

Jean Arnold

I recently hiked through a two-year-old burnt forest with a relative who used to fight forest fires. He showed me how to discern burned from unburned places — as fire sometimes quickly burns only underbrush while leaving trees intact. However, many large swaths had been obviously and completely torched. He explained how each successive year brings changes to the appearance of the burned areas. The ground was rather dry for late May, compared with outings I recall from my childhood, raising concerns about this fire season. These landscapes bear witness to the way forests are being forever altered.