



California Wildfires

Oak Canyon Community Park

This is where my first inspiration struck me. At this one spot. A couple snags (dead trees), and yet, so meaningful to how the wildlife in California is; A dead, burned down tree, in a place where you wouldn't expect to see one. I could see the effects of the fire, but not the fire itself.



While walking with my friends in the Community Park...



I stumbled around the trails in the park, and even though there was a dead tree in the background, I found a Purple Nightshade that beautifully stood about 20 feet away. That is what made me wonder: How could there possibly be beautiful flowers right next to a place that had a wildfire?



Although, that
wasn't it...



...There was even
more vegetation.

I found some French Broom (top right), Tree Tobacco (right & also invasive species and variety of Nightshade), along with some another variety of Nightshade (middle left).






After Researching...

I found that wildfires are a HUGE problem in California

12,700,000

Acres of California land have been burned only in the
past 10 years.





1 out 8

Of California's Land has been burned in the past decade.

85%

Of fires in California are caused because of human related reasons.

1.03 million

Acres was burned in the largest wildfire in California (August Complex)

What is Secondary Succession?



Meaning:

Secondary succession happens when a climax community or intermediate community is impacted by a disturbance.

In other words,

it's the order in which plants recolonize an area that has been disrupted by something like a fire, from small grasses to a mature forest

As you can see,

that is what is shown in this photo. As the secondary succession takes place, more greenery starts to come in around the dead plants.

In this photo,

the stage that the recolonizing plants are in right now, would be in the intermediate species stage. Or shrubby plants, and small trees.

Why Are There So Many Fires?

In California, there are so many wildfires that appear. But the question is: Why? Well, most fires in California are caused by humans, and out of those fires, most of them begin for the following reasons: unattended campfires, the burning of debris, arson, discarded cigarettes, and malfunctions with high voltage equipment.



I found this dead branch on the floor in the same Oak Canyon Community Park next to some growing shrubs and flowers. It most likely fell down due to the fire in that area (Woolsey Fire).



“When you say, ‘9 out of 10 fires are
caused by humans.’

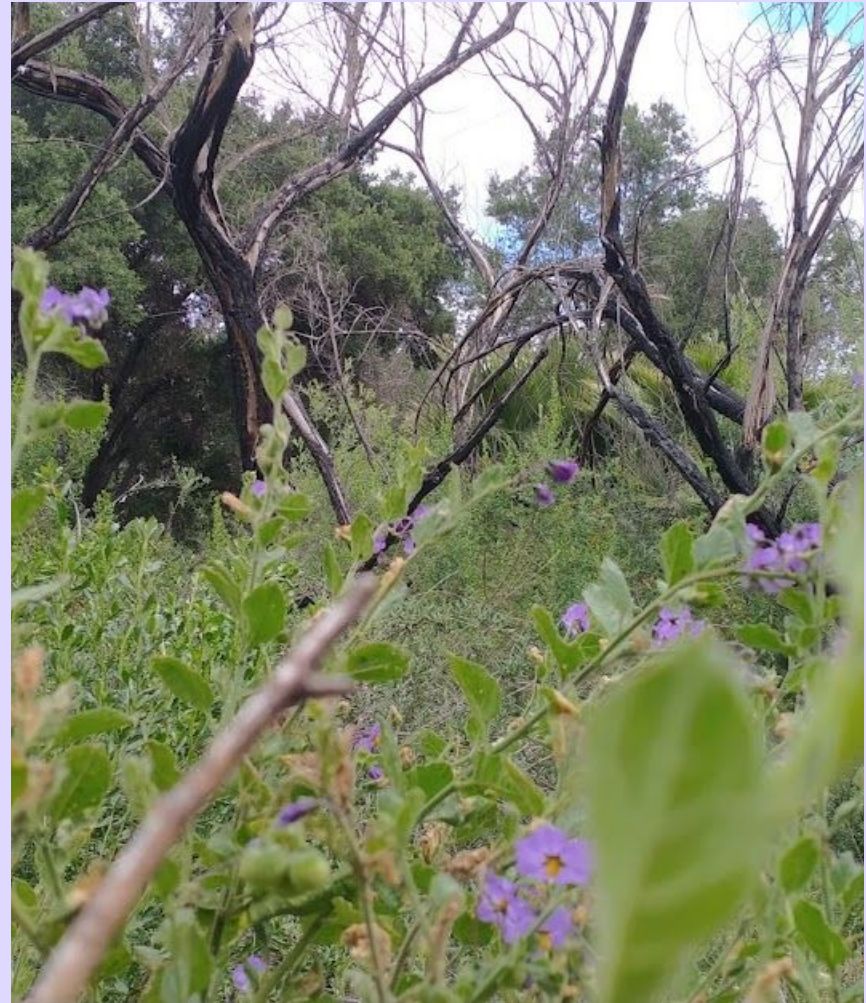
All I hear is, ‘There is a bear out there
who knows how to use matches.’”

