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The BIA Northwest Region experienced a very severe fire season in 2015, with over 500 fires burning over 481,000 acres, widespread evacuations, and losing 1.2 billion board feet of commercial timber as well as nearly 200 homes and other buildings.

Losses would have been even more severe without the 80,000 acres of fuels treatments implemented between 2003 and 2015 on the Region's five most affected Reservations: Spokane, Yakama, Warm Springs, Colville, and Nez Perce.

Fire spread was controlled most effectively where suppression actions occurred in fuels treatments strategically placed along roads. Fuels treatments located adjacent to communities also consistently reduced fire behavior and provided tactical advantage to suppression resources.

Tribal forest management activities including commercial harvest and thinning create jobs and income as well as promote forest health and resiliency, and fuels treatments are an integrated step in the management cycle to minimize highly negative wildfire effects.

In order to affect fire spread and behavior at the scales of the 2015 fires, larger fuels treatments, as well as using wildfire as a fuel treatment at less extreme fire weather, are two options to stretch limited fuels management funding.

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