



NASTL Summer Conference

August 2024

History of Wildfire and Logging in the Inland West

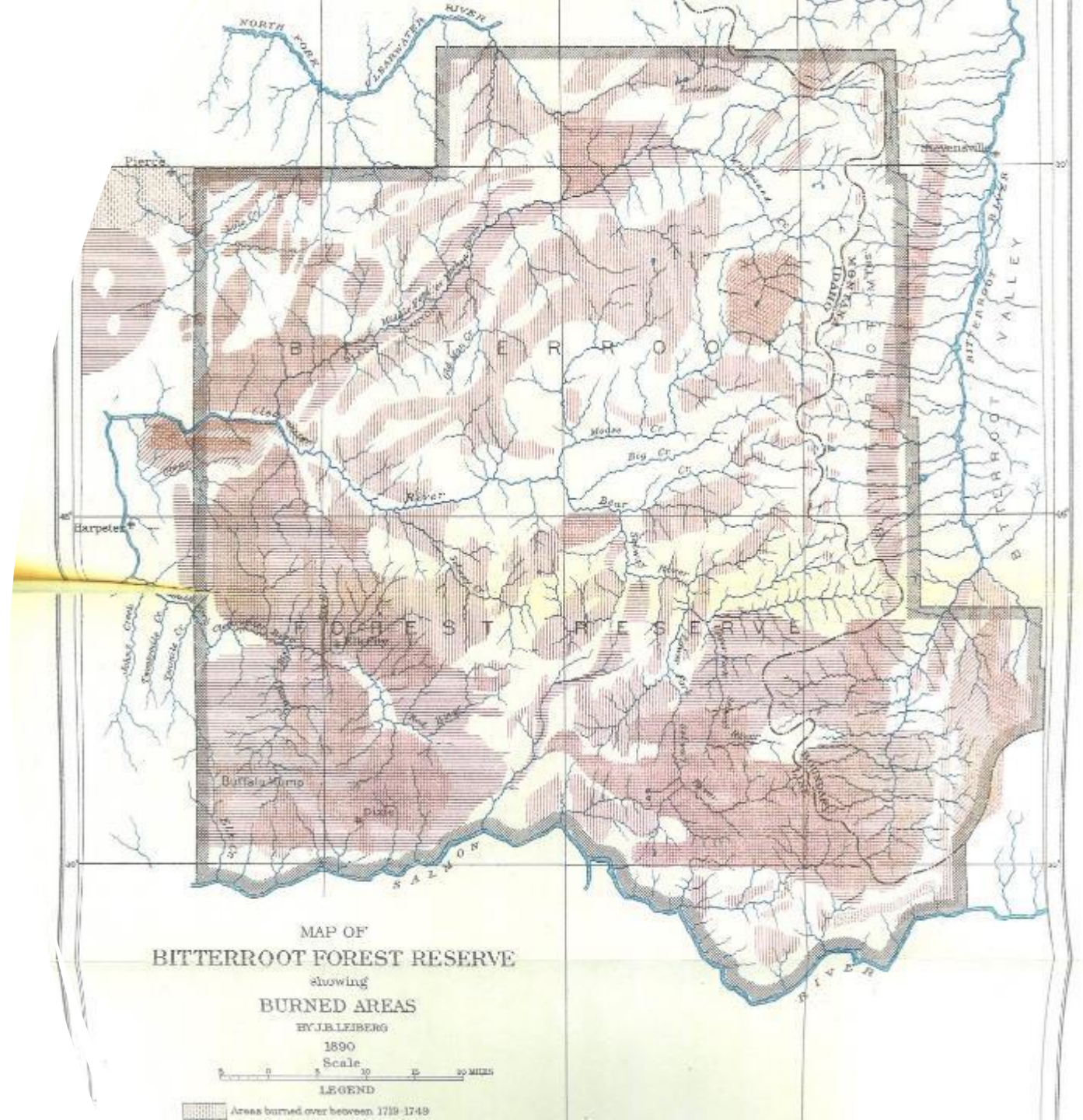
The Big Burn

- “The Big Burn” of 1910 – Idaho, Montana, Washington
- Burned 3 million acres the majority of which was in 2 days due to strong winds.
- 9th largest fire in recorded world history
- 2nd largest fire in US history
- Killed 87 people, destroyed whole towns
- Roughly 300 million board feet was salvaged, less than 1/10th of what likely burned
- Altered the ecology of the region and shaped fire protection policy for decades



One of the early recorded descriptions of landscape changes over time was done by J.B. Leiberg 1898 The Bitterroot Forest Reserve US Geological Survey

Leiberg's work gives us a benchmark in time illustrating "pre European" settlement from 1719-1898



North Fork

Of the 256,000 acres included in the area under consideration, the forest on **30 percent**, or 76,800 acres, has been totally destroyed.....

Lochsa & Middle Fork

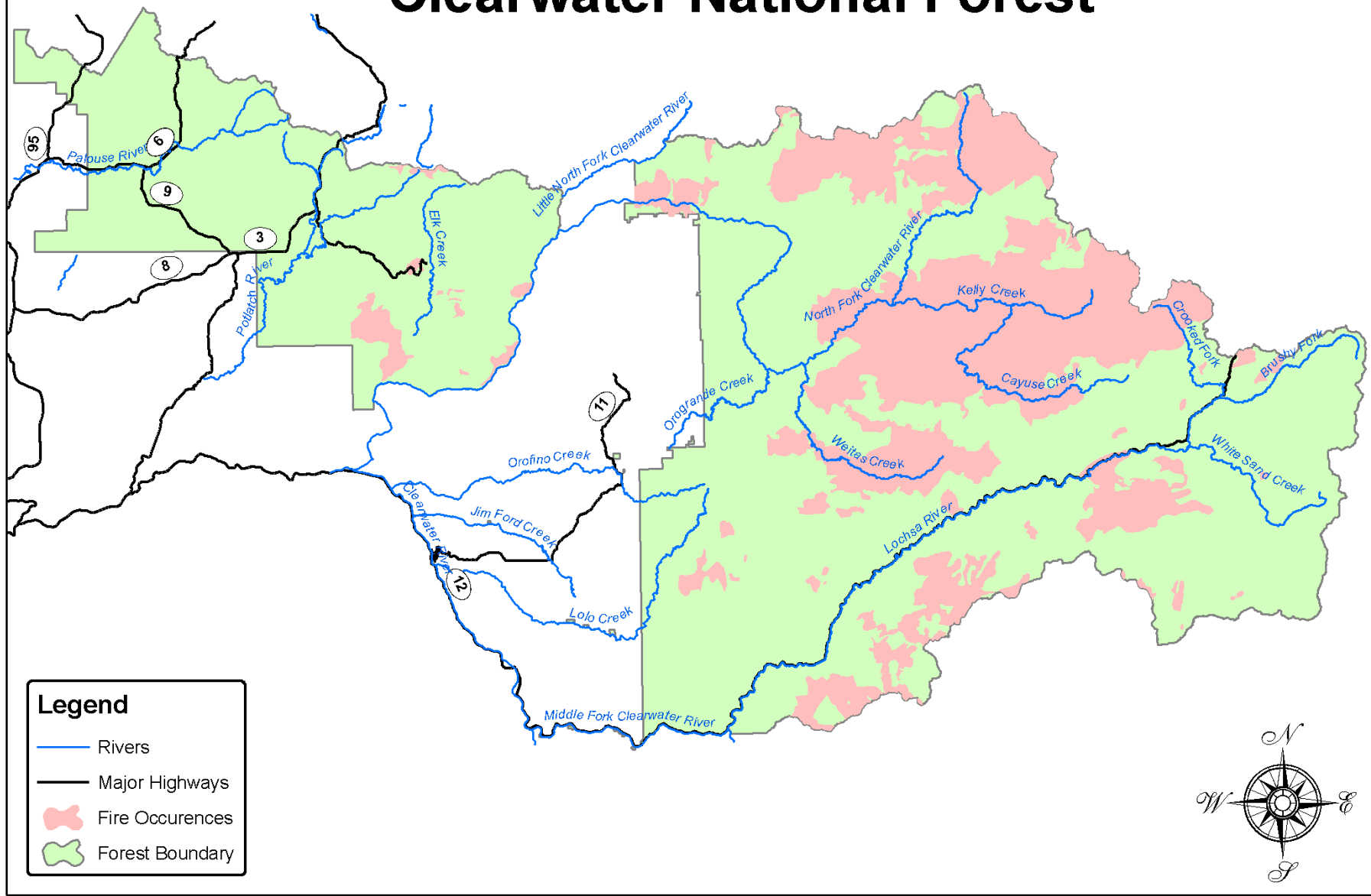
The fires of modern date, none earlier than 1862, most of them much later, have practically destroyed the timber on 701,000 out of the 1,408,000 acres in the district or nearly **50 percent**.....

Selway

The burned area in the district is reckoned at about **35 percent** of the whole, or 300,000 acres

