



Wildfire Mitigation – The Irish Experience



Ciaran Nugent
Forest Service
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Ireland



<http://www.rte.ie/news/2010/0423/galway.html#video>



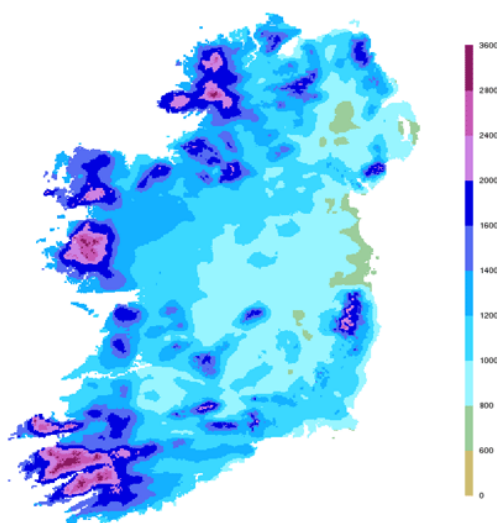
*“This island is made mainly of coal and surrounded by fish.
Only an organising genius could produce a shortage of coal and fish at the same time”*

Aneurin Bevan
Welshman

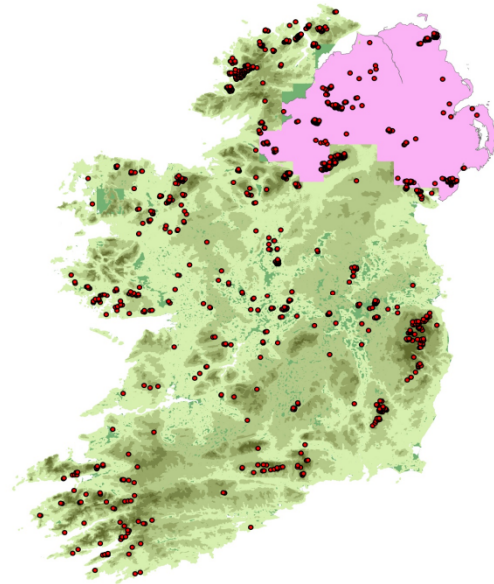


Our island is quite damp

1981-2010 Mean Annual Rainfall (mm)



The wettest areas are most fire prone



*When we try to pick out anything by itself, we
find it hitched to everything else in the
universe.*

John Muir





Wildfires are a visible symptom of many hidden problems

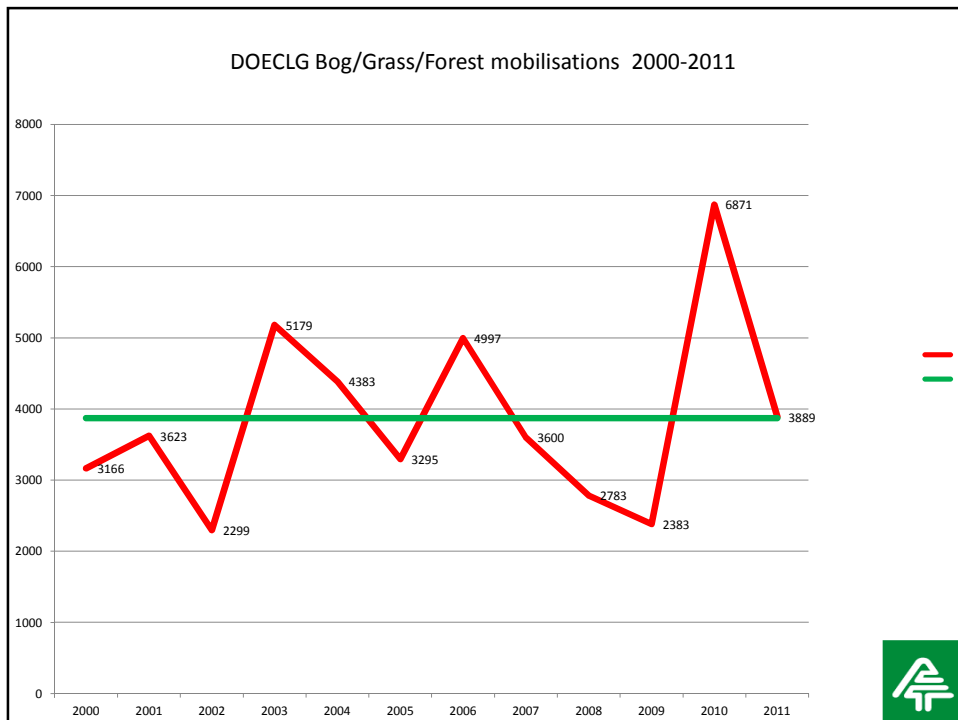
- 'Wicked problem' issue
- Land management issues
- Demographic/ Social Issues
- Urban interface issues
- Law enforcement issues
- Accumulated fuels
- Poor organisation
- Policy Transience

