Chapter 1

Setting the Scene for Post-Fire Management

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1.1 Introduction

Every year, around 45,000 wildfires occur in Europe, burning an area of 0.5 million hectares (San-Miguel and Camia 2009). Between 1995 and 2004, more than four million hectares were burned in the Mediterranean region alone, corresponding to an area larger than the Netherlands. In addition to social and environmental impacts, wildfires also produce considerable economic damages due to: (i) the huge amount of resources spent in fire suppression and prevention; (ii) the loss of commercial value of damaged wood products; (iii) the costs related to loss of public non-market services (i.e., biodiversity protection, water cycle regulation, supply of recreational areas, soil protection, carbon sequestration, etc.).

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