

Welcome to the
Natural Inquirer Monographs—
**WILDFIRE
PREVENTION
EDITION!**



Illustration courtesy of USDA Forest Service.

Glossary words are in **bold** and are defined on page 27.

Welcome to the *Natural Inquirer* Monographs—Wildfire Prevention Edition!

Wildfires are a particular type of wildland fire. A wildland fire is a fire that burns in forests, on prairies, or over other large natural areas. The Forest Service defines wildfires as unplanned ignitions (ig **ni** shənz). An ignition occurs when a fire is started. Wildfires can be started naturally, by lightning or volcanoes, or they can

be started by human action. Humans start wildfires accidentally and on purpose. The researchers in this study were interested in evaluating wildfire prevention education programs as a way to reduce accidentally caused wildfires.

The Forest Service is one of many Agencies and organizations that provide wildfire prevention education to individuals and communities.

To learn more about monographs, read “About *Natural Inquirer* Monographs!” on page 5.



Photo courtesy of USDA Forest Service, Northern Region.

WHICH ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDE WILDFIRE PREVENTION EDUCATION PROGRAMS?

Wildfire prevention education programs are provided by many different Federal, State, and local agencies. Federal examples include the USDA Forest Service, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the National Park Service. State examples include the Kentucky

Division of Forestry and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. Cities and counties also provide wildfire prevention education programs as do organizations such as the Keep Oregon Green Association, Inc., and The Lands Council.

One of the most effective wildfire prevention education programs has been the Smokey Bear campaign. Smokey Bear has taught people about wildfires since 1944.

Smokey Bear was adopted as a **fictional** symbol for wildfire prevention in 1944 (figure 1). At the time, no one knew that Smokey would soon be represented by a real bear.

In 1950, in the Capitan Mountains of New Mexico, a wildfire began to burn. The firefighters soon heard of a lone bear cub near the fire. The firefighters

hoped that the cub's mother would come for him. The mother bear did not return, and the cub climbed a charred tree to escape the fire.

The cub survived, but his front and back paws were badly burned. A New Mexico game warden, Ray Bell, helped to get the cub on a plane to Santa Fe. The cub's paws were treated and bandaged (figure 2).

News of the cub spread across the United States. The New Mexico game warden offered to transfer the cub to the National Zoo, as long as the



Figure 1. In 1945, the first Smokey Bear poster was created. Artist Albert Staehle was asked to paint the first poster of Smokey Bear.

(Staehle, Albert. 1945.) "Smokey Says—Care Will Prevent 9 out of 10 Forest Fires!"

Illustration courtesy of Special Collections, USDA National Agricultural Library.



Figure 2. Dr. Edwin J. Smith bandages the cub's burned paws.

Photo courtesy of Special Collections, USDA National Agricultural Library.



Illustration courtesy of Special Collections, USDA National Agricultural Library

bear would be dedicated to a conservation and wildfire prevention education program. The cub, now known as Smokey Bear, was transferred to the National Zoo in Washington, DC.

Smokey received so many gifts and letters he had to be given his own ZIP Code. Smokey remained at the National Zoo until his death in 1976. Smokey was buried at the Smokey Bear Historical Park in Capitan, New Mexico. Smokey Bear remains a symbol for wildfire prevention. Almost everybody knows Smokey Bear!

In this monograph, you will learn whether science shows that wildfire prevention education programs are successful at reducing the number of accidental wildfires occurring on **Tribal** lands. As you read this research, think about whether Smokey Bear's message has been successful.

EDUCATORS!

A... B... C! This monograph's **FACTivity** is a spelling bee. Have students close their monograph after you have completed the article if you plan to proceed with the spelling bee.

DID YOU KNOW?



The U.S. President and Smokey Bear are the only two individuals with their own ZIP Code. If you want to write to Smokey, his address is Smokey Bear, Wildfire Prevention Specialist, Washington, DC 20252.