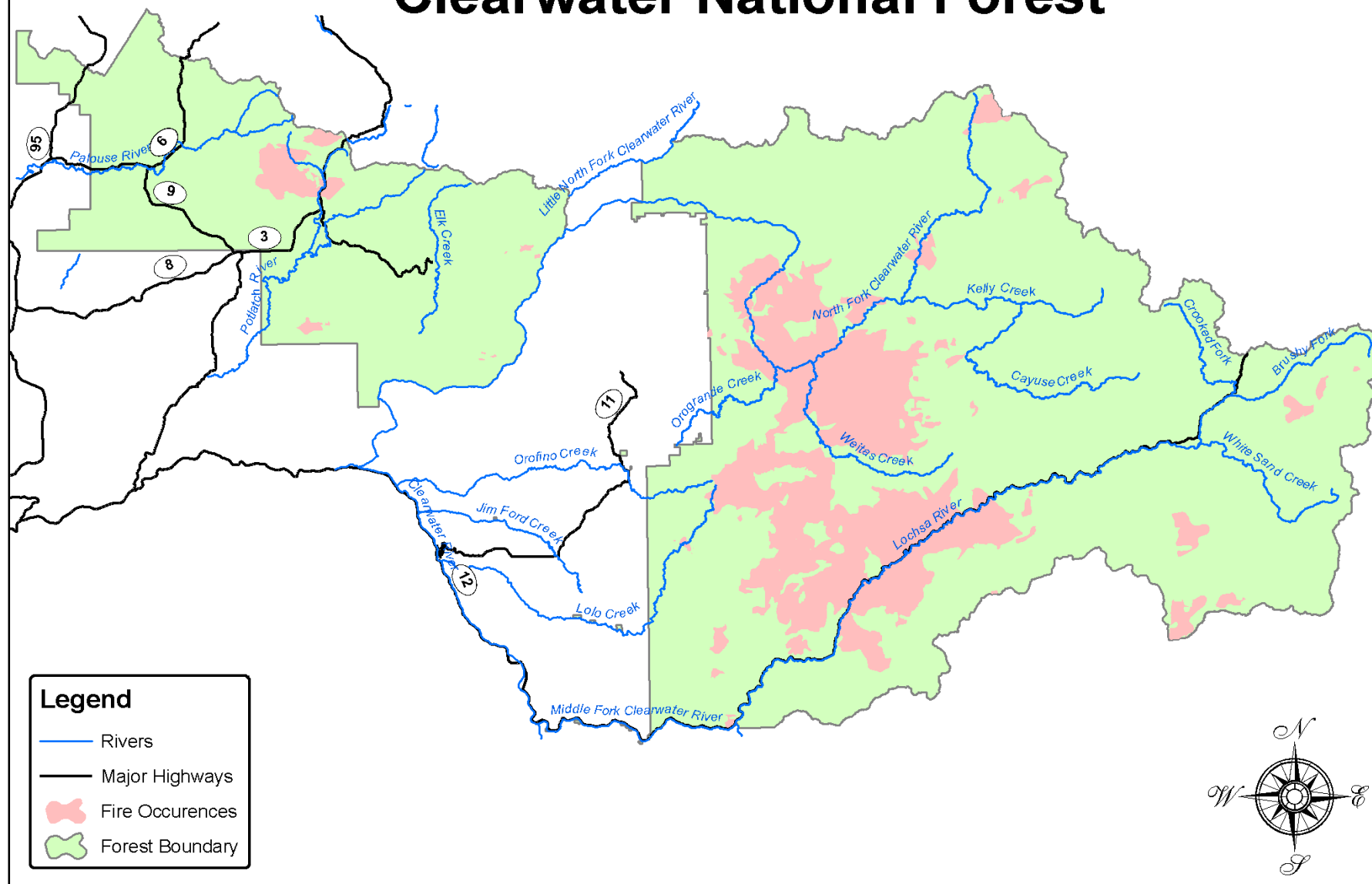
Fires 1910

Clearwater National Forest



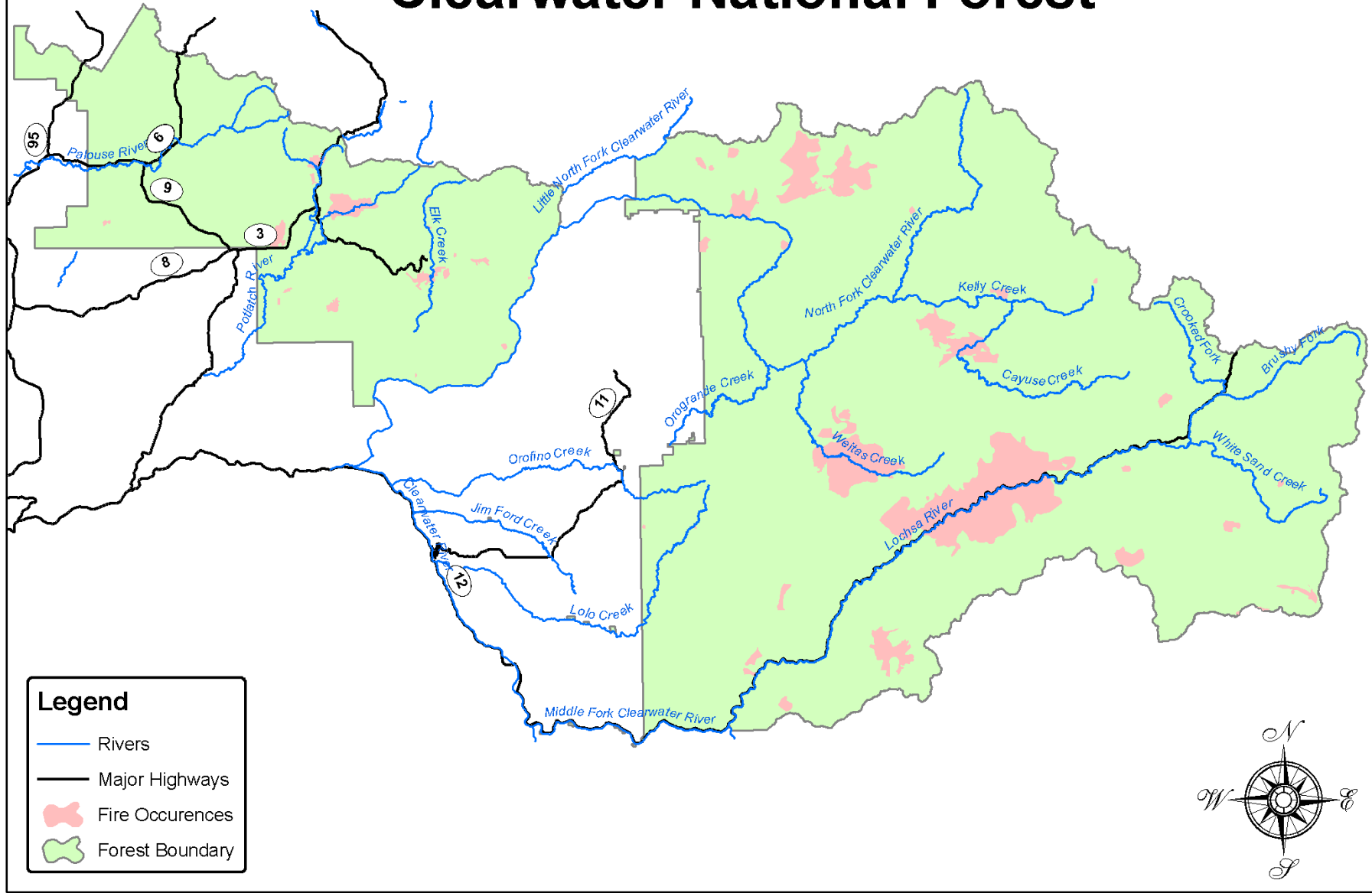
Fires 1911-1919

Clearwater National Forest



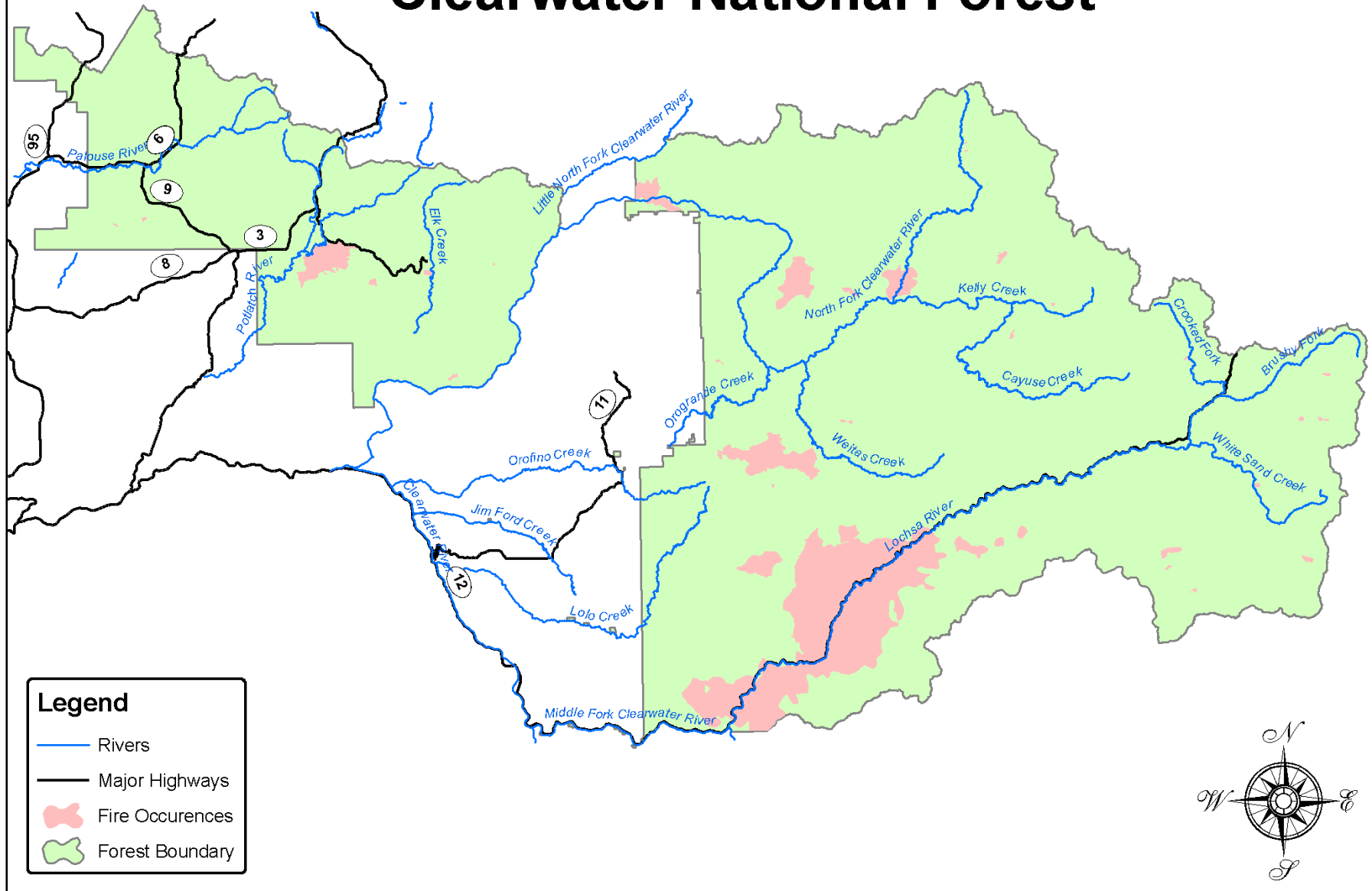
Fires 1920's

Clearwater National Forest



Fires 1930's

Clearwater National Forest





Bugle Point

Johnny
Creek

Fawn
Cr.

Cr.

