



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



FOREST
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Natural Inquirer Reader Series

Meet Smokey Bear's Team



Meet Smokey Bear's Team!

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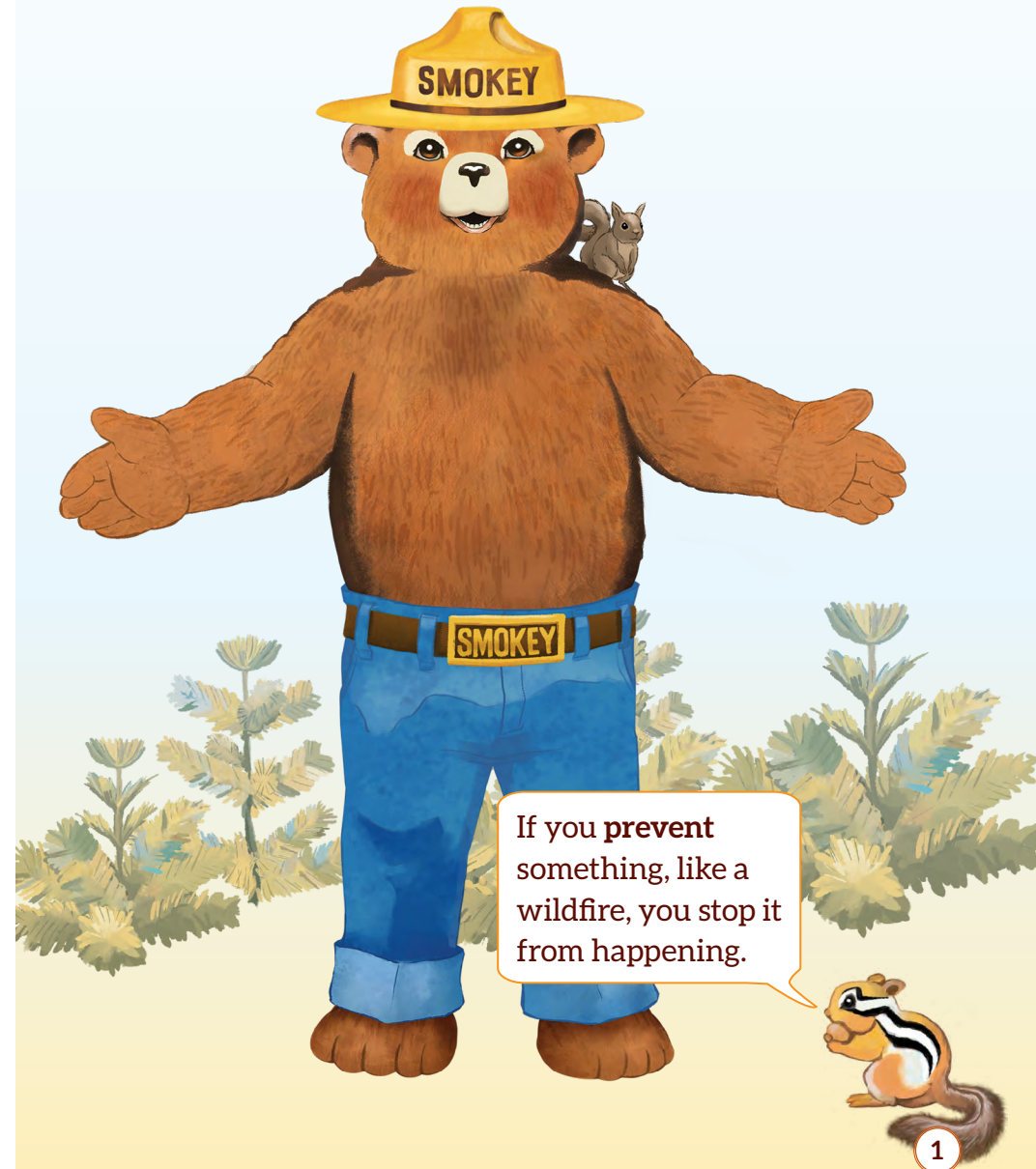
Glossary words are in **bold**.

