

Illinois Prescribed Fires Accomplished Map

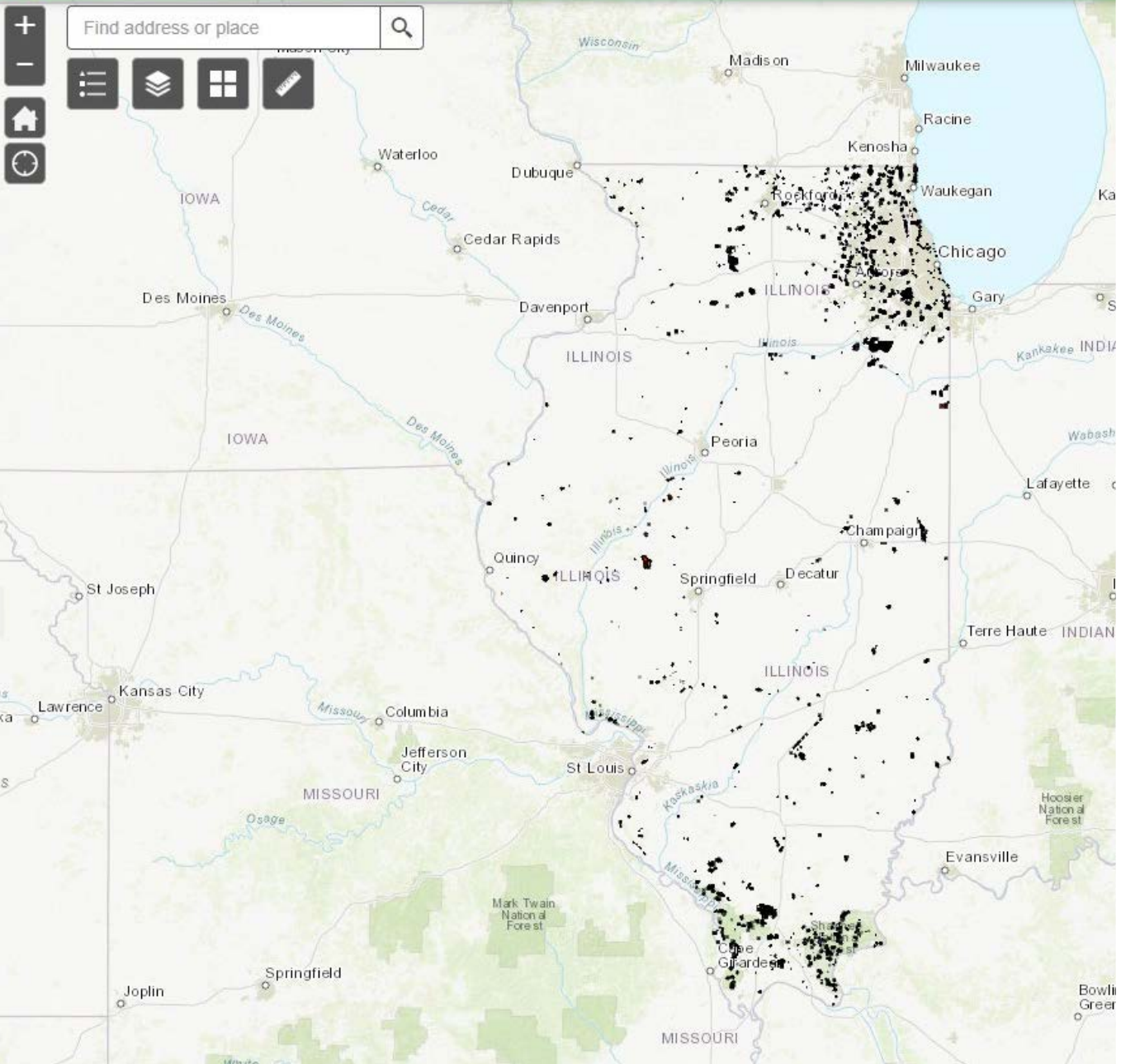
Annual report and summary of data 2015 through spring 2024

- Edited by Bill Kleiman
- IL Fires Accomplished Map manager is Dave Holman
- Graphs and data analysis by Joanne Stubbs
- Various authors submitted photos and text.





Annual Illinois Prescribed Fires Accomplished



The Illinois Prescribed Fires Accomplished Map shows us as one fire community using frequent low intensity fire to return the health of our natural areas.



An analysis of Illinois acres burned by Joanne Stubbs

Our map is a decade old, but reported data is still coming in so we only have 9 years of data for some agencies. To submit data visit our home page [Illinois Prescribed Fire Council - Home](#)

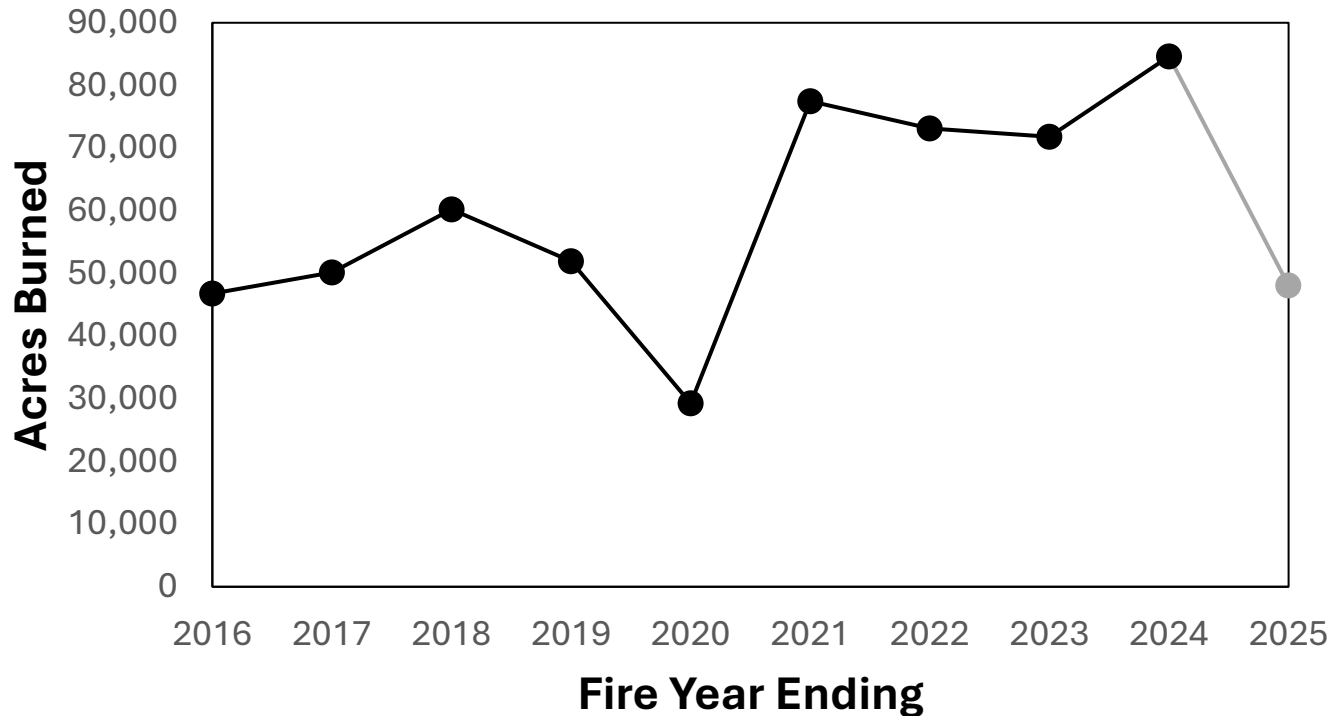
Data as of Dec. 11, 2025; Document updated Dec. 21

