



FOREST HISTORY CURRICULUM

PREPARED BY:
CALLIE BIRKLID
LESLIE HEFFERNAN
STARLYN NACKOS

EDITED BY:
JENNIFER OTT
ELISA LAW
MINDY VAN WINGEN

COPYRIGHT
2025 BY HISTORYLINK.ORG



FOREST FIRES

LESSON SUMMARY

Inquiry Description

This inquiry is meant to answer the large compelling question: *“How does fire change more than the landscape?”* This is done by examining two supporting questions. The first is: *“What is the history of forest fire in Washington?”* In this section students will look at some of the major fires in Washington and how each has led to changes in the way that fires will be approached after. In this section students will engage in discussion and note-taking that will support content area literacy goals. The information that students gain from this part of the inquiry will help to set the stage for understanding the current goals of forest fire fighting and prevention.

In the second part of the inquiry students will be answering the supporting question: *“What is being done about fires in Washington now?”* In this part of the inquiry students will engage in structured research where they will learn about the different methods that Washington state is taking to fight forest fires today. The students will then publish an argumentative response discussing if there's more that the state could be doing to fight fires in Washington.

For the “Take Informed Action” part of this inquiry students will develop and create a poster or infographic that will address the needs within their own community on how to help people prepare for the “fire season.” This allows for a place-based approach to what they are learning. Teachers could use this as an opportunity to bring in community members to be an authentic audience for student projects.

This inquiry is adaptable to be a one- or two-day lesson or use it as a mini unit. The goal of this inquiry is to have students look at the role that forest fires have played in the history of the state of Washington and what the state is doing to combat fires now. This inquiry might be used in:

- A Washington State History class while studying the history of the twentieth century, during an economics unit about extractive industries, or during a civics unit studying how the government responds to disasters.
- A United States History class when studying the role of progressive legislation in the West.
- A civics class to show how state and federal governments respond with policy changes because of constituent issues.
- A Current World Issues class to discuss the effects of climate change or response to natural disasters.

Teachers should review the inquiry and adjust the readings, notes sheets, discussion protocols, research, or student-produced work as they see fit to meet the needs of their students.

Standards

Washington State Social Studies Standards

- SSS3.6-8.1 Engage in discussion, analyzing multiple viewpoints on public issues.
- C4.6-8.3 Employ strategies for civic involvement that address a state or local issue.
- G2.6-8.3 Explain and analyze how the environment has affected people and how human actions modify the physical environment, and in turn, how the physical environment limits or promotes human activities in Washington state in the past or present.
- H2.6-8.2 Explain and analyze how individuals and movements have shaped Washington state history since statehood.
- H2.6-8.4 Explain and analyze how technology and ideas have impacted Washington state history since statehood.

- H4.6-8.2 Analyze how a historical event in Washington state history helps us to understand contemporary issues and events.

Learning Goals/ Objectives

Supporting Question: *“What is the history of forest fire in the state of Washington?”*

At the end of this lesson students will be able to:

1. Identify the key forest fire events in Washington state history.
2. Describe how the outcomes of those fires have led to changes in state policy and prevention of forest fires.
3. Analyze how each of the fires have changed the way that people in the state view natural disasters.

Students will successfully meet these objectives when they can:

1. Engage in small groups discussion and identify the key points about historic fires.
2. Use evidence from reading and discussions to share information clearly to the class.
3. Interpret information to make meaning for themselves in their notes.
4. Use the information to develop an argument about the historic fire that has had the biggest impact.

Supporting Question: *“What is being done about fires in Washington now?”*

At the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Identify and list the key strategies that the state is currently using to fight and prevent wildfires in Washington.
2. Summarize how each of the strategies work and explain the intended effect.
3. Analyze the effectiveness of each of the strategies by comparing the outcomes and/or limitations.
4. Develop an evidence-based argument using the information gathered from the different sources.

Students will successfully meet these objective when they can:

1. Come up with a clear list of facts about the different strategies used in Washington to fight and prevent forest fires.
2. Summarize how the different strategies work, including the goals and effects of the different methods.
3. Identify the advantages and disadvantages of each of the methods.
4. Clearly write or produce an evidence-based argumentation about what more the state of Washington could be doing.

Suggested Materials

Supporting Question: *“What is the history of forest fire in the state of Washington?”*

- Poster or chart paper for group notes
- Markers
- Highlighters

Focused Inquiry

Compelling Question: “How does fire change more than the landscape?”

Staging the question:

Group students into pairs or groups of four to look over the fire prevention posters on Student Handout #1.

1. Have students write down their answers to the questions to get them thinking about the ways that Washington state has tried to make the public aware of forest fires.
2. Students should share their thoughts with their group. Have students add information that they learn from their group to their handout.
3. At the end of the small group share-out, have the class make a list of why Washington would want to prevent forest fires. This information should come from the information on the poster and their own personal understanding or prior knowledge. (Students from areas that have a history of forest fires might have different ideas than students that do not have that concern.) The teacher may choose to code the list to show where the different information came from (primary source, personal experiences, history of the region, what they remember from prior summers, etc.).
4. When they are done, have the class do a quick write or and think-write-pair-share answering the prompt: Can fire be prevented?

