

The Magazine of the *Whole Earth Catalog*

# Whole Earth

Access to Tools, Ideas, and Practices Winter 1999

## vital fires

regenerating landscapes

renewing communities

honoring light, honoring warmth

kindling inspiration.

passionate sex, glowing souls

\$6.95/\$8.50 CDN



district. At times, we'll have our crews and equipment ready, but either the humidity is too low and the fires would be too flashy, or the wind is too strong and we'd be dealing with a dicey situation to meet permit requirements. So we have to wait.

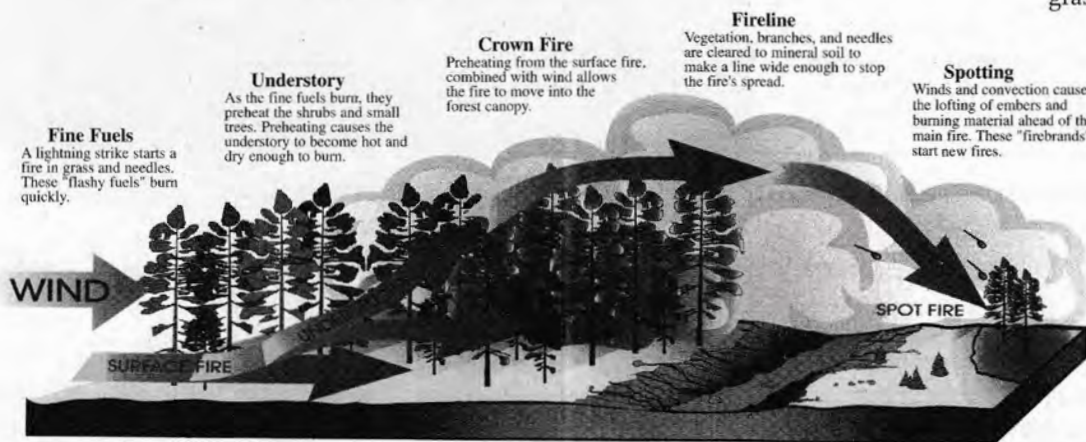
The county has the right to limit the number of burns or a certain acreage of burns anytime; so even for such innocuous fires as prescribed burns, on a "non-burn day" we're the ones who sort of pull that short straw.

On private wildlife preserves, like Creighton,

we can use more than our professional Nature Conservancy staff. We make an announcement to our membership in our newsletter and to folks on our mailing list. They can come out and volunteer to help, either preparing black lines or handling suppression or follow-up. If the interested public (especially urbanites) has a chance to actually be part of these grassland fires and see the beneficial results, to understand that fire has been—and probably still can and should be—a natural part of

grasslands, that it keeps the grasslands in grasses

and wildflowers, that it keeps perennial woody vegetation from encroaching, I hope they'd come to understand fire as good news. ❁



**Fine Fuels**  
A lightning strike starts a fire in grass and needles. These "flashy fuels" burn quickly.

**Understory**  
As the fine fuels burn, they preheat the shrubs and small trees. Preheating causes the understory to become hot and dry enough to burn.

**Crown Fire**  
Preheating from the surface fire, combined with wind, allows the fire to move into the forest canopy.

**Fireline**  
Vegetation, branches, and needles are cleared to mineral soil to make a line wide enough to stop the fire's spread.

**Spotting**  
Winds and convection cause the lofting of embers and burning material ahead of the main fire. These "firebrands" start new fires.



**AMERICA'S FIRES: MANAGEMENT ON WILDLANDS AND FORESTS**  
Stephen J. Pyne. 1997. Forest History Society, 701 Vickers Ave., Durham, NC 27701. 919/682-9319.

Start here. The best short summary of US wildland fire history available: aboriginal, frontier, suppressed, and prescribed. —PW



**THE ECOLOGY OF FIRE**  
Robert J. Whelan. 1995; 356 pp. \$31.95. Cambridge University Press.

An academic book but the most inclusive of ecological thought and fire's impacts on natural communities. —PW

## Fire Web Sites

**SATELLITE FIRE ATLAS (NASA)**  
[http://modarch.gsfc.nasa.gov/fire\\_atlas](http://modarch.gsfc.nasa.gov/fire_atlas).

**INTERNATIONAL FOREST FIRE NEWS (UN)**  
[www.ruf.uni-freiburg.de/fireglobe](http://www.ruf.uni-freiburg.de/fireglobe).

Published by the Global Fire Monitoring Center, a gold mine of links to global fire data and project descriptions.

