Latin American and Caribbean UNESCO Sites Climate, Risk and Resilience Platform

Capacity-Building Webinars: Climate change and fire management in UNESCO Global Geoparks and Biosphere Reserves

Webinar 1: The new normal for wildfires: impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems

Wednesday 1 September 2021

Time: 12h00-15h00 (Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina)

Summary: As an introduction to the series of five webinars, lessons-learned from the megafires of 2017 are considered, especially considering how climate change and human management are creating conditions that require new management regimes. The impacts of fire on biodiversity, geodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes are also considered.

- Key case studies: Torres del Paine Biosphere Reserve, Araucaria Biosphere Reserve (Partner: CONAF Chile, MAB-Chile); Naturtejo UNESCO Global Geopark, Portugal
- Roundtable: UNESCO site experts and affiliated experts

Languages: English, Spanish and Portuguese interpretation will be provided throughout

Background

Within the framework of the Latin American and Caribbean UNESCO Sites Climate, Risk and Resilience Platform and with the kind support of umgrauemeio, UNESCO is proud to organize a series of capacity-building webinars primarily for managers and stakeholders of UNESCO sites in Iberoamerica and the Caribbean that are responsible for fire management.

The Iberoamerican region has one of the highest incidences of wildfires in the world.[1] An analysis of changing patterns in wildfires in the Americas during recent decades by the Iberoamerican Network of Climate Change Offices (RIOCC) has found diverging patterns and reasons for these trends remain disputed.[2] Drivers of fire patterns across the Americas include agricultural patterns, deforestation, and climate change related factors.

[1] Bilbao *et al.* (2020), pp. 441, 443
[2] *Ibid.*, pg. 444

Nevertheless, climate change is changing fire patterns across the LAC region, directly increasing wildfire risk in some areas, with longer wildfire seasons, that are dryer and more severe. Whereas indirect drivers may be at play in others, such as invasive pests killing trees, causing fuel build-up. The displacement of people due to the impacts of climate change can lead to forest clearing and anthropogenic fires.

At a regional level, monitoring of fires is inconsistent and fire management is only beginning to move beyond fire suppression and fire fighting to incorporate integrated fire management plans that may be based on indigenous fire knowledge.

Drawing on science, good practices, lessons-learned and innovations from across Iberoamerica and the Caribbean, this webinar series will focus on case studies in UNESCO Global Geoparks and Biosphere Reserves with presentations and discussions from experts focussed on supporting site managers to better plan and implement integrated fire management in their sites. It will also feature innovative research and tools that can be applied in UNESCO sites or translated into policy-making and solutions across the region.

This series will bring together global, regional Biosphere Reserve and UNESCO Global Geopark stakeholder experts and others to consider these emerging issues from the perspective of their experiences. The overall aim is that participants will emerge with new knowledge and perspectives that can be applied in UNESCO designated sites and in wider contexts.

Objectives:

- UNESCO site stakeholders expand their knowledge of tools and the impacts of climate change and fires on the sites;
- UNESCO site stakeholders and affiliated experts exchange knowledge and tools to improve integrated fire management;
- UNESCO site stakeholders share good practice examples of fire management

Format:

- 5 webinars of three hours
- Case study based, with international and multistakeholder roundtable panel discussions
- Participants have plenty of time for questions, answers and inputs

Target participants:

- UNESCO Global Geopark, Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site stakeholders;
- Managers and technical officials for climate change, fire management at international, national and local level;
- Stakeholders from other sites and protected areas;
- Technical staff and Officials of national forestry ministries, environmental ministries, climate change divisions.
- Other interested technical experts and professionals

Agenda:

Time	Title	Speaker	Format
12:00	Introduction: Climate Change and wildfires in Ibero-America and the Caribbean	Bibiana Bilbao, Universidad de Simón Bolivar, Venezuela	Presentation
12:20	Case studies: Wildfires in Biosphere Reserves: Lessons learned (Chile)	Omar Levet and Nemo Ortega, National Forestry Corporation (CONAF), Araucarias Biosphere Reserve, Chile René Cifuentes, National Forestry Corporation (CONAF), Torres del Paine Biosphere Reserve, Chile	Presentation
12:50	Case study: Naturtejo UNESCO Global Geopark, Portugal--Impacts of the 2017 megafires on geodiversity and ecosystems (Portugal)	Carlos Carvalho, Naturtejo UNESCO Global Geopark, Portugal	Presentation
13:10	**Break**		
13:30	Expert: Wildfires in Chile: causes, impacts and resilience with a focus on biodiversity and ecosystems	Mauro González, Universidad Austral de Chile, Associate Researcher, , Climate and Resilience Centre (CR2)	Presentation
13:50	Expert: Current State of wildfires and the impacts of climate change in Chile	Jorge Saavedra, Forestry Engineer, National Forestry Corporation (CONAF), Chile	Presentation
14:10	Roundtable	Moderator: Helga Chulepin, World Council of UNESCO Global Geoparks, Uruguay 1. Javier Grosfeld, Director, Regional Division, Patagonia Norte, National Park Administration, Andino Norpatagónica Biosphere Reserve, Argentina 2. Osmar Bambini, umgrauemeio, Brasil 3. Heloisa Dias, National Council, Mata Atlântica, Biosphere Reserve 4. Ane Alencar, Coordinator of Burn Scars Model, Mapbiomas, Brazil	Panel discussion
14:55	Close		