Lesson extension: The teacher could use this as a launching point for a whole group discussion (e.g. philosophers chairs or Socratic seminar) to have students share their arguments out loud.

Teacher note: The questions on the handout are from the APPARTS method of analyzing primary sources. Teachers can use them as-is, add sentence starters, or remove questions to make this part of the assignment more meaningful for students. Multi-language learners or students with IEP might benefit from sentence stems, whereas highly capable or advanced students can be challenged to answer these questions with specific evidence from the image.

Supporting Question #1: “What is the history of forest fire in the state of Washington?”

Formative Performance Task:

Part 1: Have students watch the video from PBS American Experience *The Big Burn* and complete the viewing guide. This will give students some context for how fires were fought historically and what limitations the time period had. Use Student Handout #2 for the viewing guide.

Teacher note: This is a 8-minute video. If your students need to have this segmented or chunked to help students maintain focus, the viewing guide can be adjusted. It is meant to get the students to think of how fires have impacted the landscape, economics, and government of the state. Teachers should use the closed captioning feature and subtitles to help multilingual (ML) students.

Part 2: Now that students have context for the historical impact of fires, students will look at other historical fires in Washington. Students will use articles from [HistoryLink.org](https://www.historylink.org) to discuss some of the biggest fires in Washington state and what the impacts were. Each of the articles are excerpted, and full articles are linked to each of the excerpts.

Divide students into 6 groups, one for each of the articles. Teachers should put each of the articles and image(s) on a chart paper or larger poster paper. Time suggestions for each round is included.

1. For 5 minutes, have students read the article together. Once they are done, have them highlight/underline the article and annotate their thinking on the chart paper. These annotations should be around the main idea, key vocabulary, evidence used, etc. These annotations should be concise and to the point so that the next group can use the information to answer the first question. When time is up, have the groups rotate.

2. For 5 minutes, have the student review what the last group wrote on the poster and add any highlights/underlines or annotations that they think might be important. Then have the students answer the question “**What happened during this fire?**” on the poster. Their answers should be concise and to the point so that the next group can use the information to answer their question. When possible, have the students go to the text and/or image(s) for specific pieces of evidence. When time is up, have the groups rotate.
3. For 5 minutes, have the student review what the last group wrote on the poster and add any highlights/underlines or annotations that they think might be important. Then have the students answer the question “**How does this fire compare to the fires you previously looked at from the other stations?**” on the poster. Their answers should be concise and to the point so that the next group can use the information to answer their question. When possible have the students go to the text and/or image(s) for specific pieces of evidence. When time is up, have the groups rotate.
4. For 5 minutes, have the student review what the last group wrote on the poster and add any highlights/underlines or annotations that they think might be important. Then have the students answer the question “**What are some important lasting impacts of this fire?**” on the poster. Their answers should be concise and to the point so that the next group can use the information to answer their question. When possible have the students go to the text and/or image(s) for specific pieces of evidence. When time is up, have the groups rotate.
5. After this round, students should have actively engaged with 4 of the 6 fires in this lesson. Students will now rotate through all the posters in a “Gallery Walk” and take notes for each of the historical fires. Have students take notes on Student Handout #4. Teachers may want to set a specific timer so that students can look at all the posters without getting bottlenecked at one.

Teacher note: The “Carlton Complex Fire” reading is the densest of all the texts. This is due in part to the size of the fire. Teachers should be mindful of what group gets that reading. Teachers can use a variety of different methods to have a small group discussion. Student Handouts #3 and #4 lend themselves to set up a Modified Carousel Brainstorming protocol. (For more information on this protocol visit <https://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/brainstorming-reviewing-using-carousel>). Teachers should adjust the length of text, image, language, questions, etc. to meet the needs of their students. For ML students, teachers may want to create a translated copy of the text, pair them with students, or use translation devices to give them access to the discussion.

Featured Source(s):

[Major Forest Fires in Washington \(File 22785\)](#)

[Yacolt Burn, largest forest fire in recorded Washington history to that point, rages for three days beginning on September 11, 1902. \(File 5196\)](#)

[Forest fires in Idaho and Montana burn three million acres of timber and kill 85 people beginning on August 20, 1910. \(File 5488\)](#)

[Four firefighters die in forest fire in Okanogan County on July 10, 2001. \(File 5489\)](#)

[Carlton Complex Fire \(File 10989\)](#)

[Video: PBS American Experience The Big Burn](#)

Argument:

After students complete their gallery walk notes, have students write a response to the questions: “Which fire do you think had the biggest impact on Washington state? Why?” Students should be able to use evidence from their small group discussion and their notes sheet.

Supporting Question #2: What is being done about fires in Washington now?

Formative Performance Task:

Part 1: Have students explore the Website: smokeybear.com. While they are reviewing this site, have them fill out a concept map graphic organizer. They will gather their information during their structured research using a concept map. Use this website to help them practice what they should be looking for from each of the sources they explore. Because this is practice, teachers can use a timer. Give the students 5-7 minutes to see what the site has to offer. Ask that the student write down information in the concept map, Student Handout #5, as they go. When the time is up, have them share with a partner or table group what they found. When they are done, have a whole class share-out for students to share the important information they found. The teacher could use their technology to project a concept map and fill in what the students share. This will help students to know what the teacher is expecting from them as they conduct their own research.

