

BENEFITS OF BURNING

We all know that fires can be destructive. But did you know that foresters also use fire as a tool to keep forests healthy? **Below are some of the reasons prescribed burns are used today.**

1. HELPS NEW PLANTS GROW

Can you name a tree that needs fire to grow?

How many young plants can you find on the forest floor?

2. CONTROLS INVASIVE PLANTS

What is an *invasive* plant?

Do you see any plants that seem to be invading the forest?

3. PREVENTS LARGER WILDFIRES

What provides fuel for a wildfire to continue burning?

How could wildfire affect animals and people by spreading?

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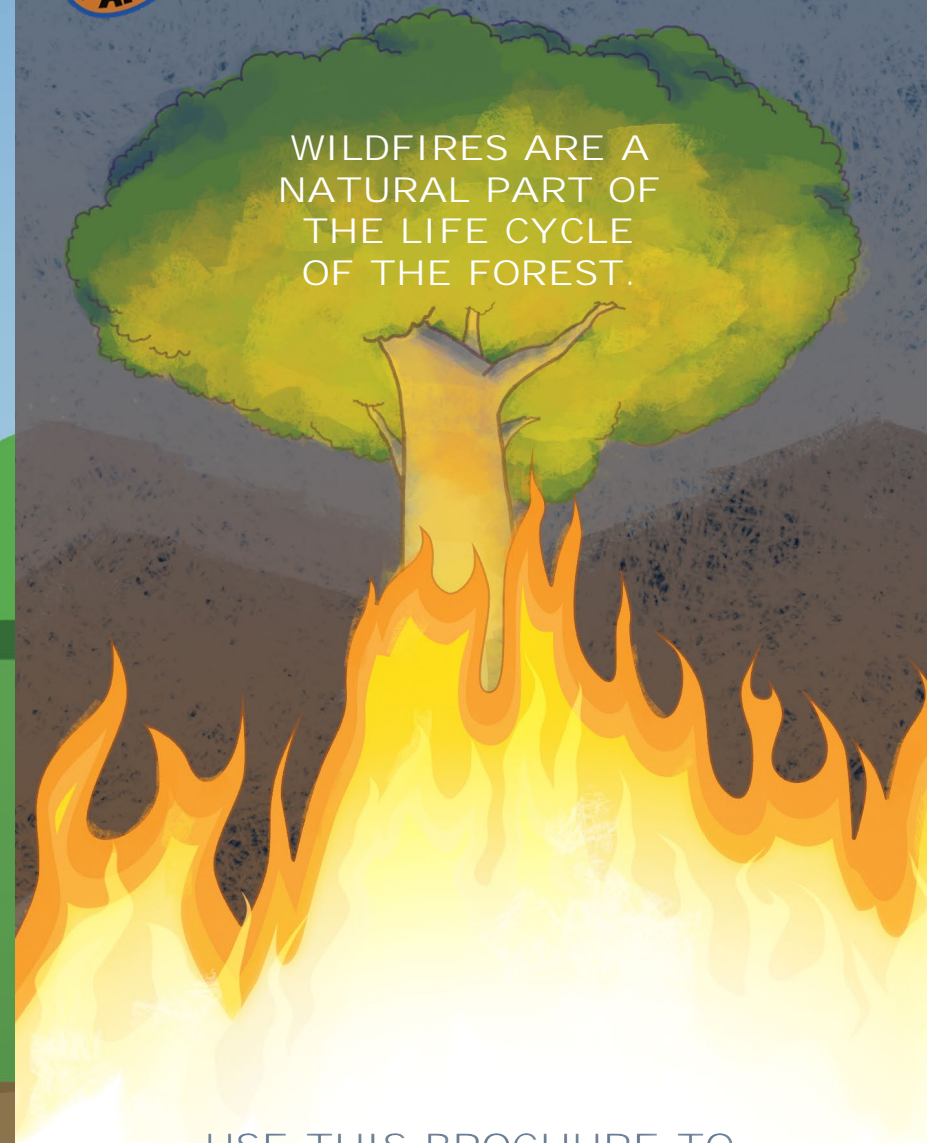


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FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN

WILDFIRES ARE A
NATURAL PART OF
THE LIFE CYCLE
OF THE FOREST.



USE THIS BROCHURE TO
DISCOVER HOW FIRES BENEFIT
TABLE ROCK STATE PARK AND
HOW YOU CAN TELL IF THERE HAS
BEEN A FIRE IN A FOREST!

SMOKE SIGNALS

How can you tell if a fire has occurred in a forest? Organisms that survive the fire display evidence while new, opportunistic life emerges. Look for these signs of fire along the trail.

SURVIVORS

Plants that survive a wildfire often bear the scars of their battle with the flames. Can you find these fire clues?

FIRE SCARS

Fire scars can be seen in a tree's rings, creating a record of the fires it has lived through. On a standing tree, fire scars can look like an upside-down "V", called a "catface", cut into the base of the trunk.

Circle which side of the tree you find scars:

Uphill

Downhill

EPICORMIC BRANCHING

Epicormic branches are shoots that grow directly from the trunk of a tree. These can sprout to life out of injuries from fire.



fire scars

A 'catface' fire scar

OPPORTUNISTS

While a wild fire is the end for a lot of organisms, it also creates opportunities for new plants to grow by restoring soil nutrients, clearing undergrowth, and removing canopy that blocks sunlight. Do you see any of these signs of new life?

PINE SPROUTS

Fire exposes mineral soil and clears out competing plants, allowing pine seedlings to sprout. Without fire, trees such as pitch, shortleaf, and table mountain pines would vanish from the landscape.



SEROTINOUS CONES

These cones are found only on trees adapted to fire. They do not open until fire melts the "glue" that holds the scales closed. This way, seeds are only released when the forest floor is burned clear.

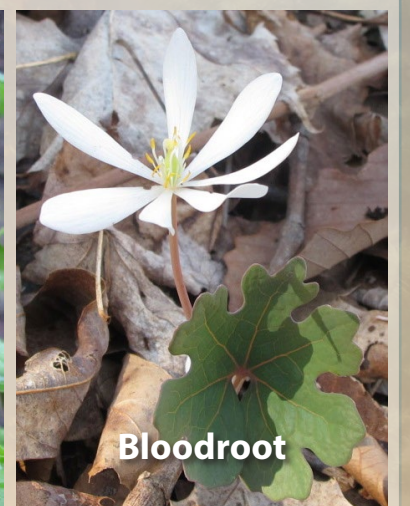


FIRE FLOWERS

There are certain wildflowers that are adapted to grow in soils that are cleared and renewed by fire. Below are a few examples. Can you find any of these blooms along the trail in spring or summer?



Jack in the Pulpit



Bloodroot



Pink Lady's Slipper

