



## CLIMATE FACT CHECK: APRIL 2026 EDITION

Debunking the 'fingerprint of climate change' -

Dismantling claims that climate is causing homelessness, and setting the record straight about heatwaves, storms, wildfires, and hailstorms -

Plus, the Atlantic Current is NOT on the brink of collapse

### March 28th: Wrong, *Seattle Times*, low snowpack does not mean heightened wildfire risk in Washington State

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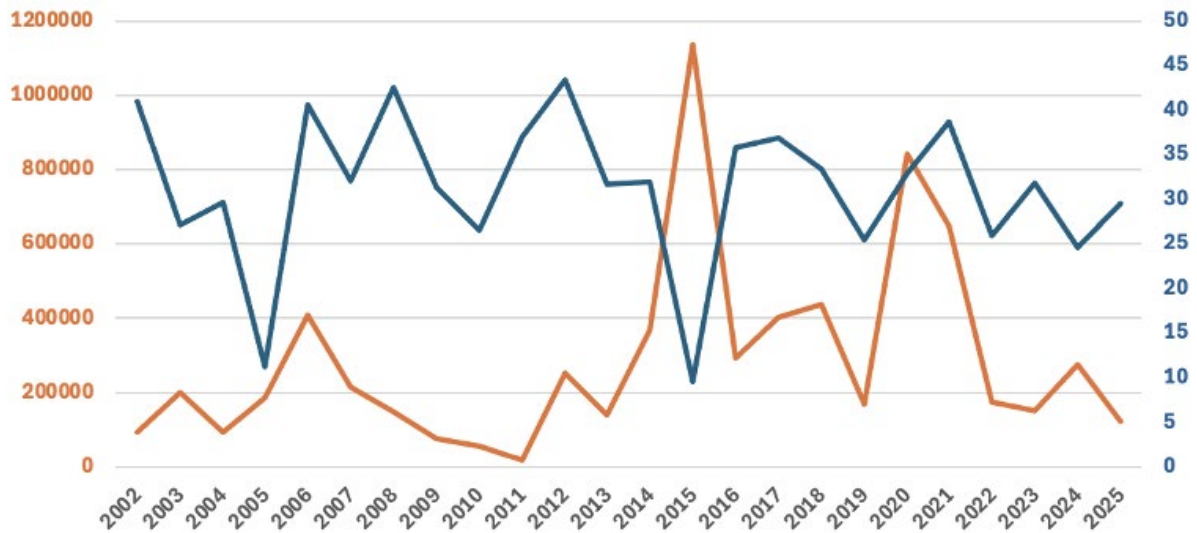


**Claim:** Media outlets like the [Seattle Times](#) (also [here](#)), [FOX 13 Seattle](#), recently claimed that a

below-average mountain snowpack in the spring signals increased wildfire danger for the upcoming summer. They opine that thinner snowpack due to climate change leads to drier conditions, earlier melt, and greater fire potential across the state.

**Fact-Check:** This narrative does not hold up well under scientific scrutiny. Data show very little correlation between April 1st snowpack levels and total acreage burned by wildfires in Washington each year. Cliff Mass, Ph.D., professor of atmospheric science at the University of Washington, [plotted the comparison](#) of April 1st snowpack against annual wildfire burn area from 2002 to 2025 below. As one can see, there is little to no relationship. Out of 24 years examined, only 2015 paired low snowpack with large fire acreage. And even then, the fires were driven by an unusually persistent summer high-pressure ridge that brought record heat and extremely low summer precipitation, not the snowpack itself.

Washington April 1 Snowpack (inches, blue) and Wildfire Area (acres, red)