Teacher note: If the link is broken other options could be used. See the list of suggested resources for the structured research project. Student Handout #5 is designed as a concept map; however, teachers can achieve the same goals using a variety of graphic organizer structures. For ML students, activate website translations and provide a translated copy of the concept map. This activity can also be done as a partner activity, with one student exploring and one student writing what they find.

Part 2: Have students engage in structured research that will answer the question: “What is being done about wildfires in Washington now?” Student Handout #6 is a scaffolded approach to the research that students will be conducting. Students can work in small groups or individually to complete the research portion of this inquiry.

Teacher note and lesson setup: Review the list of suggested resources adding any specific local resources to the list. Consider creating a “Google Doc” of links or work with the school library to have the links housed on its website. Teachers might also want to direct students to specific parts of the website to help narrow the research. Documents from HistoryLink.org may need to be chunked or modified to meet the needs of middle school students. For videos, show students how to turn on captions or where to find a transcript of the content. This inquiry was created in 2025 and new sources may be available.

Featured Source(s):

<https://smokeybear.com/>

Suggested Sources for Structured Research:

Department of Natural Resources Washington State

Keywords: Wildfire Strategic Plan, Community Resilience Programs, Forest Health Update

[Washington Department of Natural Resources](#)

[WA DNR- Community Wildfire Resilience and Preparedness](#)

[WA DNR- Community Wildfire Resilience Resource Library](#)

[WA DNR- Washington Wildland Fire Protection Strategic Plan](#)

[WA DNR- Washington State Wildland Fire Protection 10-Year Strategic Plan: 5-Year Review Addendum](#)

[WA DNR- Wildfire Ready Neighbors](#)

[WA DNR- DNR Rolls Out Initiative To Bolster Tribal Wildland Firefighters’ Access To Training](#)

[United States Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region](#)

[USFS- Fire](#)

[USFS- The Role of Silviculture in Forest Management](#)

[Washington State Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network](#)

[Ready, Set, Go! Wildfire preparedness](#)

[Oregon Public Broadcasting](#)

Keywords: Washington Wildfires
[Wildfires and Air Quality Information Hub](#)

Washington Forest Protection Association
[Fires in Washington State: Fire Management and Prevention Strategies](#)

HistoryLink Articles and Podcasts
[Washington Forest Protection Association \(WFPA\): Policy Actions 1908-2008 \(File: 8790\)](#)
[Forest Fire in Washington State \(File 5496\)](#)

Local Media Stories
[King 5 News- New wildland firefighter recruits train for longer and hotter wildfire seasons in Washington](#)
[King 5 News- Behind the scenes at Washington state's DNR Fire Academy](#)
[KERM 2 News- End of wildfire season recap in Washington](#)

Tribal Fire Stewardship Programs
[Cascade PBS- Indigenous fire practices once shaped the Northwest — and they might again](#)
[Washington State Fire Adapted Communities- Building Partnerships with Tribal Nations through Trust and Relationship](#)
[US Department of the Interior- Healing with Fire: The Spokane Tribal Network's Journey to Restore Cultural Burns and Native Foods](#)
[Washington Policy Center- Healthy and Fire-Resilient Forests with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation](#)
[Association of Fire Ecology- Managing Wildfires Using A Centuries-Old Indigenous Practice](#)

Argument:

After students conclude their research, they will produce an argumentation that answers the following prompt:

You are a member of a local non-profit organization. The main goal of your organization is to help the local community with fire resilience and prevention. Make a presentation or write a letter that shares what the state of Washington is doing and give suggestions about what more can be done.

This can be an individual or group project.

Take Informed Action:

Students should research what people in their area can do to create wildfire resiliency. Students should then create a presentation or an infographic that will inform their community what to do to prepare for the wildfire season.

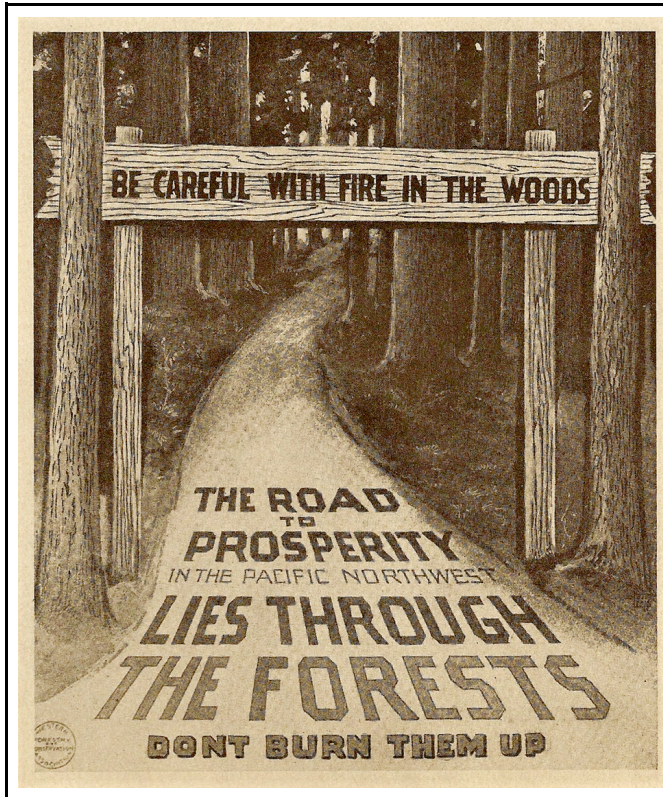
Teacher note: Teachers could use this as an opportunity to bring in guest speakers from the community. This could also be an opportunity to do community outreach. Students and teachers could work with the community to create an information fair about the wildfires in Washington.