- The raw data file contains columns for “source” and “owner”. This analysis uses “owner” unless the owner is listed as “Private”. In that case, the “source” entry is used instead. If both are listed as “Private” then a fire is assigned to “Private”.
- Some entries contain multiple participants in the “owner” or “source” field
 - TNC/NEIU entries are assigned to TNC
 - IDNR/SIPBA “source” entries for “Private” ownership are assigned to SIPBA
 - IDNR/USFS “source” entries for “Private” ownership are assigned to USFS
- Only the final year of a fire season is plotted on the time axes, e.g. “2017-2018” is represented simply as “2018”.
- Data for 2024-2025 are incomplete for many participants including USFS and USFWS

Total acreage burned has indeed increased from the 2015-2016 fire season through 2023-2024 (except the dip for COVID in 2019-2020). **Drop in 2024-2025 is an artifact of incomplete data, especially significant for USFS and USFWS**

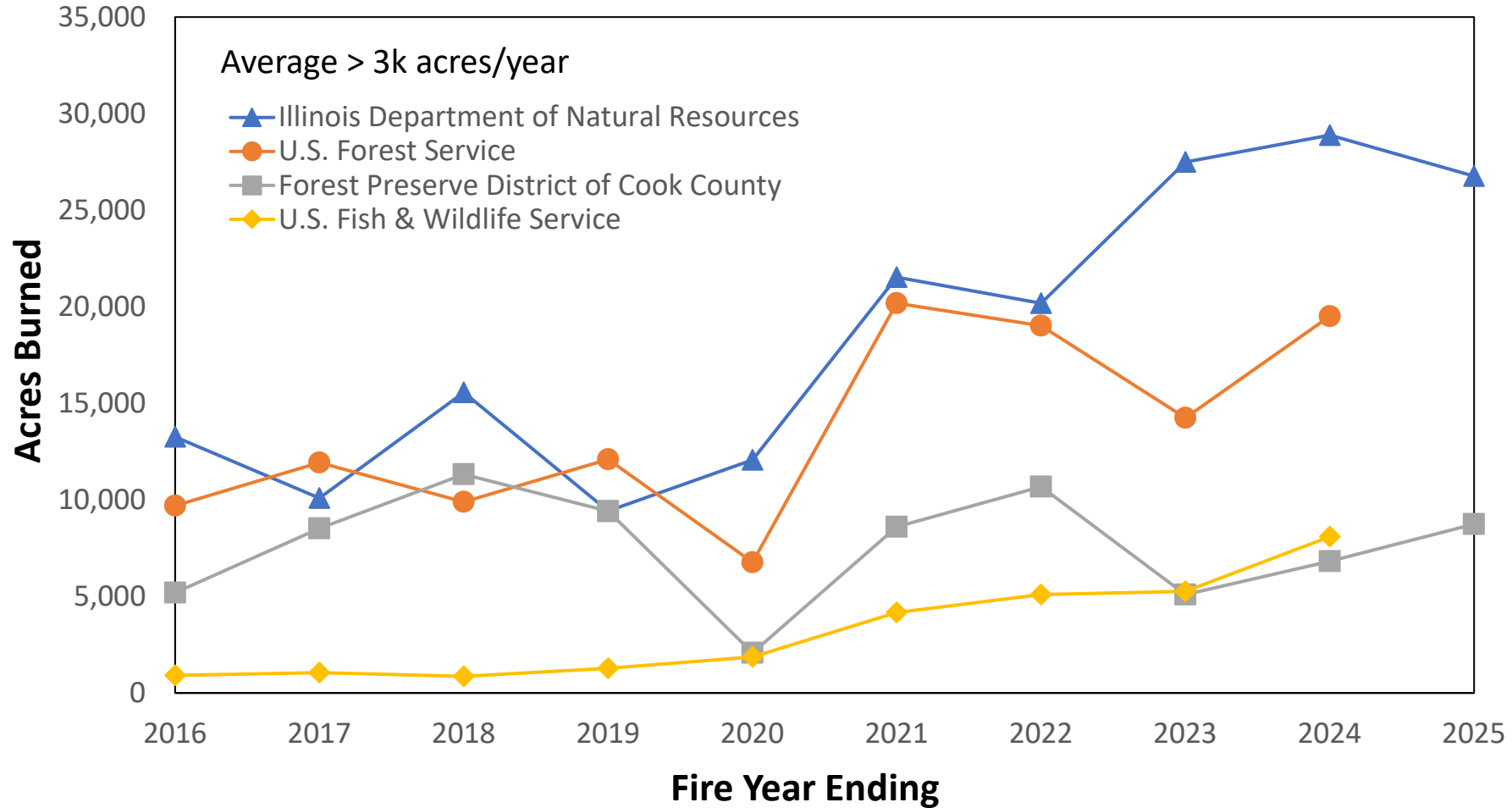
Ten organizations account for > 90% of acres burned **reported** from the 2015-2016 fire season through 2024-2025. **Of these groups USFS and USFWS did not report data for 2024-2025.**

