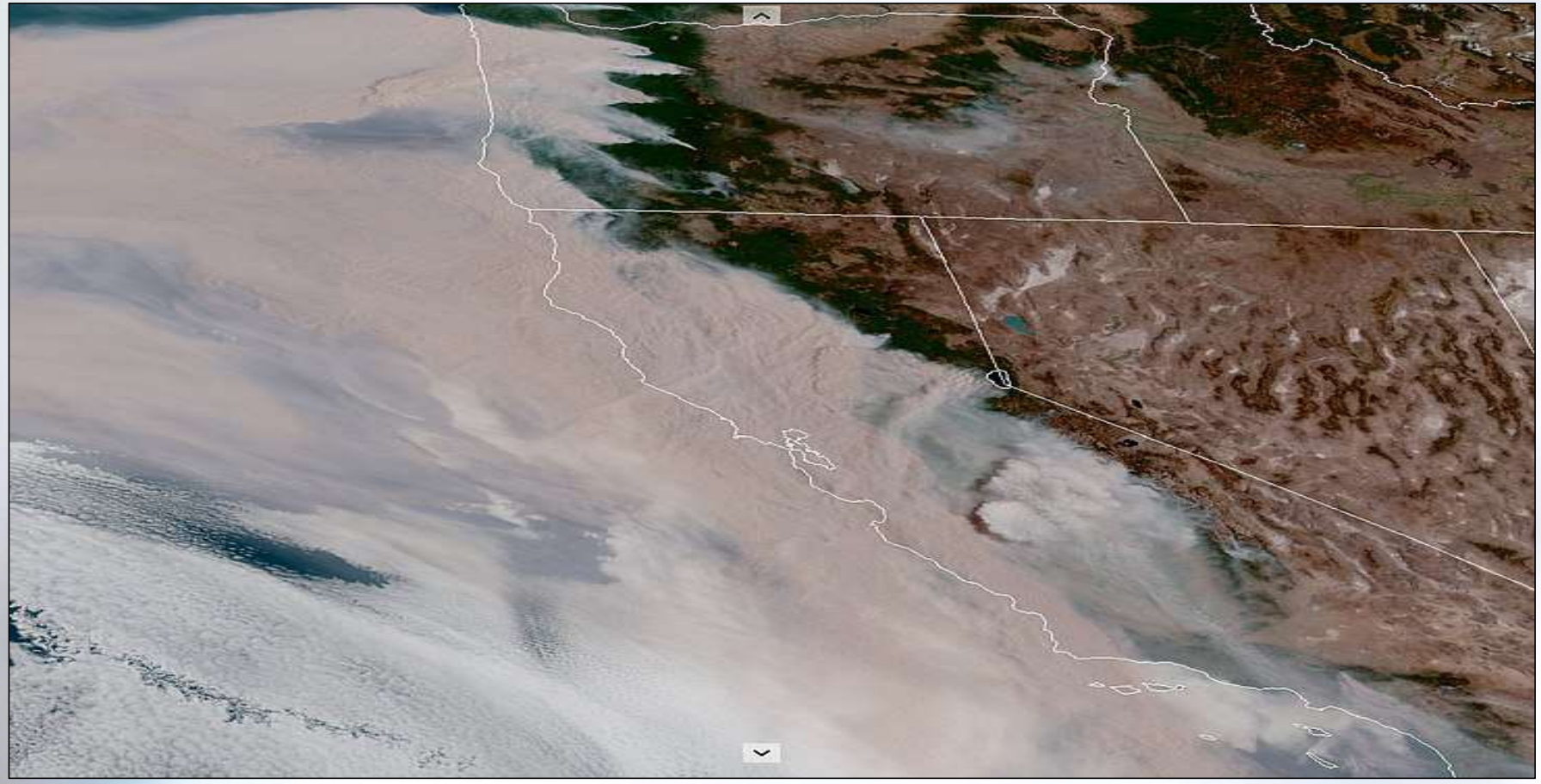