Can Fire Be Prevented?

Name:

Date:

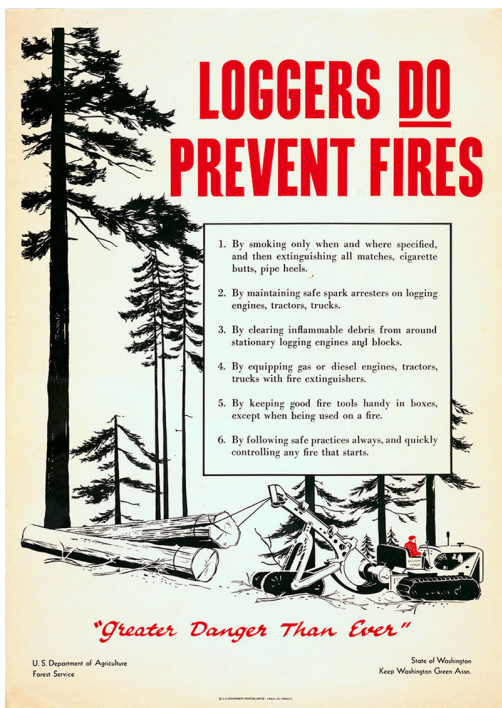
Class:



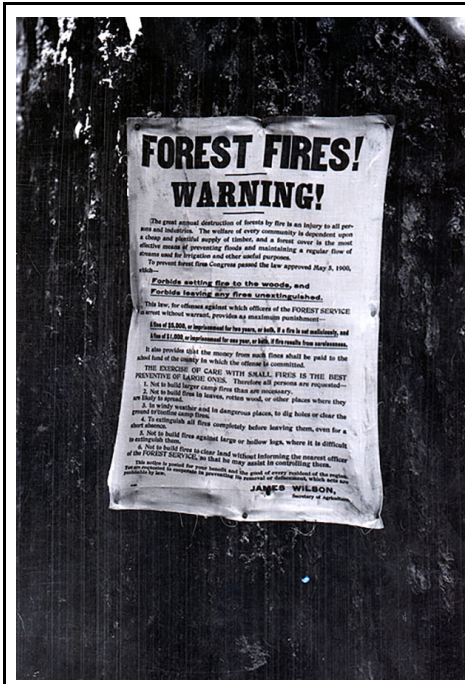
1. Who do you think made this poster?
2. Who is the intended audience of this poster?
3. What is the main idea of this poster?
4. Why do you think that this poster is important?



1. Who do you think made this poster?
2. Who is the intended audience of this poster?
3. What is the main idea of this poster?
4. Why do you think that this poster is important?



1. Who do you think made this poster?
2. Who is the intended audience of this poster?
3. What is the main idea of this poster?
4. Why do you think that this poster is important?



1. Who do you think made this poster?
2. Who is the intended audience of this poster?
3. What is the main idea of this poster?
4. Why do you think that this poster is important?

Quick Write Response:

Student Handout #2

What is the History of Fires in Washington?

Name:

Date:

Class:

The Big Burn Viewing Guide

Before you watch the video	
Why do you think the video was given this title?	What do you think the video is going to be about?
Do you already know something about this event?	Just by the title and first 10 seconds, do you think this is going to be interesting? Why or why not?

While you watch the video	
What key events does the video discuss?	Who are some of the important people the video mentions by name?
Where do the events of this video take place?	What kind of sources does the video use? (Historians, images, readings of primary sources.)

After you watch the video	
Write a brief summary of what you learned.	
What was the most surprising thing about this video?	What is one suggestion you would make to the director of this video?

