

Official: Climate changes create more intense wildfires

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal



With a warming climate making for longer fire seasons and more intense wildfires, an ongoing effort to revamp the nation's firefighting strategy is gaining increasing importance, the chief of the U.S. Forest Service said.

Tom Tidwell, in Reno last week as part of a coalition of officials discussing fire policy, said a changing climate is adding urgency to an already extensive danger posed by fire.

"Fires are burning hotter, and they are more intense," Tidwell said. "We see it both in the forests and on the rangeland habitat."

Mountain snowpacks are melting earlier, and fire seasons are lasting 30 to 45 days longer across many areas of the West, Tidwell said.

"The type of fire behavior is very different from what we had even 10 years ago," Tidwell said.

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