

## Wildfires: Not in my backyard handout – answer sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

Answers appear in italics below.

### Introduction:

1. Wildfire is an *unwanted* fire that burns fields, grass, brush, or forests.
2. Wildfires effect:
  - a. *wildlife*
  - b. *watersheds*
  - c. *forests* and plants
  - d. Personal *property*
3. Pennsylvania's wildfire season is in the *spring* and *fall* when leaves are off the trees.
4. On average *4300* acres burn each year due to wildfires.
5. Lightning is a major cause of western wildfires, but cause less than 2% of Pennsylvania wildfires.
6. Most Western wildfires occur between *May* to October when it is hot and dry. Most Pennsylvania wildfires occur from March to May and from October to November.

### Fire behavior and the environment

7. Wildfire behavior and intensity is controlled by
  - a. *Fuels*
  - b. Topography
  - c. Weather
8. Grass, leaves and pine needles can dry in one *hour*. Small twigs and branches take several hours to dry.
9. Low relative *humidity*, warmer temperatures, and wind rapidly dry grass, leaves, twigs, and branches.
10. Peak burning activity/wildfire risk is between 10 AM and 6 PM.

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11. Topography includes slope and aspect. Each plays a role in wildfire behavior. Fire moves faster up steep slopes and slower on flat terrain.
12. Aspect is the direction (north, south, east or west) the terrain is facing. North facing slopes receive less direct early morning sunlight. South and west facing slopes receive direct afternoon and evening sunlight resulting in drier conditions.
13. Because of Pennsylvania's size, there is a South to North transition as the vegetation becomes green in the spring. The process reverses itself as fall colors come upon us and trees lose their leaves prior to winter.  
This effects where wildfire activity occurs during these times.

### Wildfire causes and way to reduce wildfire risk

14. Human activity causes 98% of all wildfires in Pennsylvania with debris burning and arson as the leading causes.
15. Individual responsible for starting a wildfire in Pennsylvania can be held accountable for the cost of putting out the fire including
  - a. manpower and equipment
  - b. helicopters
  - c. airplanes
16. Practice safe debris burning.
  - a. Clear an area ten feet around the barrel to prevent sparks from igniting material outside the barrel.
  - b. Have water hose and rake available to quickly put out sparks.
  - c. Use a metal container with ½ inch ventilation holes at base to allow for quick and clean burning of debris.
  - d. Put a ¼ inch expanded steel screen on top of the barrel as a spark arrester. Always make sure the fire is completely out before you walk away from the burn barrel or burning debris.

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17. Alternatives to burning debris

- a. Recycling
- b. Mulching
- c. Wildlife habitat
- d. Composting

18. Check with you local Bureau of Forestry office about fire danger. When local or county-wide burn bans are in effect, campfires should not be used. When camping, use a stove to cook to reduce the risk of wildfire. A self-contained metal or ceramic fire pit can be used in place of an open campfire. And as always, be sure camp fires are put out cold.

19. Smokey's message: Only you can prevent wildfires.