



Forest Fire Facts

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1. Forest fires can start by natural causes or by humans (accidents).
2. Lightening is the most important natural cause of fires, especially if it is followed by a dry season.
3. Forest fires can have harmful and helpful effects. For example, fires can release nutrients that would otherwise decompose very slowly. These nutrients are good for growth of some plants.
4. Surface fires are different from crown fires. Surface fires burn the undergrowth and leaf litter. This clears way for animals such as moose, deer etc.
5. Surface fires can prevent larger, more serious crown fires (large uncontrolled fires that burn many tree tops) from occurring. Therefore, the people from forest services sometime carry out what they call 'controlled burns' of undergrowth and leaf litter.
6. We can decrease the number of forest fires by being careful and avoiding fire related accidents.
7. Heat from one fire season can take a long time to cool down. Even when we do not see flames, and the land gets covered with snow, sometimes there is enough that remains trapped in the burn areas, for a fire to start again when the snow melts away and it starts to get warmer.
8. Climate change (warming of the climate) is believed to cause longer, warmer and drier summer seasons, which provide conditions favorable for occurrence of forest fires. We need more research data to establish a reliable relationship between climate warming and forest fires.