Weitas

N. Fork
Clearwater

ERA
Camp

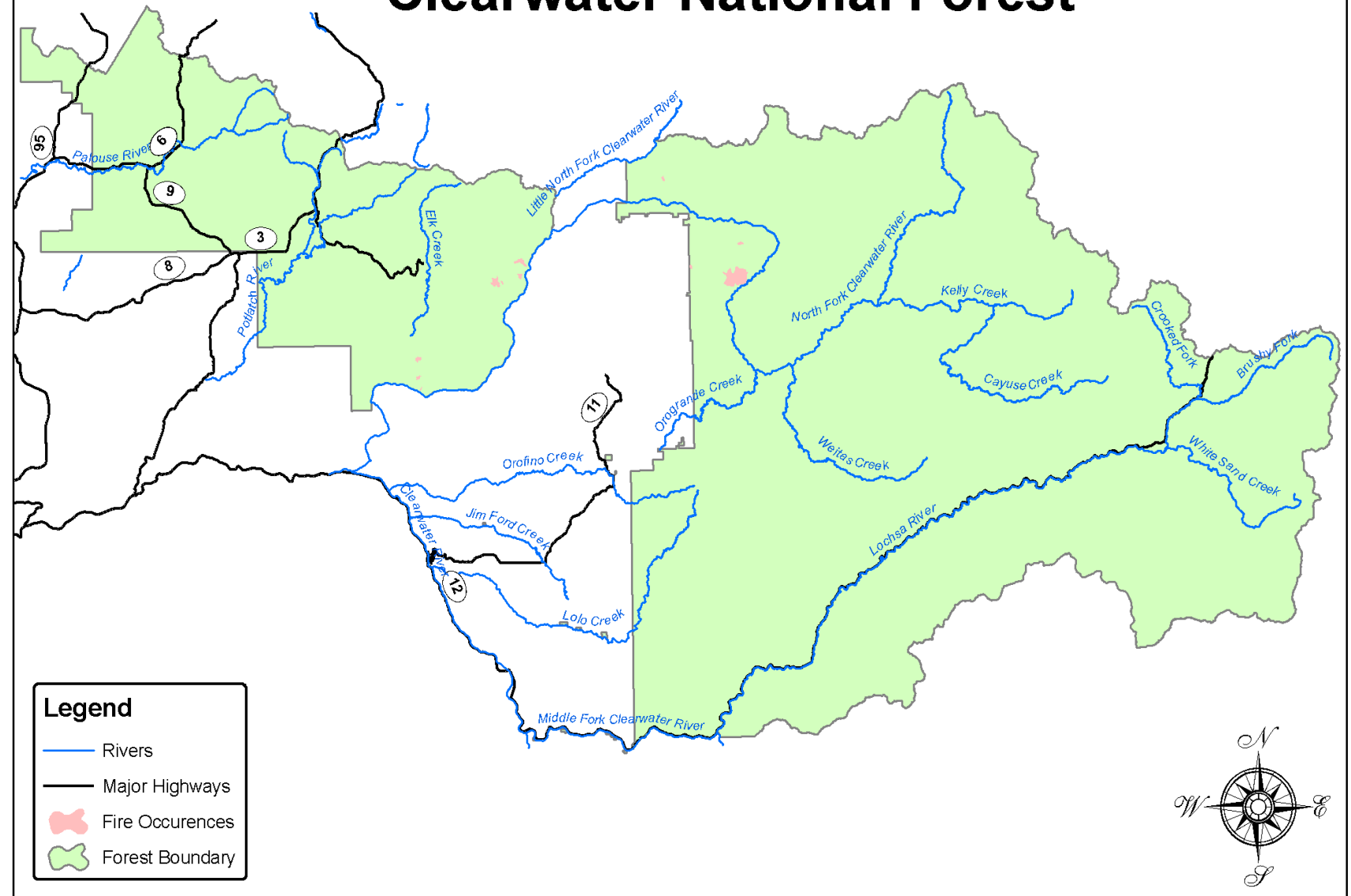
River



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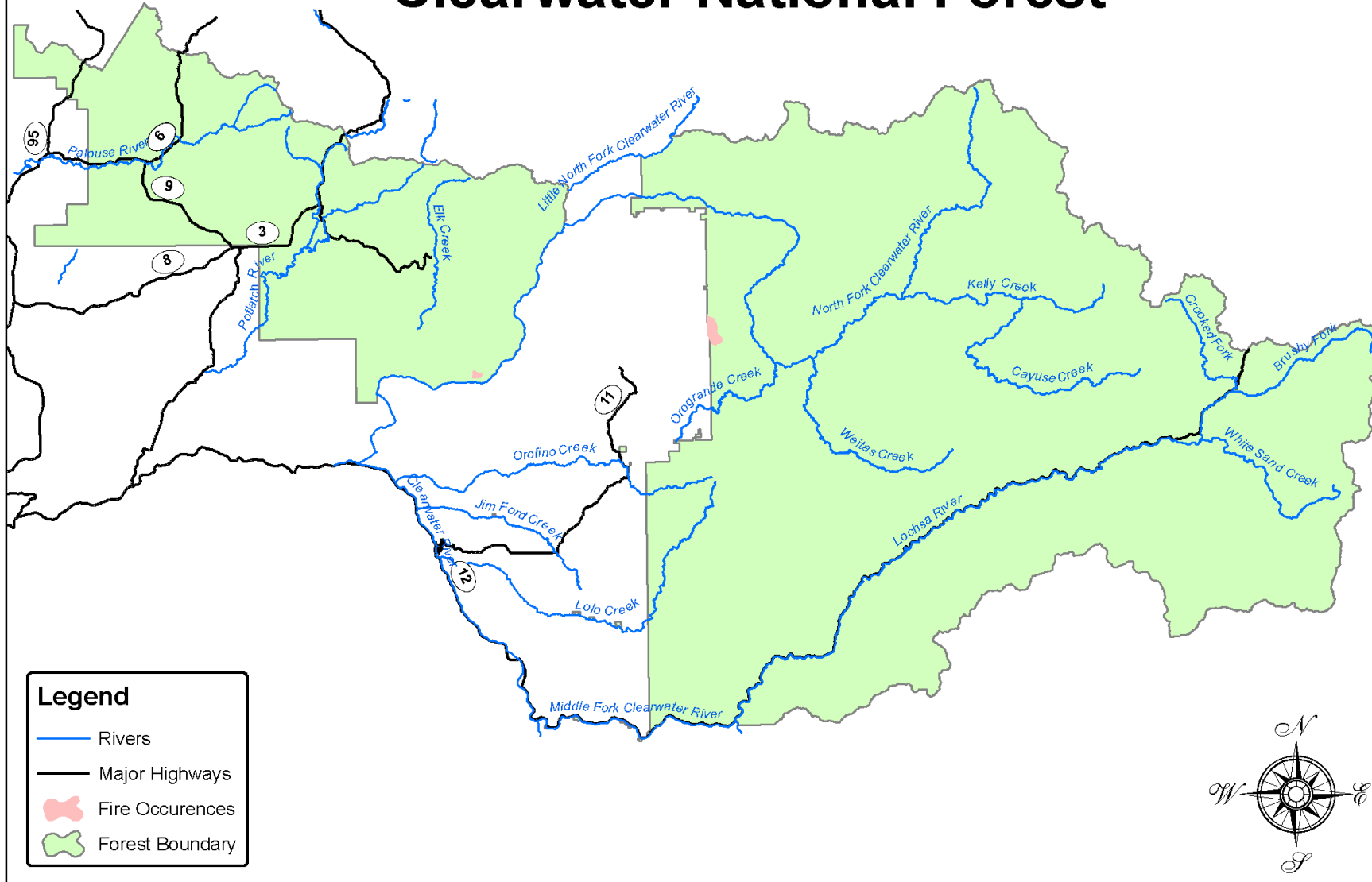
The 10 a.m. policy was a wildfire suppression policy implemented by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in 1935. The policy required that all wildfires be controlled by 10 AM the day after they were first reported. The policy was developed by Ferdinand "Gus" Silcox, the Chief Forester of the USFS, in response to the Tillamook Fire of 1933 and the Big Burn of 1910.

