

Giant Sequoia Fire History

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ABSTRACT: The importance of aboriginal burning in terms of its effect on fire frequency is a question confronting wilderness fire managers. In most areas, however, the recorder trees (those scarred by previous fires) are relatively short-lived and do not predate the era of Indian influence. Snags and stumps of these species are not persistent enough, even with cross-dating, to allow the establishment of a fire history longer than several hundred years. Giant sequoias, on the other hand, live to be several thousand years old, and stumps from cut sequoias probably will last several hundred years. Thus, investigators in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, by cross-dating fire-scarred sequoias with established chronologies (ring patterns), may be able to compare fire frequencies for the pre-Indian and Indian periods.

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