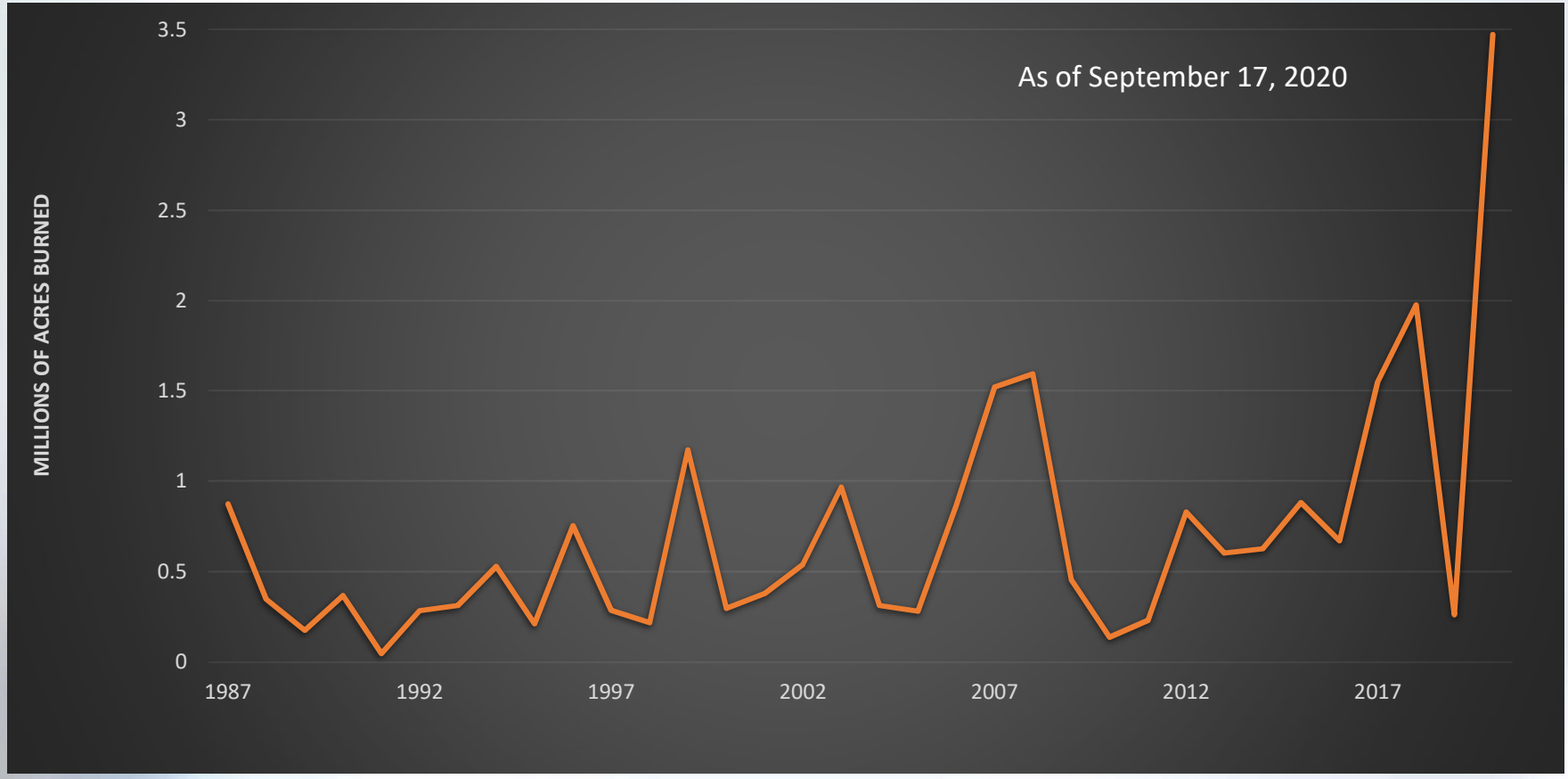


