



Just days after our [feature](#) of Reelfoot Lake last week and the 1811-1812 quakes that formed it, the Washington Post [reported](#) on the latest National Seismic Hazard Model, which predicts that same New Madrid fault zone has a *90% chance* of experiencing a severe earthquake in the next century, making it the **most at-risk location** east of the Rockies.

FEATURED PARK



Photos and facts of
your favorite parks,
one issue at a time

Dinosaur National Monument Utah and Colorado



FACT 1: As its name suggests, Dinosaur is laden with fossils, most of which originate from the Late Jurassic, ~150 million years ago. While many fossils have been excavated and are now displayed in museums, visitors can still view more than 1,500 fossilized bones where they were originally found.

FACT 2: Dinosaur covers over 210,000 acres along the Green and Yampa rivers, protecting about 400 modern-day animal species including bighorn sheep and mountain lions.

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PARK PERKS



Visualizing key research to show why parks matter

Public discussion of wildfires typically focuses on their potential for damage, especially to human well-being. Park policy has often recommended fire suppression, seeking to eliminate all wildfires regardless of size. By contrast, an [article](#) published last November in the journal *Science Advances* explores fire's potential to play a more positive role in land management. Basing their analysis on satellite data, the authors utilized measurements from NASA's Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS), a satellite-based sensor, to estimate the presence and intensity of wildfires across about 124,000 km² forested acres in California from 2001 to 2021.

Low Intensity Fire Regimes

Benefits to conifer forests

PRESERVED CANOPY COVER

IMPROVED FOREST AGE STRUCTURE

REDUCED SURFACE FUEL



SLOWER FIRE SPREAD RATE

REDUCED ECOLOGICAL AND HUMAN RISK

LOWER FLAME HEIGHT

64%

REDUCED LIKELIHOOD OF HIGH-INTENSITY FIRES

The authors found that minor fires are not only a natural occurrence in many ecosystems, but may often play a **crucial role** in preventing the damage caused by larger fires. In conifer forests, for example, the likelihood of severe fires in areas burned by minor fires was about *64% lower* than in similar unburned areas, with reduced risk for **at least 6 years**. These results suggest relatively small fires can often reduce the fuel load of a given area, eliminating dead wood and other material that would otherwise fuel high-intensity fires.

This research validates conservation policy that leverages wildfire in forest management, making use of its fuel-reducing potential rather than pursuing complete suppression. More generally, these findings suggest conservation may benefit from a more nuanced appreciation for unwieldy and even dangerous natural phenomena, accounting for *benefits* in addition to risks.

PLAY GROUND

What do you get when you take away 1lb 1oz from a lion's meal?

1 pounce