Totals All Participants

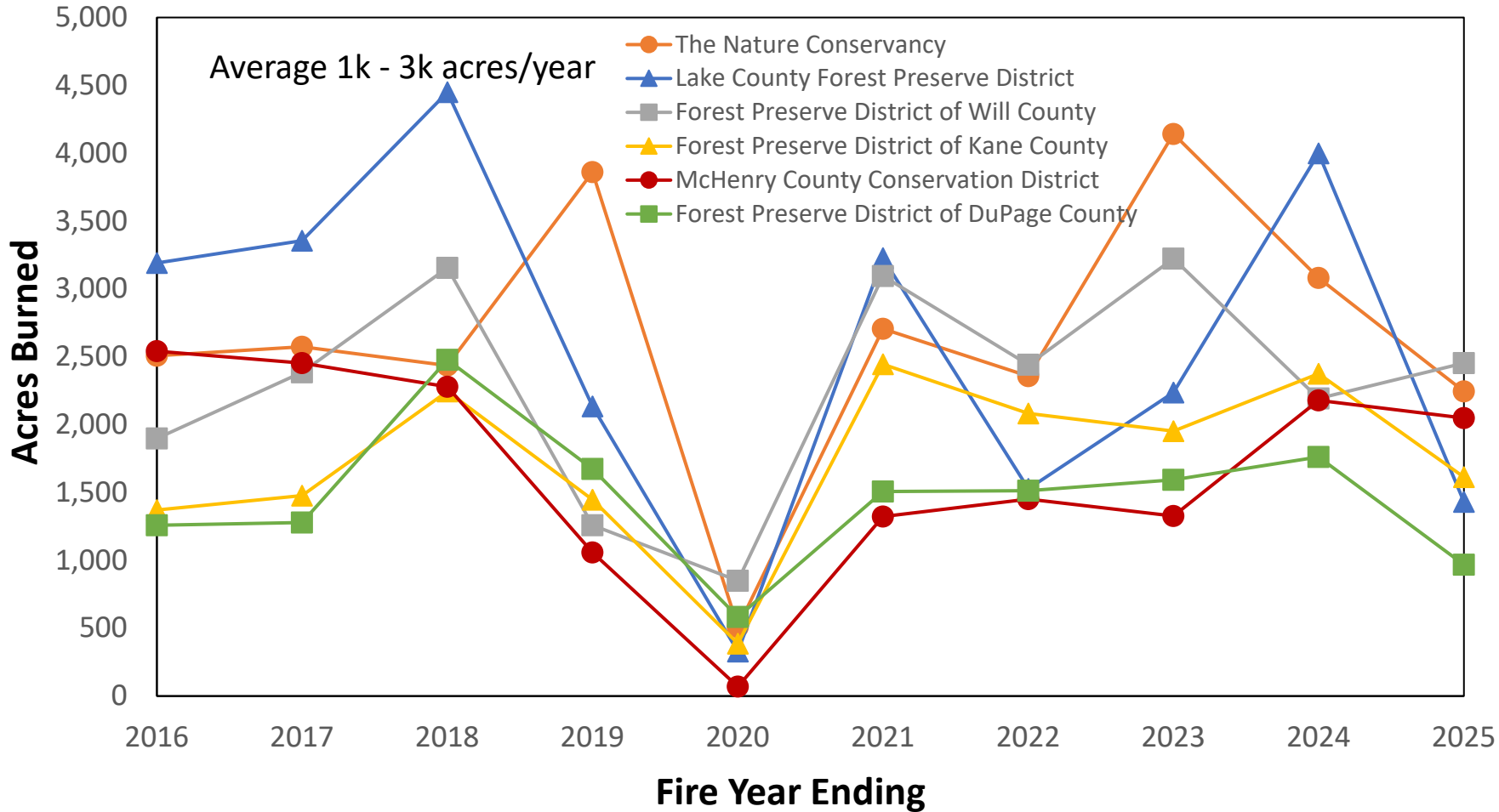


Organization	Fraction of total acres
Illinois Department of Natural Resources	31.2%
U.S. Forest Service	20.8%
Forest Preserve District of Cook County	12.9%
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	4.8%
Lake County Forest Preserve District	4.5%
The Nature Conservancy	4.4%
Forest Preserve District of Will County	3.9%
Forest Preserve District of Kane County	2.9%
McHenry County Conservation District	2.8%
Forest Preserve District of DuPage County	2.5%
Subtotal	90.6%

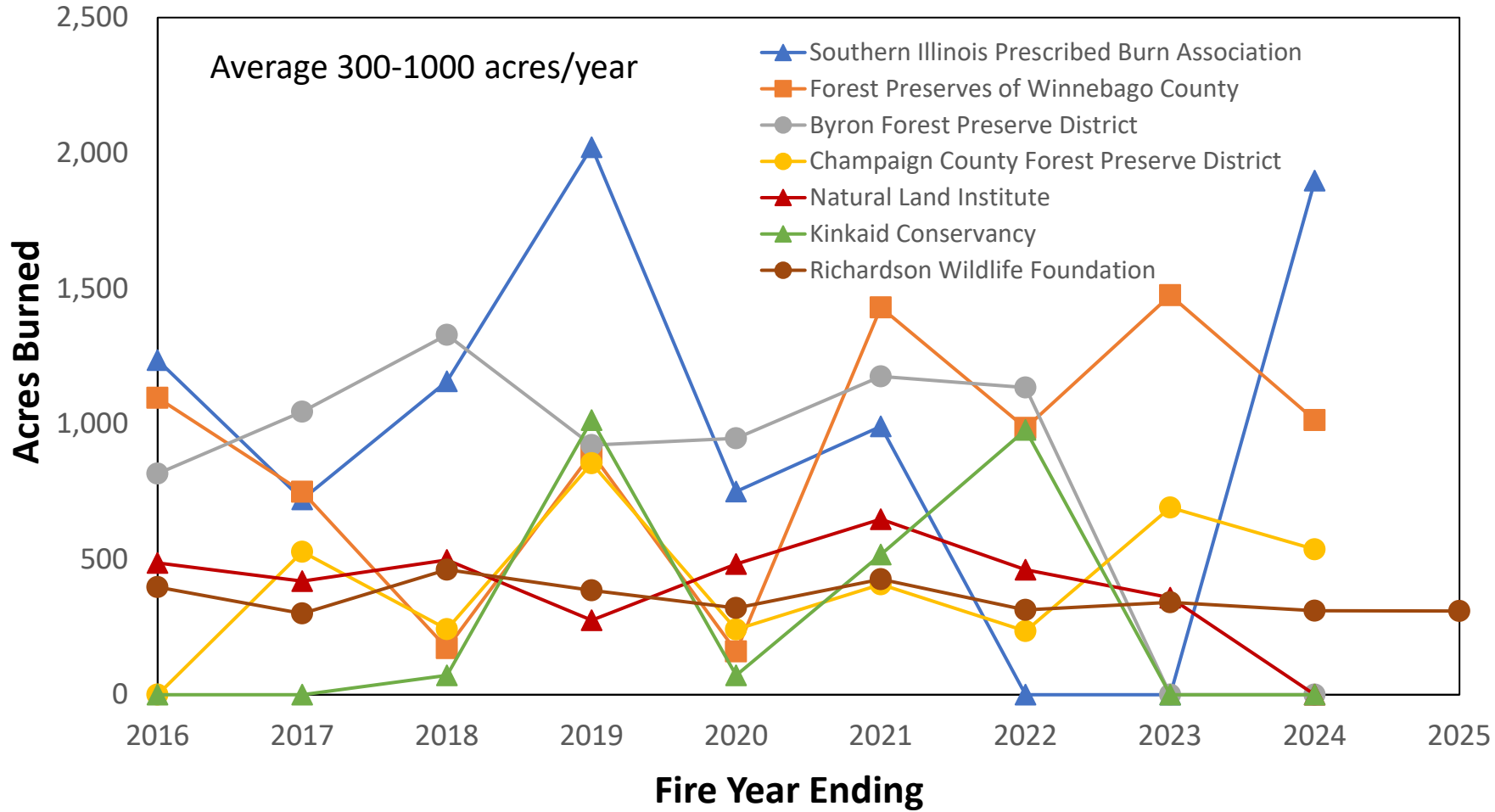
- The upward trend is dominated by the biggest players: IDNR and USFS
- Among those who average > 3k acres/year USFWS also shows a strong upward trend **through 2024**
- FPDCC shows no clear trend
- **USFS and USFWS did not report data for 2024-2025**