Fires 1940's Clearwater National Forest



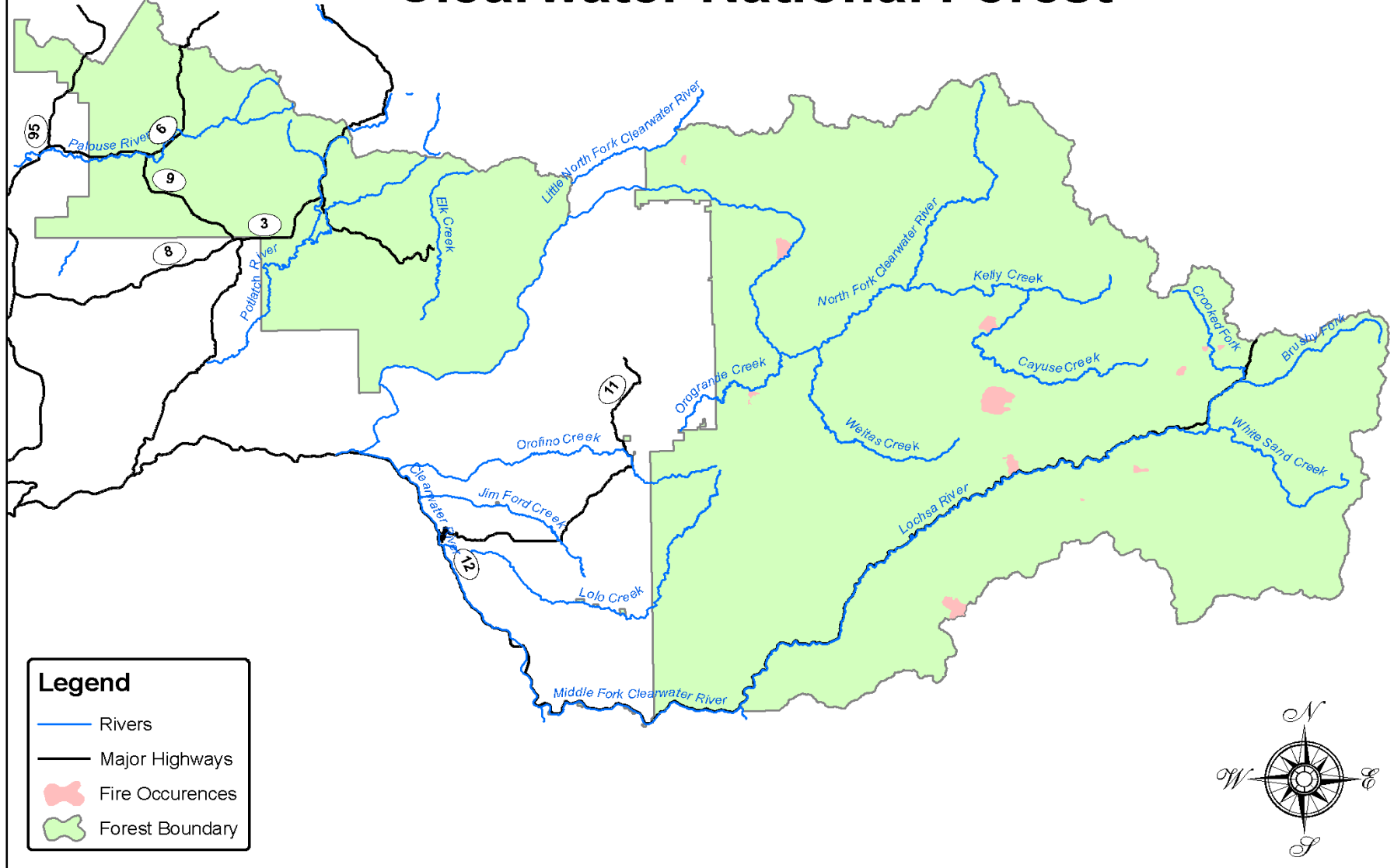
Fires 1950's

Clearwater National Forest



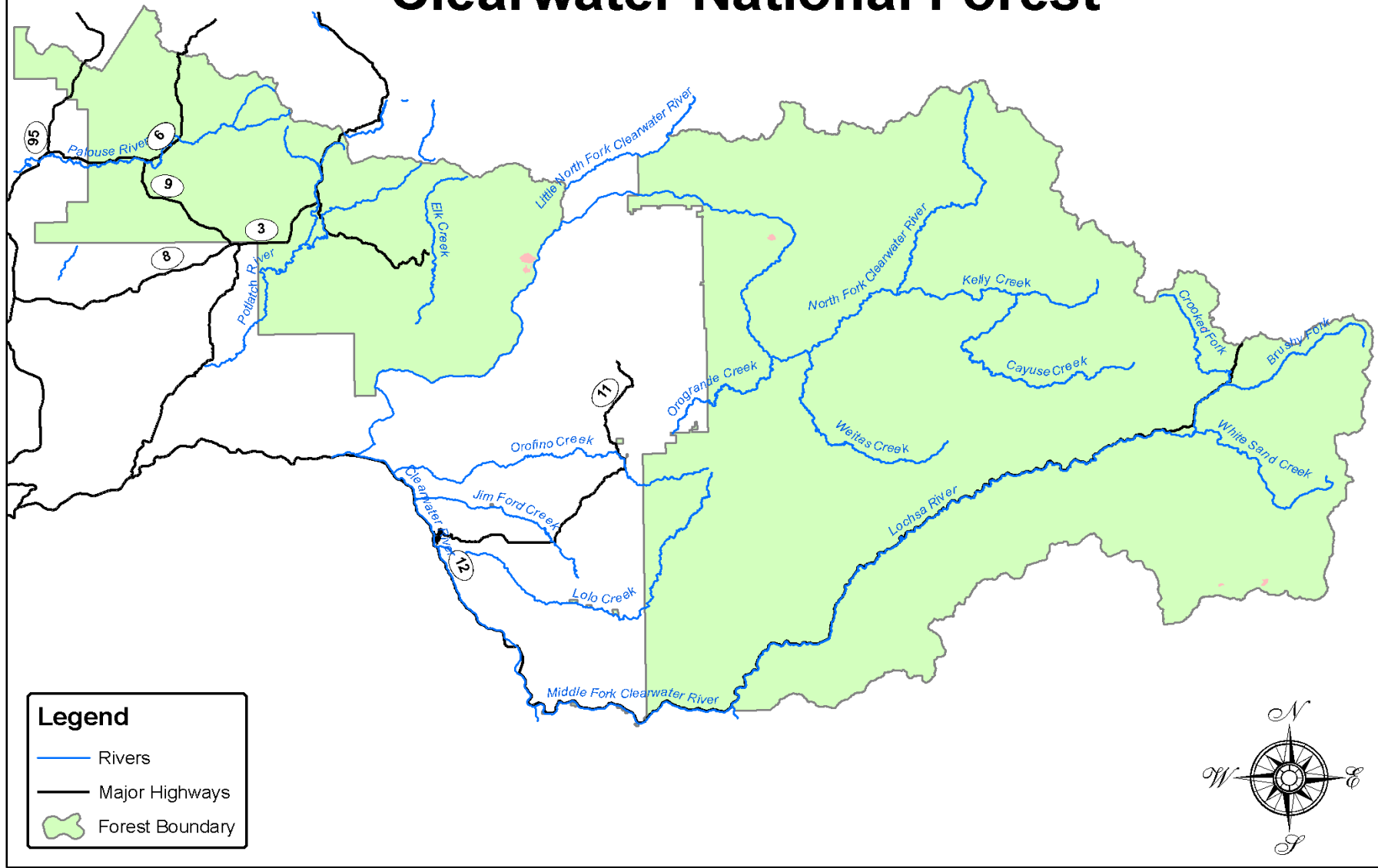
Fires 1960's

Clearwater National Forest



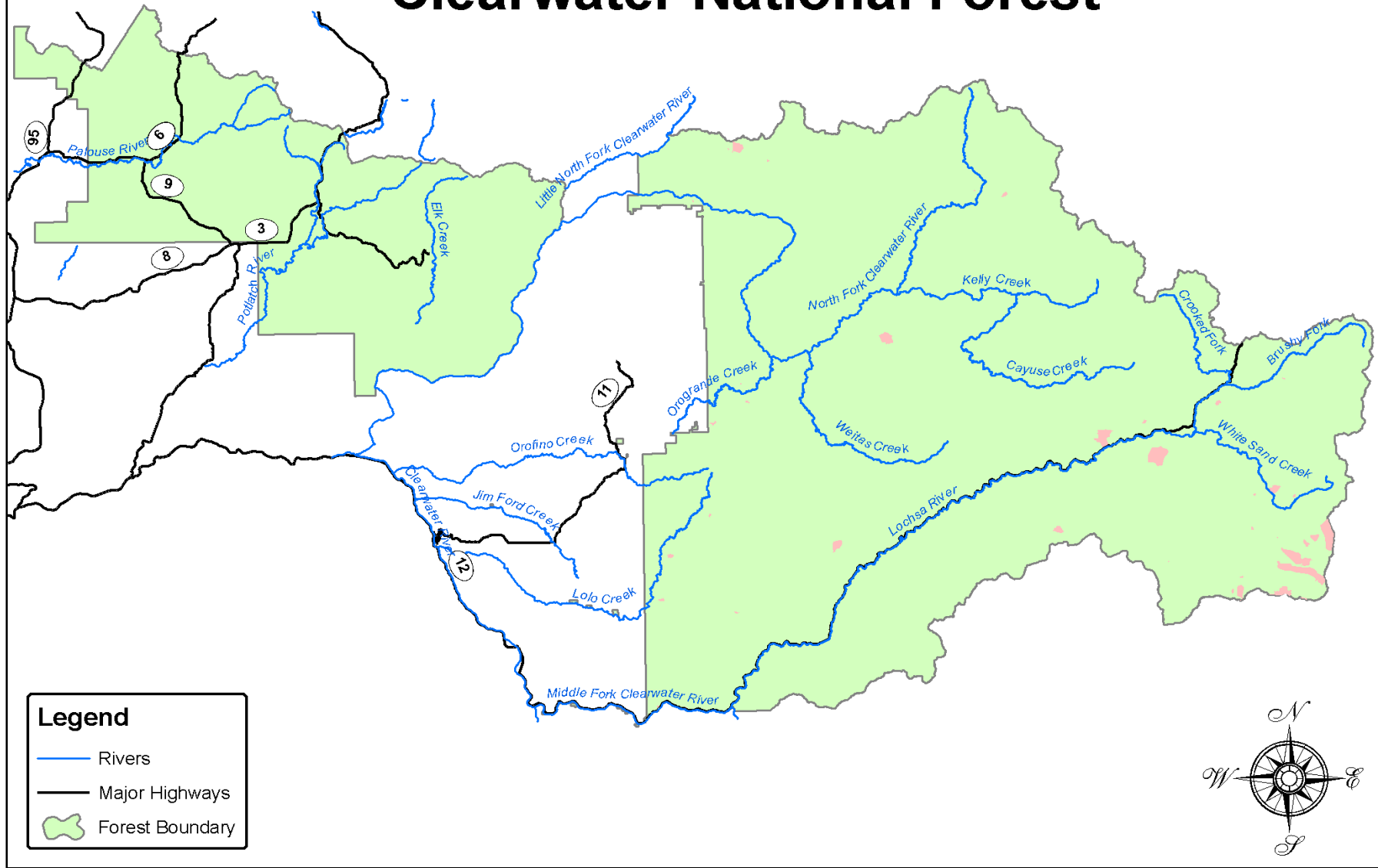
Fires 1970's

Clearwater National Forest



Fires 1980's

Clearwater National Forest



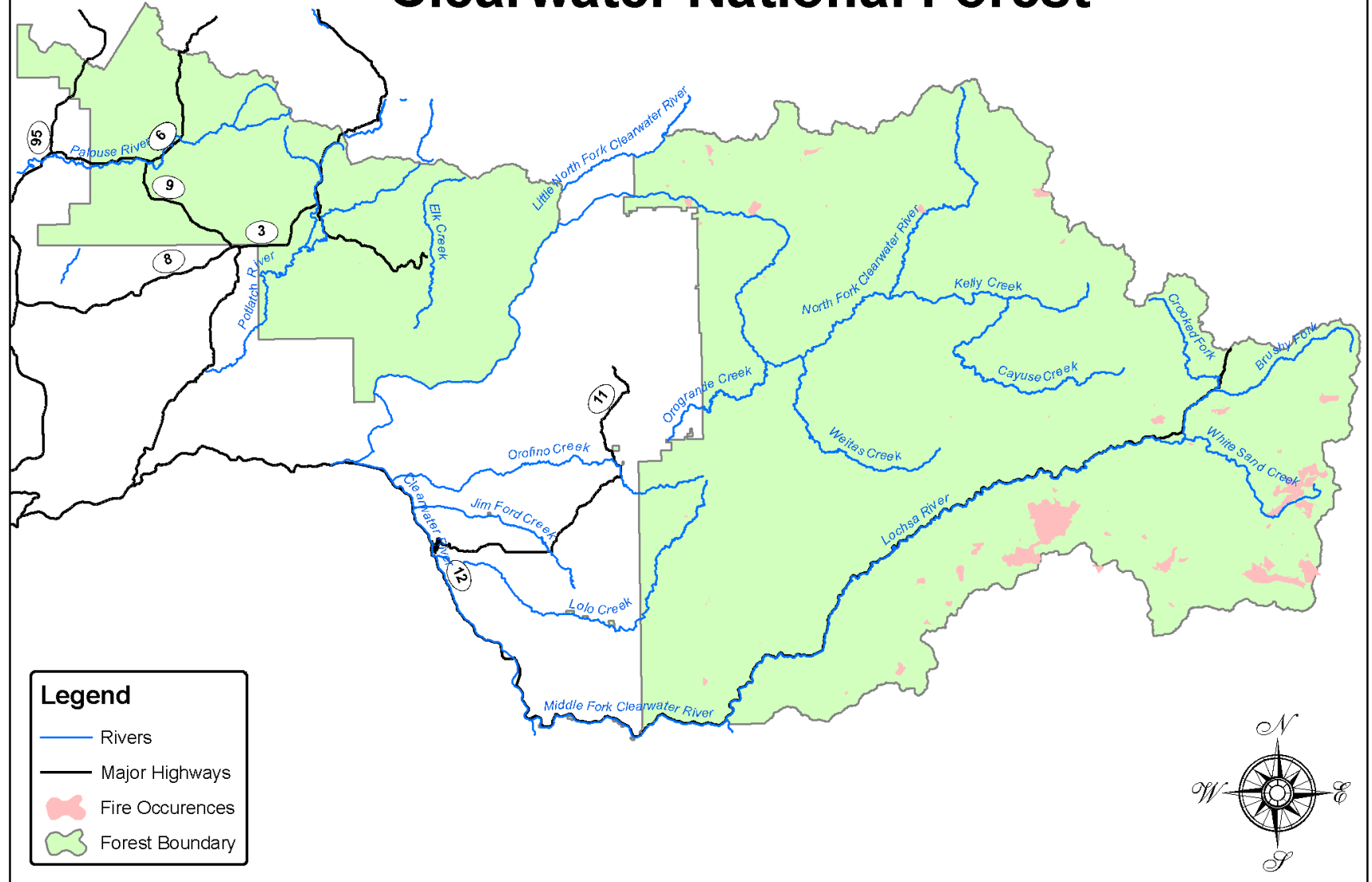
The policy was effective for many years, but over time it led to a buildup of dried-out fuels and denser forests, which could lead to more catastrophic fires.