## April 11th: No, Mother Jones, today's heatwaves have not surpassed our bodies' ability to stay cool

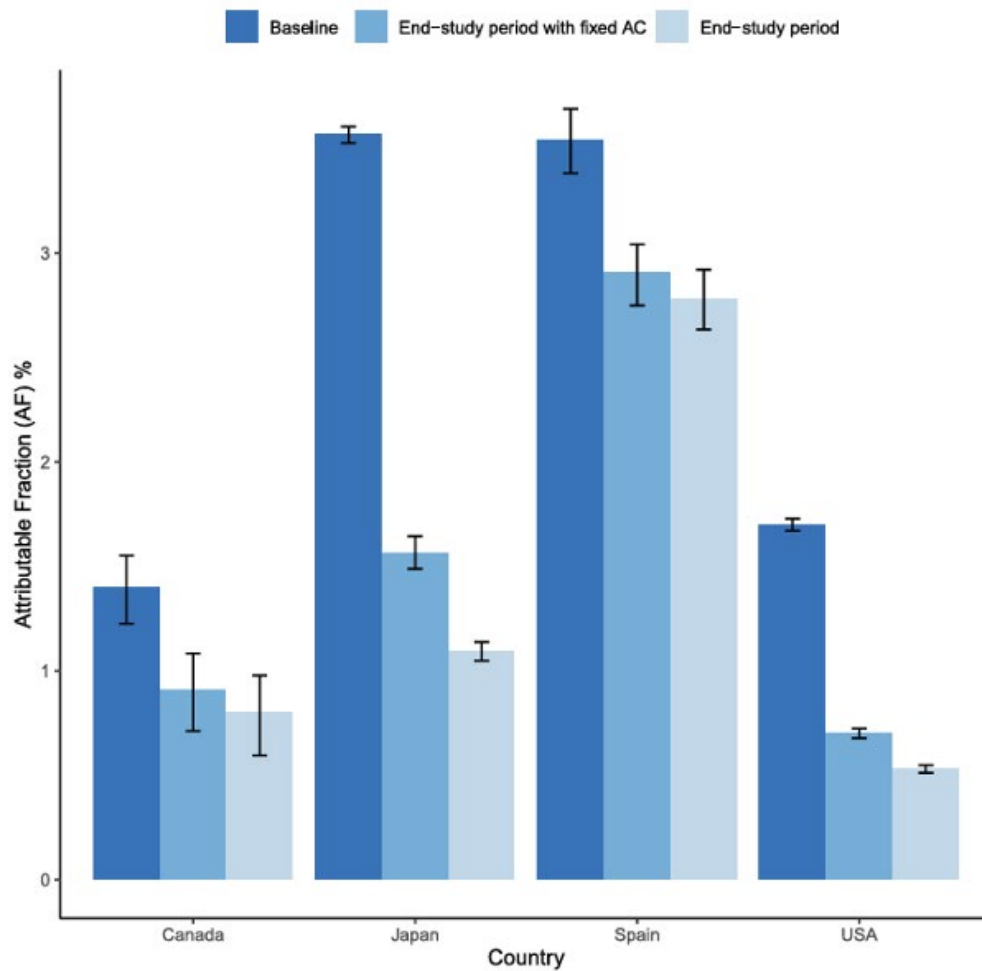


**Claim:** A [recent Mother Jones article](#) cites a [new study](#) published in *Nature Communications* claim that

modern heatwaves have already created “unsurvivable” conditions for humans, breaching the long-cited 35°C wet-bulb temperature survival limit. It highlights six recent heatwaves (including Mecca 2024, Bangkok 2024, Phoenix 2023, and others) where deadly impacts occurred despite not reaching that threshold, warning that hundreds of millions of people are at grave risk due to climate change.

**Fact-Check:** The fact that people do continue to live in areas regularly above the supposed survival limit, debunks this claim from the outset. There is no specific temperature that the Earth might reasonably experience for any extended period at which humans can't survive – it all depends on a variety of other conditions. Heat has always been deadly for the vulnerable, particularly the elderly, those with preexisting health conditions, outdoor workers, or people without access to water, air conditioning, or other means of cooling off. Excess deaths from heatwaves are nothing new. Over [5,000 people](#) were killed during the heatwaves of July–August 1936 in the United States. The *Mother Jones* article ignores key limitations of the study. First, the results are based on a model. Second, it is also assumed that people have a six-hour continuous exposure starting at a typical core body temp of 98.6°F (37°C), and that there is no behavioral adaptation to temperature spikes (e.g., hydration, clothing adjustments, reduced activity, seeking shade, resting, etc.). The *Mother Jones* piece ignores the real-world evidence that adaptation works. Real-world data indicate that heat-related

mortality has decreased in many developed countries since the 1970s, thanks to AC. A landmark [2020 multi-country longitudinal study](#) published in *Epidemiology* analyzed 331 locations across Canada, Japan, Spain, and the U.S. from 1972–2009 and found heat-related excess mortality plunged despite any warming: from 1.40% to 0.80% in Canada, 3.57% to 1.10% in Japan, 3.54% to 2.78% in Spain, and 1.70% to 0.53% in the States.