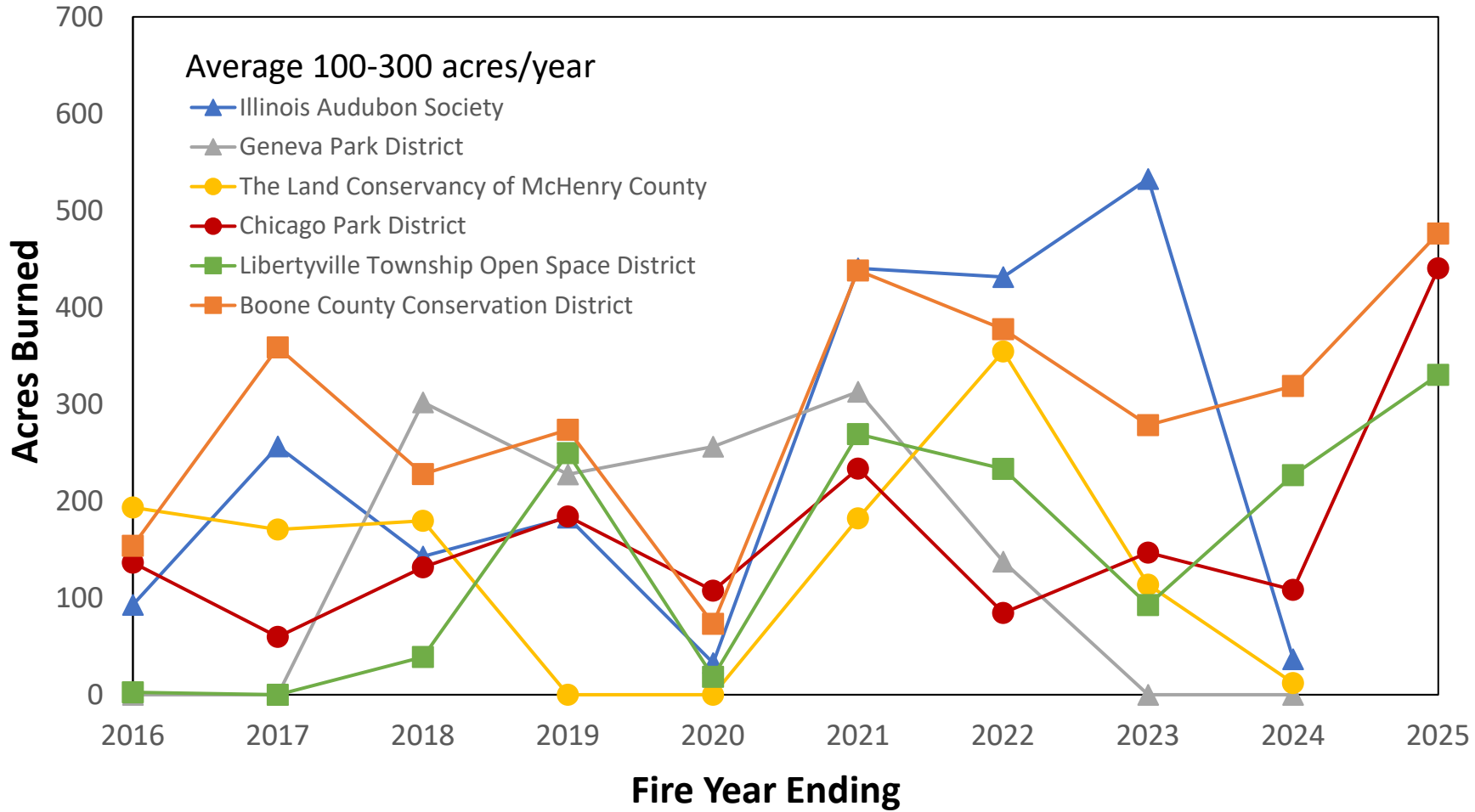
- No clear trends among landowners who average 1k – 3k acres/year
- The Nature Conservancy acres reported are for TNC owned lands. This data does not include the many assists with partner lands.



