



# SOUTH WHIDBEY FIRE & EMS



# BRUSH FIRES – WHIDBNEY AND FIDALGO

Nicholas Walsh

Chief- South Whidbey Fire EMS

# NICHOLAS WALSH

Born on Whidbey Island

Lived in Washington and Montana

Started Firefighting 25 years ago

Fidalgo Island/ Anacortes Fire Department 15 yrs

South Whidbey 2 years

Previously in Whatcom, Skagit counties







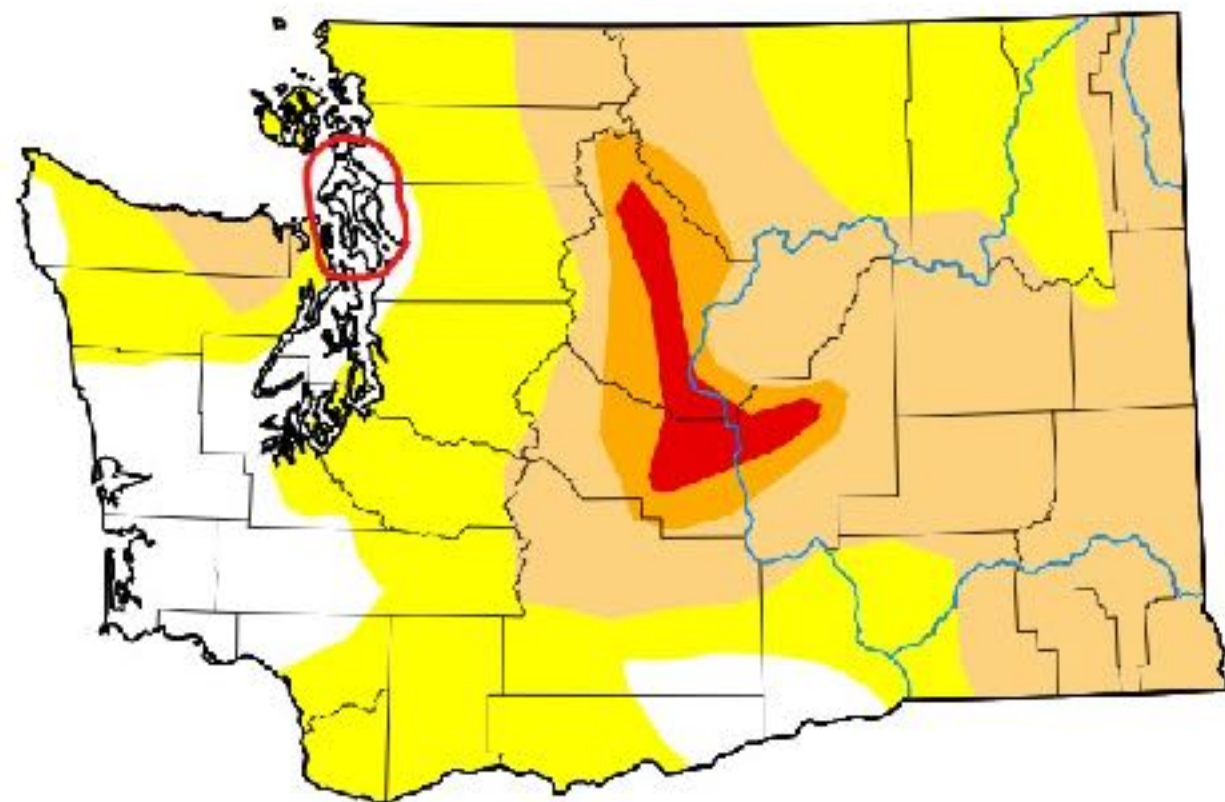
# HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON WHIDBEY AND FIDALGO

- Evidence of historic large area wildfires
- Wildfire vs Brushfire
- No wildfires in recorded history
- Trends in past 20 years

