

West had snowy winter, so why the fiery summer?

By Dan Elliott, AP

Acrid yellow smoke clogs the skies of major Western U.S. cities, a human-caused fire in the Columbia River Gorge rains ash on Portland, Oregon, and a century-old backcountry chalet burns to the ground in Montana's Glacier National Park.

Wildfires are chewing across dried-out Western forests and grassland, putting 2017 on track to be among the worst fire seasons in a decade.

A snowy winter across much of the West raised hopes that 2017 wouldn't be a dried-out, fire-prone year, but a hot, dry summer spoiled that.

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