

WILDFIRE

Are wildfires becoming more frequent in Colorado?

Drier climates, logging, shrinking snowpack and previous fire suppression policies have left forests vulnerable to burning



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3:45 AM MST on Mar 7, 2025



Illustration provided by Gigafact

Yes.



The number of wildfires in Colorado more than **doubled in the past 20 years**, from an average of 3,400 fires per year between 2000-2003 to roughly 7,200 fires per year between 2020-

T 2023.

Colorado's 20 largest wildfires all occurred after 2001. The Cameron Peak fire in 2020 was the state's largest, burning over 200,000 acres in Larimer and Jackson counties and Rocky Mountain National Park. The most destructive was the Marshall fire in 2021, which destroyed roughly 1,100 homes in Boulder County. Historically, Colorado's major fires were limited to summers. Today, Colorado experiences large fires throughout the year.

While there are no clear nationwide trends regarding wildfire frequency, the Southwestern U.S.— Colorado included — has seen larger, more frequent and more destructive wildfires. Drier climates, logging, shrinking snowpack and previous fire suppression policies have left forests vulnerable to burning. Human development in wildland areas is also a factor.

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