~Unknown



Call to Action

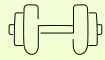
The whole purpose of this slideshow is to show awareness of how harmful human beings can be to the environment. Even though there is a chance that through secondary succession new plants will grow in, sooner or later there will be a huge scar on California. So I decided to make this in order to tell people: *BE MORE CAUTIOUS AND AWARE* of your surroundings and what you are doing in those surroundings. California doesn't deserve to die because of the carelessness of humans. The carelessness can be improved by just using Smokey the Bear's rules when starting a fire! As Smokey the Bear says; only you can prevent wildfires!



Summary of My Photos

All of my photos were taken at the same place; Oak Park Community Center. That place was really beautiful, and I most definitely didn't expect to see a place where a fire had damaged the terrain. I looked around and realized that the whole mountain/hill ahead of me was burnt. I took tons of pictures in the area, stoked about all of the living plants near it, and researched about the area. I found that that mountain/hill was burnt in part of the Woolsey Fire. The Woolsey fire was a fire that burned through L.A and Ventura County in 2018. It burned 96,949 acres of land and destroyed 1,643 structures, killing 3 people in the process. And the part that I was even more shocked about, was that it started by man. An electric and communication company started the fire because of some of their equipment. After learning about this, and how many fires happen annually, it gave me the inspiration to do something about wildfires affecting California. When looking back at my photos I was in awe at how beautiful nature can be, and how easily it can be destroyed. The photos that I took, took the best image possible in showing that. It is honestly so heartbreaking to see the photos as an imagery of how our planet is going in a downward spiral. In the first photo, I saw it as the tree being frozen at the time it was being burned. I could see the thinned out branches reaching in the direction of life, as if it wanted to survive the heat. The next four photos of the new life growing, were so precious to me. It was like little sprouts of baby life after the pain of birth. They also showed me the diversity between their color and shape, but still in the same family. I wanted to include the sixth photograph because I wanted to get some of the burnt hill in the background, while also having the flowers in the front as the spotlight. The seventh photo was extremely good at showing how powerful that fire must have been to knock down trees. I thought that the tree laying on the floor was like a dead corpse from the aftermath of the massive fire. The last picture was very beautiful. I used the Nightshade again, and this time placed it in an angle in front of the snags. With that, it was like the perfect balance of good and evil. But then again, there shouldn't be any dark symbol of "evil" at all. It was created to be perfectly lovely in its natural form. California really needs to focus on wildfire awareness and ways to prevent it. Especially since California is constantly in droughts, making everything highly flammable. I think that Smokey the Bear gave the best advice on what to do to avoid these things. The only problem is that he isn't that popular anymore.

Hopefully more awareness can bring his spirit back.



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Strengths

The acknowledgement of the big problem will shock people. They might not think that it is a big deal, but as soon as they see the numbers, I'm not so sure they will see it the same way. It even impacted myself when I learned about it. I absolutely love fire when I have a campfire, but seeing how dangerous it is, makes me a way more cautious about it.

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Weaknesses

Some people nowadays won't take things like this to heart in order to help the cause. They'll just dismiss it out of hand and ignore what has to be said. Though there are those who will have a double-take on their decisions before they act.



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Opportunities

Most fires in California are caused by humans; About 85% of these wildfires caused by humans, lead to more than 1 in 8 acres of California to be burned up. So when starting anything that can combust, do your part in making sure you are in a controlled environment, or keep an eye on what you are doing.

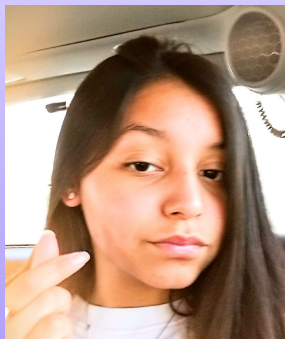
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Threats

But the hard thing is that there are other things that contribute to wildfires. These things consists of dry plants from droughts in California and rising temperatures due to climate change. And those things are really hard to prevent. But there always ways to reduce the threats in all of these things that threaten California's vegetation.



Project Members



Dreena Ogawa
Photographer and
Author



Ms. Jahr
Teacher and
Assistance

Thank you!

I hope that this slideshow was able to give
a bigger picture of wildfires in California!
Only you can prevent wildfires!

