

Ms. Norris  
Current Event Report

Title: Why wildfires have gotten worse - and what we can do about it, by Paul Hessburg  
I accessed this video on TED.com.

### Summary

The western United States, in recent years, has fallen victim to severe, massive wildfires. In the last three decades, the number of homes and acres burned due to megafires has been on the rise. Many of these wildfires could have been prevented, if we took better care of our forests and wildfire management practices.

Some historical factors have laid the groundwork for how we view and manage wildfires today. For centuries, human society has manipulated the land by farming, animal grazing, and large-scale logging operations. These practices have enabled patches of forest to grow back denser and thicker with trees--providing the perfect catalyst for outrageous wildfire. Another factor is a warmer climate, increasing the incidence of wildfire by drying out the forests. In addition, many homes and towns are built in these forests; so when a wildfire does occur, it causes massive destruction.

We can systematically prevent wildfires with some better practices. Prescribed burning can create natural barriers for the spread of wildfire. In addition, we can thin out dense patches of forest to lessen the fuel available for fires to burn.

### Impact

Learning to better manage wildfires will prevent unnecessary destruction from happening. Homes, towns, and wildlife can safely exist near forests without the threat of being destroyed by wildfire. Preventing megafires would have an economic benefit because there would be less damages to repair.

### Definition or explanation

Prescribed burn: A prescribed burn is a controlled fire that happens under closely monitored conditions. These are used to help restore ecosystems that depend on fire to thrive.

### Connection

I learned about the railroad system in history class. It is interesting that this invention not only revolutionized transportation and industry in the United States, but also acted as a barrier for wildfires.

### Opinion

I support better management of wildfires because I would like to see the habitats out west be restored. Also, it is important to protect people's homes from these destructive fires. I would like to see less disheartening news about wildfires happening out west.