# WATER CONNECTS ALL LIFE IN THE FOUR CORNERS

# TÓ ÉÍ ÍINA ÉÍ T'AA AŁTSO BEE DA'AHXÍÍNIITA KWE'É KÉYAH DI¡¡GO HAHOODZOOÍGÍÍ 'AHIDI' DII'ÁADÍ

# EL AGUA CONECTA TODA FORMA DE VIDA EN LAS CUATRO ESQUINAS

**To live in this dry landscape, people, wildlife, and plants must make the most of what little water is available here. They face a delicate balance of survival. A warmer, drier climate threatens the existence of some desert species. Such a climate could also threaten our ability to live here in the future.**

**Wildfires play key roles in our environment**
Here in the Four Corners, wildfires caused by lightning occur naturally in our forests and grasslands. To live here, some plants and animals have evolved to survive wildfires.

For example, Ponderosa pines grow thick bark to protect them from burning. Pine needles on the forest floor fuel smaller wildfires instead of large and hot fires, helping these trees survive.

Small fires can be good for the environment because they clear the forest floor of grasses which produce more fuel and lead to more intense fires.

In open grasslands, wildfires suppress the growth of trees and shrubs that would otherwise take over the landscape. Wildfires also recycle nutrients back into grassland soils.

**Warmer and drier seasons lead to more wildfires**
Wildfires have long been a part of local environments. In recent decades, less rain, along with warmer temperatures have dried grasses, bushes, and trees, which more easily burn and lead to more wildfires.

If warmer and drier conditions continue, these fires could be deadly to our native plants and animals.

Proper fire management can lessen the risks. Prescribed burns and the removal of invasive plants can limit how often fires happen and how intense they become and thus protect our local environments. We can all play a role in preventing wildfires by following local guidelines and informing ourselves of fire risks.

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