

Opinion: Fire is not a toy to play with

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Aug. 25, 2011, Reno Gazette-Journal.*

As the fire that raged through the wildlands south of Gardnerville clearly demonstrated, this can be a very dangerous time of year for Northern Nevada.

That fire reached more than 3,800 acres before firefighters were able to get it under control, burning an unoccupied home, a guesthouse and a handful of outbuildings in the tinder-dry pinion-juniper forest in rural Douglas County.

One resident mourned the loss: "All those trees are gone. They won't ever look again like they did in my lifetime."

As bad as the damage to the landscape was, however, of even more concern was the injury of two firefighters fighting the blaze.

Yet, longtime residents of this area who have seen the kind of devastation that a wildfire can cause know that it could have been much worse. In 2007, the Angora Fire in South Lake Tahoe burned 3,100 acres but destroyed 254 homes.

The two 15-year-old Gardnerville boys who were accused of starting the Ray May Fire by leaving a smoldering campfire at a makeshift fort can take some solace that the consequences of their foolish actions weren't significantly more damaging. It will be costly for them and their parents, but not as costly as it could have been.

Read the whole story