In the mid-20th century, research began to show that fire was an important ecological process for forest growth, and the USFS began to experiment with prescribed fires and allowing natural fires to burn.

In 1971, the policy was amended to limit wildfires to 10 acres or less, and in 1978 the policy was revised again to focus on managing fire suppression costs.

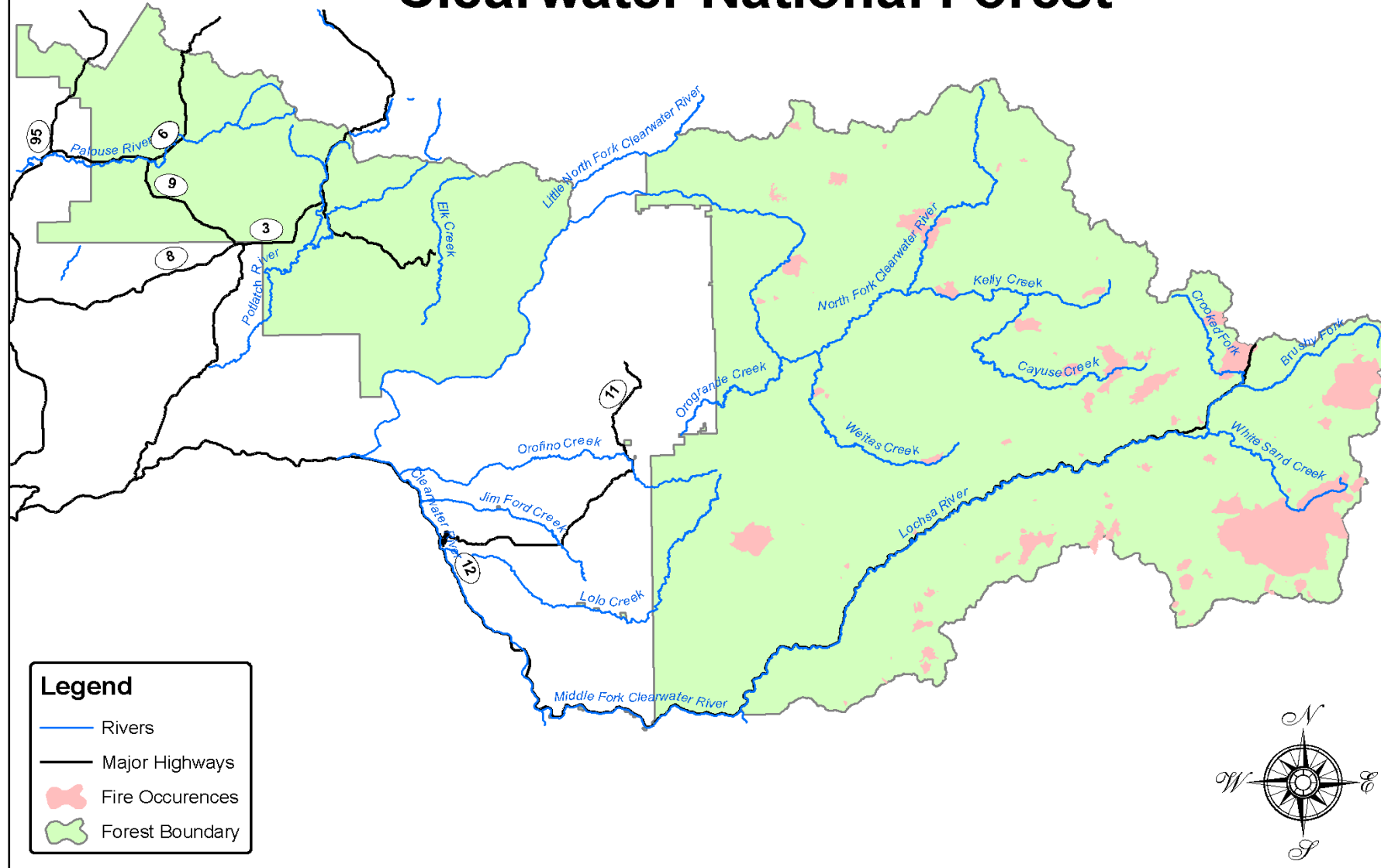
By 1988, the USFS and National Park Service had changed their policies to allow more natural fires to burn on federal land.

