

# 5-minute Climate News



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### Did you know..?

- The United States constitutes 5% of the world population, yet contributes to 22% of the entire world's carbon emission.
- We lost approximately 302.4 billion work hours due to excessive heat in 2019.

# WHAT HAPPENED IN MAUI?

By Nathasha Thalpaguruge and Sophia Halim

In a catastrophic sweep, fierce wildfires tore through Maui, consuming thousands of acres and claiming the lives of at least 114 people. The wildfires left not only a bare landscape but also etched a grim chapter in the nation's history. The blazes destroyed more than 2,200 structures, which have an estimated value of \$5.5 billion, according to the Pacific Disaster Center and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Over 2,000 people who were originally housed in emergency shelters have been emptied, and many displaced residents were forced to stay in hotels.

It's clear that these wildfires didn't show up magically. Hawaii had been suffering through a consistent trend of dry weather. About 14% of Hawaii had been suffering from severe or moderate drought according to the US Drought Monitor and 80% of the state has been classified as abnormally dry. Although climate change was a huge factor in spreading the wildfires, a top power utility that provides power to 95% of the state's residents, Hawaiian Electric, was also to blame. The power utility company was asked to shut off power in regions that may damage power lines and create a blaze, however, they failed to do so. As winds picked up, several power lines were down. Video footage and data have determined that a power line may have sparked one of the fires. It is estimated that it could take years for Maui to recover from the catastrophic wildfires that have ravaged the island.



Waiola Church in Lahaina engulfed in flames on August 8, 2023

## SOURCES

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- [HTTPS://WWW.VOX.COM/CLIMATE/2023/8/14/23831460/HAWAII-FIRES-MAUI-WILDFIRES-DEATH-TOLL-SEARCH-RESCUE-MISSING](https://www.vox.com/climate/2023/8/14/23831460/hawaii-fires-maui-wildfires-death-toll-search-rescue-missing)

# CANADIAN WILDFIRES STILL RAGING IN THE BRONX

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By Ethan Liu

The Bronx, with over 65% of residents being Black or Hispanic, faces disproportionately high asthma rates due to the intentional concentration of pollution-emitting sources in the borough – one being the Cross Bronx Expressway created by Robert Moses, a notorious urban planner during the 1900s.

While it has been nearly three months since New York City was tainted by the golden hues of the Canadian wildfires, the long-term effects from this “Breaking Bad background” continue to plague NYC residents, especially those living in the Bronx. The particulate matter and toxic pollutants released by the Canadian wildfires traveled quickly to the Bronx, a community already burdened with poor air quality due to local industrial activities. The influx of wildfire-generated pollutants caused long-term exacerbation of respiratory conditions to residents who already suffer from them. The Canadian wildfires serve as a wake up call that environmental issues know no boundaries. As a nation, we need to advocate for sustainable and equitable policies to protect the health of our neighbors who bear the heaviest burdens of environmental injustice.



New Yorkers protecting themselves with masks due to a dangerous air quality index of over 400 on June 7, 2023

## SOURCES

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<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/toxic-smoke-canadian-wildfires-impact-health-millions-us/story?id=99837839#:~:text=on%20the%20body.%22-,PM2.,as%20asthma%20and%20heart%20disease.>

<https://welcome2thebronx.com/2023/06/08/already-overburdened-by-air-pollution-canadian-wildfires-leave-bronx-residents-breathless/>



# THE WILLOW PROJECT

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By Agatha Whitthorne

The Biden Administration has made numerous promises, many of which impact environmental issues and subsequently Indigenous communities. We must note the connection between nature and Native Americans— they're intrinsically attached. Indigenous survival is intertwined with the conservation of natural resources.

Today, many Native American people are living on reservations that don't have clean water, electricity, or plumbing. Due to native peoples' reliance on naturally occurring resources, they're one of the first communities to be affected by climate change.

## SOURCES

<https://www.npr.org/2023/03/22/1165353140/alaska-the-willow-project-and-the-future-of-fossil-fuels>

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<https://www.nativemovement.org/willow-project>

In March of 2023, the Willow Project was approved, allowing the ConocoPhillips company to drill for oil in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska. They ignored Indigenous people and environmental advocates to make money off of and pollute native Alaska.

Biden approved the Willow Project to lower gas prices, with the reality being that ConocoPhillips won't see any oil until 2029. However, the project will begin affecting Indigenous Alaskan communities immediately. Most notably, the Nuiqsut tribe will be exposed to deadly toxins that will damage not only the Alaskan Slope but will release upwards of 260 million metric tons of carbon dioxide into earth's atmosphere over the next 3 decades. Stop the Willow Oil Project, protect our environment and Native communities.

# CLIMATE OPPORTUNITIES

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*The Amazon rainforest. Credit: Marcio Isensee e Sa / Adobe Stock (photo via climate.nasa.gov)*

- **THE WILD CENTER** IS SCIENCE-BASED, AND ITS EXPERIENCES, EXHIBITS AND PROGRAMS ARE DESIGNED TO OPEN NEW WAYS TO LOOK INTO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE. THEY ARE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR A VARIETY OF TASKS **(14 YEARS OLD+)**
- **KIDS FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE** IS A YOUTH-LED NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO TEACHING YOUTH ABOUT THE CLIMATE CRISIS. THEIR GOAL IS TO FOSTER KNOWLEDGE IN STUDENTS FROM ALL ACADEMIC, SOCIOECONOMIC, AND ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS. AS A VOLUNTEER, YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES CAN INCLUDE DESIGNING SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS, ARTWORK, STORYTELLING, GRAPHIC DESIGN, OR WEB DEVELOPMENT. **(NO AGE REQUIREMENT!)**

## ACTIVITIES

**MAKE AND DECORATE YOUR OWN REUSABLE BAGS.**

**GARDENING - GROW YOUR OWN PLANTS (DIY INDOOR GARDENING OR HYDRROPONIC GARDENING).**

**IF YOU DO ANY OF THESE, SHARE IT WITH US BY TAGGING US ON INSTAGRAM @THEATMOSCOPE.**

# DONATE TO A NON PROFIT OF THE WEEK

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## THE RAINFOREST ALLIANCE

THE RAINFOREST ALLIANCE IS AN INTERNATIONAL NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION WORKING TO PROTECT FORESTS, IMPROVE THE LIVELIHOODS OF FARMERS AND FOREST COMMUNITIES, PROMOTE THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS, AND HELP THEM MITIGATE AND ADAPT TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS.

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