



Image credit: NASA

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## Record Wildfire Season in Washington State

According to the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, the 2015 wildfire season was the worst in the state's history. By August 19, four days after this image was taken, a thinly stretched team of professional firefighters, National Guard troops, and civilian volunteers were battling 22 large fires across the state, burning through over a million acres.

Not coincidentally, Washington also experienced their warmest summer on record in 2015. Many consecutive years of drought conditions, combined with a diminishing snowpack in the Cascade Mountains, had left the forests sick and dangerously vulnerable to fire. Lightning strikes triggered a number of the conflagrations, but too many were needlessly set off by the irresponsible behavior of humans.

Climate change affects different parts of our planet in different ways. In US states like Washington and California, that means millions of acres of hot, tinder-dry forest defenseless against the vast destructive potential of a single spark.