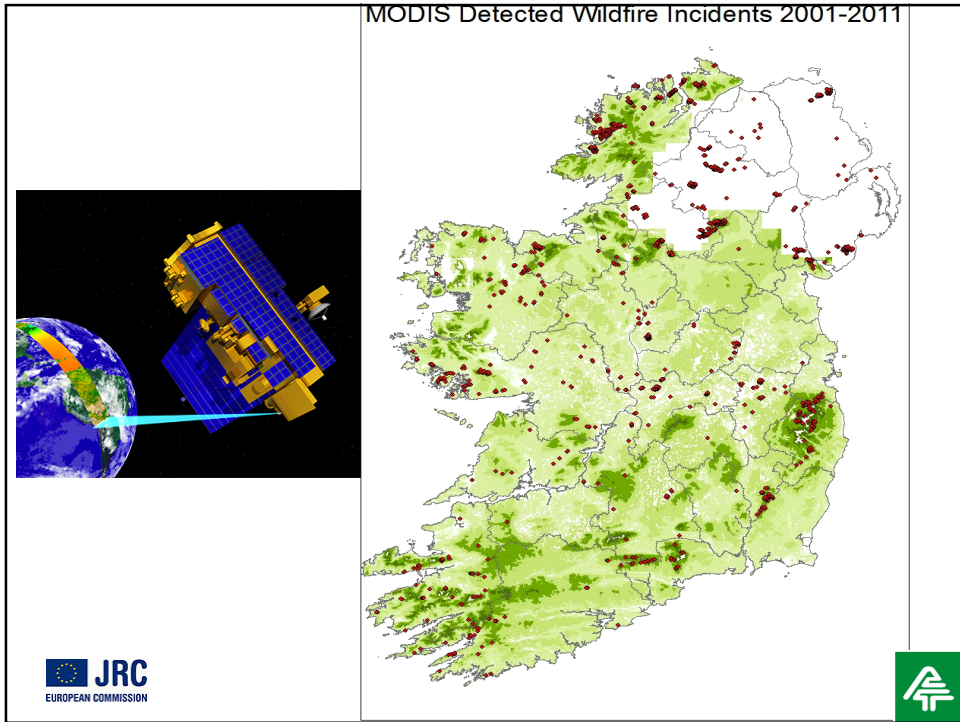


Other Challenges

- Wildfire is a part-time problem in Ireland
- Austerity Measures
- Emphasis on structural firefighting in FRS
- Poor wildfire culture across affected sectors
- Scarcity of data esp. Geospatial data
- Climate change impacts on fuels, weather
- Fuels accumulation, arrangement and extent







Effects of Wildfire- 2011



- 700 incidents in 5 days
- 1500ha of forest destroyed
- 25,000ha land burned over
- Two Deaths
- Major fire service diversion
- 4 Dwellings destroyed
- Damage to critical Infrastructure
- Fire Suppression costs
- Long term damage to habitats



Fire Weather Warning System

- Adapted from **Canadian Forest Fire Weather Index (FWI) System**
- Based on ECMWF Data
- Main Synoptic stations
- 5 day forecast index,
- 5 day look back index
- Issued daily at 3pm
- 5 Condition ratings
- General fire warnings
- Prescribed fire Guidance

Station	28/4/2011	27/4/2011	26/4/2011	25/4/2011	24/4/2011
Valentia	3	1	1	4	3
Shannon Airport	4	2	2	4	4
Dublin Airport	5	4	4	5	4
Malin Head	4	3	4	3	3
Belmullet	1	3	4	3	1
Ballyhaise	5	4	4	4	3
Johnstown Castle	4	3	4	4	2
Claremorris	2	1	5	4	4
Oak Park	4	4	3	5	4
Casement	5	4	4	4	5
Cork Airport	5	4	3	4	3
Gurteen	4	3	3	3	3
Knock	5	3	4	4	3
Mullingar	4	3	4	3	3
Mace Head	1	1	3	3	3
Moore Park	4	4	4	5	3
Sherkin Island	5	4	4	3	2
Roches Point	4	4	4	4	4



2011 Edition

**Prescribed Burning
Code of Practice - Ireland**

Department of
Agriculture,
Food and the Marine
Dáil na Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara









Local Level Fire Management Groups

- Organic Development
- Not centrally coordinated
- Fire interagency Groups – Cork, Kerry (SW)
- Fire Management Groups – Laois (Midlands)
- Controlled Burning Support – Louth (NE)



Local Level Fire Management Groups

- Permit information exchange at local level
- Enable communication with key stakeholders
- Utilise and optimise existing structures, networks and capabilities
- Joint operation/cooperation/coordination of activities
- Common media message
- Interoperability