Fires 1990's Clearwater National Forest

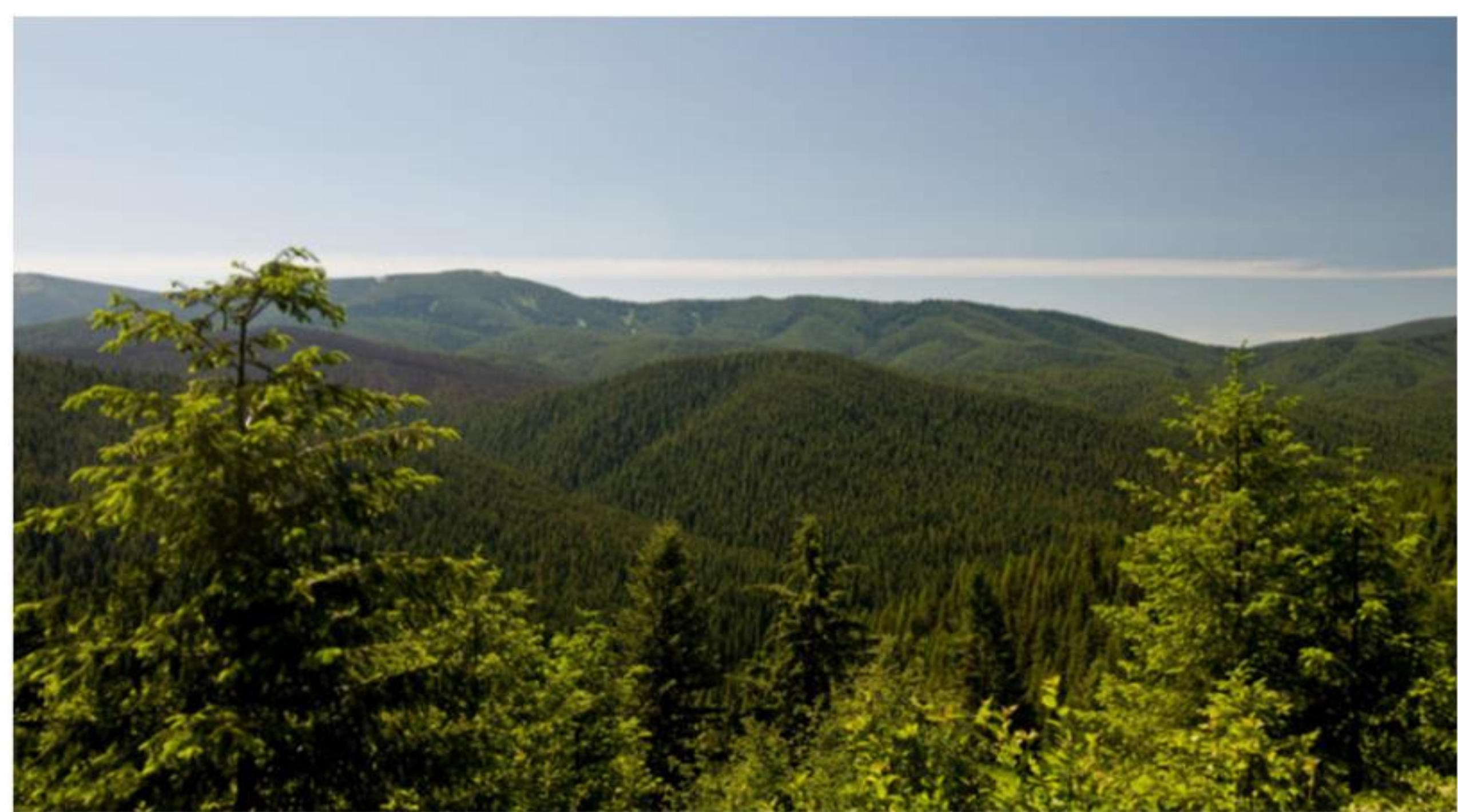


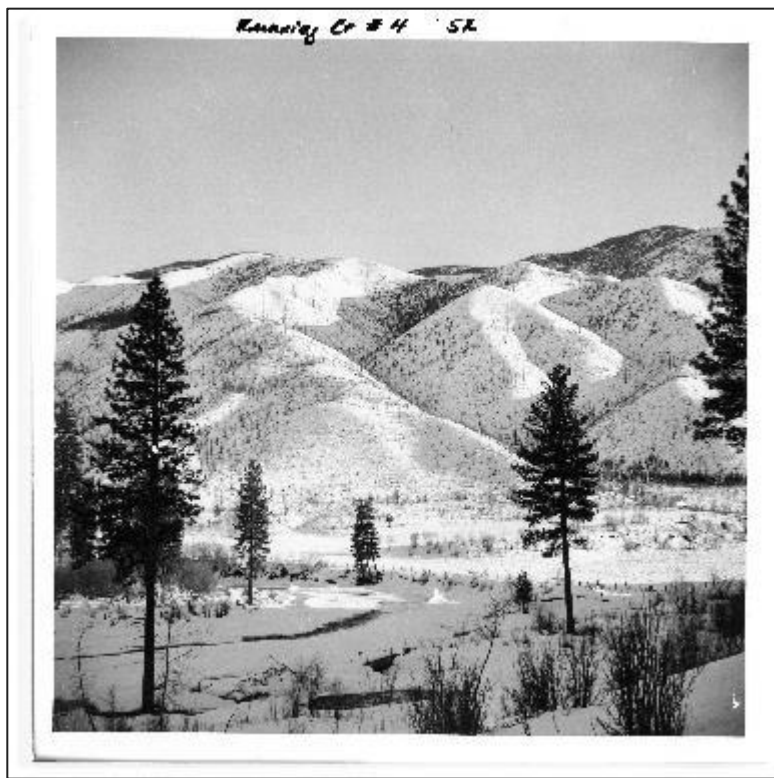
Fires 2000's

Clearwater National Forest



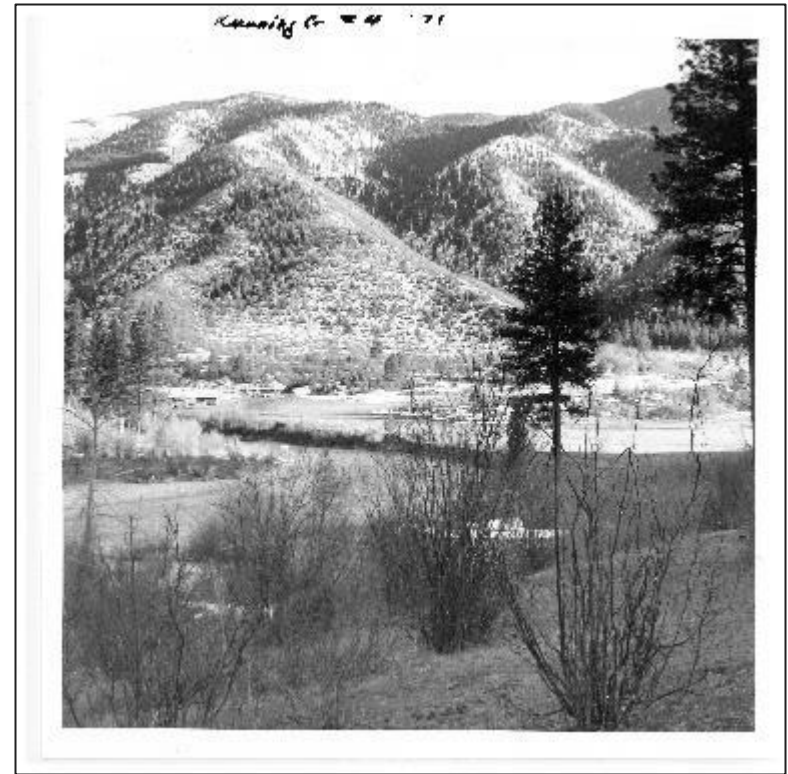






1952

Running Creek



1971



2012

Logging In Idaho

- 1878: The U.S. Army builds the first sawmill in North Idaho near the Spokane River, at what is now Fort Sherman.
- 1880s and 1890s: Lumbermen from the Great Lakes states turn their attention to the Pacific Northwest's abundant forests.
- 1882: The Northern Pacific Railroad is completed across Idaho's northern panhandle, making it easier to ship lumber.
- 1880–1882: Logging becomes a backbone of northern Idaho's economy, along with mining.



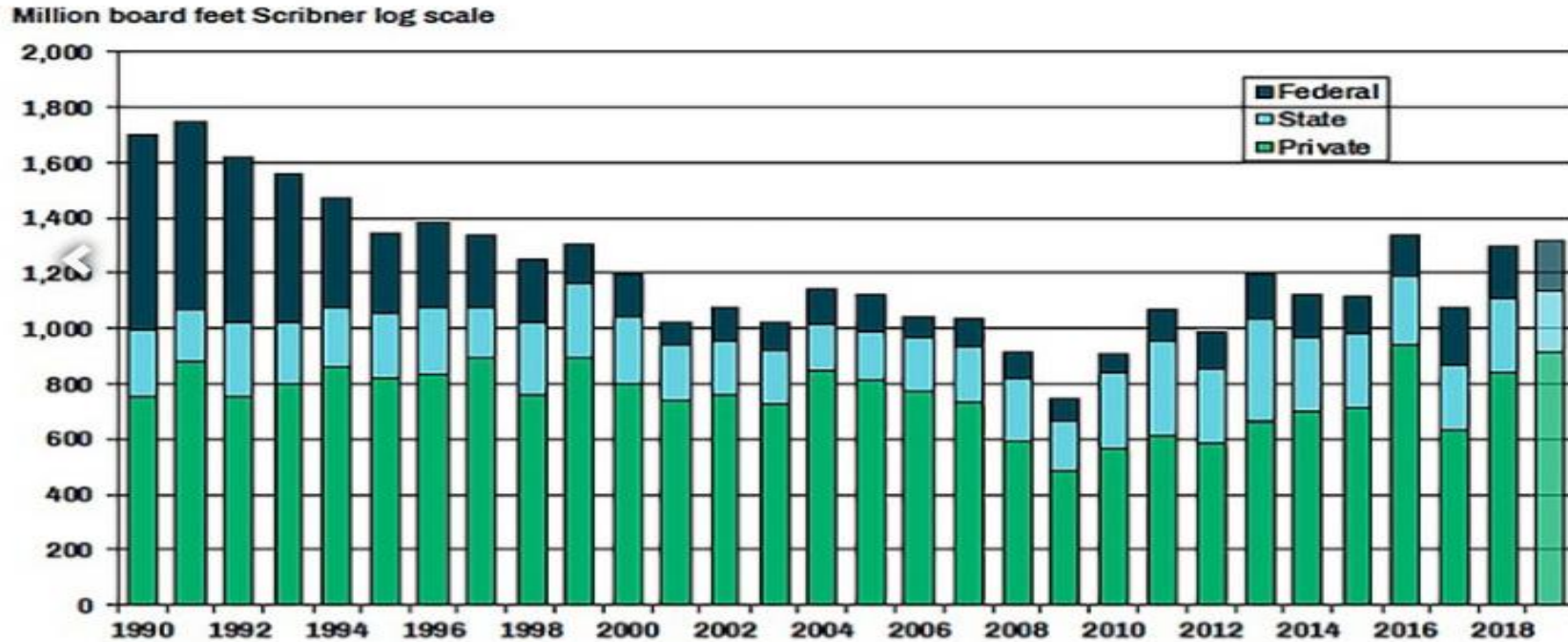
Logging In Idaho

- 1900: Humbird Lumber Co. begins its venture near Sandpoint and Fredrick Weyerhaeuser and group of investors found Clearwater Timber Company and start purchasing land from the railroad companies.
- 1906 Potlatch Lumber Co. builds the largest white pine sawmill in the world in what would become the town of Potlatch, Idaho.
- 1915 Edward Rutledge and others construct a sawmill in Coeur d'Alene which runs until 1983.
- 1926 Clearwater Timber Company builds a mill in Lewiston and begins the Clearwater River log drives, which continued until the Dworshak Dam was built in 1971.



Timber Harvest

Idaho Timber Harvest by Ownership
1990-2019



2019 numbers estimated based on first three quarters.

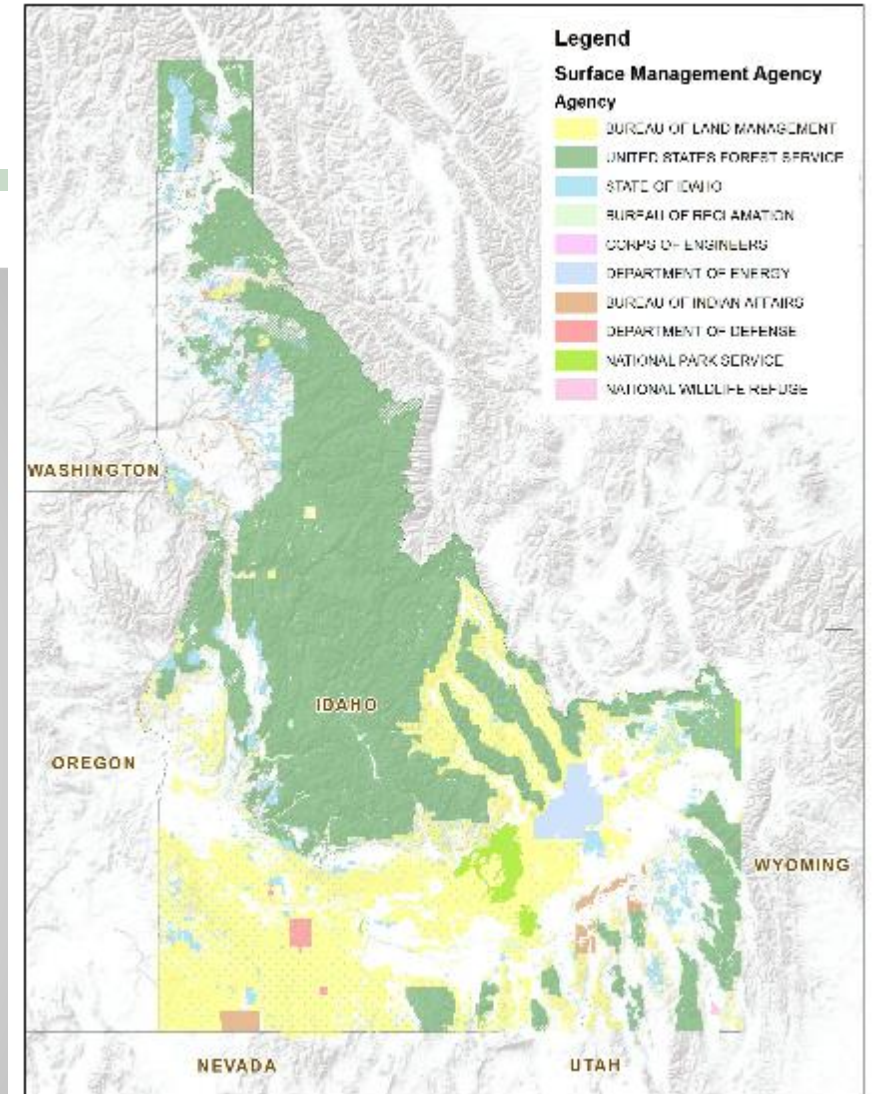
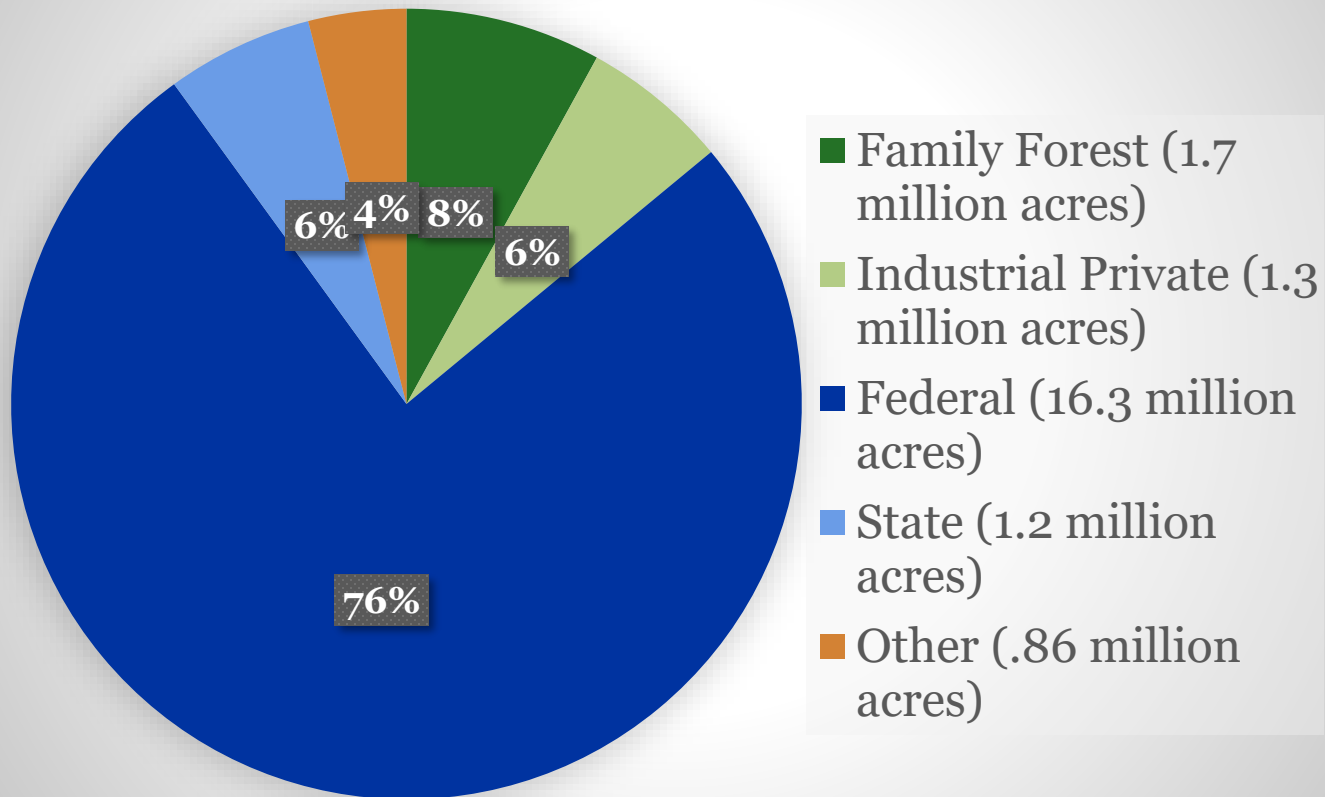
Sources: Idaho Department of Lands; U. S. Forest Service; U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Timber Supply



