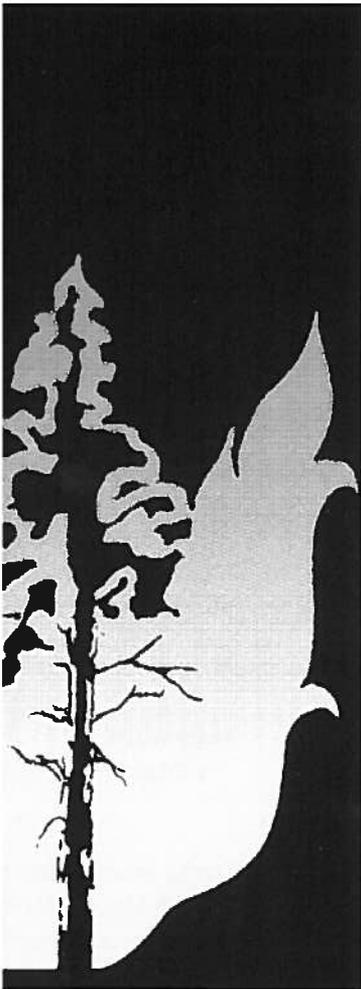


L D L A N D



• R E S E A R C H

Wildland Fire Study

**Fire Conditions on Public
Forests & Rangelands**

**A Nationwide Survey of
Citizens**

Forest Resources Department
Oregon State University
Corvallis, Oregon

Forest Resources Department
Utah State University
Logan, Utah

6. People get information about natural resources from a variety of places. How useful have the following sources of information been to you? By useful we mean sources that you pay attention to and that provide good information. Please circle one number for each or mark "no experience" if you have not had experience with a particular source.

	No experience	-----Level of Usefulness-----			
		None	Slight	Moderate	High
a. Newspapers or magazine	___	1	2	3	4
b. Radio station	___	1	2	3	4
c. Television programs	___	1	2	3	4
d. State government agencies	___	1	2	3	4
e. University scientists	___	1	2	3	4
f. Federal agencies (Forest Service, BLM, National Park Service, etc.)	___	1	2	3	4
g. Natural resource industry groups	___	1	2	3	4
h. Environmental groups	___	1	2	3	4
i. Friends or relatives	___	1	2	3	4
j. Internet	___	1	2	3	4

7. Public trust in natural resource agencies is essential to the success of public land management programs. Please indicate your level of trust in the following groups to make (or contribute to) good management decisions. If you feel you have no basis for judgment, please mark "no opinion."

	No opinion	-----Level of Trust-----			
		None	Limited	Moderate	Full
a. U.S. Bureau of Land Management	___	1	2	3	4
b. U.S. Forest Service	___	1	2	3	4
c. National Park Service	___	1	2	3	4
d. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	___	1	2	3	4
e. Bureau of Indian Affairs	___	1	2	3	4
f. Your state department of natural resources (or equivalent agency)	___	1	2	3	4
g. University research scientists	___	1	2	3	4

People have different ideas about how forests and rangelands work. In this section we are interested in what citizens know about these environments.

8. How familiar are you with the following natural resource terms? (circle the best response)

	I know the meaning	I've heard the term, but don't know the meaning	I've never heard the term.
• ecosystem management.....	1	2	3
• rangelands.....	1	2	3
• controlled burn.....	1	2	3
• riparian zone.....	1	2	3
• watershed.....	1	2	3
• forest succession.....	1	2	3
• prescribed fire.....	1	2	3
• native vegetation.....	1	2	3
• hazardous fuels reduction.....	1	2	3
• noxious weeds	1	2	3
• biological diversity.....	1	2	3
• forest thinning.....	1	2	3

9. Please respond to the following statements to the best of your ability by indicating whether you believe each is **true**, **false**, or you are **not sure**.