Student Handout #3

Document A: Yacolt Burn, 1902 by David Wilma

Excerpt: Yacolt Burn, largest forest fire in recorded Washington history to that point, rages for three days beginning on September 11, 1902. Full article: <https://www.historylink.org/file/5196>

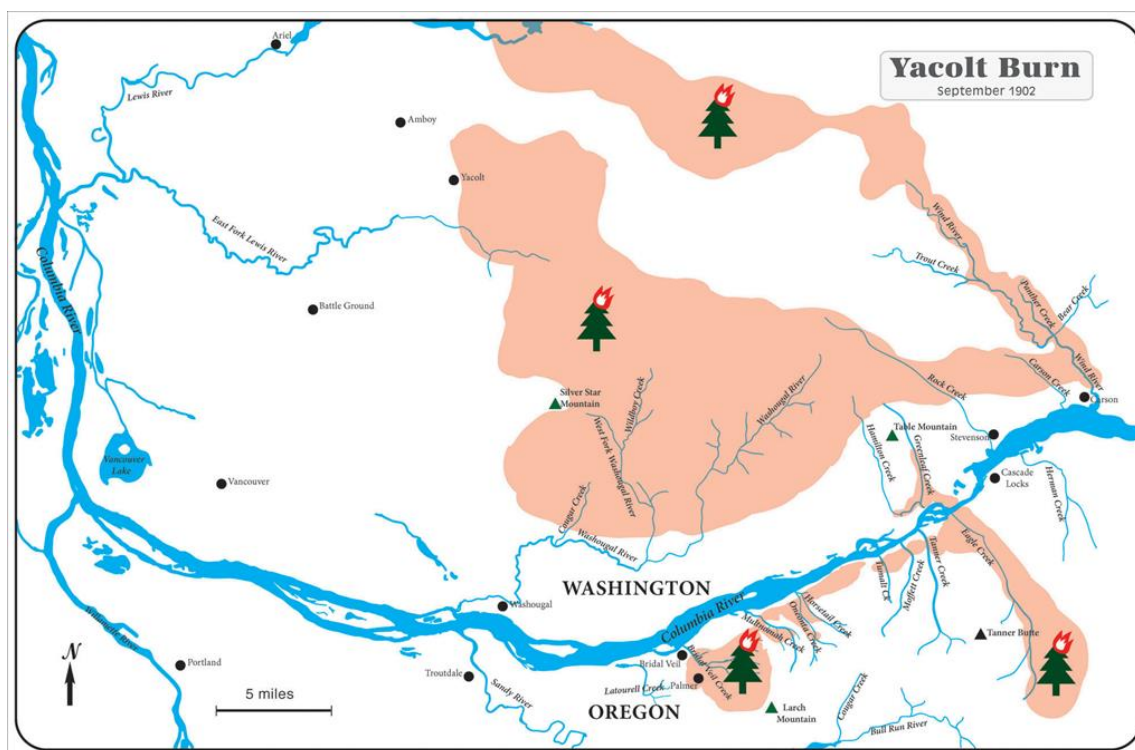
From September 11 to 13, 1902, the Yacolt Burn, the largest forest fire in recorded Washington history to that point..., [destroyed] 238,920 acres -- more than 370 square miles -- and [killed] 38 people in Clark, Cowlitz, and Skamania counties. The fire is fanned by unusual dry winds from the east and travels 36 miles in 36 hours. There is no organized effort to stop the [fire], which consumes \$30 million in timber - - more than \$600 million in 2001 dollars... Rain finally extinguishes the Yacolt Burn.

The causes of the Yacolt Burn were never firmly established. The origin was variously recorded as the Wind River Valley, the Washougal River Valley, along the Lewis River, and at Star Mountain. Loggers burning logging slash, logging operations, and farmers burning to clear land were common causes of fires...

In 1902, there was no organized system for wildfire fighting, so residents and loggers just fled. The flames reached the town of Yacolt, then turned north. Homes, churches, barns, and livestock were lost. At least 146 families were left homeless. Troops from Vancouver Barracks helped evacuate residents...

In 1903, the State Legislature established a state **fire warden**. In 1908, private landowners formed the Washington Fire Protection Association and funded a system of fire wardens and a program of fire prevention on private lands. In 1910, the U.S. Forest Service began to organize a program of wildfire suppression on public lands.

Fire warden: a person that is responsible for keeping people and property safe during fire emergencies by helping people get out safely.



Source: Yacolt Burn, Largest Forest Fire in Recorded Washington History to That Point, Rages for Three Days Beginning on September 11, 1902. www.historylink.org/File/5196.

Student Handout #3

Document B: The Big Burn, 1910 by David Wilma

Excerpt: Forest fires in Idaho and Montana burn three million acres of timber and kill 85 people beginning on August 20, 1910. Full article: <https://www.historylink.org/file/5488>

On August 20 and 21, 1910, forest fires in northern Idaho and western Montana [burned] more than three million acres of timber and [killed] 85 people. The fire, which also extends into a small sliver of Northeast Washington, is the largest fire, in acreage destroyed, in recorded United States history. The disaster, known as the Big Burn, will result in the U.S. Forest Service adopting a nationwide policy of aggressive forest fire suppression and prevention.

The summer of 1910 was abnormally dry in the West. Dozens of fires broke out in the Rocky Mountains from a variety of sources, none ever established conclusively. Temporary crews hired by the new U.S. Forest Service, and employees detailed by railroads, timber companies, and mining companies with private holdings fought the various fires. Fire suppression in the region was complicated by the lack of communications, roads, equipment, and personnel. Even though 1,200 to 1,500 men had been hired as firefighters, Forest Service managers asked President William Howard Taft for help from the U.S. Army. African American soldiers of the 25th Infantry Regiment from Fort George Wright and from Fort Missoula pitched in to help.