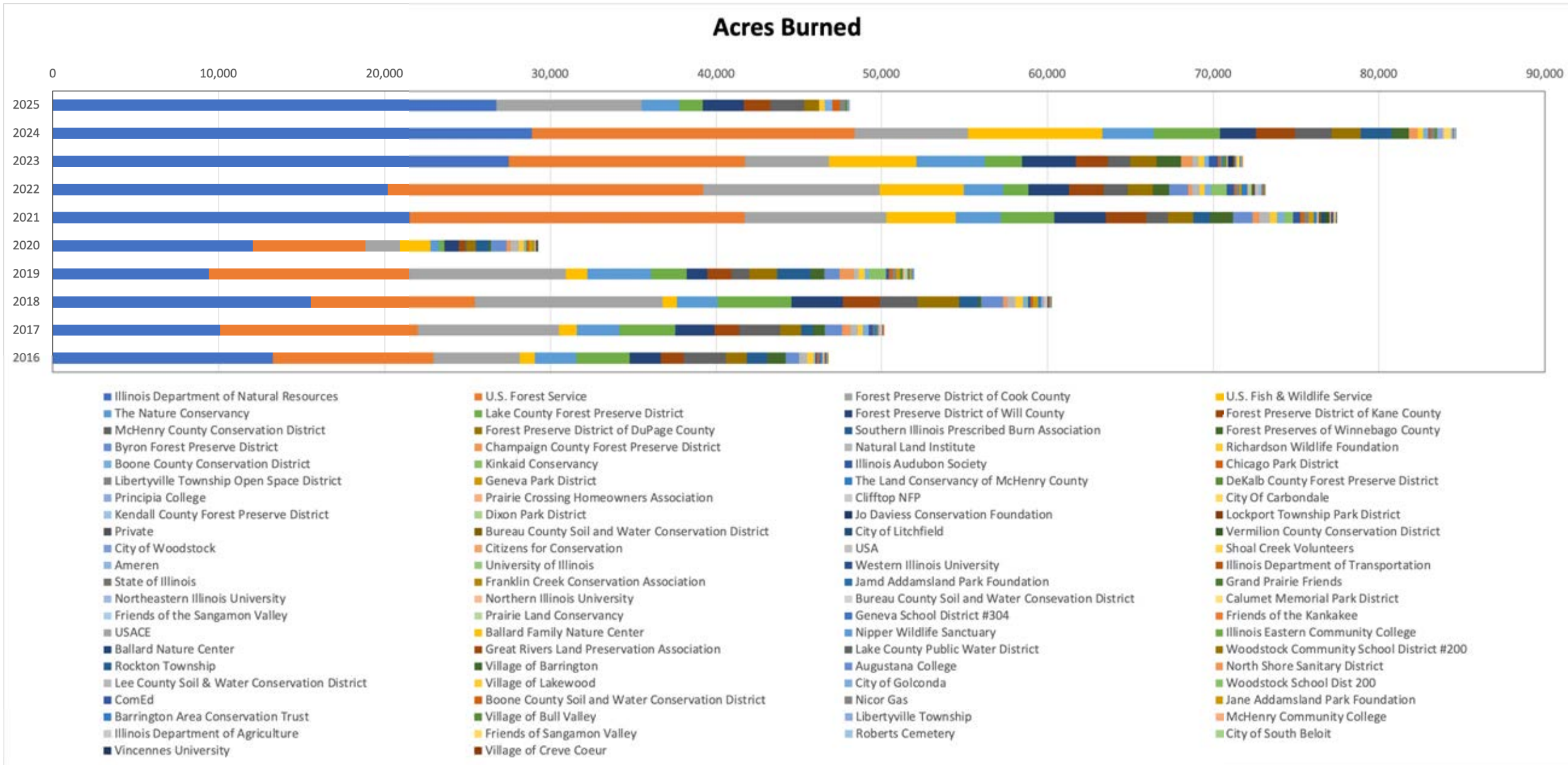
- No clear trends among landowners who average 300-1000 acres/year
- No 2024-2025 data for SIPBA, NLI, KC, FPWC, Champaign Cty FPD, BFPD



- No clear trends among landowners who average 100-300 acres/year
- No 2024-2025 data for LCMC, GPD, IAS

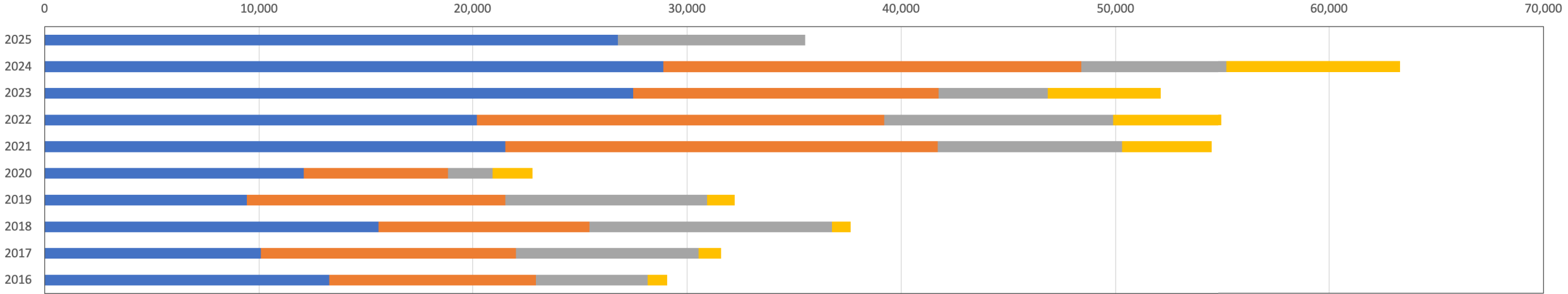


In the list of participants read left to right in each row then down for the the order in the bar graphs. These are ordered by size of average contributions over time. For example, from left to right in the bar graphs the order is IDNR, USFS, FPDCC, USFWS, TNC, LCFPD, etc. The following slides break this plot out into smaller subgroups. Numerous groups have not yet reported data for 2024-2025.