	Generally true	Generally false	Not sure
a. Wildfires have played a significant role in shaping many of the nation's forests.	1	2	3
b. Humans cause most of the wildfires in the U.S.	1	2	3
c. Fires can be an important force in controlling disease and insect outbreaks in forests and rangelands.	1	2	3
d. Wildfires kill the majority of large trees in the burned area.	1	2	3
e. Many plants require occasional fires so that new seeds or seedlings can sprout.	1	2	3
f. Fires kill a majority of the animals in a burned area.	1	2	3

The questions on the next few pages ask for your opinion about specific practices resource managers can use to change environmental conditions in forests and rangelands. Please read the paragraphs below, and then answer the questions that follow. Answer them from your own point of view, even if you feel your knowledge of these concepts is limited. This will help us understand how citizens feel about their natural resources.

Scientists have learned in recent years that wildfires are an important part of how nature works. However, past natural resource practices have led to conditions that did not exist before the time of the pioneers. As a result, many forests and rangelands are now considered “unhealthy.” In some places, a century-long policy of putting out all wildfires has led to a buildup of “fuel” that promotes hotter, larger, and more frequent fires. In other places, naturally fire-resistant plants have been replaced by more flammable weeds. Many forests have more, but smaller, trees that are more likely to burn up in a fire. All of these situations create greater risk to lives, property, and healthy natural environments when fires do occur.

Resource managers are now looking for ways to allow fires to burn more naturally and less dangerously in forests and rangelands. To do this, they want to change the amount and types of plants to create conditions more like the wild lands encountered by the pioneers. Some of the practices that can do this are:

Prescribed fire—Also called controlled burning, this practice can involve 1) letting a naturally caused fire to burn under close and careful watch; or 2) intentionally setting fires in ways that can be controlled to produce desired conditions and protect against undesired results.

Mechanical vegetation control—These methods vary widely. Resource managers can use chainsaws, brush mowers, or other specialized machines to reduce the number of shrubs and small trees where they are so numerous that they increase the risk and size of wildfires.

Grazing—In some cases, domestic animals can be placed in areas where they graze on plants before they dry out in summer, thus reducing the amount of flammable vegetation later on.

Restoration planting—Sometimes managers may be able to plant native and/or less flammable species that can slow the spread of wildfires.

Please go on to the next page and answer every question you can....

1. In my opinion, intentionally setting **prescribed fires** on public forests and rangelands is: *(select one)*

- a legitimate tool that resource managers should be able to use whenever they see fit.
- something that should be done only infrequently, in carefully selected areas.
- a practice that should not be considered because it creates too many negative impacts.
- an unnecessary practice.
- I know too little to make a judgment about this topic.

2. In my opinion, **mechanical vegetation removal** on public forests and rangelands is: *(select one)*

- a legitimate tool that resource managers should be able to use whenever they see fit.
- something that should be done only infrequently, in carefully selected areas.
- a practice that should not be considered because it creates too many negative impacts.
- an unnecessary practice.
- I know too little to make a judgment about this topic.

3. The use of **prescribed fire** may create concerns for some people. Please indicate how concerned you are about the following possible effects of prescribed fire.

	Not a concern	Slight concern	Moderate concern	Great concern
a. damage to private property	1	2	3	4
b. effects on recreation opportunities	1	2	3	4
c. loss of wildlife and fish habitat	1	2	3	4
d. risk to human safety	1	2	3	4
e. economic loss of useable timber	1	2	3	4
f. reduced scenic quality	1	2	3	4
g. increased levels of smoke	1	2	3	4
h. deteriorated public water supply	1	2	3	4

4. Please respond to the following statements about **prescribed fires** by indicating whether you believe each is **true**, **false**, or you are **not sure**.