When the town of Wallace, Idaho, was threatened, the mayor ordered all able-bodied men into fire duty. Women and children and hospital patients were evacuated by train. The mayor had to order soldiers to pull from departing trains men who had been pressed into fire service...

The [fire] was a turning point in national policy. The Forest Service began to aggressively suppress fires with full-time, trained crews, a system of fire lookouts, and campaigns to prevent fires. In Washington state, this policy fit with programs started by the state and by private timberland owners through the Washington Forest Fire Association.



Grave marker for five U.S. Forest Service firefighters killed near Wallace, Idaho, on August 20, 1910

Courtesy U.S. Forest Service

Source: "Forest Fires in Idaho and Montana Burn Three Million Acres of Timber." Historylink.org, 2017, www.historylink.org/file/5488.

Student Handout #3

Document C: Spokane Firestorm, 1991 by David Wilma (updated by Nick Rousso)

Excerpt: Major Forest Fires in Washington. Full article: <https://www.historylink.org/File/22785>

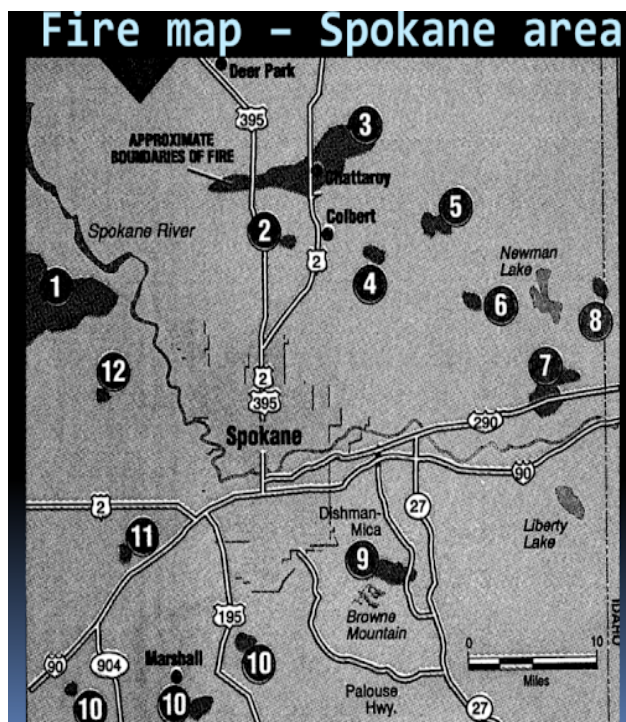
While it was primarily a grass fire and not a forest fire, the Spokane Firestorm would strongly influence how the State of Washington responded to major fires after 1991.

On the morning of October 16, 1991, winds gusting to 62 mph uprooted trees and downed power lines in the Spokane area. The energized wires ignited dry grass and brush. The first alarm was received at 8:45 a.m. near Spokane International Airport, and within three hours, every firefighting resource in Spokane County was committed to battling a total of 92 separate fires that came to be called the Spokane Firestorm. One firefighter died in a machinery accident and 114 homes were destroyed as firefighters had to decide which structures to save and which to leave to the flames. Some residents were evacuated ahead of the fires; many more rushed to remove dry brush and leaves from around homes built near wildlands.

By noon on October 19, Spokane and its population of approximately 350,000 were surrounded on three sides by fires. Spokane County Commissioners and the Spokane City Council declared a state of emergency. Many of the fires were contained by October 20, but on October 21, a second windstorm struck the area with gusts to 52 mph and the contained fires flared anew. By 4 p.m., more than 4,000 firefighters called in from around Washington and Idaho managed to control the fires again.

The fires continued to burn for six days, until they were contained and fire units began to demobilize. An investigation found that utility wires caused most of the fires...

In 1992, the Washington State Legislature passed a law expanding the mobilization of resources, including the National Guard, during large fires. The law also provided for reimbursements to agencies called in to assist in large fires, and for agencies whose own resources were exhausted.



Text Source: "Major Forest Fires in Washington." Historylink.org, 2023, www.historylink.org/File/22785.

Image Source: Weather, Northwest. "Firestorm 1991." Blogspot.com, 2021, inlandnorthwestweather.blogspot.com/2021/10/firestorm-1991.html.

Student Handout #3

Document D: Tyee Creek Fire, 1994 by David Wilma (updated by Nick Rousso)

Excerpt: Major Forest Fires in Washington. Full article: <https://www.historylink.org/File/22785>

On July 24, 1994, lightning ignited a fire in the Wenatchee National Forest at Tyee Creek that burned for 33 days and destroyed 35 homes and cabins. Many more structures were saved by the efforts of firefighters and by the fire-prevention strategies of homeowners. Other fires in the region on Hatchery Creek and Rat Creek consumed 40,000 acres. More than 2,775 firefighters worked on the fire lines and approximately 1,000 Marines from Camp Pendleton, California, joined the effort.