<https://www.naturalinquirer.org>
<https://smokeybear.com>



Hi! I'm Smokey Bear.

I teach people how to **prevent** wildfires!



I also have many wildfire **prevention** friends that help me do my job. Will you be one of my friends, too?



Prevention is the act of stopping something, like a wildfire, from happening.



Learning about Smokey Bear



Teaching about firefighters



Building a safe campfire



Humans have been using fire for thousands of years to cook food and stay warm.

Fire is important. Many forests and grasslands need fire to keep their **ecosystems** healthy.



Cooking over a fire



A forest that needs fire

An **ecosystem** is all the living and nonliving things you see. Plants and animals are living things. Rocks, water, and air are nonliving things.





However, **wildfires** can harm plants, trees, and buildings. Sometimes, people start wildfires by accident.



A wildfire

Uh oh!
Wildfires
can be very
dangerous.



A firefighter working

Firefighters and people who live and work near these wildfires might get hurt.

Smoke from the fires can be bad to breathe.



Smoke from a wildfire



After a wildfire

When a place is destroyed by a wildfire, it can take a long time to rebuild and grow.



Did you know that humans cause most wildfires?



Matches and lighters

Kids can accidentally start a wildfire by playing with matches or lighters.

Never play with matches or lighters!



Campfire

People can accidentally start a wildfire by not putting out a campfire all the way.

Don't build a fire if the weather is windy or dry.



Burning yard waste

People can accidentally start a wildfire by burning yard waste when it is not safe.

I've been teaching people how to prevent wildfires for many years. But I'm not the only one!



I have lots of friends who help me prevent wildfires. Together, we help keep people, animals, and lands safe.

Come meet my friends!



Working as a team



Packing her tools



Making a plan

Some people look out for fires.

People who look for fire may stay in areas deep in the forest or far away from other people.

A lookout watches every day for signs of a fire. A sign could be as small as a puff of smoke.

If a lookout sees signs of a fire, they use special tools to locate the fire. Then they use a radio to tell other people where the fire is.



The person who looks for signs of fire AND the building they work in are both called fire lookouts!

Some people study the **fuels** in a forest or grassland.

Forests and grasslands have lots of fuels. Branches, grasses, other plants, leaves, and trees are all fuels.

People might count the types of fuels or how many fuels there are.

Then these people make a plan to take away some of the fuels.

A **fuel** is something that burns.

Can you see some forest fuels in this photo?

Some people help make forests safe from big wildfires by removing fuels.

They might take away fuels by cutting down some smaller trees.

They might remove fuels by clearing away fallen branches.

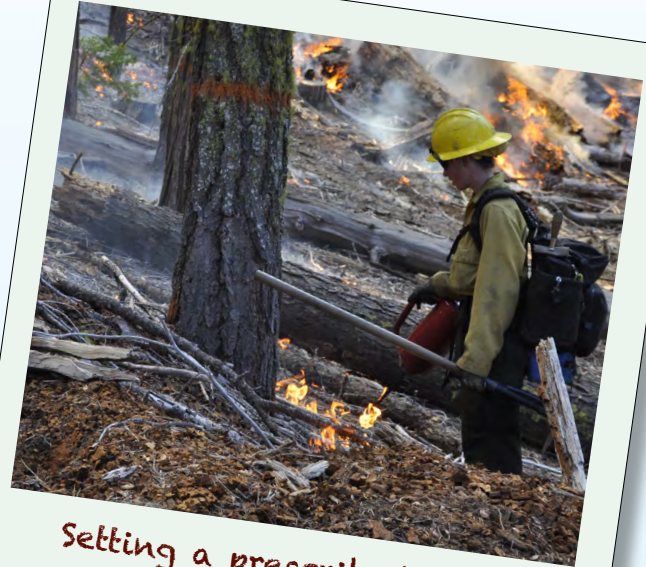


Cutting down a small tree



When plants have more space between them, it is harder for fires to spread.

