



Fire Ecology in Rocky Mountain Landscapes

William L. Baker

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Fire Ecology in Rocky Mountain Landscapes brings a century of scientific research to bear on improving the relationship between people and fire.

In recent years, some scientists have argued that current patterns of fire are significantly different from historical patterns, and that landscapes should be managed with an eye toward reestablishing past fire regimes. At the policy level, state and federal agencies have focused on fuel reduction and fire suppression as a means of controlling fire.

Geographer William L. Baker takes a different view, making the case that the available scientific data show that infrequent episodes of large fires followed by long interludes with few fires led to naturally fluctuating landscapes, and that the best approach is not to try to change or control fire but to learn to live with it. In *Fire Ecology in Rocky Mountain Landscapes*, Baker reviews functional traits and responses of plants and animals to fire at the landscape scale; explains how scientists reconstruct the history of fire in landscapes; elaborates on the particulars of fire under the historical range of variability in the Rockies; and considers the role of Euro-Americans in creating the landscapes and fire situations of today.

In the end, the author argues that the most effective action is to rapidly limit and redesign people-nature interfaces to withstand fire, which he believes can be done in ways that are immediately beneficial to both nature and communities.

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