Image: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:GOES17_geocolor_Western_US_2020-09-09_1100AM.jpg

California Wildfires Are Getting Worse



Data sources: https://www.fire.ca.gov/media/11397/fires-acres-all-agencies-thru-2018.pdf
https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/

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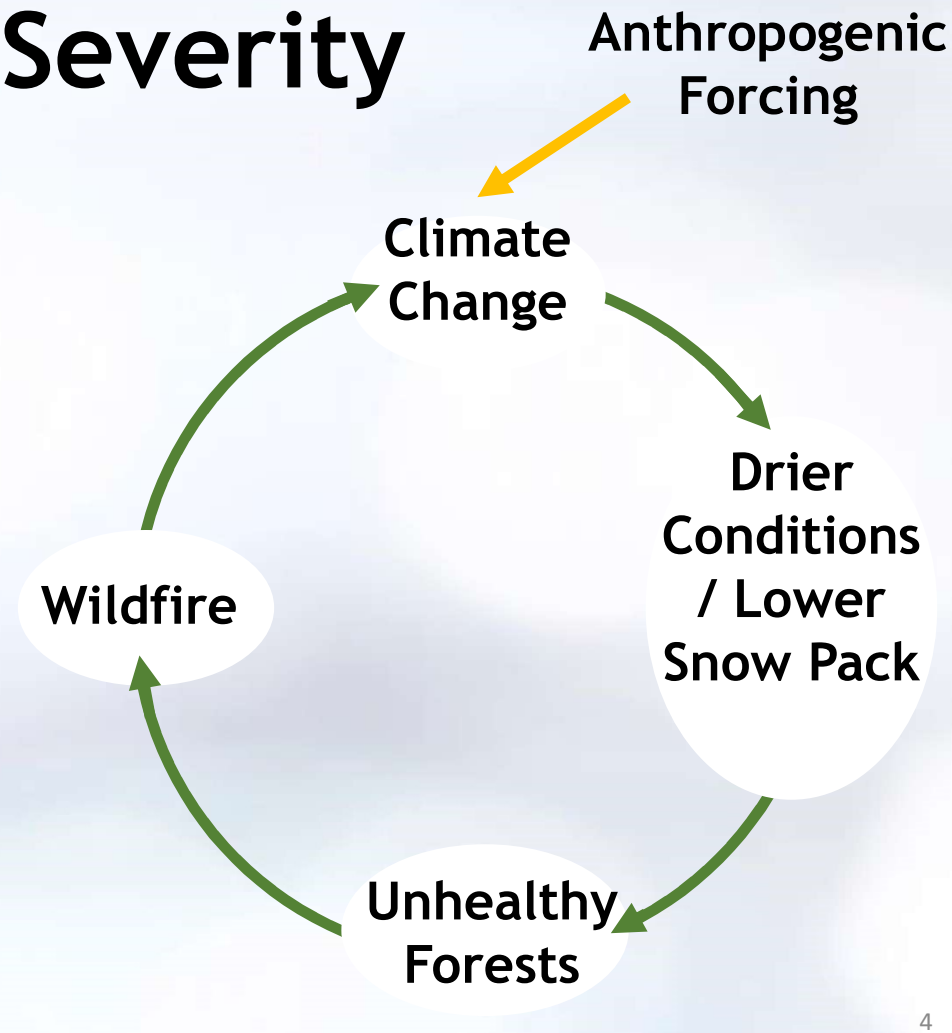
Reducing Wildfire Severity

- Climate change creating conditions more conducive to large catastrophic wildfires
- Supporting healthy forests key to reducing wildfire risk and susceptibility



Looking To The Future: Room For Optimism

- Increased partnership between air quality agencies and land managers
- Recognition of the health impacts from wildfire smoke
- Greater public support for holistic forest management practices, including prescribed burning

Restoring Healthy Forests

Image Sources: https://www.csp-inc.org/what-we-do/capabilities-services/ecological-and-spatial-statistics/support-forest-prescribed-fire-management/
https://www.fs.fed.us/research/pdf/Western_final.pdf

- Much more prescribed fire is needed to restore healthy forests
- Also physical thinning of the understory
- Healthy forests reduce the severity of wildfires and sequester more carbon

Taking A Holistic Approach

- California's Scoping Plan considers forests within a broader context
- Define clear goals and targets
- Recognize the interplay between natural and working lands and other sectors
- Use innovative approaches to fund wildfire risk mitigation and forest management activities

The Path Forward

- There is no easy solution
- It will take decades to fully mitigate the risks of wildfire
- Collective action is needed at the local, state, and federal levels
- Holistic approaches are essential
- Success is not possible without partnerships and public support