Map released: Thurs. August 15, 2024

Data valid: August 13, 2024 at 8 a.m. EDT

## Intensity



## Authors

United States and Puerto Rico Author(s):

[Curtis Riganti](#), National Drought Mitigation Center

Pacific Islands and Virgin Islands Author(s):

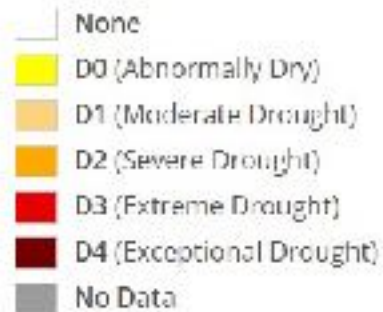
[Anthony Artusa](#), NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC



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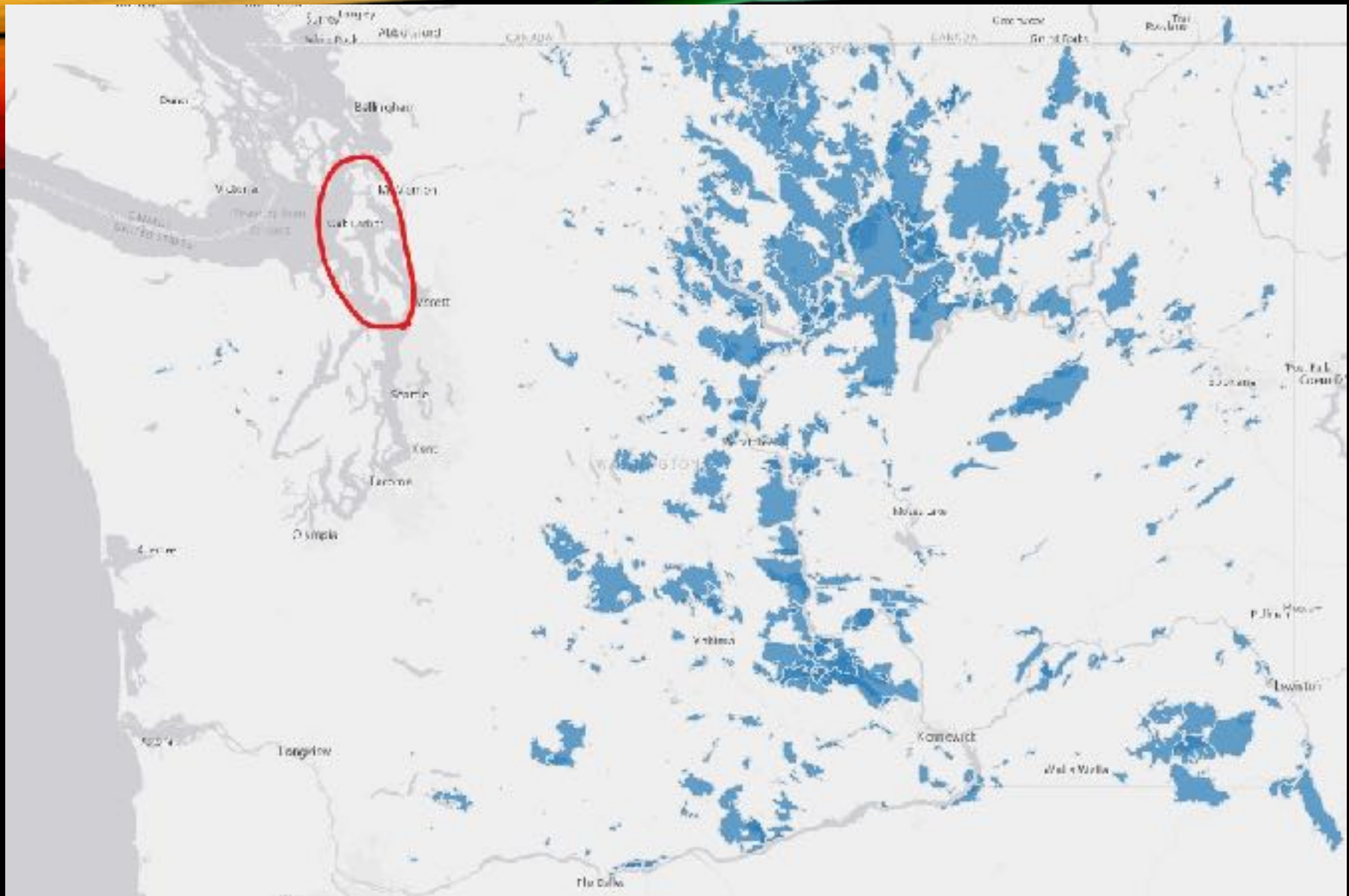
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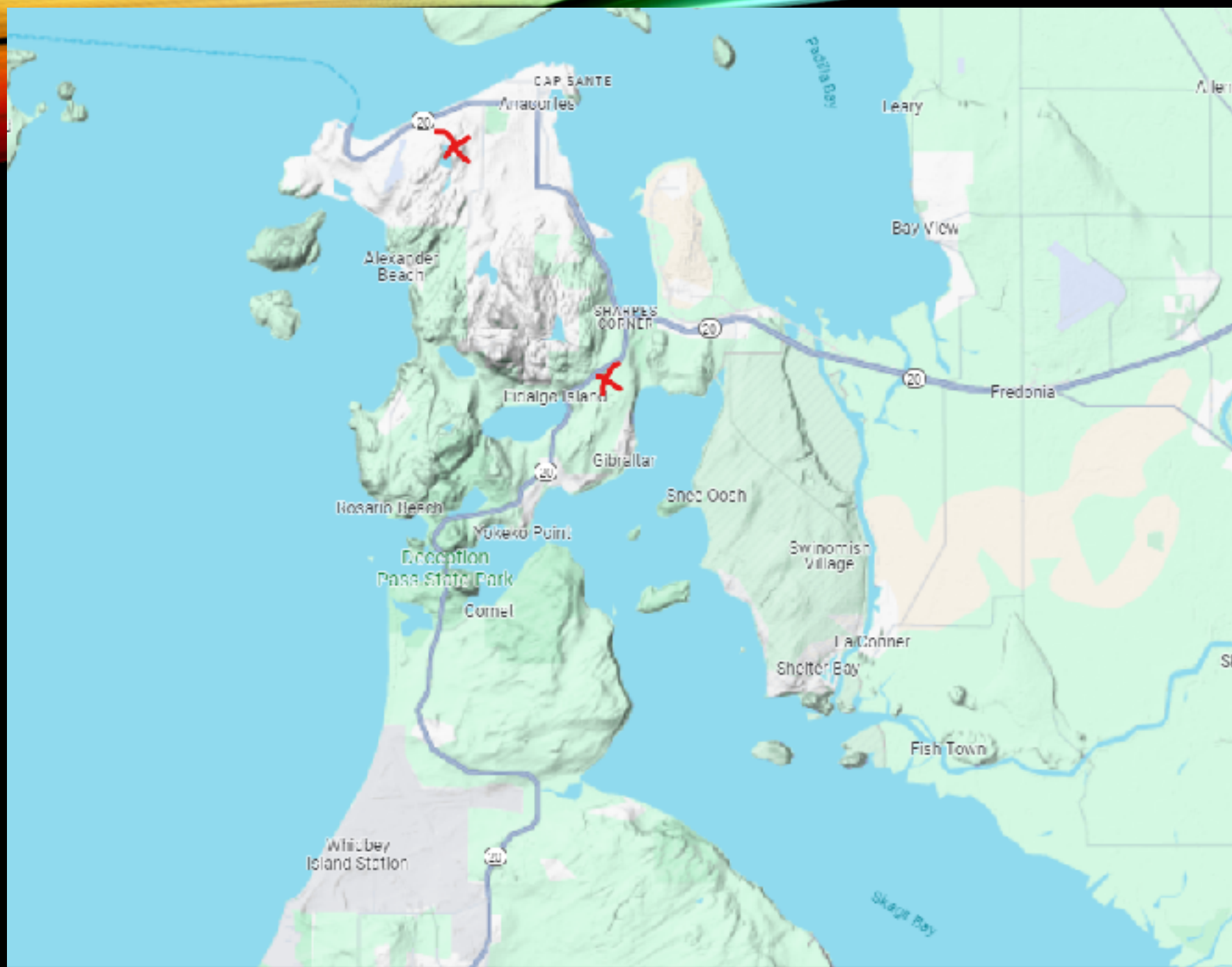


