

Opinion: Nix the campfire

By Marjorie "Slim" Woodruff, High Country News

In 1972, Grand Canyon National Park outlawed campfires in the backcountry. Backpackers like me considered this an outrage. After all, the only people who carried those fancy little stoves back then were people incapable of building a fire. I bring this up because we are living through another explosive fire season in the West.

Of course, popular campsites back then looked a lot like parking lots. No downed wood, no dead (or live) grasses, no bushes, no bark on the trees as far up as you could reach. When a dozen people a night are building campfires, anything burnable vanishes pretty quickly.

Note: Fires denude the camping area.

I had a stove. I remember setting up my tiny SVEA, putting the pot on to boil, and turning to organize my sleeping place, because when cooking on a wood fire, it takes forever for the pot to boil.

But my pot boileth over, more quickly than I expected.

Read the whole story