**FIGURE 3.** Excess mortality associated to heat reported as attributable fraction (AF%) estimated at the beginning (baseline, dark) and end of the study period assuming no change (end-study period with fixed air conditioning, medium) or with the observed change (end-study period, light) in air conditioning (AC) prevalence.

## April 14th: No, climate change is not making hailstorms worse

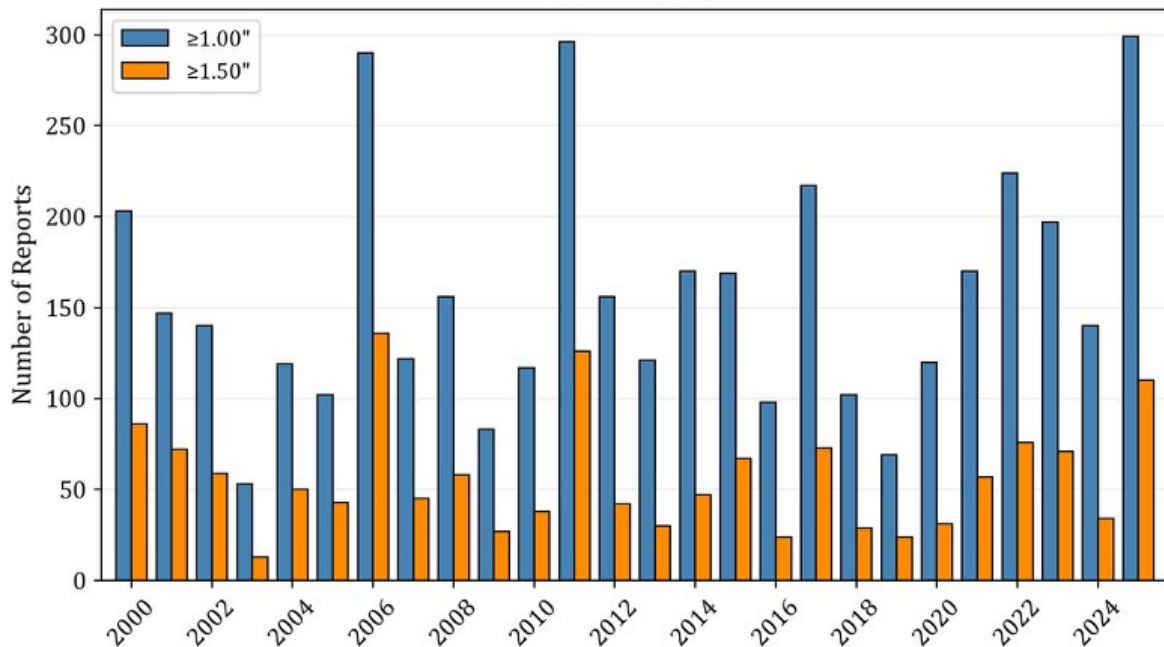


**Claim:** Sarah Godlewski, the Secretary of State of Wisconsin, who is currently running for Lieutenant Governor on the Democratic ticket, [posted a video](#)

on Facebook showing herself standing on her front porch during a hailstorm. In the video, she exclaims, "Republicans claim climate change isn't real, but this is golf-ball-sized hail in my front yard! This isn't normal, and we can't keep ignoring our environment!"

**Fact-Check:** Godlewski's video may make for good virtue signaling politics, but her claim is false. Hailstorms are nothing new. March, April, and May are prime severe weather season in the United States. According to the state climatology office, Wisconsin's largest hailstone on record measured [5.7 inches in diameter](#); it was found in Wausau in Marathon County on May 22, 1921. Long-term [data from NOAA's Storm Events Database](#) indicate that severe hail (diameter  $\geq 1.0$  inch) reports in Wisconsin have not increased over the last 25 years. While a longer record would be more helpful, there was significant underreporting prior to the mid-1990s due to limited technology. Cellphone cameras and social media, have enabled easier reporting, making it seem that hail is more severe, but the data say it isn't. In theory, giant hail should decrease under global warming because it raises the freezing level, which means hailstones have more time to melt before reaching the ground.

