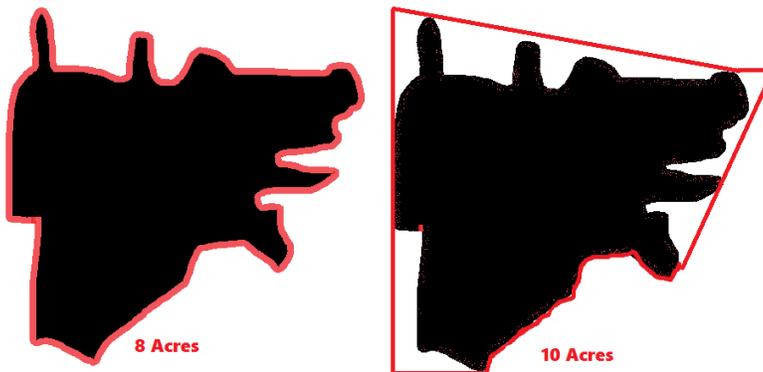


Land manager accomplishment reporting databases:

Sizes and dates can be unreliable

1. The US Forest Service (USDA) uses a database called FACTS- (Forest Accomplishment Tracking System). The Department of the Interior agencies (BLM, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs) use a database called NFPORS (National Fire Plan Operations Reporting System).
2. These are both SQL databases with lots of fields, querying them to help inform a National Emissions Inventory would probably include columns of: project name, year, accomplishment date, size, type of project (i.e. prescribed fire), location (latitude and longitude), State, County
3. Entries are put into the database through an online interface, this is done at a fairly local level; there are thousands of people nationwide adding entries to the databases.
4. Land managers have a target number of acres to accomplish each federal fiscal year.
5. Because “acres” are the currency by which success is measured for the land managers’ prescribed fire programs, there is incentive to maximize that value for each entry, within reason. So the same fire footprint might be mapped like the left if it were a wildfire (which does not count towards target) but if it were an Rx, you might bump it out to the nearest roads like at right:



6. A manager might meet or exceed their target early in one year, but continue to do field work and prescribed burning, and hang on to report those acres in a different fiscal year. This is not exactly allowed but it sometimes happens.
7. For the years I’ve looked at closely for the NEI (2014 and 2017) I’ve found some significant anomalies for prescribed fire events sourced from these databases. I’ve called the local manager and they’ve said “Oh yeah, X got in there and changed the numbers for that year, and we haven’t had time to clean it up”. I would assume this type of issue extends beyond just Utah.

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