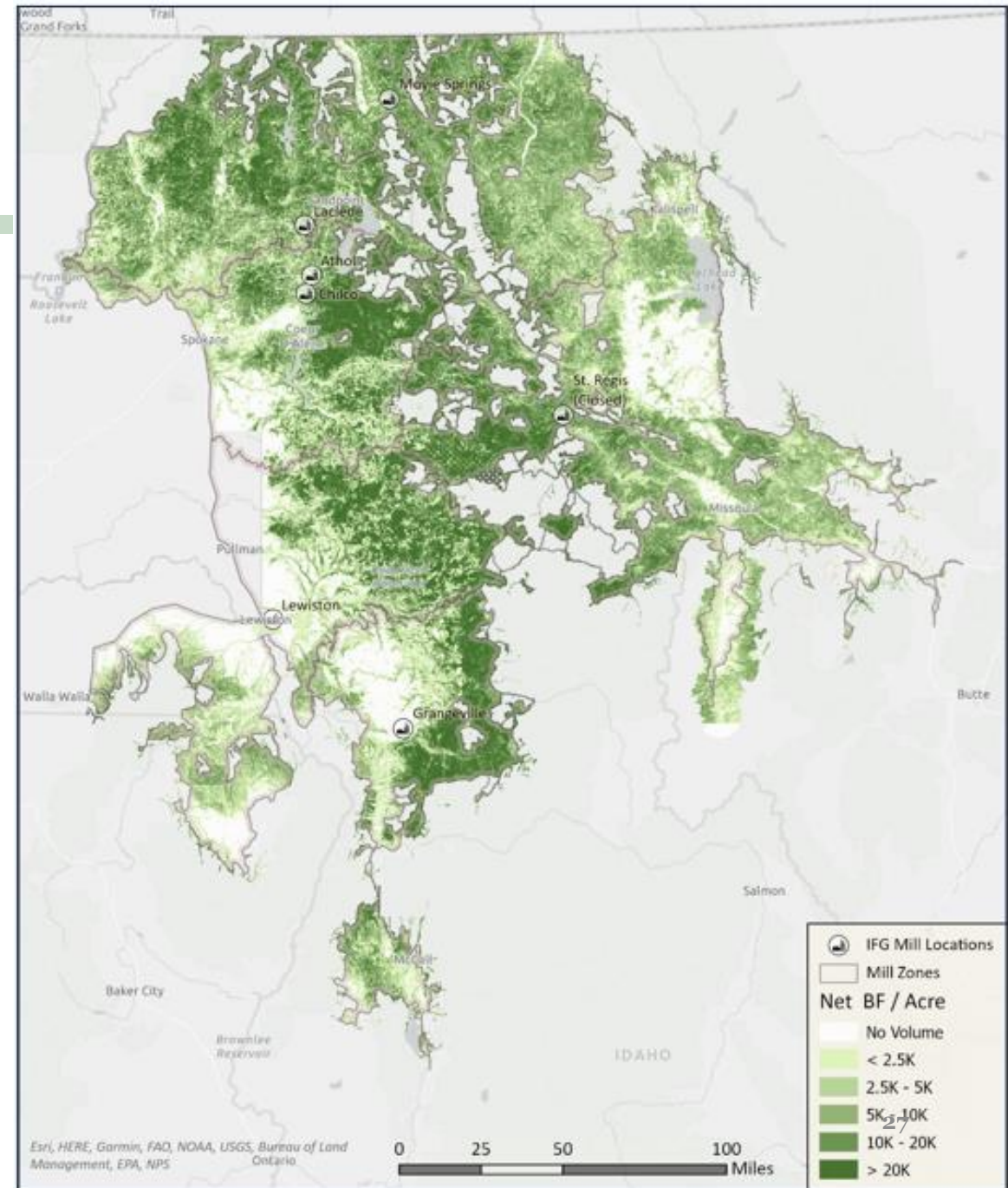
Idaho: Land Ownership and Log Sourcing

Idaho Forest Ownership

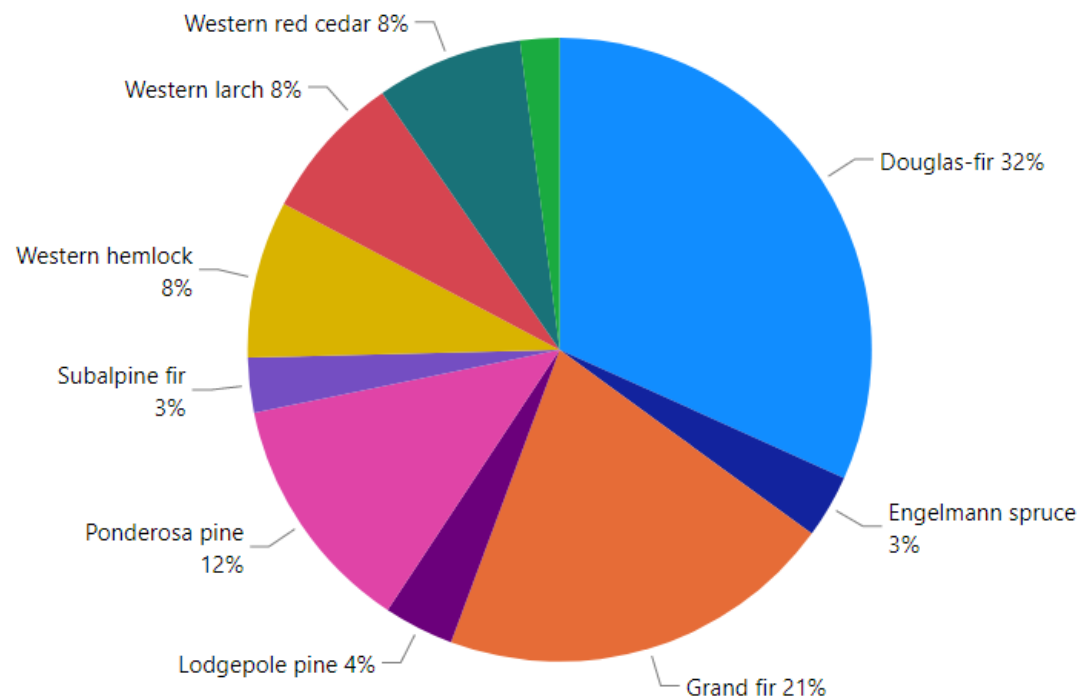


Landownership vs Volume Distribution

	Acres	Available Volume	Harvest
Other Federal	5%	4%	4%
USFS	48%	59%	11%
State	9%	9%	26%
NIPF	23%	20%	25%
Industrial	15%	9%	35%

