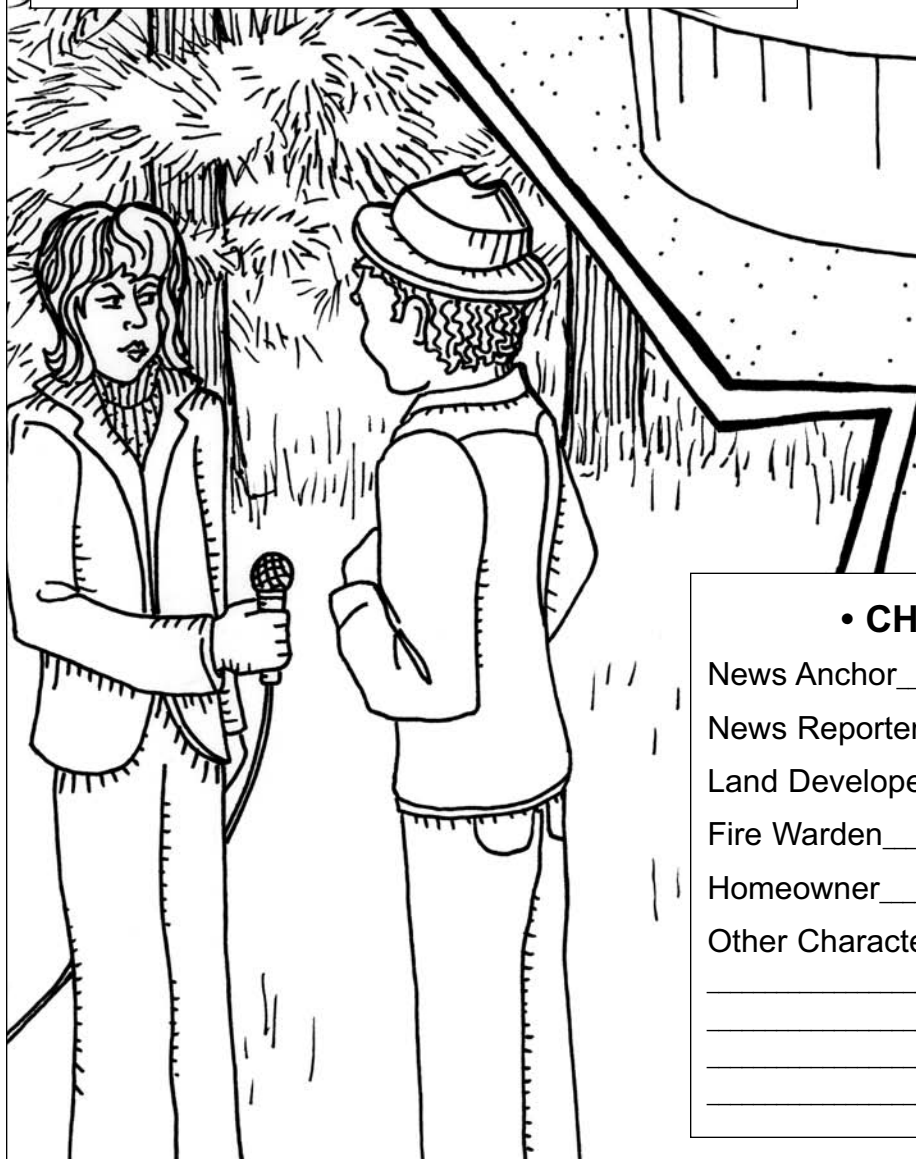


SCENE 6 SCRIPT

A CHANGING LANDSCAPE (A Live at 5 News Report)

Smokey Bear's message has been very effective. Forest fires have been stopped all across the U.S. Many houses were saved and a lot of the wood that would have burned has been harvested and used. But, many forests have become very, very thick with trees. We now understand that fire is a natural part of many forested areas. By preventing and suppressing fires, humans stopped fires that have occurred over and over again for thousands of years. As you will see, this has had some unintended consequences.



• CHARACTERS •

- News Anchor _____
- News Reporter _____
- Land Developer _____
- Fire Warden _____
- Homeowner _____
- Other Characters _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

SCENE 6 SCRIPT

News Anchor Good evening. Tonight we bring you a special report on wildfires and the threat that they pose to life, property, and natural resources.

To begin, let's turn to our co-anchor on the ground in Adams County, Wisconsin.

News Reporter I'm standing here in the Tri-Lakes area of northern Adams County. This is a rapidly growing area, where forests are filling with expensive vacation homes and businesses.

I'm here with a real estate agent from a local realty company.

Can you describe the changes that you've seen in the real estate market over the last 10 years?

Land Developer In one word – “boom.” The current price of land is evidence of that. People from other parts of the state and country have been buying land and putting up vacation homes. And I'm not talking about cabins. I'm talking about \$300,000 homes. With these homes come the businesses and jobs for local people that support them.

News Reporter And that is only part of the story. Let's talk to the local fire warden about where those homes are being built.

Thanks for being here with us. What does the development in the Tri-Lakes area have to do with forest fires?

Fire Warden The forest in the Tri-Lakes area is a very fire-prone forest. This means that the trees here, jack pine and red pine, burn very easily and very hot when conditions are dry. Historically, fire has occurred in jack pine forests every 125 to 180 years. The forests surrounding this area are due for a fire.

The people building homes in this area may be putting themselves right in the middle of a disaster waiting to happen.

News Reporter What can homeowners do about the danger of fire?

Fire Warden I would say the first thing that they can do is make an informed decision about where they build houses. As a fire warden, I see all of the houses in danger and think that communities and individuals need to make better choices about where they build.

Second, if people do build houses in areas that are prone to fire, they need to protect their houses. They can do this by keeping flammable materials away from their houses, using fire-resistant materials during construction, and being careful when using fire.

If anyone in the audience wants to know how to protect their home, they can look on the world wide web at www.firewise.org.

SCENE 6 SCRIPT

News ReporterLet's turn to a local homeowner and landowner to see how they feel about the possibility of fire.

Have you every thought about the possibility of large wildfire in the area?

HomeownerWildfires, earthquakes, and tornadoes are all possible, but I try not to think about it too much. You can't control things like that.

News ReporterHave you done anything to prepare?

HomeownerMy house is insured and I don't burn anything outdoors when it is dry, but besides that, not really. I have 40 acres of trees and I can't get insurance on them. If a fire came through the forest, I would lose all of my trees.

News ReporterWhat would you say to a person that said that fires have occurred in these forests throughout history and the forests need fire to remain healthy?

HomeownerI would say that what might be good for the trees is not good for us folks that live here.

News ReporterA very hot issue. Back to you.

News AnchorWe'll be sure to keep watch on this burning issue. That does it for our program tonight. Have a great evening!

• END SCENE 6 •

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What is the issue that the news report is dealing with?
 How do the different people in the program feel about fire?
 What can people do to protect themselves from wildfires?
 Do you think that the threat that wildfire poses to people and their homes is increasing or decreasing? Why?