

Chapter 14

COMMUNITY DYNAMICS—DISTURBANCE ECOLOGY

IN THE NEWS

Forest fires are large, infrequent disturbances to ecological communities around the world. Large fires, such as those in Yellowstone National Park in the summer of 1988 and in south-eastern Australia in 2006, cause social and political pressures for ecologists to do something about the desolation of the landscape, the loss of vegetation and animal life, and the loss of human life and property.

In August and September 1988 a large fire in the border area of Montana and Wyoming burned about 500 km² of Yellowstone National Park, sparking criticism of Park management.



Lodgepole pine stands in Yellowstone National Park during the fires of 1988.