LARGE FIRES 1973-2023



# TWO LOCAL FIRES- CASE STUDY

- LITTLE CRABERRY
  - 2016
  - Around 20 acres
  - Neighborhood in WUI threatened
  - Believed to be caused by smoking materials
- THOMAS LANE FIRE
  - 2018
  - Around 10 acres
  - Neighborhood in WUI threatened
  - Unattended fire left by transient camper

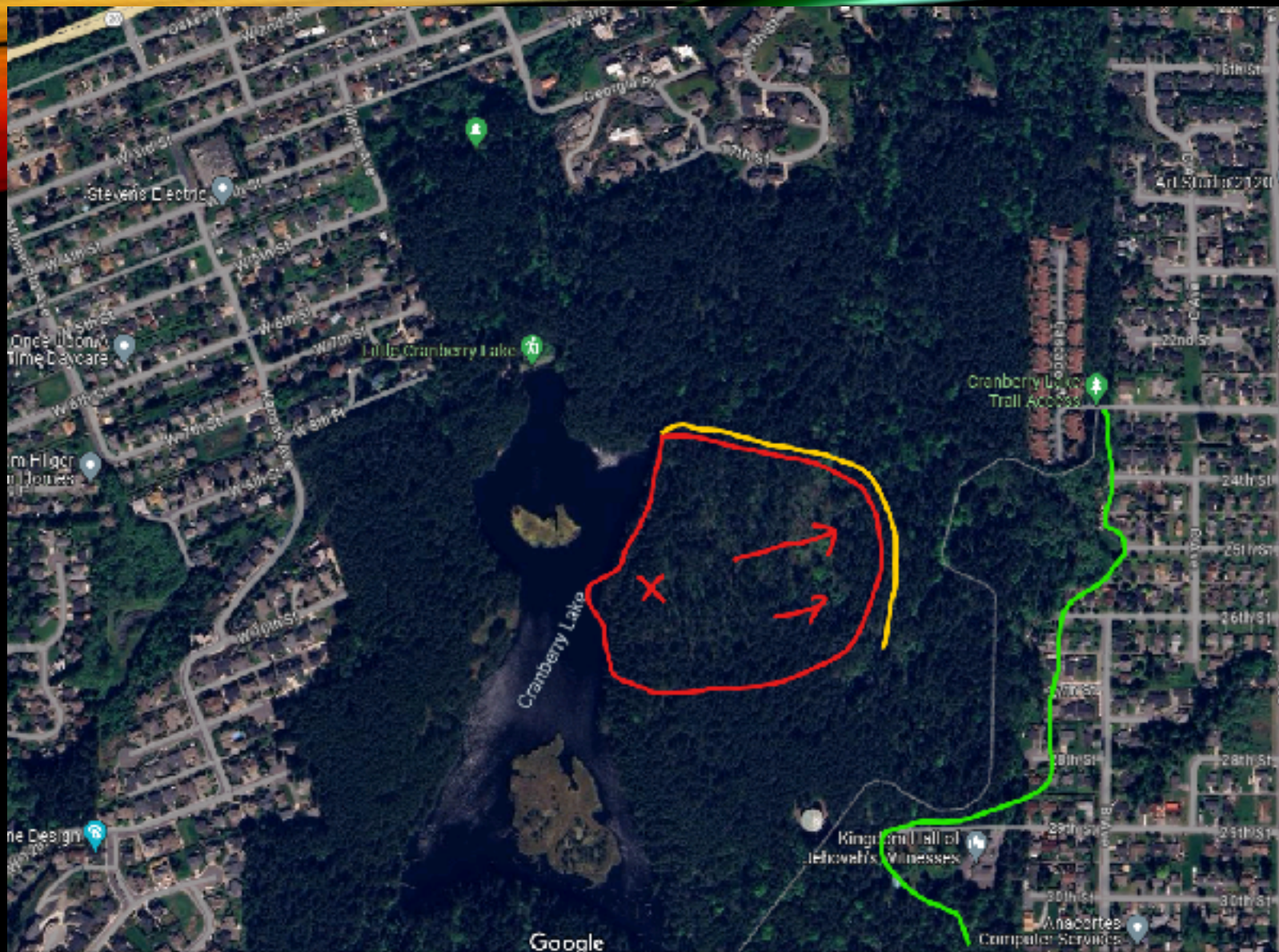




**LITTLE CRANBERRY LAKE FIRE ACFL 2016**

## ASSISTANT CHIEF JACK KENNEDY-

- “I’ve been with the department for **34 years**, and it’s the largest wildland (fire) we’ve had. We’ve had several acres in size but not like this. **The fire behavior that we experienced up here was also not normal for this area.** We had trees that were actually torching from the bottom to the top because of the relative humidity temperature and also the slope of the hill the fire was actually on.”



# CRANBERRY TACTICS



# LITTLE CRANBERRY





## LITTLE CRANBERRY IMPACTS

# Forest rebounding from 2016 fire

By Mazey Servin-Obert [mservin@skagitpublishing.com](mailto:mservin@skagitpublishing.com) Sep 30, 2020  0



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Four years after a fire at Little Cranberry Lake, scarring can still be seen on trees that burned in the blaze, but the ground is covered in green growth.

[Buy Now](#)

A promotional banner for a contest. It features a red circular logo with a crown and the text "WIN FREE Groceries FOR A YEAR". Below the logo is a green banner that says "\$5,000 PRIZE!". The background is decorated with various fresh vegetables like bell peppers, tomatoes, and onions. At the bottom, it says "ENTER TO WIN! JULY 29 - AUGUST 27, 2024" and includes a green "ENTER HERE" button. The name "Skagit Valley" is visible in the bottom right corner.A promotional banner for "LOCAL EATS". On the left, a vertical red bar says "NEW COUPONS". The main image shows a dining table with chairs in a restaurant setting. Below the image, it says "Get \$280 val up in dining certificates for \$75." and "Check out our latest promotions for different restaurants!". A circular logo with "LOCAL EATS" is on the right. At the bottom right is a red "Order Now" button.



