Requesting 2013 State General Fund Appropriation Increase of $2.4 Million to Maintain Current Firefighting Capacity

Where We Are:

- Workforce has been reduced 21%
  - Wildfire response capabilities severely impacted creating larger fires
  - Area of responsibility for each firefighting crew increased 39% to 521 square miles
  - Increased wildland firefighting burden on volunteer fire departments due to reduction of AFC firefighting resources
  - Citizens are left vulnerable due to response requirements for large or numerous wildfires
  - Emergency response reduced by 50% *(fire, tornado, hurricane, flood, haz-mat, terrorism, etc.)*
  - Acres lost due to catastrophic wildfire increased 182%
  - Homes threatened due to large fires increased 173%

AFC Response to April 2011 Tornados

AFC Responders: 167
Man Hours: 20,240

Responsibilities: Search & Rescue, Humanitarian Aid (food, water, supplies), Public Health (poultry disposal), Road and Debris Clearing, Law Enforcement

What We Are Facing:

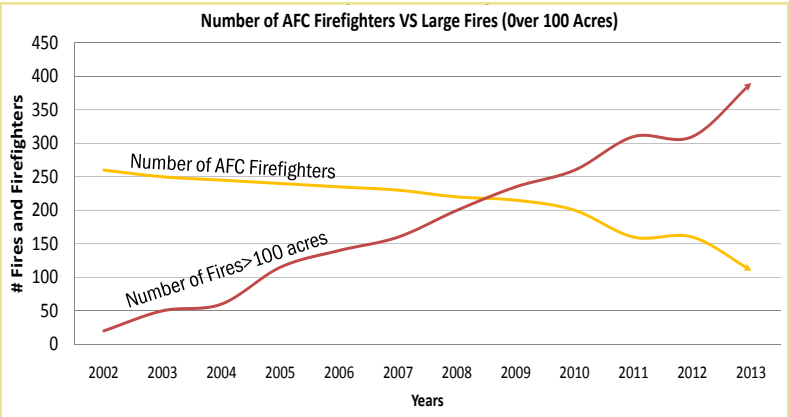
- Number of large fires increasing 26%
- At the FY12 State General Fund (SGF) level, 25 wildland firefighter positions - retained through ARRA - will have to be eliminated
- The proposed cut of 25% to FY13 SGF will result in a reduction of 25 additional employees
- Burden on Volunteer Fire Departments intensifying due to reduction of AFC firefighting resources
- Tipping point reached where decision to maintain personnel is weighed against replacement of equipment that has exceeded its recommended lifespan by 66%
- Increased risk of uncontrollable wildfires related to natural disasters
- 93% (12 million tons) of downed tornado timber remains on the ground, increasing fuel load for future catastrophic wildfires
- Containment of wildfires in tornado/hurricane damaged areas necessitates commitment of firefighting resources that leave other areas vulnerable
- Limited ability to perform management activities for private landowners which help reduce the threat and potential losses due to catastrophic wildfires

Last year the AFC responded to 3,656 wildfires totalling 69,700 acres

Tornado-Debris Fire in Jefferson County (June)
Burned 3,000 Acres in 6 days

Due to the twisted nature of the tornado debris, AFC equipment has limited capacity to control wildfires in tornado-damaged areas.