They might carefully burn some of the forest on purpose to take away fuels. This is called a **prescribed fire**.



Setting a prescribed fire

A **prescribed fire** is a carefully planned fire that skilled workers set on purpose to remove fuels.



A woman with glasses and a red helmet is smiling while working on a silver fireproof box in a forest. She is wearing a yellow firefighter jacket. The box has a window showing a camera inside. The background shows a forest with trees and dry leaves.

Some people study fires. They study how fire **impacts** plants and animals. The information they learn helps others do their jobs.

Impact means to have a strong effect on something. In this case, fire can have a strong effect on plants and animals.

She sets up a camera in a fireproof box to take pictures of a wildfire while she is gone.





Some people teach others
what we have learned
about wildfire.

They teach us how to
keep everyone healthy
and safe from wildfires.



Teaching kids

Some people teach grownups how to keep their
homes and communities safe from wildfires.



Keeping everyone safe



Teaching grownups

We all work together to prevent wildfires that are started by humans.

-  Some people watch for wildfires.
-  Some people remove extra fuels.
-  Some people study fire.
-  Some people teach others about wildfires and how to be safe.

Together we can keep forests and grasslands safe and healthy.



How can YOU help Smokey?



Questions for You!

1. Which wildfire prevention job do you like best? What do you like about that job?
2. What is one important thing you have learned about wildfire?
3. What is your idea of a good way that Smokey Bear can teach people about wildfire prevention?



Here are the new words
we learned in this Reader!

Smokey Bear's Words

ecosystem (ē kō si stəm): A group of plants and animals that interact with each other and their environment.

fuel (fyūl): Things that can burn, like branches, grasses, other plants, leaves, and trees (in a forest or grassland).

impact (im pakt): To have a strong effect on something.

prescribed fire (pri skribd fī ə): A carefully planned fire that skilled workers set on purpose to remove fuels that may cause a large wildfire.

prevent (pri vent): To stop something from happening.

prevention (pri ven(t) shən): The act of stopping something from happening.

wildfire (wīld fī ə): An outdoor fire that is unwanted.

Try This!

I have five rules for fire prevention:

- 1 Only YOU can prevent wildfires.
- 2 Always be careful with fire.
- 3 Never play with matches and lighters.
- 4 Always watch your campfire.
- 5 Make sure your campfire is completely out before leaving it.



Choose one of Smokey's rules and write it here:

Now draw a picture of that rule below.

Send me your picture or write me a letter
at Smokey Bear, Washington, DC 20252.
I have my own ZIP code!



Number 12
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Background: Smokey Bear's work in educating the public about wildfire prevention is aided by many other people working in fire prevention careers. Learn more about these careers at:

National Interagency Fire Center: Careers
<https://www.nifc.gov/careers>

USDA Forest Service: Careers in Wildland Fire
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/working-with-us/careers/fire>

Smokey Bear: The Front Line
<https://smokeybear.com/en/about-wildland-fire/fighting-wildfires/the-front-line>

Note: For more background information and lesson plans, visit <https://www.naturalinquirer.org> and choose the "For Educators" tab.

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Be a Possibility Possum

Scientists make things possible;
They ask and answer questions.
You can make things possible
If you follow these suggestions.

Observe your world and wonder;
Ask how, what, why, and who?
Ask and answer questions
To make things possible for you.

Wonder is a good thing;

It is very plain to see.

When I ask and answer questions,
I make things possible for me.



Since 1944, Smokey Bear has protected America's forests from unwanted, human-caused fire. His message of wildfire prevention is the center of the longest running public service advertising campaign in our Nation's history.



Though Smokey has been essential to the reduction of unwanted human-caused wildfires, he still needs help. Even today, nearly 9 out of 10 wildfires nationwide are caused by people. Now more than ever, Smokey needs you to help prevent unwanted, human-caused wildfires.

To learn more, visit www.smokeybear.com.