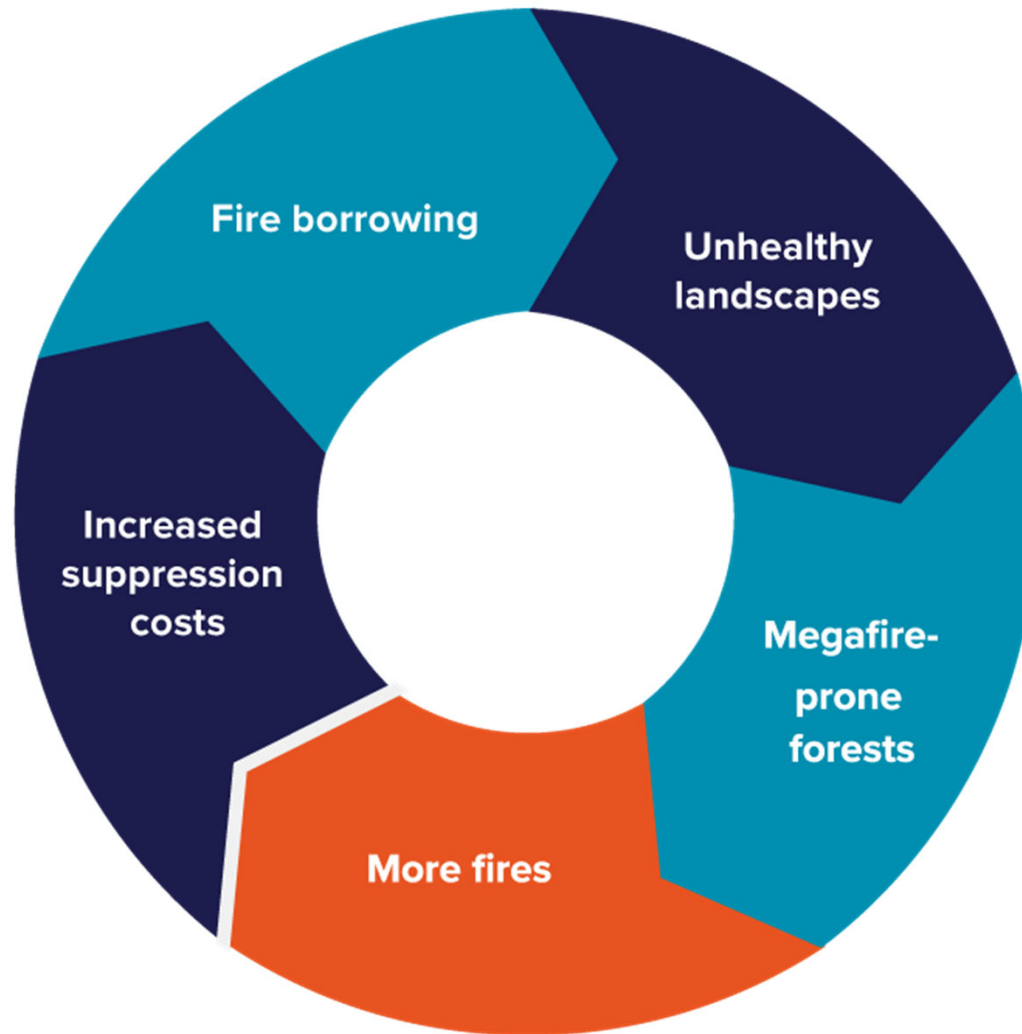




# A NEW APPROACH TO WINNING THE WAR AGAINST WILDFIRES

BRIEFING FOR WESTERN STATE FORESTERS

# LIKE MOST WILDFIRE-PRONE STATES, WASHINGTON WAS USED TO THIS CYCLE...



# THE CHALLENGE IN WASHINGTON STATE...2010 TO 2015

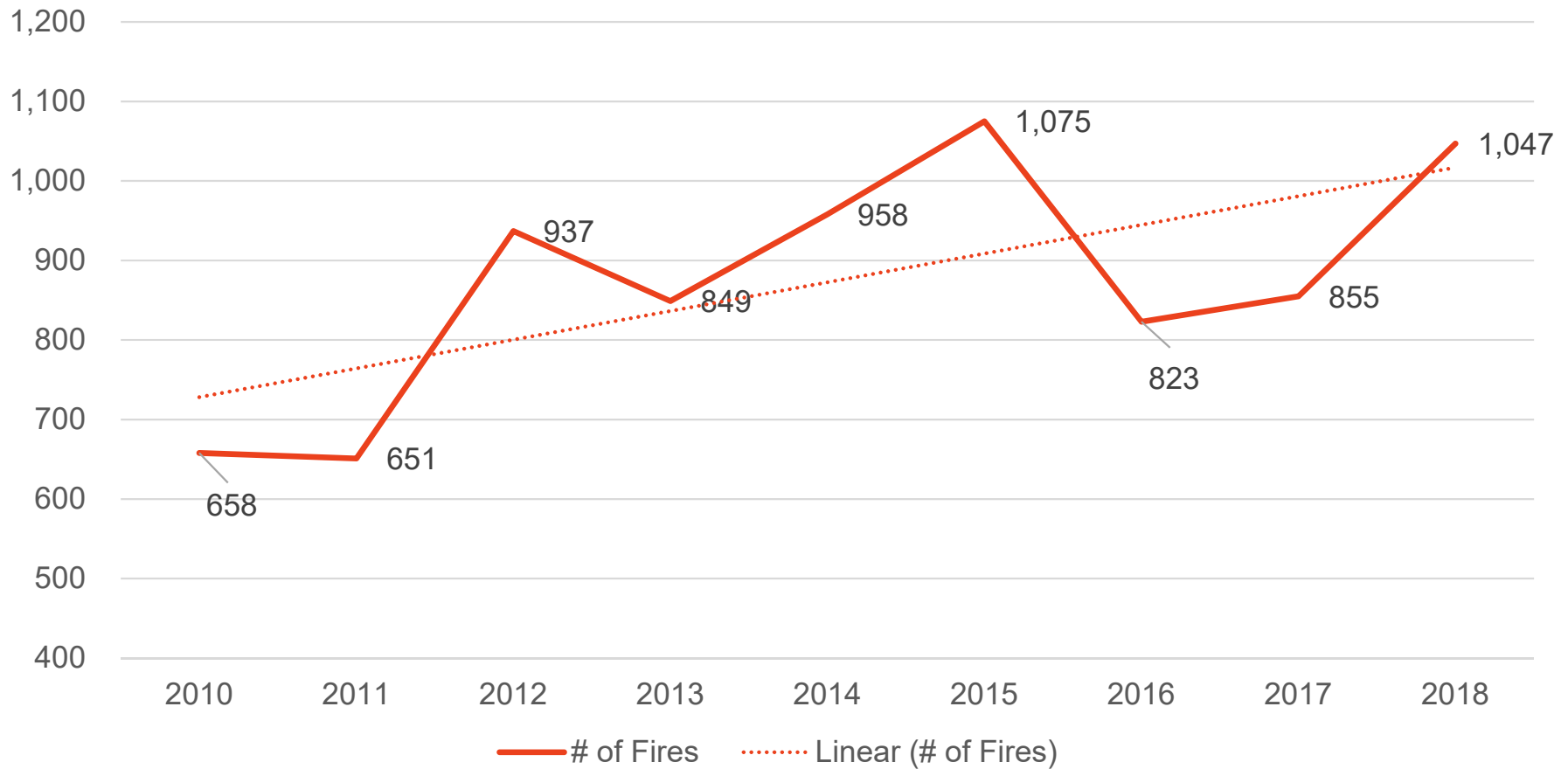
- ▲ The number of wildfires was continuing to increase...
- ▲ The number of acres burned every year was increasing...
- ▲ They were spending more and more money on suppression and less and less on forest health initiatives such as forest thinning and prescribed burns...
- ▲ Ground based fire fighting crews jobs were becoming increasingly more taxing and dangerous, leading to turnover and recruiting challenges

*“...insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, but expecting different results”*



