



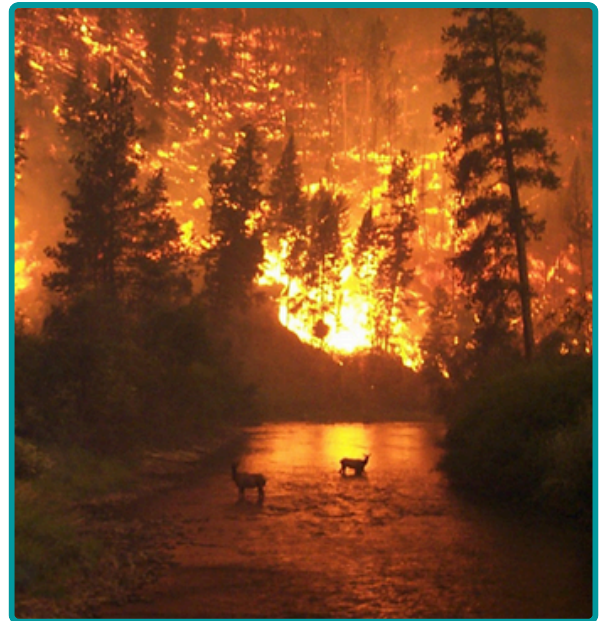
Wildfires and Smoke

Wildfires are a major concern around the Inland Northwest, especially during the hot and dry seasons of summer and fall. The fires can start either by lightning from thunderstorms or from human actions. Sometimes fires can smolder for days and then increase rapidly with gusty, dry winds and burn through grasses, woods, and into neighborhoods. Wildfires can cause people to lose their lives, destroy homes and send harmful smoke into neighboring communities.

Wildfires create lots of smoke that can move into towns and cities. Even if the fires are many miles away, the smoke can travel with the wind. There can be days or even weeks when it's hazy and residents can't see the Sun. This smoke can lead to poor air quality. Breathing smoky air can harm our lungs and our heart. It is especially hazardous for those with breathing issues like asthma.

Wildfires are scary and can move very quickly. It's important to prepare before wildfire season.

- Talk to your family on what to do if there is a fire near your house: Where do you go? Who do you contact?
- Put together an Emergency Kit with items like: flash light, batteries, bottles of water, snacks, extra clothes, and maybe other items to keep you safe.
- Be ready to leave if fire fighters tell you it's not safe.



Native animals have adapted to wildfires and know how to avoid or escape them. It is not uncommon for some animals to go to rivers or streams or tunnel underground. Some animals prefer to return to the burned forests right away and can thrive even in a what seems to be a barren habitat.

Fire fighters have special training to take on wildland fires. They can be local fire crews or regional from Oregon, Idaho or Montana that help fight wildfires across Eastern Washington. When they arrive, they set up fire camps. Fire camps are where the firefighters place their tents to sleep. They are provided meals and showers at fire camp too. They can be at the fire camps for up to 14 days straight. It is hard work!

After wildfires, most grasses, brush, and trees are burned. The ground is scorched too so that nothing can grow for some time. When it does rains, the water can't soak in and runs quickly down the slopes. When the rain is heavy enough, this can cause flash flooding, debris flows, or rock slides in towns, cities and on roads especially in areas with steep terrain.

Wildfires can be good and healthy for a forest. The fires clean the forest floors and allow beautiful flowers and mushrooms to return and grow. Fires also get rid of diseased trees and nasty bugs that can kill the trees. Some trees need the fire to release their seeds to grow, such as Lodgepole pines.





DID YOU KNOW?

One tool that every wildland firefighter uses is called a Pulaski. It is a hand tool that has an axe on one side for chopping and an adze on the other side for digging. Firefighters use this tool to make firebreaks. It's also been adapted for gardening, trail construction and other outdoor work. The pulaski was invented in 1911 by a local man, Ed Pulaski. Ed was a U.S. Forest Service ranger out of Wallace, Idaho. In 1910, he became famous for saving many lives during the huge wildfire in north Idaho.



WILDFIRE WORD SEARCH

H	L	Z	L	B	E	C	J	O	D	A	S	P	C	X	W	F	O
V	O	F	O	L	T	L	S	J	X	G	U	M	B	R	I	L	U
B	E	T	D	L	I	G	H	T	N	I	N	G	G	N	N	O	O
G	P	E	G	Y	J	U	F	L	A	M	E	S	I	Z	D	O	L
G	U	D	E	L	S	W	A	T	E	R	M	J	V	G	S	D	J
P	L	L	P	J	J	Q	T	C	K	T	N	V	G	Z	F	I	S
O	A	N	O	F	I	R	E	F	I	G	H	T	E	R	M	N	C
B	S	S	L	I	X	C	X	J	W	D	D	R	Y	A	J	G	O
L	K	E	E	I	B	Y	H	A	Z	E	K	S	I	O	R	J	R
F	I	R	E	C	A	M	P	D	W	W	E	N	X	R	R	B	C
Z	S	U	M	M	E	R	J	D	I	T	W	K	R	C	A	C	H
M	F	S	Q	G	S	M	O	K	E	J	G	R	A	S	S	C	L



SUMMER FIREFIGHTER PULASKI LIGHTNING
LODGEPOLE FLOODING HAZE WINDS GRASS
WATER FLAMES SCORCH SMOKE
HOT DRY FIRECAMP



FUN WEATHER FACT



Wildfires can make their own weather, especially when they grow large and generate intense heat! Sometimes they develop their own clouds called "pyrocumulus" which are large cauliflower shaped clouds that can produce thunder and lightning. A fire whirl is whirlwind induced by the heat of fire and rotating air columns. They are also known as a fire tornado or fire devil. They can be very dangerous to fire fighters who must find safety until the fire settles down. What other rotating storms can you think of?



WHY DO FIRES BURN? THE FIRE TRIANGLE

The fire triangle is a simple way of understanding the elements of fire. The sides of the triangle represent the interdependent ingredients needed for fire: heat, fuel and oxygen.

Envirokids is a collaborative effort among multiple environmentally focused agencies in the Spokane region working to provide locally relevant educational resources to teachers and families.