USFS and USFWS data missing for 2024-2025

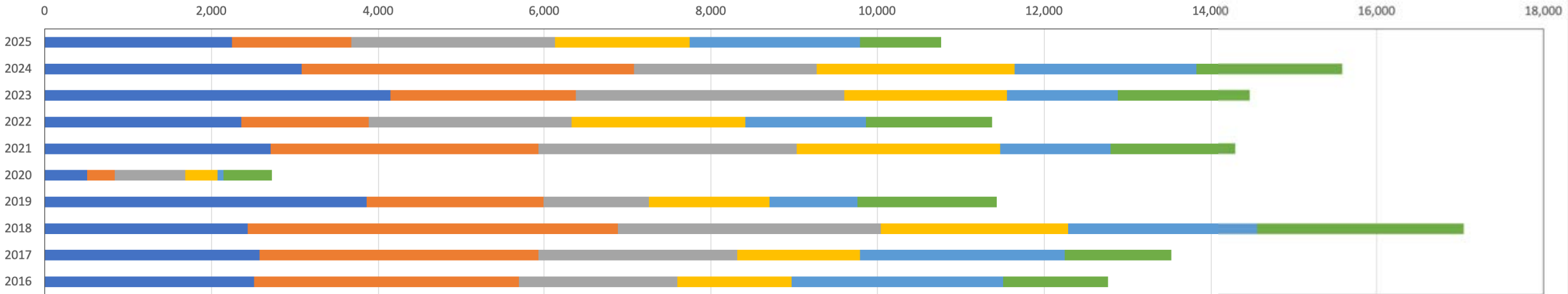
Acres Burned



Average > 3k acres/year

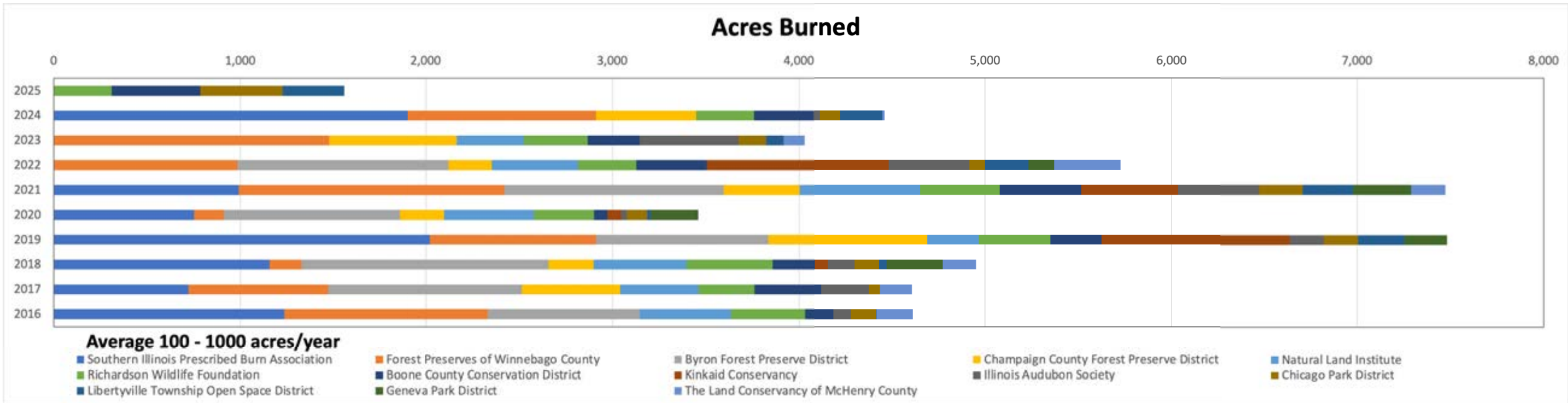
■ Illinois Department of Natural Resources ■ U.S. Forest Service ■ Forest Preserve District of Cook County ■ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Acres Burned



Average 1k - 3k acres/year

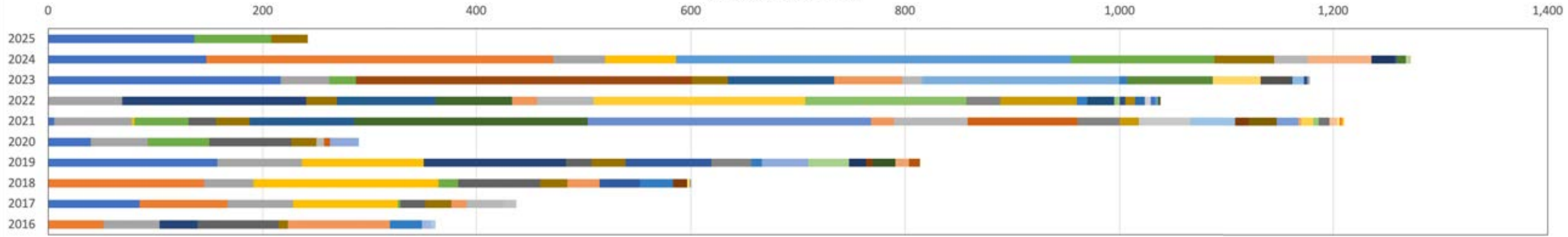
■ The Nature Conservancy ■ Lake County Forest Preserve District ■ Forest Preserve District of Will County
 ■ Forest Preserve District of Kane County ■ McHenry County Conservation District ■ Forest Preserve District of DuPage County



Note – There are no data for SIPBA for 2021-2022 or 2022-2023. Might this be a reporting anomaly?

Several groups in this acreage class are missing data from 2024-2025:
 SIPBA, FPWC, BFPD, CCFPD, NLI, KC, IAS, GPD, LCMC

Acres Burned



Average < 100 acres/year

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| DeKalb County Forest Preserve District | Principia College | Prairie Crossing Homeowners Association | Clifftop NFP | City Of Carbondale |
| Kendall County Forest Preserve District | Dixon Park District | Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation | Lockport Township Park District | Private |
| Bureau County Soil and Water Conservation District | City of Litchfield | Vermilion County Conservation District | City of Woodstock | Citizens for Conservation |
| USA | Shoal Creek Volunteers | Ameren | University of Illinois | Western Illinois University |
| Illinois Department of Transportation | State of Illinois | Franklin Creek Conservation Association | Jamd Addamsland Park Foundation | Grand Prairie Friends |
| Northeastern Illinois University | Northern Illinois University | Bureau County Soil and Water Conservation District | Calumet Memorial Park District | Friends of the Sangamon Valley |
| Prairie Land Conservancy | Geneva School District #304 | Friends of the Kankakee | USACE | Ballard Family Nature Center |
| Nipper Wildlife Sanctuary | Illinois Eastern Community College | Ballard Nature Center | Great Rivers Land Preservation Association | Lake County Public Water District |
| Woodstock Community School District #200 | Village of Lakewood | Village of Barrington | Woodstock School Dist 200 | North Shore Sanitary District |
| Lee County Soil & Water Conservation District | Nicor Gas | City of Golconda | Barrington Area Conservation Trust | ComEd |
| Boone County Soil and Water Conservation District | McHenry Community College | Jane Addamsland Park Foundation | Friends of Sangamon Valley | Village of Bull Valley |
| Libertyville Township | Vincennes University | Illinois Department of Agriculture | | Roberts Cemetery |
| City of South Beloit | | Village of Creve Coeur | | |

Only 4 groups in this acreage class reported data for 2024-2025:

- DeKalb Co. FPD
- Kendall Co. FPD
- Libertyville Township
- “Private” with no other org identified

Selected photos from the field

Mineral Marsh burn, November 2025

Burn Boss Russ Blogg filled a crew roster as follows: 7 DNR/INPC crew, 1 DNR contractor, 3 volunteers from Middle Rock Conservation Partners, and 3 volunteers from Friends of IL Nature Preserves. TNC and MRCP supplied a tender and UTV. The 6 volunteers that showed up made the fire possible. - from Russ Blogg

