

Do your part and fire won't start!



A picture taken from Temeni beach: How the fire was burning at night

One of the most important natural disasters facing the community, especially in recent years, are wildfires. After a meeting with the expert for the fire in Aigio, Mr. Timotheou, who also took part in this fire, gives us a lot of information on how we can prevent those disastrous natural phenomena. More and more often, every summer a new focal point of fire breaks out in the area of Aigialeia which often finds people unprepared, while others are just waiting for their ‘beginning’. But what causes these fires? What effect do they have on both nature and the human population itself? What kind of measures are needed to be taken in order to reduce the number of fires in this area?

Remarkable is the way in which these ‘fire focal points’ are created. “A cause of fire is the arson and the deceit to destroy the natural environment, with the aim of individual or social support, for example by creating new habitable land, houses, dwellings, factories, even for someone to become widely accepted”, says Mr Timotheou. Another cause is weather, as with a swift but ‘miraculous’ lightning, a forest is really straightforward to catch fire. More specifically, human carelessness and the theory of human superiority on Earth are – if not the most important – one of the most significant and serious causes of fire in an area.

Then it’s worth mentioning the consequences that such wildfires and not just a fire can have. First and foremost, the destruction of the natural environment, as more and more animals and plants are being burned, resulting in a rapid decline in their populations in the region. “However, such a phenomenon entails landslides, floods and a very hot summer for this region”, he adds.



How the fire started in Dervenaki area (picture taken from a local resident)

So, in order to prevent this, it is necessary to establish and observe certain rules. Every citizen must clean the dry grass in cooperation with the municipality while equally of the utmost importance is the opening of safety zones. He also added that the state needs to inform citizens more accurately while the electricity network should be preserved, too.

As far as the Aigialeia region is concerned, he talks about the fire that erupted in the summer just above Intercontinental. “It was a very hot summer, with no rainfall at all, with great drought and more specifically whole days with very strong wind. For unknown reasons, a small outbreak began to manifest in certain points next to the road”, he contends.

Because of all of this, it quickly gained enormous dimensions and destroyed huge cultivable land. Fortunately, no houses were destroyed and there were no casualties. At that time, large fire forces and airplanes along with municipal groups helped with water carriers and many residents contributed. Eventually, he said, the fire was reduced and calmed down after 3 days.

Unfortunately, however, the losses it caused were devastating. The natural landscape was burned down and only fragments of the forests remained. He emphasized that an amorphous piece of forest no longer exists... So apart from the aesthetics, we expected -and there were- problems with the first rains. The burnt mountain with the first waterfront was cut off and part of it moved to the national and the provincial road. These roads were eventually closed because they were filled with mud and water, gradually resulting in the complete cessation of traffic. The same happened during last winter many times...

The summer that begins in a few weeks is expected – and will come – to increase the temperature of the microclimate of the region of Diakopto-Dervenaki-Akrata with the risk of creating a new fire that will burn the rest of the forest that has so far remained untouched. Finally, the tourist businesses in the burning

area will suffer great destruction, since that picturesque landscape's damage is expected to damage the wider economic sector of the region of Aigialeia.



The second night of the fire: Many areas were burned down

By continuously pursuing viable targets, it will be achieved to a very large extent to reduce the outbreak of fires, both with the right information and with the rational critical thinking and ability of the citizens. That is why it is necessary to mention actions that are needed to be established in order to avoid such a disastrous environmental phenomenon.

Initially, before a fire breaks out, there are times when firefighters have predicted its provocation. In fact, in the past there were forest and farm guards, people who knew the forest from outside out and in case of an emergency they guided the firefighters on the right paths and roads. In addition, it is necessary to decontaminate and clean dry plots, because it is very easy to catch fire that extends lightning. The opening of roads within the forest contributes to the development of fire zones, land stripes without vegetation, or roads inside the forest that prevent the spread of fire. Finally, at a time when technology is constantly evolving, the update of the extent of fire is faster and more accurate while all operators are in full vigilance, simultaneously carrying out patrols.

On the other hand, after the fire has been suppressed, the local authorities must immediately reforest it with slow-burning trees, because the pines are tremendous and increase the intensity of the flame. It is also needed for projects to support the mountain in order to avoid landslides as much as possible and, finally, better training, organization and coordination between the municipality, firefighters and inhabitants is required to avoid fires in the area, he finally adds.

To sum up, the fires are a blow to the whole world and even more to those who have the 'luck' to experience them. However, with proper management and vigilance, it can develop into a phenomenon almost completely manageable, thus avoiding all the above negative effects that it can bring to the environment...