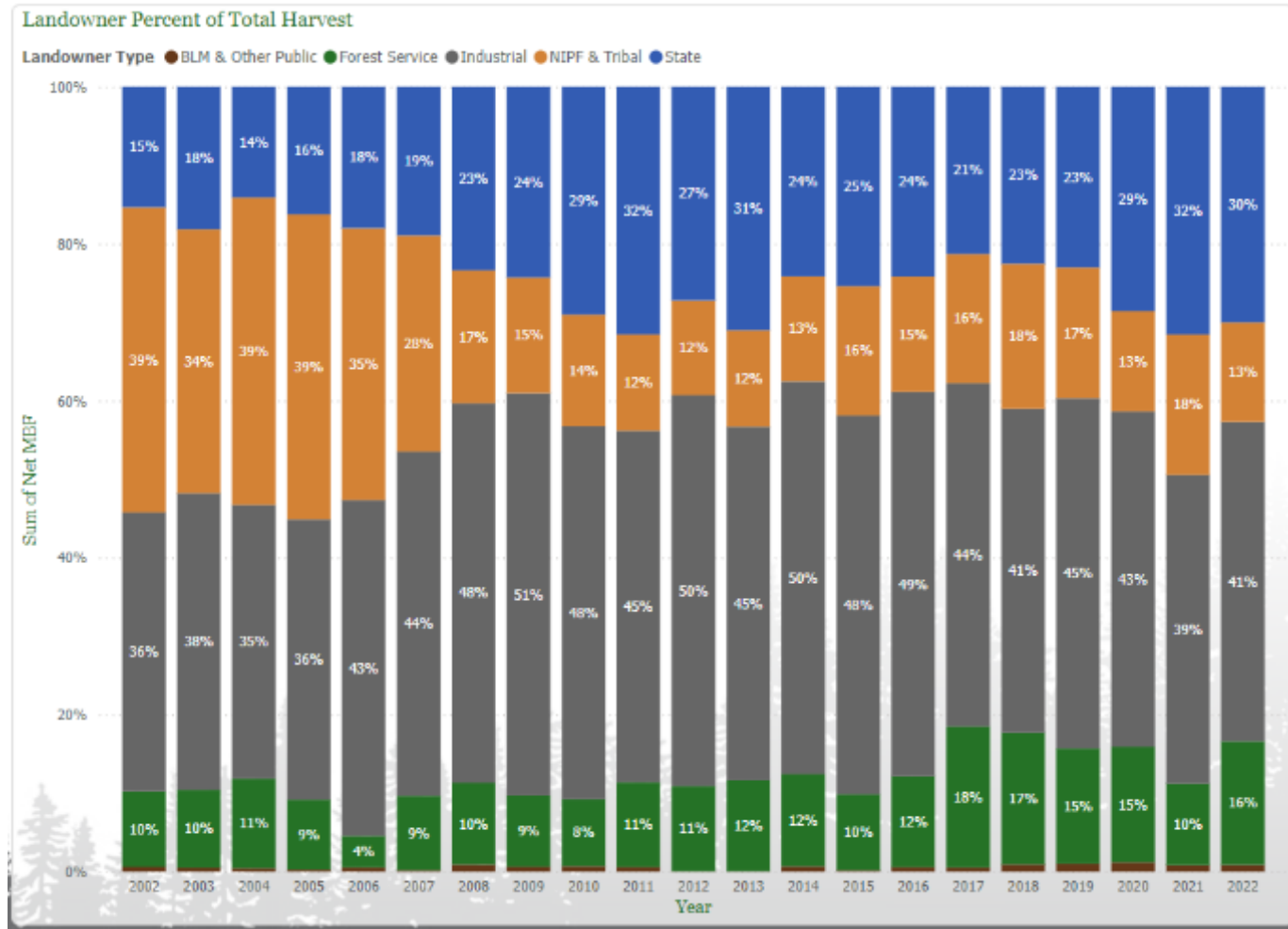


SPECIES COMPOSITION



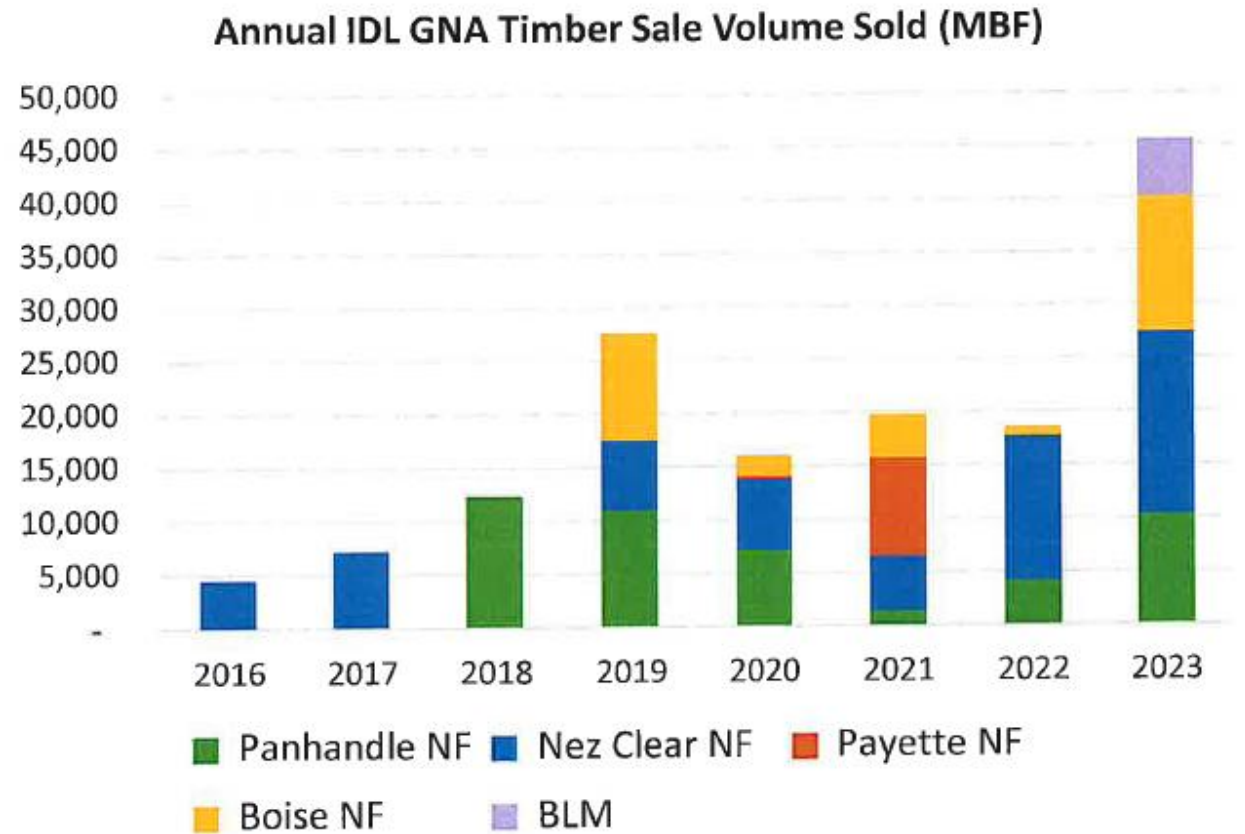
	IFG Woodbasket	Northern Division	Southern Division	Eastern Division
Douglas-fir	32%	31%	26%	44%
Engelmann spruce	3%	3%	2%	5%
Grand fir	21%	16%	34%	6%
Lodgepole pine	4%	3%	4%	2%
Ponderosa pine	12%	11%	11%	20%
Subalpine fir	3%	3%	2%	4%
Western hemlock	8%	9%	9%	3%
Western larch	8%	10%	2%	14%
Western red cedar	8%	11%	9%	2%
Western white pine	2%	4%	1%	0%

IDL Volume is Critical to IFG Woodbasket

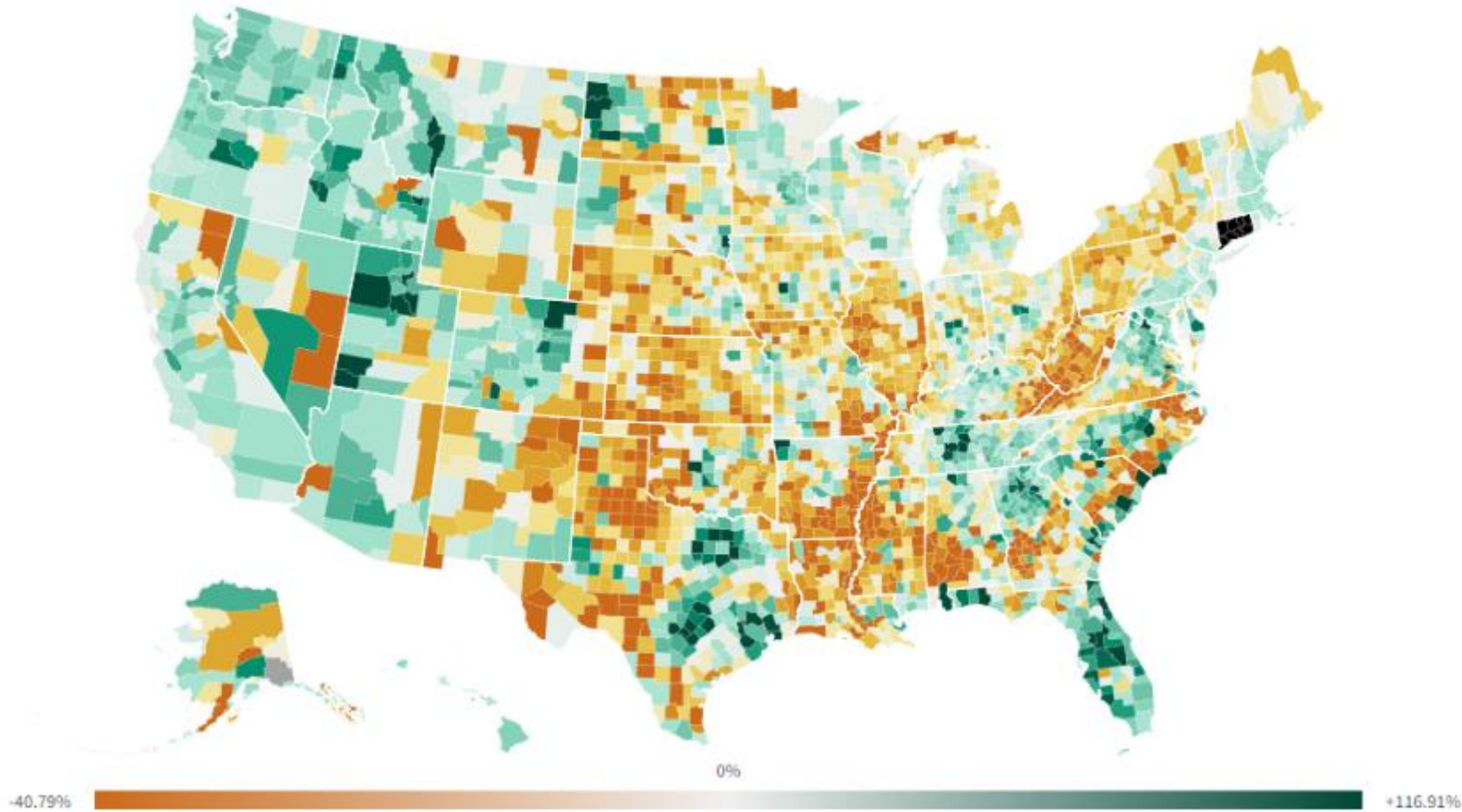


- IDL volume is roughly 30% of the total volume harvested in IFG's Idaho woodbasket (BBER 2022).
- IDL volume has replaced the diminishing harvest on private lands post-Recession.
- IDL is critical to the forest products manufacturing infrastructure, woods contractors, and the vast related service industries.

Idaho Good Neighbor Authority



Population Change from 2010 to 2022



Tough Market Conditions

Lumber prices are down by about 6% since before Covid.

Inflation has driven costs of log and haul up by 35%.

Manufacturing and labor costs are up 27%.

Demographics and timber supply are changing.

Lumber has always been a cyclical market. Logging and milling is in the blood. It's part of the cultural in many of Idaho's small towns and active forest management is the key to healthy forests and health communities.





IDAHO FOREST
GROUP

Thank you!

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