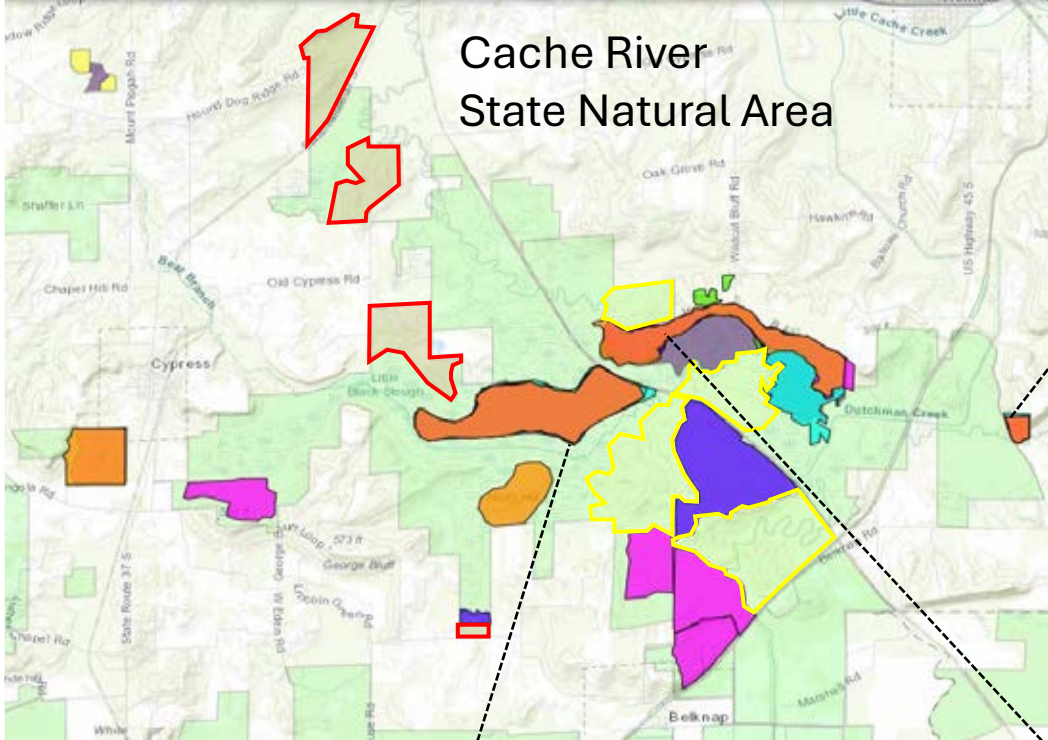


Champaign County FPD: Growing season burns to set back Canada goldenrod and woody encroachment in restored prairie units.



Champaign County FPD growing season burns. Patchy as expected. – from Philip Borsdorf





Cache River State Natural Area



Annual fire maintains the Grade A Limestone Glade at Cave Creek Glade Nature Preserve.

The Cache River State Natural Area encompasses over 18,000 acres of upland, bottomland, and wetland habitats and represents the largest INPC-protected landscape in Illinois.

Large-scale increases in coverage of burned area

- The Divisions of Natural Heritage, Forestry, and Wildlife have collaborated to develop many new burn units.
- In the past five years, IDNR expanded from 3-5 “regular” units totaling ~1000 acres to about 15 units covering over 3000 acres.
- More units are being planned that will increase coverage to over 4000 acres.



Shining grass (*Diarrhena americana*, *D. obovata*) carpets the bluff tops and woodlands of Boss Island.



Fire easily moves through the continuous leaf litter and grass fuels of the woodland and glade community complex at Wildcat Bluff.

Photo by Taryn Bieri.

Higher burn frequency of all units across the site.

- Several units with highly pyrogenic communities are burned almost annually.
- Frequent fire has dramatically improved quality and plant diversity, reduced fuel build-up, and enabled successful mosaic burns.
- The target frequency for every unit is at least once every three years.
- – from Christina Feng

Paul Ladner owns land that he leads volunteer burn crews in mid-state Knox county, near Galesburg. These folks are getting good fire on the ground.



Prescribed fire at DNR's Pyramid State Recreation Area in Perry County is used to manage large landscapes for grassland-dependent wildlife. The entire site occurs on reclaimed strip mine land and includes 8,000-12,000 acres of potential open habitats managed according to an IDNR grassland management plan.

Prescribed fire is being used in combination with other tools to conduct landscape-level grassland management. This includes using fire for preparation and follow-up alongside shrub control projects using dozers and grinders, exotic species control using drone spraying, and native forb seeding.

Prescribed fire benefits shared goals between IDNR's Natural Heritage, Wildlife, and Lands divisions, with a shared focus on habitat management for Northern Bobwhite. Fire has also been a part of a research partnership at the site between IDNR and students from Southern Illinois University. - from Stephen Tillman