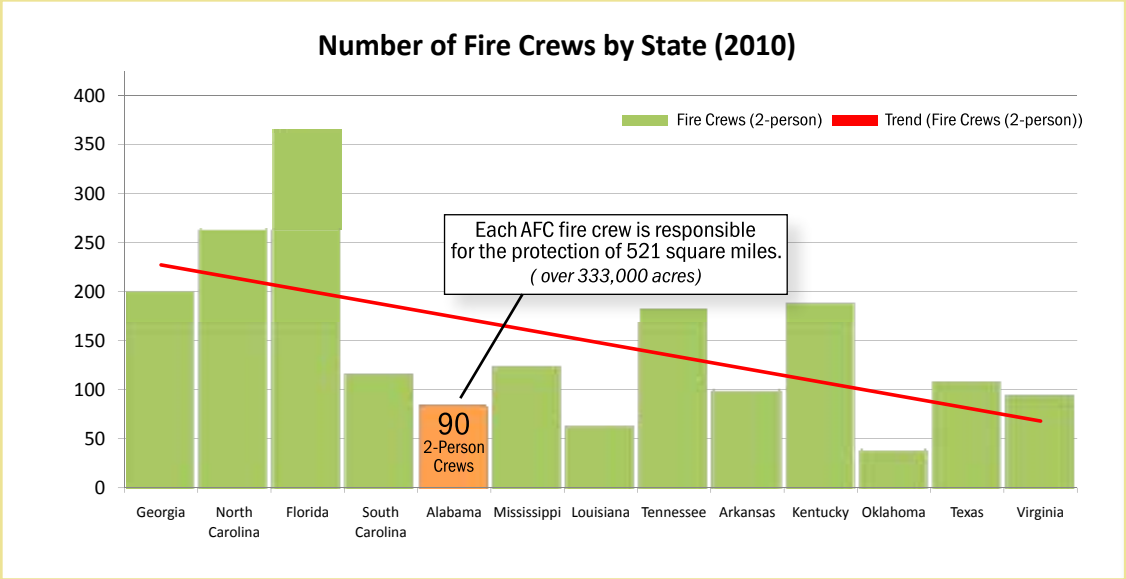
Impact to Public Safety with Additional 25% Budget Reduction



Due to past budget reductions, the number of AFC firefighters continues to decrease, while fires larger than 100 acres continues to increase.

2011 Gulf State Park Fire (June 25 - July 1)
Burned 900 Acres

AFC fire crews continue to battle catastrophic wildfires in areas impacted by timber damage from the 2004 hurricanes *(examples: 2011 Gulf State Park Fire and Seminole Fire).*



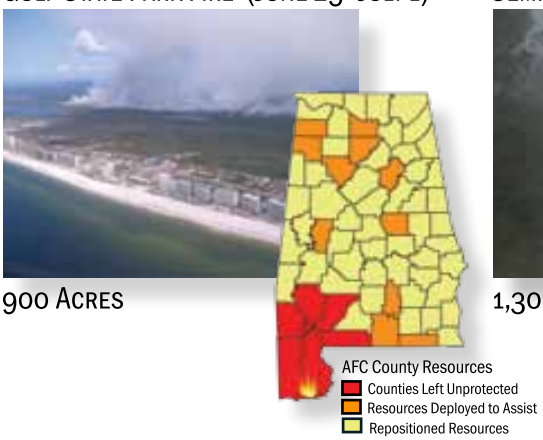
Based on the trend line of what other states support for the number of wildfires they must control, Alabama should have 170 two-person fire crews. The AFC currently has 90 fire crews.

April Tornados

93% (12 million tons) of timber damaged during the April 2011 tornados is still on the ground, increasing fuel load for future catastrophic wildfires.

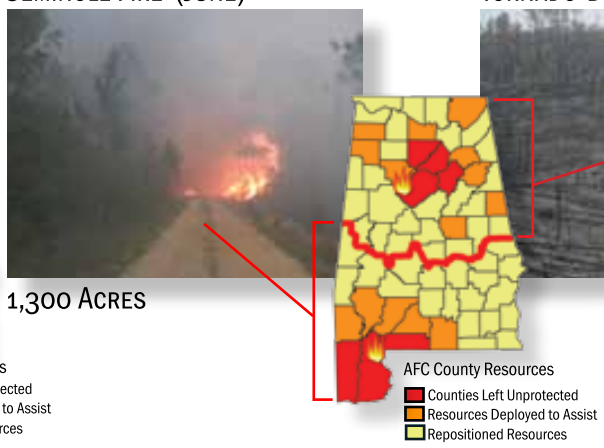
To place it into context, this volume of timber would create a convoy of 440,000 log trucks that would stretch 5,500 miles. It could reach any point on the red circle from Montgomery, Alabama.

Gulf State Park Fire (June 25 -July 1)



900 Acres

Seminole Fire (June)



1,300 Acres

Tornado-Debris Fire in Jefferson Co. (June)

3,000 Acres