Wisconsin Hail Reports by Size Threshold  
2000–2025



Data source: NOAA NCEI Storm Events Database  
<https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/stormevents/>

Chart: Chris Martz

# April 14th: The April heatwave was not a “fingerprint of climate change,” WHYY.org

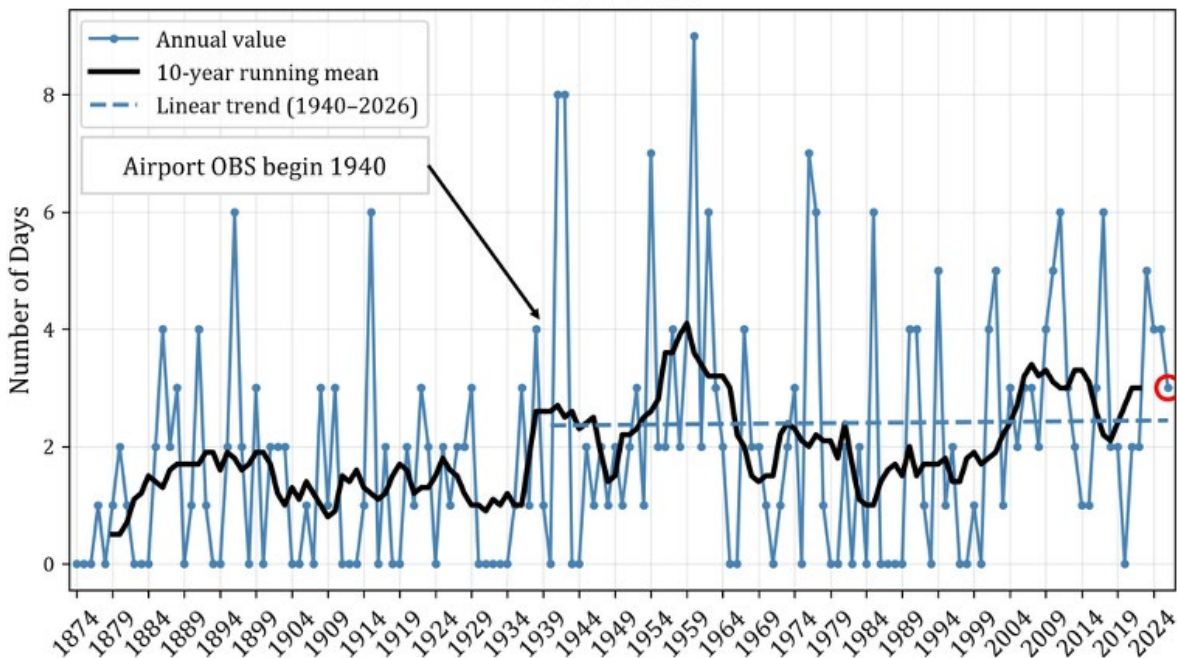


**Claim:** Philadelphia’s *WHYY News* [published an article](#) claiming that the city’s mid-April heatwave had the “fingerprint of climate change” all over it. They stated, “climate

analysts say that these hot temperatures fit into a trend of warming spring weather,” quoting a researcher from climate advocacy group Climate Central. Jen Brady, the data analyst at Climate Central, also claims that events like the mid-April heatwave are now “twice as likely” due to climate warming.

**Fact-Check:** While it is true that spring weather conditions have become warmer, there is no indication that this has translated to an increase in unusually warm April afternoons, at least in Philadelphia, where the *WHYY* story was focused on. Philadelphia recorded five consecutive days with daily maximum temperatures  $\geq 80^{\circ}\text{F}$  between April 13th and 17th. This has happened seven other times before, all of which were more than 20 years ago, according to [NOAA data](#). The record run was seven days from April 14–20, 1941. Philadelphia also recorded eight days  $\geq 80^{\circ}\text{F}$  in April, but the record is nine from April 1960. Both Aprils 1941 and 1942 also observed eight days each. Long-term, there has been *no increase* in warm April afternoons since weather observations began at Philadelphia International Airport in June 1940. So, Climate Central’s claim that these types of events are twice as likely now does not withstand scientific scrutiny.