# WASHINGTON STATE - # OF FIRES

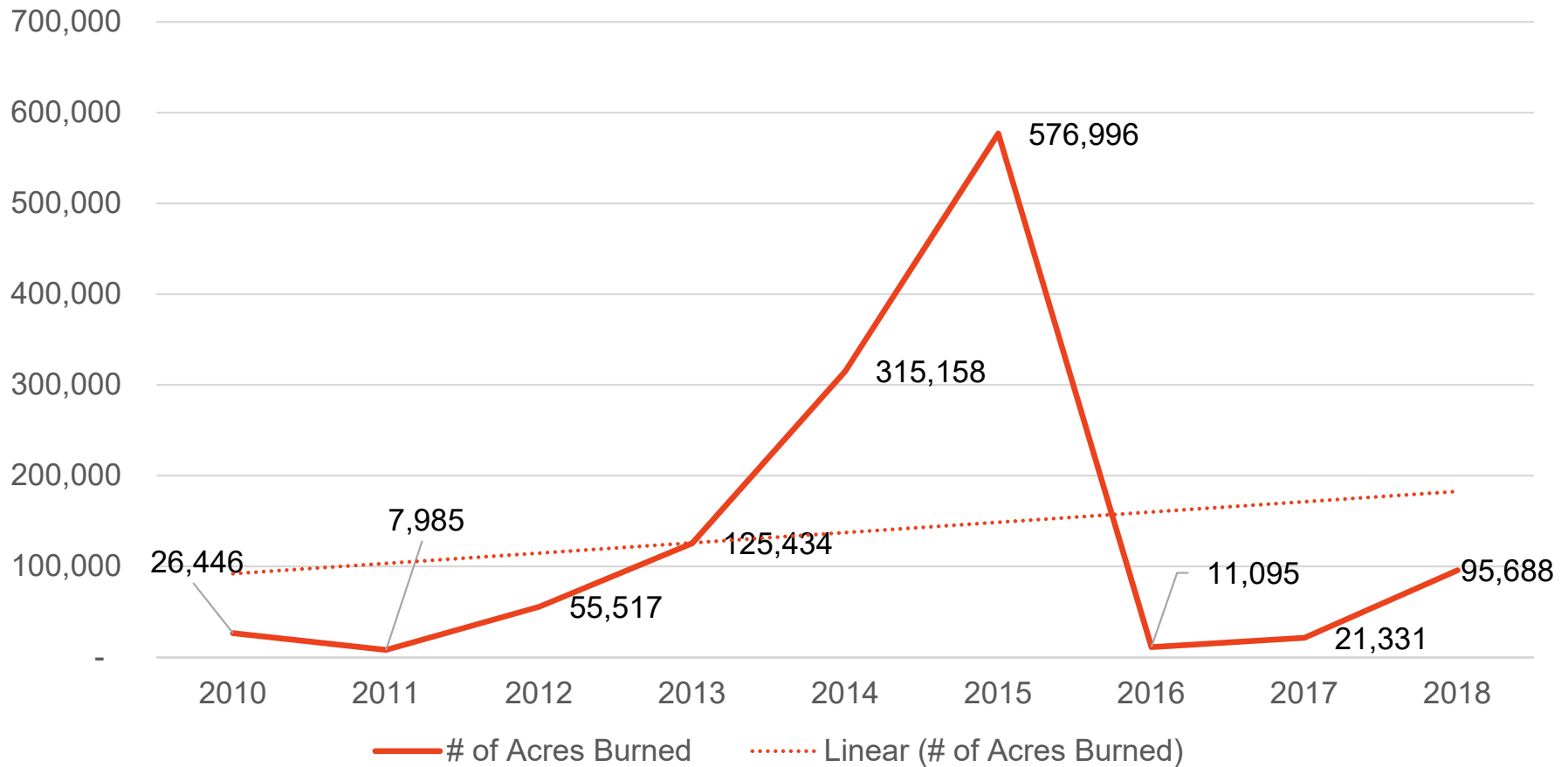
Number of Fire Starts Per Year\*



\* Data provided by WA-DNR's Emergency Incident Response Database – only includes WA-DNR lands.

