

# What do you think about the forest fire risk in your community?

*For most of the questions in this survey, you should circle a number on the scale of 1 to 7 to show how strongly you feel, or place an X in a box. Instructions are provided in italics for other types of questions.*

*Part A. Following are some general questions about how you see the forest fire risk, what your experiences with forest fires have been, and what type of an area you live in.*

**1.** In general, how high do you feel the risk of forest fire is **to residents of your community**?

No Risk 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very High Risk

**2.** In general, how high do you feel the risk of forest fire is **to you and your household**?

No Risk 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very High Risk

**3.** When thinking about how to handle the forest fire risk, how important is it to you to protect **human life**?

Unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Important

**4.** When thinking about how to handle the forest fire risk, how important is it to you to protect **property**?

Unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Important

**5.** When thinking about how to handle the forest fire risk, how important is it to you to protect **the environment**?

Unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Important

**6.** The way forest fires are handled now, how well do you think that **human life** is protected?

Unprotected 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Well Protected

**7.** The way forest fires are handled now, how well do you think that **property** is protected?

Unprotected 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Well Protected

**8.** The way forest fires are handled now, how well do you think that **the environment** is protected?

Unprotected 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Well Protected

**9.** How many years have you lived at your present address?

\_\_\_\_\_ years

**10.** What type of area do you currently live in?

- A rural area
- A suburban area
- An urban area

**11.** What type of building do you live in?

- A detached house
- A low-rise apartment
- A high-rise apartment

**12.** Before moving to your present address, where did you live?

- A rural area
- A suburban area
- An urban area
- I have always lived at my present address

**13.** Overall, how much do you feel you know about forest fires?

Very little 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 A lot

**14.** What kind of land abuts your current property? *Circle yes or no for each item.*

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| <b>a.</b> Privately owned forest  | Yes | No |
| <b>b.</b> Publicly owned forest   | Yes | No |
| <b>c.</b> Privately owned lawn or grassy area                                 | Yes | No |
| <b>d.</b> Publicly owned lawn or grassy area                                  | Yes | No |
| <b>e.</b> Paved land <i>other than</i> roads and streets (e.g. a parking lot) | Yes | No |
| <b>f.</b> Buildings and other structures                                      | Yes | No |

**15.** Within the past five years, which of the following have happened to you? *Circle yes or no for each item.*

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| a. Saw smoke or flames from a forest fire                                    | Yes | No |
| b. Felt fear or anxiety as a result of a forest fire                         | Yes | No |
| c. Had a friend or family member whose property was damaged by a forest fire | Yes | No |
| d. Had my own property damaged by a forest fire                              | Yes | No |
| e. Had a friend or family member injured by a forest fire                    | Yes | No |
| f. Was personally injured by a forest fire                                   | Yes | No |

**16.** Over your whole life, *not including the past five years*, which of the following have happened to you? *Circle yes or no for each item.*

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| a. Saw smoke or flames from a forest fire                                    | Yes | No |
| b. Felt fear or anxiety as a result of a forest fire                         | Yes | No |
| c. Had a friend or family member whose property was damaged by a forest fire | Yes | No |
| d. Had my own property damaged by a forest fire                              | Yes | No |
| e. Had a friend or family member injured by a forest fire                    | Yes | No |
| f. Was personally injured by a forest fire                                   | Yes | No |

**17.** Are you, or have you been, a member of a volunteer or professional fire company?

- Yes, I am currently a member of a fire company
- No, I am not currently a member, but I was in the past
- No, I have never been a member of a fire company

**Part B.** *Following are some short paraphrases of what some other residents of southern New Jersey said about forest fires in an earlier part of this research project. Read the summary of each person's viewpoint, then answer the questions that follow. Don't worry if you agree with more than one of the viewpoints, or if none of them really match what you think.*

**18.** *A. R. says:*

“When it comes to forest fires, I try to just use common sense and be responsible. Everybody has to keep their own house in order -- cleaning up the yard and so forth. It's really important, too, to make sure that people don't carelessly start a fire by, say, letting a campfire burn unattended. I think we ought to have good communication with firefighters, since they've got the experience to know what to do about fires. If the fire company came around and said we needed to evacuate, I'd definitely get out of there.”

a. How much do you agree or disagree with A.R.'s viewpoint?

Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Disagree

b. Is A. R.'s view reasonable or unreasonable?

Reasonable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unreasonable

c. If A. R. was your neighbor, would you trust him or her?

Trust 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Distrust

d. Do you think there are many people in your community, or only a few people, who think the way A. R. does?

Many 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Few

e. Are there any other thoughts you have about A.R.'s viewpoint?

**19. B. K. says:**

“What we really need is good, detailed planning for how to handle forest fires. We need to make our decisions based on the best scientific information. I think the public should also be involved in deciding what to do, since it’s our homes and backyards that are affected. If regular people get educated about how fires happen, we’ll be able to take care of our own neighborhoods. That way firefighting won’t get politicized or bogged down in red tape. I’m also worried that some people want to take too much of a “hands off” approach to nature, because I don’t think that good plans for keeping people safe are going to hurt the environment.”

a. How much do you agree or disagree with B.K.’s viewpoint?

Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Disagree

b. Is B.K.’s view reasonable or unreasonable?

Reasonable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unreasonable

c. If B.K. was your neighbor, would you trust him or her?

Trust 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Distrust

d. Do you think there are many people in your community, or few people, who think the way B.K. does?

Many 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Few

e. Are there any other thoughts you have about B.K.’s viewpoint?

**20. C. J. says:**

“I worry sometimes that the people in charge, like the Forest Fire Service, aren’t really in tune with what regular people living in this region want. We need to make sure that they’re listening to our concerns -- like how expensive and time-consuming it can be to follow all the recommendations for fire safety -- and letting us know what they’re doing and why they’re doing it. I also worry that we interfere with nature too much when we try to control fires.”

a. How much do you agree or disagree with C.J.’s viewpoint?

Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Disagree

b. Is C.J.’s view reasonable or unreasonable?

Reasonable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unreasonable

c. If C.J. was your neighbor, would you trust them?

Trust 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Distrust

d. Do you think there are many people in your community, or few people, who think the way C.J. does?

Many 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Few

e. Are there any other thoughts you have about C.J.’s viewpoint?

**21. D. M. says:**

“Forest fires are a big risk in this area. We need to focus on keeping people safe, even if that means sacrificing someone’s property or doing something that environmentalists might not like. I know people have other things to worry about too, but it’s still really important for everyone to make sure they’re not creating a fire risk to their neighbors. Otherwise the authorities might have to step in, or maybe their insurance rates should go up. The main thing, though, is to make sure that every fire -- whether it’s a natural one, an accident, or a controlled burn -- is under control.”

a. How much do you agree or disagree with D.M.’s viewpoint?

Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Disagree

b. Is D.M.’s view reasonable or unreasonable?

Reasonable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unreasonable

c. If D.M. was your neighbor, would you trust him or her?

Trust 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Distrust

d. Do you think there are many people in your community, or few people, who think the way D.M. does?

Many 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Few

e. Are there any other thoughts you have about D.M.’s viewpoint?

**22. E. B. says:**

“The environment in this region is naturally fire-prone, and that’s got to be the main consideration. We should use the best science at our disposal in order to figure out what kind of impacts we’re having on the landscape, and to create good plans. That way we can mimic the natural fire regime, while still reducing the risk to areas where there are homes. We also have to be concerned about unrestricted development -- if people are out there building houses without thinking about fire safety, it makes it tougher to protect them without sacrificing the ecology of this area.”

a. How much do you agree or disagree with E.B.’s viewpoint?

Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Disagree

b. Is E.B.’s view reasonable or unreasonable?

Reasonable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unreasonable

c. If E.B. was your neighbor, would you trust him or her?

Trust 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Distrust

d. Do you think there are many people in your community, or few people, who think the way E.B. does?

Many 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Few

e. Are there any other thoughts you have about E.B.’s viewpoint?

**Part C.** This section has some more general questions about your opinions of society and the environment, so we can see how people's opinions about forest fires relate to their broader worldview.

**23.** The world would be a more peaceful place if its wealth were divided more equally among nations.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**24.** One of the problems with people today is that they challenge authority too often.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**25.** If people have the vision and ability to acquire property, they ought to be allowed to enjoy it.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**26.** The best way to provide for future generations is to preserve the customs and practices of our past.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**27.** What our country needs is a fairness revolution to make the distribution of goods more equal.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**28.** It seems that whichever party you vote for things go on pretty much the same.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**29.** Everyone should have an equal chance to succeed and fail without government interference.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**30.** I support a tax shift so that the burden falls more heavily on corporations and people with large incomes.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**31.** We need to dramatically reduce inequalities between men and women.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**32.** I feel that life is a lottery.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**33.** Cooperation with others rarely works.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**34.** The future is too uncertain for a person to make serious plans.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**35.** Decisions in business and government should rely more heavily on popular participation.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**36.** People who are successful in business have a right to enjoy their wealth as they see fit.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**37.** Competitive markets are almost always the best way to supply people with things they need.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**38.** Society works best when people obey all rules and regulations.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**39.** Respect for authority is one of the most important things that children should learn.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**40.** Different roles for different sorts of people enable people to live together more harmoniously.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**41.** Most people make friends only because friends are useful for them.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**42.** In a fair system, people with more ability should earn more.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**Part D.** Following are a series of actions that some experts have recommended for households in high-risk areas. Put an X in the box indicating whether you or someone else in your household have done, or will do, each action at your current home (you may mark more than one). Mark "N/A" if the action could not be done in your home -- for example, if your home already had a sprinkler system when you moved in, you would mark N/A for question 60.