The area along Tyee Creek, 60 miles north of Wenatchee, had originally been covered with ponderosa pine, which has a thick bark and is resistant to fire. Periodic fire was essential to the tree's life cycle, and also burned off smaller vegetation on the forest floor. Over time the pine was harvested and Douglas fir, less resistant to fire, grew in its place. Meanwhile, fire-suppression policies of the Forest Service, the State of Washington, and private timberland owners resulted in a buildup of small trees and brush, providing kindling for fast-moving forest fires.

The deaths of 34 firefighters across the nation in 1994 and the fires around Wenatchee provided another opportunity for proponents of new forestry practices to question the Forest Service's tradition of aggressive fire suppression. In 1995, the federal agencies responsible for wildfire policies – the Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Fish and Wildlife Service – developed the National Fire Plan. Under this program, local land managers developed fire-management plans that included "prescribed" burning (planned, controlled burns of brush and other buildup of fuel), removing vegetation, and small- and large-scale suppression.

Student Handout #3

Document E: Thirty Mile Fire, 2001 by David Wilma

Excerpt: Four firefighters die in a forest fire in Okanogan County on July 10, 2001. Full article:
<https://www.historylink.org/File/5489>

On July 10, 2001, four U.S. Forest Service firefighters [died] while battling the Thirty Mile Fire in Okanogan County. Six others are injured including two hikers. It is the second deadliest fire in Washington history.

The fire was ignited by a camper's fire 30 miles north of Winthrop in Okanogan National Forest in the Chewuch River Valley. The blaze grew to just 25 acres in size when 21 Forest Service firefighters were dispatched to contain it. After the crew arrived, the fire blew up and surrounded them. The firefighters deployed their safety shelters, but four died. One firefighter (Rebecca Welch) sheltered herself and two hikers in a safety shelter designed for one person. Some crew members found safety in the water of a creek. The fire grew to 9,300 acres before it was brought under control.

There were no towns or structures near the fire. Under Forest Service policy, managers were obligated to fight the fire because it was started by human activity. Naturally occurring fires, such as those started by lightning, were allowed to burn. Had the fire started one mile to the west in a designated wilderness area, regardless of origin, it might have been allowed to burn because of the fire management plan in place for wilderness areas.

... This incident and the deaths of 14 firefighters in Colorado in 1994 caused a rethinking of Forest Service firefighting policies, including not fighting a fire if it is not safe to do so.



Thirty Mile Fire explodes, July 10, 2001

Courtesy J.M. Thornsberry

Student Handout #3

Document F: Carlton Complex Fire, 2014 by Jim Kershner

Excerpt: Carlton Complex Fire. Full article: <https://www.historylink.org/file/10989>

The Carlton Complex fire started as four deceptively small blazes, ignited by a lightning storm that rumbled over the Methow Valley on July 14, 2014...

A hot summer had dried out the grass, brush, and timber in the steep canyons and ridges on both sides of the Methow River drainage. On July 15, all four fires began to spread alarmingly. The Stokes fire ... was considered the most serious, since it was threatening homes near Carlton...

On July 16, the fire was whipped up by hot breezes and mushroomed from 1,720 acres to over 7,000 acres. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) authorized federal funds to fight the fire and a national interagency team was called in to handle the... Carlton Complex [fire]... Cooperating agencies included the U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan National Forest, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, the Bureau of Land Management, the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, Okanogan Fire District 6, Okanogan Fire District 15, and the Okanogan County Sheriff's Office...

On the afternoon of July 16, fire officials began ordering Level 3 evacuations -- the most urgent level. The fire raced into several inhabited areas. Ten homes caught fire and were destroyed...

On the morning of July 17, officials estimated that the fire was burning in about 18,000 acres; by 3 p.m. it had grown to 44,553 acres. By the end of the day, the fire had exploded to a staggering 167,712 acres...

When July 19 arrived, a total of 760 firefighters were battling the Carlton Complex blaze, along with at least 15 helicopters and two planes...

The scope of the disaster was beginning to get the attention of the wider world on July 20. Washington Governor Jay Inslee... assigned 100 members of the Washington National Guard to the fire... The fire had become the No. 1 priority wildfire in the nation and firefighters from around the country were pouring in. By the end of the day, the fire crew had more than doubled to 1,622.

Better weather on July 21 did allow crews to dig new fire lines on some parts of the perimeter. However, that afternoon the fires outside of Carlton, Twisp, and Winthrop started making a run to the northeast, once again causing Carlton and other areas outside of Twisp to be evacuated...

...On July 23, Obama declared a state of emergency in Washington because of the fires... Rainstorms dampened the fire, but now there was a new hazard: flooding. The land was scorched and bare, with no vegetation to hold the topsoil. On July 23, as much as an inch of rain fell in some areas, causing mud flows...

Firefighters, numbering over 3,104, continued to quell hot spots, dig fire lines, and drop giant buckets of water by helicopter. By July 28 the fire was 66 percent contained. However, 105-degree weather on July 29 caused at least one part of the fire to jump a fire line...

...Stormy weather brought a few more lightning strikes, and the fire perimeter continued to push out incrementally. By August 6, the Carlton Complex fire had reached its ultimate size -- 256,108 acres -- and it was now officially listed as 90 percent contained....

