

Nobel laureate predicts dire fires in West

Oct. 1, 2008—Global warming will spawn more and larger wildfires in Montana, predicts 2007 Nobel Peace Prize co-winner Steve Running, a University of Montana ecologist and forestry professor. In his **story posted Oct. 1** on the Hungry Horse News Web site, Chris Peterson reports:

“The fire season in the West is now 78 days longer than it used to be. Twenty to 30 years ago, high alpine forests didn’t burn—there was snow covering them, or latent moisture from snow.”

Part of the West’s wildfire problems are the result of fire suppression in past decades, Peterson reports.

Running made his comments at Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell, at a meeting that was co-sponsored by the National Parks Conservation Association and Headwaters Montana, a local environmental group, Peterson reports. Running was one of some 600 scientists who won the Peace Prize as a lead author of the 2007 United Nations Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change Report (see **Wikipedia**).

“The crowd of about 125 mostly agreed with Running’s climate predictions,” Peterson writes. “After all, most just look out their window and see the results. About 20 percent of Glacier National Park has burned in wildfires in the past decade and its namesake glaciers are rapidly disappearing.”

For information about how to protect your place from wildfire, go to the **Fire Mitigation Committee** page.