**43.** Trim all trees and shrubs, and clean up other flammable material, within **10 yards** of your home.

- I have done this
- Someone else in my household has done this
- I have not done this, but I plan to in the next couple years
- Someone else in my household plans to do this
- We do not plan to do this
- N/A

**44.** Trim all trees and shrubs, and clean up other flammable material, within **30 yards** of your home.

- I have done this
- Someone else in my household has done this
- I have not done this, but I plan to in the next couple years
- Someone else in my household plans to do this
- We do not plan to do this
- N/A

**45.** Create an explicit emergency plan for your household in case of a forest fire

- I have done this
- Someone else in my household has done this
- I have not done this, but I plan to in the next couple years
- Someone else in my household plans to do this
- We do not plan to do this
- N/A

**46.** Install a sprinkler system

- I have done this
- Someone else in my household has done this
- I have not done this, but I plan to in the next couple years
- Someone else in my household plans to do this
- We do not plan to do this
- N/A

**47.** Talk to your neighbors about working together to make your community safer from fire

- I have done this
- Someone else in my household has done this
- I have not done this, but I plan to in the next couple years
- Someone else in my household plans to do this
- We do not plan to do this
- N/A

**48.** Put screens over windows, vents, eaves, and other places that embers could enter the house

- I have done this
- Someone else in my household has done this
- I have not done this, but I plan to in the next couple years
- Someone else in my household plans to do this
- We do not plan to do this
- N/A

**49.** Clear leaves and other debris from roof and gutters

- I have done this
- Someone else in my household has done this
- I have not done this, but I plan to in the next couple years
- Someone else in my household plans to do this
- We do not plan to do this
- N/A

- 50.** Conduct a hazard reduction burn on your property  
 I have done this  
 Someone else in my household has done this  
 I have not done this, but I plan to in the next couple years  
 Someone else in my household plans to do this  
 We do not plan to do this  
 N/A

- 51.** Replace wooden shingles with metal or tile roofing  
 I have done this  
 Someone else in my household has done this  
 I have not done this, but I plan to in the next couple years  
 Someone else in my household plans to do this  
 We do not plan to do this  
 N/A

*Part E: Following are several factors that may have hindered you in keeping your household safe from forest fires. Circle a number to show how much of a barrier each factor has been for you.*

- 52.** Fire safety costs too much money.  
 Not a barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 A barrier  N/A

- 53.** Fire safety takes too much time.  
 Not a barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 A barrier  N/A

- 54.** I don't know what things would make my house safer.  
 Not a barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 A barrier  N/A

- 55.** Fire safety would be harmful to the natural environment.  
 Not a barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 A barrier  N/A

- 56.** Fire safety actions will lower the attractiveness of my home.  
 Not a barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 A barrier  N/A

- 57.** There are local laws that get in the way.  
 Not a barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 A barrier  N/A

- 58.** My neighbors aren't doing their part.  
 Not a barrier 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 A barrier  N/A

*Part F: This section asks about you and your household, so that we can see if different types of people have different views.*

- 59.** How many adults (18 years or older) **including yourself**, and how many children (under 18), live in your house?

→ \_\_\_\_\_ adults and \_\_\_\_\_ children  
 → If you are the only member of your household, skip to question 70. If at least one other person lives with you, go to question 60.

- 60** I consider my household to be very orderly.  
 Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

- 61.** Each person in my household has their own individual hobbies.  
 Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

- 62.** My household has a lot of traditions that we try to preserve.  
 Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

- 63.** My household has a lot of routines and activities that we do at scheduled times.  
 Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

- 64.** My household does a lot of activities together as a group.  
 Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

- 65.** Who does what chores in my household mostly depends on who has the time and is better at it.  
 Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

- 66.** My household is very "tight-knit."  
 Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

- 67.** When there's an important decision to be made, everyone in the household gets to have an equal say.  
 Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**68.** Each member of my household has their own friends -- we don't all socialize with the same people.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**69.** There's one person who's clearly the "head of the household."

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree  N/O

**Part G.**

**70.** What is your race?

\_\_\_\_\_

**71.** What is your gender?

\_\_\_\_\_

**72.** What is your religion? (*if you are not religious, write "N/A"*)

\_\_\_\_\_

**73.** What was your total household income for 2006?

- less than \$15,000
- \$15,001-\$40,000
- \$40,001-\$80,000
- \$80,001-\$150,000
- more than \$150,000

**74.** What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

- Did not complete high school
- High school
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree or PhD

**75.** What is your age?

- 18-29 years
- 30-39 years
- 40-59 years
- 60 years or older

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your answers are important for helping us understand what residents of New Jersey think about forest fires. If you have any additional comments about the forest fire issue, or about this survey, use the space below to share your thoughts.

Please return this survey in the enclosed envelope. You do not need to write your name or other identifying information on the survey or envelope. If you have lost the envelope, you may mail the survey to:

Stentor Danielson  
Geography Dept., Clark University  
950 Main St.  
Worcester, MA 01610

If you have any questions about this survey, you may call me at (202) 215-7888, or send an email to [sdanielson@clarku.edu](mailto:sdanielson@clarku.edu).