CRANBERRY NOW



CRANBERRY NOW



THOMAS LANE FIRE







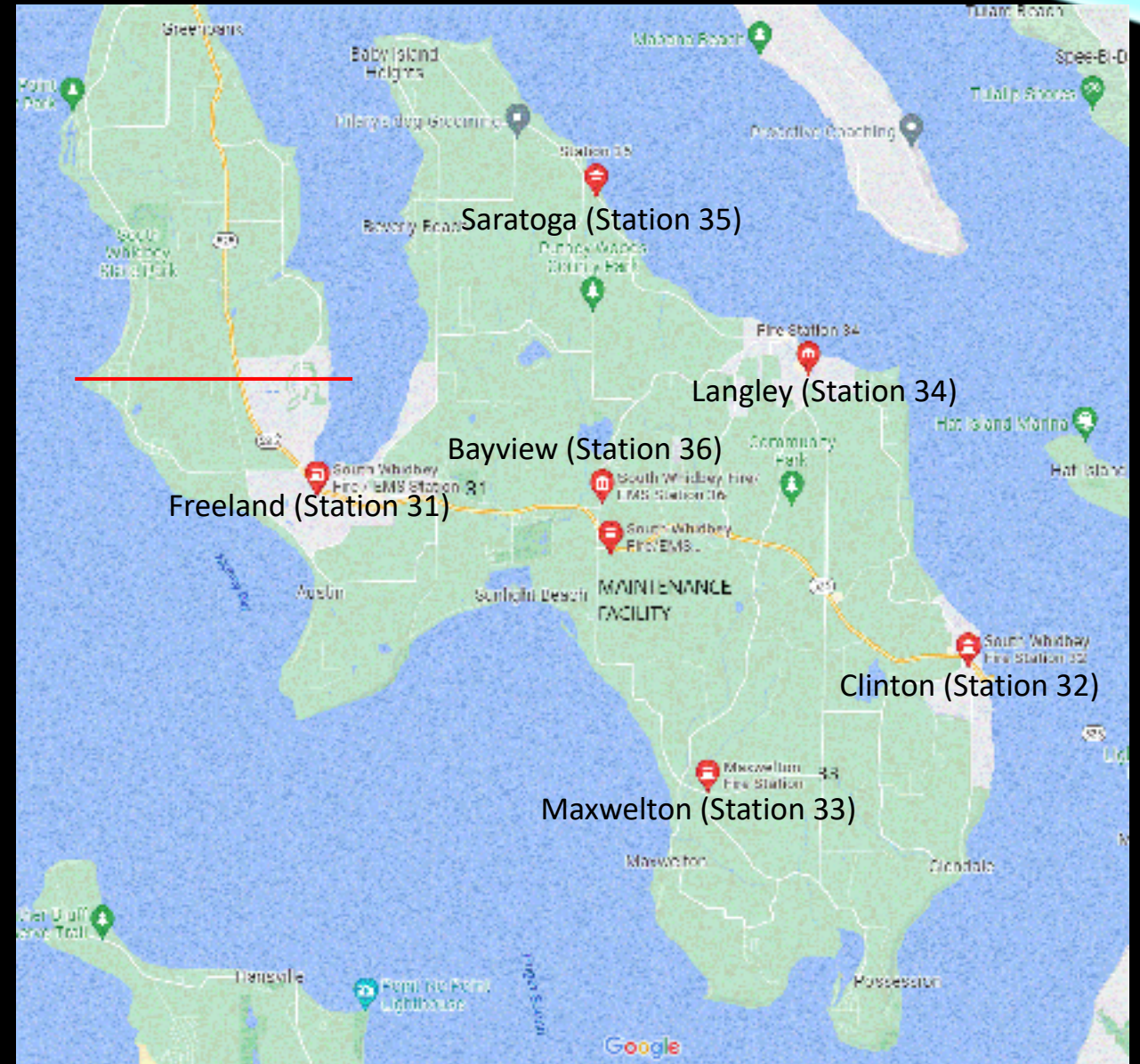
LOCAL FIREFIGHTERS -FIRELINE



# SWFE

We serve people on Whidbey Island South of Mutiny Bay Road. We serve approximately **15,000** residents, **10,000** visitors and **533** businesses over **66 square miles**.

We rely on full-time and volunteer emergency personnel who respond to an average of **2,600** calls a year.





**YOUR SOUTH WHIDBEY FIREFIGHTERS**



**TYPICAL SWFE BRUSHFIRE**

# WHAT IS SWFE DOING

Responded to 6 brush fires so far in 2024

Outfitted small “brush truck” to access and extinguish wildland fires

Building skill and enthusiasm amongst the team for expertise in wildland firefighting

- 2023 Leavenworth Firefighter Challenge
- 2024 Leavenworth Firefighter Challenge
- 2024 15 South Whidbey Firefighter “red carded” as wildland firefighters!
- 2024 Purchased new wildland firefighting clothing, packs, shelters

# WHAT CAN I DO?

Have defensible space around your home

Be fire safe

Follow the burn ban and be safe with fire.

All fireworks that go up in the air and explode are illegal and banned in the state of Washington

