

Fire Season Statistics

NOVA Activity **Fire Wars**

The National Interagency Fire Center, a partnership among government agencies that helps states and towns fight fires, has released its tallies on all recorded wildland fires for the year 2000 season. Your job is to make sense of the numbers. Look at the data below and see what it can tell you.

		Bureau of Land Mgt.	Bureau of Indian Affairs	Fish and Wildlife Service	National Park Service	USDA Forest Service	State/Private
NATURALLY CAUSED							
Lightning	Fires	2,567	1,293	185	342	6,371	7,659
	Acres	1,355,209	258,658	217,162	101,013	1,676,414	1,218,187
HUMAN CAUSED							
Prescribed	Fires	485	33	1,068	111	2,954	**
	Acres	125,600	3,353	201,052	19,072	728,237	**
Camping	Fires	64	109	47	56	1,260	1,876
	Acres	84,152	1,401	1,931	16,082	52,467	18,953
Smoking	Fires	23	160	31	23	237	3,418
	Acres	4,038	20,295	15,098	83	15,930	44,951
Incendiary	Fires	57	707	89	61	817	25,259
	Acres	60,294	18,465	6,609	13,522	157,144	847,914
Equipment	Fires	121	180	75	36	194	10,107
	Acres	16,856	7,712	97,479	1,387	8,311	308,681
Railroads	Fires	10	10	12	13	56	2,711
	Acres	86	47	476	338	55,561	85,260
Juveniles	Fires	11	631	13	14	65	3,193
	Acres	117	14,762	1,041	80	211	12,729
Misc.	Fires	257	1,440	177	138	866	49,786
	Acres	50,112	190,121	8,800	18,142	172,872	1,165,084
GRAND TOTALS							
Natural and Human	Fires	3,595	4,563	1,697	794	12,820	104,009
	Acres	1,696,464	514,814	549,648	169,719	2,867,147	3,701,759

Source: National Interagency Fire Center Web site:
www.nifc.gov/fireinfo/2000/stats.html

* State/Private data not available.

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Questions

Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

- ① Look at this data. What does it tell you in its current form? Calculate all totals for the data set and choose a way to represent them, using bar graphs, pie graphs, or some other presentation method.
- ② Which source is the cause for the most fires? What source of fire is responsible for the most acres damaged? Which source has the highest fire-to-acres-burned ratio?
- ③ Considering human causes of fire only, and excluding the miscellaneous category, which source is the cause for the most fires? Which source is responsible for the most acres damaged? Which source has the highest fire-to-acres-burned ratio?
- ④ Which source was the cause of the fewest fires? What source is responsible for the fewest acres damaged? Which source has the lowest fire-to-acres burned ratio?
- ⑤ The 10-year average number of fires (1990-1999) was 106,393. The 10-year average of acres burned during the same period was 3,786,411. What does this information tell you when compared to the year 2000 totals?
- ⑥ What are some conclusions you could draw from the facts above?
- ⑦ What questions do you have about the data presented in this data set? What additional information would you like in order to test your conclusions?

