

HOW SASKATCHEWAN FIREFIGHTERS MANAGE FIRES

A.

- Forest fire season usually begins in early April with grass fires that scorch the landscape.
- Then there will be fires in May and June with more to come in the dry, summer months.
- More than half of most fires are caused by carelessness and could have been prevented.
- 48% are caused by lightning which can be a natural part of a nearby grassland or forest.
- The fire reduces the buildup of dead and decaying leaves, logs, and needles that lie on the forest floor.
- The fire will reduce or get rid of the overhead forest canopy so that more sunlight can let things grow from the seeds and roots.
- Plants have adapted to fires.
 - Lodgepole Pine and Jack Pine have a resin-sealed cone that melts and lets the cones pop open. Thousands of seeds scatter to the ground and grow eventually into trees.
 - Woodpeckers eat the bark beetles and then we will find that other insects begin to live in the newly burned trees.

B.

- Twenty years ago Parks Canada decided it wouldn't stop natural processes such as fire, insects and disease unless neighboring lands were at risk.
- In some parts of North America "*prescribed fires*" are used. Forests are set on fire on purpose to clean out forest debris and to let ecosystems that need fires to keep growing and living.
- Specialists decide:
 - when, where, and how long to allow such fires to burn
 - they think about weather and what kind of plants grow there
 - how the fire behaves
 - if there are mountains, valleys, hills will the fire burn safely.



- Many people in Canada and the United States don't like the "prescribed burn" because landowners and businesses that need the boreal forest believe that timber is very valuable. As well, it is hard to convince anyone that burning down trees, makes sense.