	Generally true	Generally false	Not sure
a. Prescribed fires kill the majority of large trees in the burned area.	1	2	3
b. Prescribed fires promote the growth of plants that serve as food for deer and elk.	1	2	3
b. Prescribed fires kill most of the small, young trees and vegetation beneath the forest canopy.	1	2	3
c. Prescribed fire is effective in controlling noxious weeds.	1	2	3
d. Prescribed fires kill a majority of animals in the burned area.	1	2	3

5. To help forest managers make decisions, please tell us how you feel about the following:
(circle one number for each statement)

	strongly agree	agree	uncertain	disagree	strongly disagree
a. Following nature's way is preferable to human intervention in ecosystems.	1	2	3	4	5
b. All fires, regardless of origin, should be put out as soon as possible.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Selectively thinning dead and dying trees is better than leaving them in the forest.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Prescribed fire effectively reduces the amount of excess fuels in forests and rangelands.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Prescribed fire is too dangerous to be used as a management tool.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Because fire is part of nature, prescribed fire is a better tool than mechanical removal.	1	2	3	4	5
g. Livestock grazing is appropriate for reducing wildfire risk and fire severity on public lands.	1	2	3	4	5
h. It's okay to plant fire-resistant species in a forest or rangeland if they are already native to the area.	1	2	3	4	5
i. It's okay to ignite a prescribed fire in a wild area but not near homes and private property.	1	2	3	4	5

6. Did you hear about the forest fires at Los Alamos, New Mexico this past spring?

NO  Please go to Question 8.
 YES 

6-a. Did the fires in Los Alamos influence how you feel about the use of prescribed fire?

NO  Go to Question 8.
 YES 

6-b. Please check *all that apply* regarding your current feelings concerning the use of prescribed fire.

- feel more negative about its use.
- feel more positive about its use.
- want to know more about its purpose and/or implementation.
- feel more skeptical about the ability of natural resource agencies such as the Forest Service or the Park Service to effectively implement a prescribed fire program.

7. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

I think that the Los Alamos case was an isolated incident that should not keep prescribed fires from being used elsewhere in the country. (circle one number)

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Don't Know	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----

Questions in this final section help us more fully understand peoples' views and opinions. All responses are strictly confidential.

8. How often do you spend time in a national or state forest or national park? (check one)

<input type="checkbox"/> never	<input type="checkbox"/> about once a month	<input type="checkbox"/> daily
<input type="checkbox"/> less than once a year	<input type="checkbox"/> about once a week	
<input type="checkbox"/> a few times a year	<input type="checkbox"/> several times a week	

9. Which of the following best describes where you live?

<input type="checkbox"/> rural area	<input type="checkbox"/> city of 50,001 to 100,000
<input type="checkbox"/> town/city of 2,500 or less	<input type="checkbox"/> city of 100,001 to 250,000
<input type="checkbox"/> town/city of 2,501 to 25,000	<input type="checkbox"/> city of 250,001 to 500,000
<input type="checkbox"/> town/city of 25,001 to 50,000	<input type="checkbox"/> city of more than 500,000

Wildland Fire Study

10. How long have you lived in the same town? _____ years
How long in the same state? _____ years
11. Which of the following best describes the community in which you grew up?
- _____ urban area _____ small town
_____ suburban area _____ rural area
12. What is your zip code? _____
13. Are you? _____ Male _____ Female
14. What is your age? _____ Years
15. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- _____ Some high school _____ Bachelor's degree
_____ High school graduate _____ Some graduate school
_____ Some college _____ Completed graduate degree
16. Are you retired? _____ Yes _____ No
17. Please indicate if you are a member of any formal organizations below that are interested in public lands issues? (*check all that apply*)
- _____ environmental organization _____ farming, ranching, fishing group
_____ forest industry group _____ recreation organization
18. Circle the category that best describes where your household derives its primary income.
(*if retired, select your former occupation*)
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Forest industry | 6. Professional (doctor, lawyer, etc.) |
| 2. Farming, ranching, fishing, mining | 7. Business owner |
| 3. Education or research | 8. Public sector (government) |
| 4. Recreation, tourism | 9. Other service industry |
| 5. Manufacturing, construction | 10. Other: _____ |

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return the questionnaire in the envelope provided.