Philadelphia April Days with  $T_{\text{max}} \geq 80^{\circ}\text{F}$   
1874–2026



Data source: NOAA / RCC-ACIS daily  $T_{\text{max}}$  station data  
April-only threshold counts

Chart: Chris Martz

## April 16th: No, UCLA, climate change is not a primary driver of rising U.S. homelessness

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**Claim:** [Research led by UCLA's](#)

Dr. Kathryn Leifheit (published in JAMA Network Open and other journals) claims that "each home lost to climate-related events, per 10,000 people, was associated with a significant, 1 percentage point greater increase in homelessness." The studies frame homelessness as a "predictable consequence of climate disasters," especially citing the 2025 Los Angeles County wildfires, and call for housing stabilization as a core part of disaster response.

**Fact-Check:** Disasters can indeed displace people and temporarily increase homelessness, but the UCLA researchers were wrong to frame climate change as a key driver. Climate change is not a documented factor contributing to homelessness, unlike well-documented causes: chronic shortages of affordable housing, skyrocketing rents, eviction, drug addiction, and state- and local-level policy failures. U.S. homelessness reached record highs in 2024, with about 771,000 total (roughly 23 per 10,000 people), with stabilization or a slight decline into 2025. The primary driver, according to analyses by the [U.S. Department of Housing & Human Development \(HUD\)](#) and groups like End Homelessness, is an affordable housing shortage. In California, home to 30% of the nation's homeless, restrictive zoning, high construction costs, and regulatory barriers have created massive shortages. More importantly, there is [no evidence weather related disasters have become more frequent or severe](#), thus they can't be responsible for any increase in homelessness.

## April 20th: Wrong, The Independent, the Atlantic Current isn't on the brink of collapse

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**Claim:** *The Independent* warns (once again) that the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) is [significantly more likely to shut down](#) within

decades, plunging Europe into extreme winters and triggering global disruption. The article asserts that AMOC "could pass the shutdown tipping point within the next couple of decades," and that a slowdown of 42 to 58 percent by 2100 is "almost certain to end in collapse."

**Fact-Check:** This is wrong-headed speculation. First, the article itself acknowledges that analyzing the AMOC is "an incredibly complex process" with "widely varying results" ranging from no drop at all to a massive slowdown. That admission is key. Published science over the past decade has pointed in three different directions: some studies projecting collapse, others indicating [relative stability](#), and still others suggesting a modest [strengthening](#) of the AMOC. The core issue is model dependence. The [study highlighted by The Independent](#) blends limited real-world observations with climate models run under high-end emissions pathways and large freshwater influx scenarios. These are stress tests. They are not forecasts. They assume strong

anthropogenic (human-caused) forcing and then examine how models behave. The high-end emission scenarios have increasingly been rejected, even by those who argue humans are causing climate change, as being [unrealistic and likely impossible](#).

## April 21st: No, New Zealand is not experiencing a new era of “a storm every eight days” due to climate change



**Claim:** New Zealand media outlet, Radio New Zealand (RNZ), [reported](#) that a “storm” hit the nation every eight days on average between March 2025 and February

this year, causing damage claims to the country’s largest insurer, IAG New Zealand, to more than triple. Bryce Davies, IAG’s climate spokesperson, told RNZ that the country was now experiencing storms far more often, and with greater severity, than in the past. He claimed that storms have increased from one per month to ~3–4 over the last 15 years, and that it demands “systemic response.”

**Fact-Check:** This is misleading, at best. IAG’s tracker counts “damaging weather events” (e.g., strong winds or intense rain) based on internal claims data. This is not an objective meteorological count of storms, but rather a proprietary metric that is influenced by exposure, population growth, rising property values, improved reporting, and urban development in vulnerable areas. Independent long-term data show no clear increase in storm frequency or severity. Peer-reviewed research of extreme rainfall events (a key driver of claims) shows [no historical trend](#) nationwide, with high counts in earlier decades like 1921–1940. [Normalized insurance losses](#) for weather events (adjusted for changes in exposure, accounting for more buildings and higher asset values) show no statistically significant increase either.