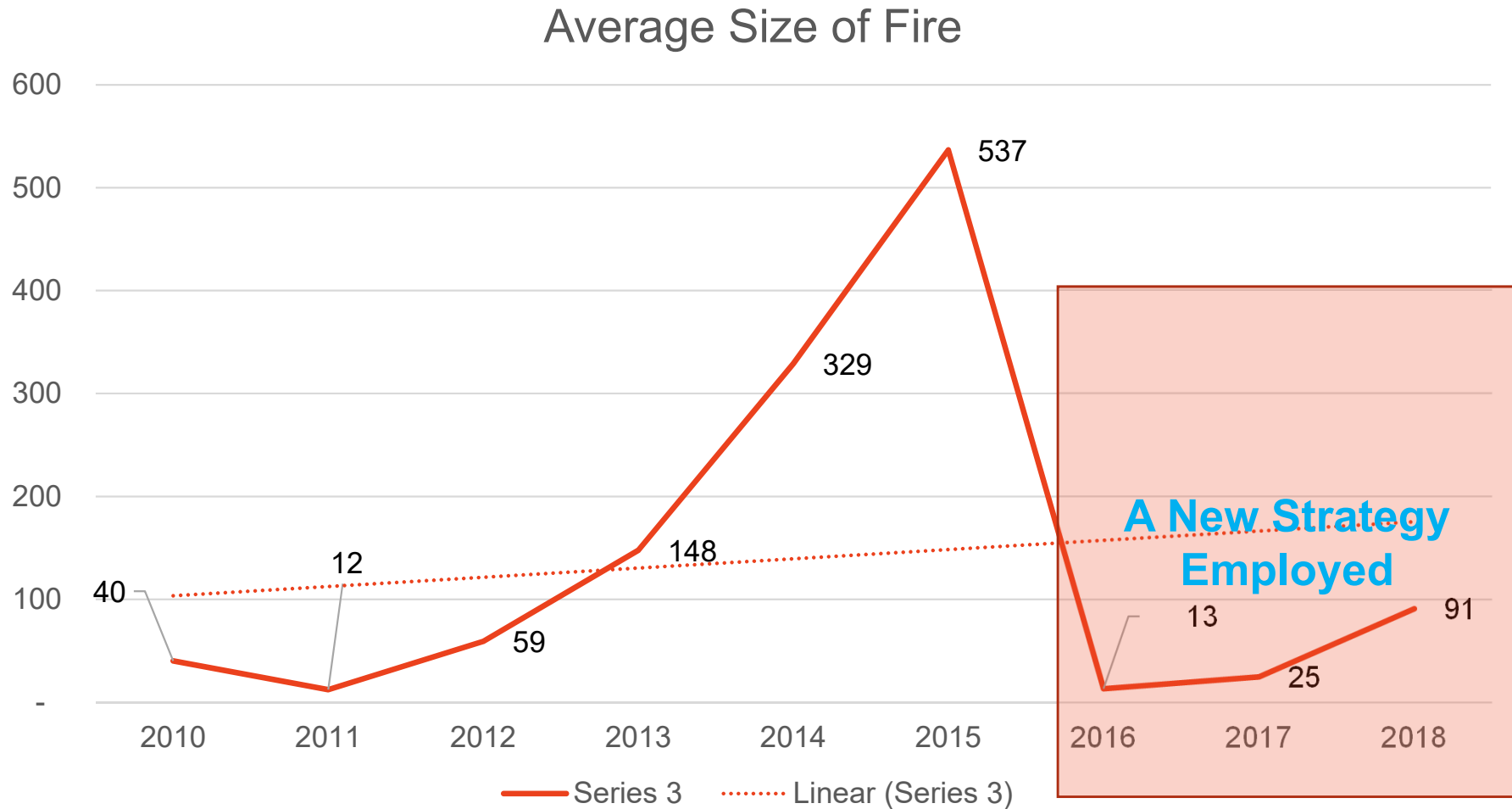
# WASHINGTON STATE – ACRES BURNED

## Number of Acres Burned Per Year\*



\* Data provided by WA-DNR's Emergency Incident Response Database – only includes WA-DNR lands.

# WASHINGTON STATE – AVERAGE ACRES BURNED PER FIRE



\* Data provided by WA-DNR's Emergency Incident Response Database – only includes WA-DNR lands.

# THE NEW STRATEGY...

- ▲ After the 2015, the need for “Rapid Initial Attack” aerial assets was identified
- ▲ The State decided to “pay the insurance” for having cost and water dropping effective aerial assets prepositioned in numerous locations across the state near high fire danger areas
- ▲ These “Combined Initial Attack\*” teams would be “scrambled” to a fire start ASAP to provide accurate intelligence on the fire and immediate suppression
- ▲ The goal was to keep every fire start to 10 acres or less on WA-DNR protected land



\* Combined Initial Attack teams comprised of Air Attack, type 2 Helo and two Fire Bosses

# THE RESULTS...

- ▲ 2,571 of the 2,726 fires that have occurred over the last three seasons have been kept to 10 acres or less. This is 94% of all wildfires.
- ▲ Spending on “pre-suppression” dollars is up, but overall suppression dollars have been significantly reduced by not having to fight extended attack major fires over many, many days or weeks.
- ▲ The State is spending more and more money on forest health initiatives such as forest thinning and prescribed burns
- ▲ Ground fire fighting teams are less taxed and tired when fires can be contained and kept small more quickly resulting in reduced turnover challenges and greater operational flexibility

*While harder to track, loss of life, property and resource values have also been reduced*





# A NEW WAY TO “WIN THE WAR” ...

- ▲ Fire prone areas need to significantly increase the number of aerial fire fighting aircraft pre-positioned to respond to wildfire starts...
- ▲ Aircraft need to be selected on their firefighting and cost effectiveness as well as operational flexibility...avoid the need to return to base to “reload”...
- ▲ When smoke is seen on the horizon, aircraft need to be “scrambled” to get to a fire within an hour and start pummeling it...response time matters...this is a military operation now...speed counts...

*Rapid Initial Attack with cost and water effective aerial assets can change the game*



# A BETTER WAY IS PROVING OUT...

***“Knock a fire Out” the first day\****



- 1** Successful initial attack equals:
- ▲ Fewer acres burned
  - ▲ Reduced insurance losses
  - ▲ Reduced dollars spent on wildfire suppression efforts



- 2** Saved suppression dollars fund:
- ▲ Fuel management tactics that create healthier forests
  - ▲ Jobs related to brush clearing, forest thinning and prescribed burns
  - ▲ Critical reduction in megafire risk for years to come

***Spend the money saved on reducing the long-term risk***



\* If possible depending on when the fire starts. This goal won't always be achieved. Even the best goal sometime isn't achieved, but this goal as a mindset creates a proactive strategy that is working in Washington state