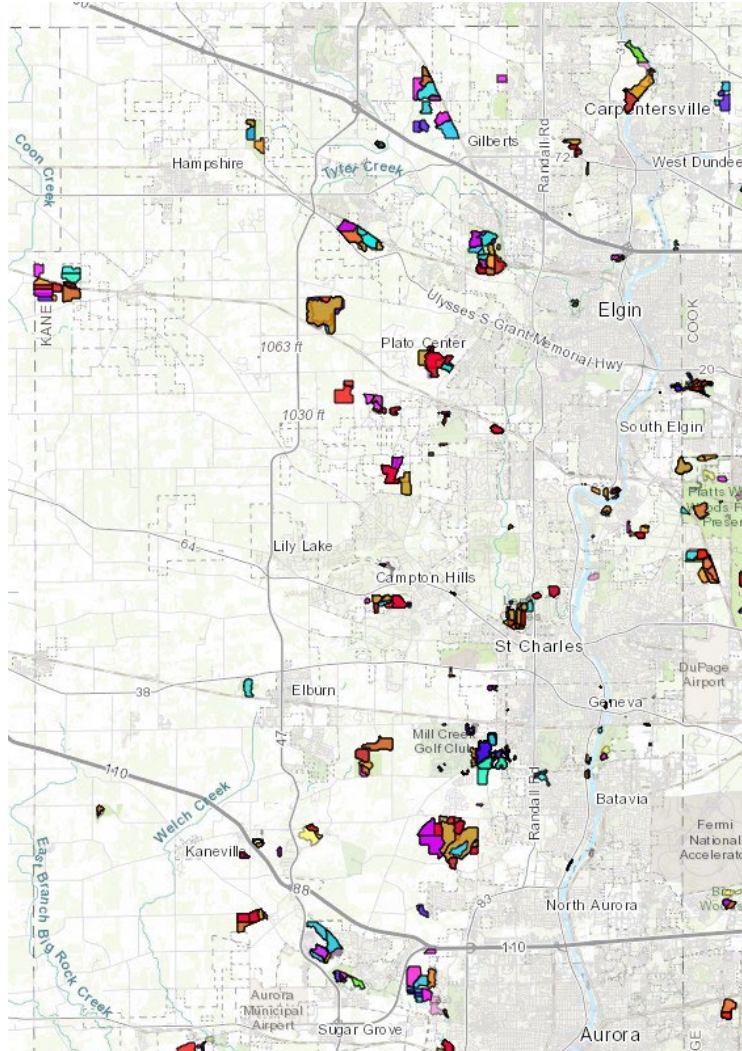


Fire and
Drone Spraying

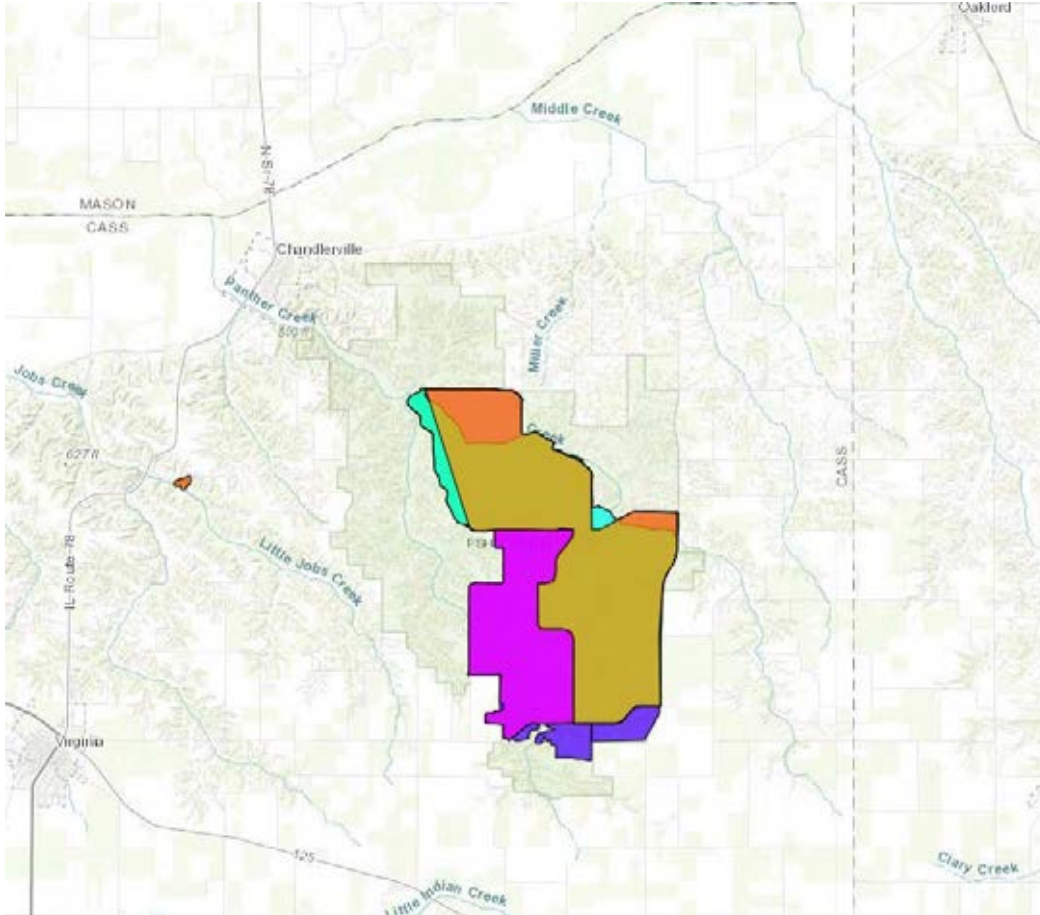


Fire and
Shrub Grinding

The Forest Preserve District of Kane County typically relies on staff from Natural Resource Management and Operations to conduct prescribed burns. However, to supplement crews and maximize the number of burns conducted the District also utilizes volunteer burn crew members, as well as staff from across the District. In 2025, members of the Community Engagement, Finance, and Human Resources departments participated in prescribed burns including Director of Human Resources Jen Clough pictured here. – from Patrick Chess



Jim Edgar Panther Creek State Fish and Wildlife Area



Jim Edgar Panther Creek SFWA is in Cass County Illinois and is a roughly 16,500 acres IDNR owned site. The site is divided into 9 burn units and an attempt is made to burn 3 each year. Burns at the site range from 3,000 to 5,000 acres in a day.

Multiple partners come together for the IDNR led burn. The Burn Boss is Ray Geroff, a Natural Heritage Biologist. There are representatives from multiple offices within IDNR (Natural Heritage, Wildlife, Forestry, Lands, Law Enforcement, Consultation, and INPC) and a multitude of partner groups and agencies including Pheasants Forever, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Great Rivers Research and Education Center and The Nature Conservancy.

Crews range in size from 22-38 people, some with decades of experience and some being their first burn.

- From Ray Geroff



Harlem Hill Nature Preserve. A partnership between DNR biologists, DNR site staff, NLI, and Friends of IL Nature Preserves. – from Melissa Grycan

Your Fire Council is raising funds to hire its first Executive Director

- With a paid Executive Director, the Illinois Prescribed Fire Council could do more, both faster and better. Fire is essential in our state. Let's build the infrastructure to support the good work of prescribed in Illinois.

A professional Executive Director Could:

- Represent the IPFC day to day.
- Develop resources for training and safe operations.
- Establish an insurance claims fund to help cover prescribed fire liability.
- Build relationships with structural fire departments and promote fire's ecological importance while supporting safe wildfire response.
- Partner with agencies to document and share best practices for increasing the pace and scale of prescribed fire.
- Maintain and learn from the Illinois Fires Accomplished Map.
- Collaborate with Federal, state, county, and NGOs
- Help Illinois EPA to modernize the state smoke management plan.
- Lead professional and consistent outreach—including social media—to engage the public and build support.

To offer support or ask a question reach out to any
of our directors or email us at
ll.prescribedfire@gmail.com