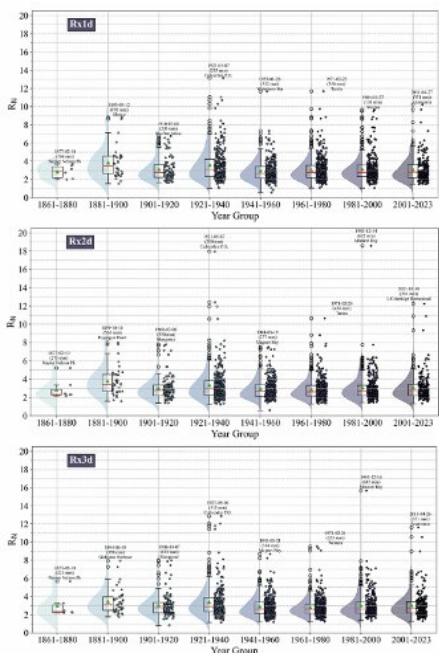
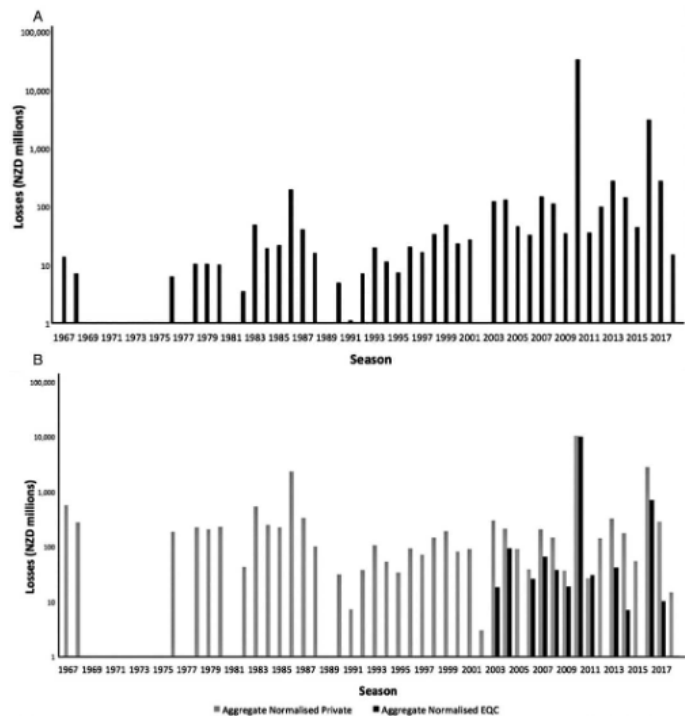


Figure 3. Rainhead plots of  $R_n$  for the top five extreme rainfall events at each of the 107 stations utilized in this study, across the Rx10, Rx20, and Rx30 return periods. Each subplot shows the distribution of  $R_n$  values grouped by different time periods from 1861 to 2023, with individual events plotted as points. The highest  $R_n$  in each period is highlighted, along with their associated stations and rainfall amounts. The density distribution illustrates the spread of event amounts within each time period, while the triangles denote the central tendency and spread. The triangles represent the average  $R_n$  of extreme events within each time period.



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## April 28th: Wrong, AP, wildfires have always burned at night

# AP

**Claim:** In a story picked up by dozens of media outlet, the [Associated Press claims](#) that human-caused climate change is causing fires to burn later into the night and earlier in the morning. The AP asserts that “burning time for North American wildfires is going into overtime” and that the number of hours favorable for wildfires is 36% higher than it was 50 years ago. They tie this to higher nighttime temperatures, implying that fires “used to die down or even die out at night” but now persist because of climate change.

**Fact-Check:** The AP’s claims are false. Wildfires do not “go to sleep” because the clock strikes sunset. They slow when humidity rises, temperatures fall, and winds calm. When those meteorological conditions do not improve at night, fires continue to burn. That has always been true. Both major fires cited by the AP were driven by extreme wind events, not by some novel nighttime warming effect. The 2025 Eaton Fire in California was [sparked by electrical power system failures](#) during a severe windstorm event. The Palisades Fire was determined to have been [intentionally set by an arsonist](#). Ignition sources matter. Neither fire began because of climate change. Both were driven by powerful, sustained winds common to the areas during that time of year, which remained intense overnight. The AP acknowledges that its analysis “looked at times when conditions were ripe for fire, but that didn’t mean fires occurred during all that time.” In other words, the study modeled fire-weather conditions rather than measuring actual fire behavior. [Long-term data](#) reveal a steep decline in wildfire burn area in the U.S.

### Wildland Fires: Number of Acres Burned in the USA

1926-2019

Source: National Interagency Fire Center

[https://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/fireInfo\\_stats\\_totalFires.html](https://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/fireInfo_stats_totalFires.html)



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