...At least the downpours extinguished most of the remaining areas of fire. On August 24, 41 days after the first lightning bolt ignited the first branch, officials declared the Carlton Complex fire 100 percent contained... Governor Inslee filed a formal request with FEMA for a major disaster declaration to cover Chelan and Okanogan counties and the Colville Indian Reservation. FEMA subsequently approved a disaster declaration to repair public structures, but the agency sparked anger in the region when it denied a request for disaster aid to individuals who lost home and property, on the grounds that most of the losses were covered by insurance.

What is the History of Fires in Washington?

Name:

Date:

Class:

Gallery Walk Note Sheet

Fire	Summary	How is it similar or different to other fires?	Lasting impacts
Yacolt Burn 1902			
The Big Burn 1910			
Spokane Firestorm 1991			
Tyee Creek Fire 1994			
Thirty Mile Fire 2001			
Carlton Complex Fire 2014			

Which fire do you think had the biggest impact on Washington state? Why?

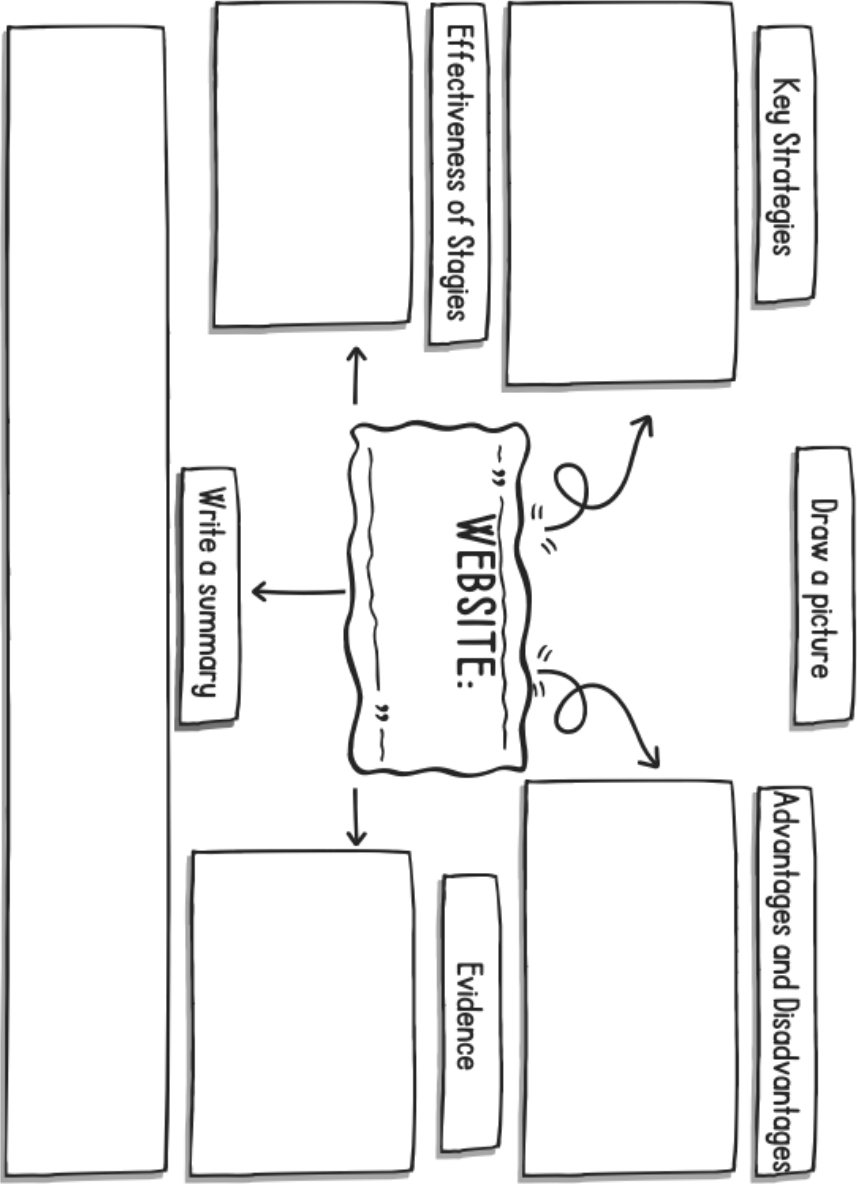
Research: What Is Being Done About Fires in Washington Now?

Name:

Date:

Class:

Concept Map



Student Handout #6

Research: What Is Being Done About Fires in Washington Now?

Name:

Date:

Class:

Directions: Create a concept map for each of the websites that you use for your research. Make sure to include key strategies, effectiveness of the strategies, advantages and disadvantages, and specific evidence from the website. Write a summary of what you learned and draw a picture to represent the key ideas. You can make your own or use the one from Student Handout #5 as a template.

Now that you have completed your research, use the information to prepare for your presentation of letter.

- What is Washington currently doing to prevent wildfires or make wildfire resilient communities?
- How effective are these strategies?
- What are some of the key advantages to these strategies?
- What are some clear disadvantages of these strategies?
- What more could be done?
- What websites did you get your information from?