Forest fires in Canada

Prepared for

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Executive Summary

Forest fires in Canada are responsible for the destruction of millions of acres of forestland every year. These fires mostly occur in a season that runs from April to October. The period between June and August witness large areas of land burning. In a typical Canadian year, the number of forest fires is roughly 9,000. These fires happen in both tropical and temperate forests in Canada. The government of Canada has set up several bodies like the Canadian Wildland Fire Information System that uses modern technology to gather fire statistics and make recommendations. Another body established to collect data and information about the wild fires is the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CFFC). The discussion below demystifies the different causes of natural fires and their general contribution to the menace that is Canadian forest fires.

To ensure the impact of the natural fires

1. Introduce the problem of forest fire in Canada to Canadian Wildland Fire.
2. Causes of forest fire.
3. Natural Causes of Forest Fire.
4. The best strategies that can be adopt to reduce the impact of the natural fires.
Introduction to the Causes of Forest Fires in Canada

The causes of forest fires can be manmade or natural. Age proportions of the forest fires in Canada (about two thirds) are a result of human actions. These actions include arson, discarded plastic and glass, discarded cigarettes, equipment sparks and arcs of power lines.

The other proportion of forest fires are result from natural causes that are varied in nature. These natural causes include volcanic eruptions; spontaneous combustion, lightning and rock fall sparks. Lightning is the major natural cause of fire. In the western and northern part of Canada, It is responsible for 50 percent of the forest fires (Canadian Forestry Service, 2008). These areas are remote and are therefore when, fires strike, it is not easy to avail the equipment for fire suppression.

Causes of Forest Fire

Lightening causes forest fire by burning the trees. The trees catch fire, which then spreads slowly through a vast forest area burning almost everything on its path. If rain does not accompany the lightening, it becomes very hard to put out the fire.

Fires require fuel, heat, and oxygen to start. The oxygen is usually found abundantly in the atmosphere. The tree’s wood functions as the fuel and the heat that is generated prevents the fire from being extinguished. If the wood attains 592 degrees in temperature, it can release a biological gas that can react with atmospheric oxygen to trigger flames that provide heat to surrounding wood. This heat then causes fires to start growing and it eventually becomes so strong that it burns large tracts of forestland (Greg and Herring, 2007).

Natural Causes of Forest Fire

Low humidity and high temperatures are also natural causes of forest fires. They provide perfect conditions for the initiation and subsequent spreading of natural fires. Volcanic action
although uncommon is another natural cause of forest fires. Molten larva rises from the earth’s underground and sets alight the things that it finds on the surface.

About four percent of natural forest fires burn very rapidly and are relatively uncontrollable. They result in colossal damage destroying about 1,500 acres of land and vegetation in half an hour (Higgins, 2010). They lead to the death of wildlife that resides in the forests. However, most of these animals have developed fire senses through time, and therefore, able to detect when fire is imminent and escape before their habitats are engulfed in flames.

Natural fires initially start spreading at a slow pace. With time, they are continuously propagated by winds. This propagation then causes them to spread rapidly and fast and consume a lot of land in a very short time. Lack of enough heat and lack of wind can, however, act as hindrance to the spread of fire and causes it to substantially slow down.

Conclusion

Unlike man-made causes of fires, which are generally avoidable, it is not easy to deal with the natural causes of fire. This is because they are very unpredictable and can strike any time.

Recommendation

The best strategy that Canada can adopt to reduce the impact of the natural fires is to deploy and avail fire centers in areas that are prone to natural forest fires so that when the fire initially starts, it is managed before it causes massive damage.
References