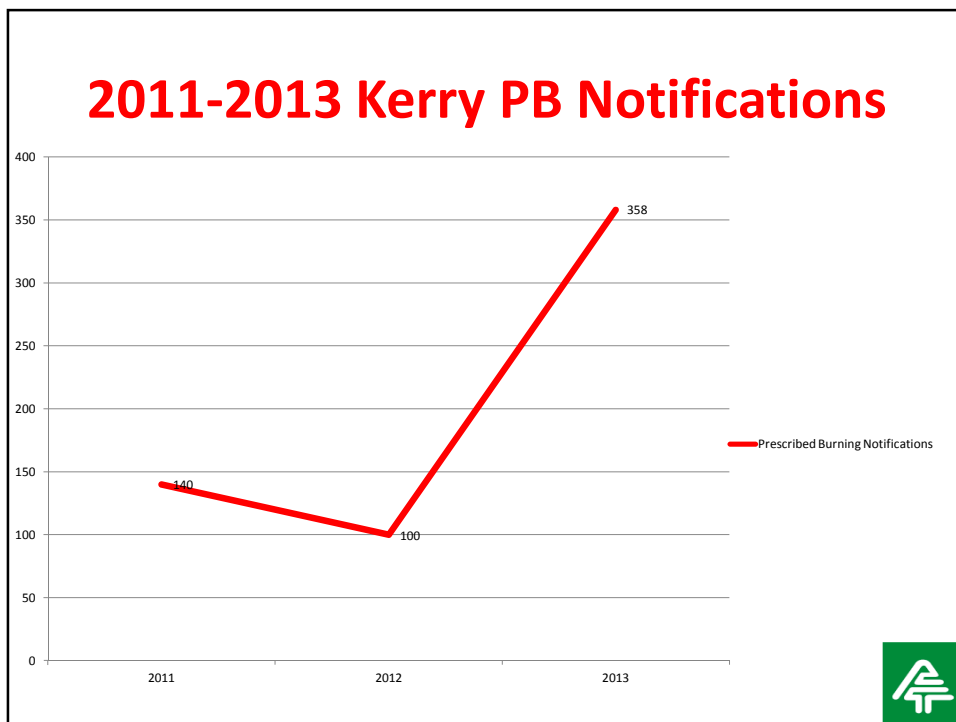
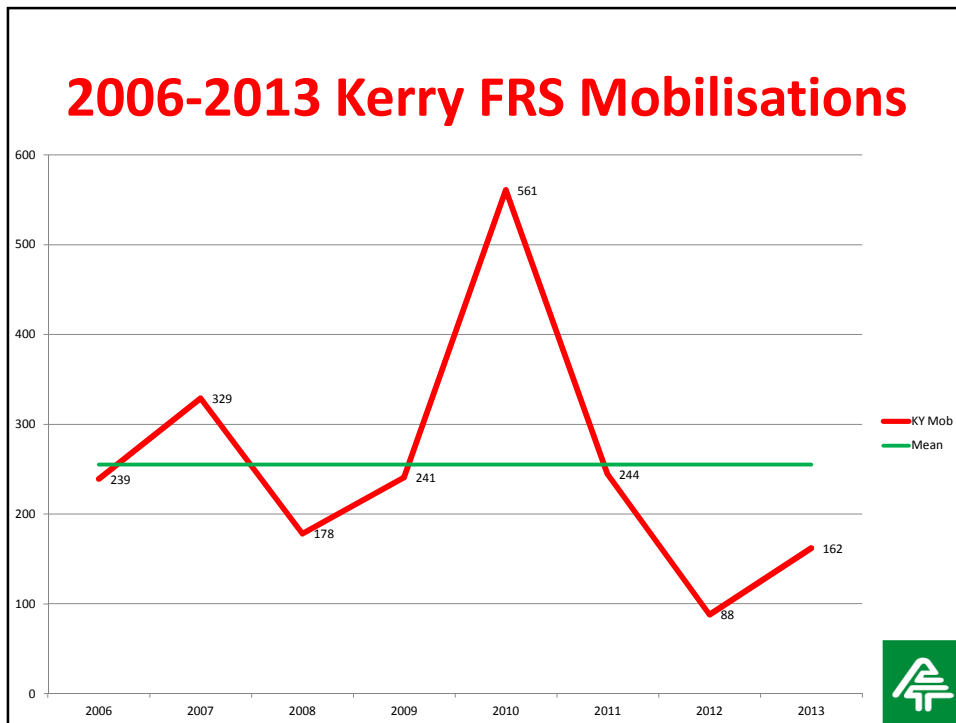


Critical elements

- Chief Fire Officer
- Senior Garda (Police) Officers
- Local Authority Public affairs officer
- Local Authority Community and Enterprise officer
- Farming organisations County Chairpersons

- 1-2 champions
- Local Media





Prosecutions



- Three prosecutions arising from 2012 incidents
- Four more prosecutions pending
- Average fine €250
- Farm Penalties



Conclusions

- Resilience comes from organisation
- Organisation comes from issue champions
- Consultation is key to behaviour modification
- The right kind of consultation for the right people
- Identify existing local structures and networks and adapt and optimise these for fire mitigation
- Low input, low cost localised methods are more resilient and more sustainable in the long run



Acknowledgements

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