**NATIONAL INTERAGENCY FIRE CENTER (USA)**  
[www.nifc.gov](http://www.nifc.gov).

Current news, updates, agencies, links to fires.

**U.S. FOREST SERVICE FIRE SOFTWARE**  
[www.fire.org](http://www.fire.org).

Download software and play with virtual fire.

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WILDLAND FIRE (IAWF) BOOKSTORE**  
[www.wildfiremagazine.com/bookstor.shtml](http://www.wildfiremagazine.com/bookstor.shtml).

800 books and videos, for starters.

**DAILY FIRE SITUATION REPORT (USA)**  
[www.nifc.gov/news/sitrept.html](http://www.nifc.gov/news/sitrept.html).

Current news of ongoing fires and a year-to-date summary.

**SATELLITE SURVEY CURRENT FIRE EVENTS (NOAA)**  
[www.osei.noaa.gov/Events/Fires/index.html](http://www.osei.noaa.gov/Events/Fires/index.html).

**UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM FIRE SURVEY**  
[www.grid.unep.ch/fires](http://www.grid.unep.ch/fires).

**GLOBAL FIRE (ANIMATED YEAR)**  
[http://modarch.gsfc.nasa.gov/fire\\_atlas/movies/FIRE\\_ANIMATION.GIF](http://modarch.gsfc.nasa.gov/fire_atlas/movies/FIRE_ANIMATION.GIF)

**U.S. FOREST SERVICE FIRE WEATHER DATA**  
[www.fs.fed.us/fire/planning/nist](http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/planning/nist).

**INTERMIX FIRE WEB PAGE**  
[www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org).

## Video Access

**WILDLAND FIRE: HOW CAN WE LIVE WITH IT?**  
DANR Communication Services, University of California. 1997; 14 minutes. \$20. DANR Communication Service-Publications (Video No. V97-1), 6701 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland, CA 94608. 800/994-8849, 510/642-2431, danrcs@ucdavis.edu, <http://danrcs@ucdavis.edu>.

The heat is up over the issue of open and natural fire in wildlands affecting civilization-creeping summer homes and subdivisions. This slick video oh-so-carefully offers pros, cons, action, and opposition, with the ultimate refrain, "let's talk." —PW

**U.S. FOREST SERVICE VIDEO LIBRARY**  
No cost except return postage. Audience Planners, Inc. 5341 Derry Avenue, Suite Q, Agoura Hills, CA 91301. 800/683-8366, 818/865-1233, <http://www.r5.fs.fed.us/video>.

The Forest Service maintains a great library of videos (and films and slide shows converted to video)

on subjects ranging from Forest Service careers, to the destruction of Native American archaeological sites on public lands, to fire-fighting technique and history. Some are available in close-captioned versions. See Video site (above).

**FOREST SMOKECHASERS**  
1948; 27 minutes. Program No. V2811.

This historical training film follows a lookout. He backpacks to single-handedly extinguish a lightning fire (using only a shovel and a Pulaski). Absolutely matter-of-fact, without glamorization (or discussion of fire-management). You can't help admiring the fortitude of the solitary smokechaser. —MKS

**FIFTY YEARS WITH SMOKEY BEAR**  
1993; 23 minutes. Program No. V2780.

Smokey may be the greatest success story in the history of advertising; he's second only to Santa Claus in name/face recognition. Meet the artist who put him in pants, and sing the Smokey song along with Roy Rogers. —MKS

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MAGAZINE

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Dear Johann:

I wanted to get you a personal copy of our winter issue with a note of thanks. I appreciate the effort you put into our communications and the good counsel you provided along the way.

The access information for IFFN and the Global Fire Monitoring Center (page 64) looks very good, well placed and following a strong article on restorative burns. I hope you'll also enjoy reading the other articles on fire in its many, many forms.

It was a pleasure working with you, Johann. Have a wonderful holiday season.

Warmest wishes,



Nicole Parizeau  
Senior Editor