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California Wildfires: a New Normal

Easterly winds off of the Pacific Ocean drive rivers of dirty, yellowish smoke inland as wildfires ravage the Golden State. This image was captured on August 2, 2018, two days before a national disaster was declared for Northern California.

By the time the fires subsided in mid-September, a total of 7,295 individual fires had destroyed over 1.5 million acres. 8 civilians and 6 firefighters had lost their lives. Nearly \$3 billion in damage had been done.

An abundant supply of dead tree fuel produced by increasing temperatures and decreasing rainfall makes Northern California especially vulnerable to seasonal wildfire outbreaks. These trends are consistent with those observed around the world, implicating global warming as the root progenitor of this destructive cycle.

