

Revision: Northeast FFP Compact Fire History Trends and Comparisons

US States 1984-2010

This version corrects errors in prev. data. Pls discard prev version.

I plan to bring all Compact jurisdictions into one dataset, but due to different sources, etc., am starting in two pieces.

Friends: Please note any differences between this source and what you are using, especially as it may affect protected area in your state. Until we have confidence in our numbers we will not do more detailed statistical analysis.

			Acres		
			Total Land Area	Total Forest Area	Protected Area
Maine			19,752	17,673	
New Hampshire			5,740	4,850	
Vermont			5,920	4,618	
Massachusetts			5,018	3,171	
Connecticut			3,101	1,794	
Rhode Island			669	356	
New York			30,217	18,669	
	USA Compact states		70,417	51,131	
Quebec			380874	181,199	123,500
New Brunswick			18031	15,045	
Nova Scotia			13585	10,473	
Nfld and Labrador			100035	26,503	
	Canada jurisd.		512,525	233,220	
	Total Compact		582,942	284,351	
	Sources: USA: USF FIA -- RPA tables for 2007.				
		Canada: various websites			

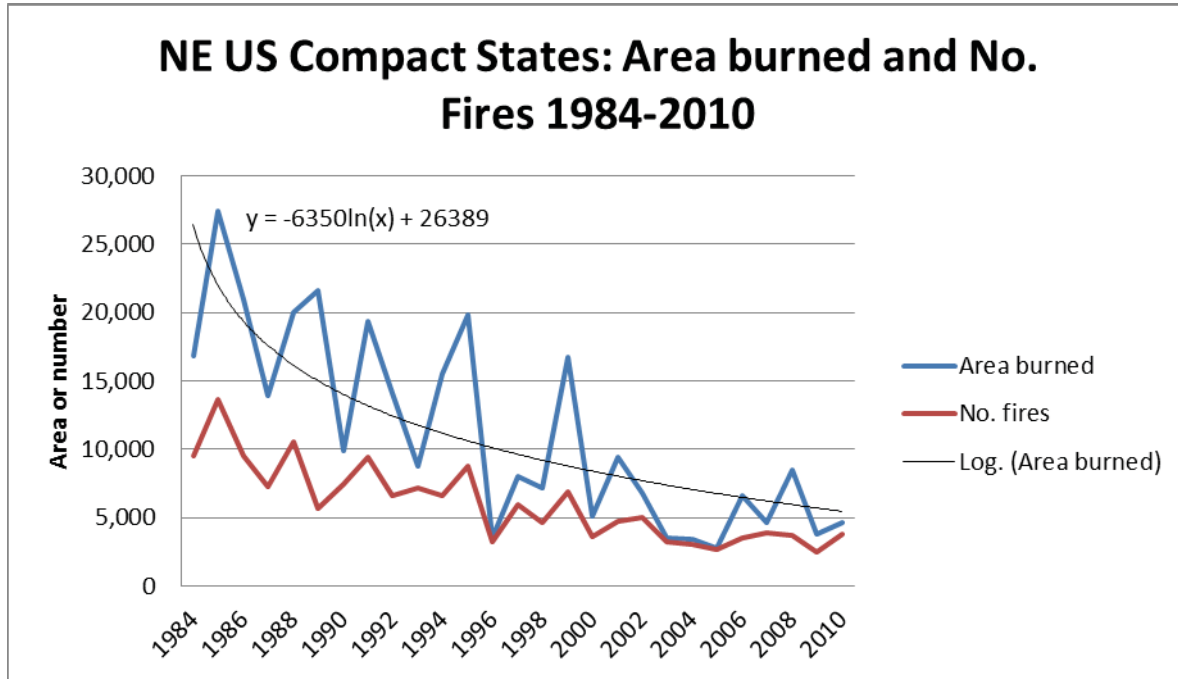
The USFS dataset certainly shows the volatility of area burned and fire numbers in the region.

USFS Data source: provided by Bob Hartlove USFS S&PF, Radnor. Annual summaries of state-reported data, by year. Compiled by TIG.

		1984-2010		
State		Average	High	Low
ME	Acres burned	1,288	6,278	342
	Number of fires	652	1,338	345
	Average size	1.81	5.95	0.61
NH	Acres burned	478	2,770	90
	Number of fires	574	1,757	280
	Average size	1.00	6.24	0.27
VT	Acres burned	277	989	68
	Number of fires	140	370	31
	Average size	1.95	4.50	0.94
MA	Acres burned	3,681	11,098	417
	Number of fires	2,955	7,756	962
	Average size	1.16	2.03	0.43
RI	Acres burned	176	569	60
	Number of fires	120	246	59
	Average size	1.42	3.80	0.57
CT	Acres burned	644	3,874	0
	Number of fires	266	1,471	0
	Average size	2.74	6.87	0.00
NY	Acres burned	2,436	11,768	385
	Number of fires	266	723	73
	Average size	8.16	23.15	2.39
NE US subtotal				
	Acres burned	8,571	27,385	2,719
	Number of fires	5,007	13,612	2,516
	Average size	1.66	3.81	1.00

Note: CT zeros due to missing data

Our concern now is with totals and pattern over time. When comfortable that we have the right data, will do some more interesting statistical analysis. We are now tabulating the area burned and fire numbers by size class and this gives some interesting results.



Current Status on Historical Datasets:

I now have NY area burned and no. fires basically complete back to 1942.

I also have Maine 1903-2010, and CT, with a few breaks, from about 1910 to present.

We now have NH with only a few gaps back to 1912.

Sure would like to get farther back than 1984 for a few states; that would help us see a number of things lot better. For example, would be good to see effects (if any) of the major Northeastern drought of 1961-65, and a later one of 1979-81 on fire experience.

We do not really need to go back farther than the mid-40s; going back that far helps to put the '47 Fire outbreak into perspective as it was a regionwide phenomenon. But I think it would be regrettable if we had to use '84 to present for any state.

Data for individual states are in an attached spreadsheet.

We've already noted instances in which the USFS source does not match a state source; so far, difference are not troubling us. Glad to hear of any large differences, tho.

Comparing these states requires caution. New York seems to have the largest fires... is this an artifact of different reporting? Massachusetts seem to have the most fires. We wonder if the Mass data include more fires due to different reporting requirements/methods... if so, how can we make the sources comparable to get a better regional view? While we understand general differences between and within states as to weather patterns, climatology, and fuel conditions, we may not be able to make very strong statements about these differences with the current statewide fire occurrence data. WE do plan a selective look within selected states and this is under way.

We also need to be alert to any changes in reporting systems that might cause a break in data in a single year and make time series noncomparable.

In next version, we will attempt to standardize these numbers for the differing forest areas of the states. This is problematic in comparing historical trends, though, because area burned often includes a good deal of nonforest.

