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Fire in the Earth System: A Paleoperspective

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In recent decades, fire activity has increased dramatically in many parts of the world, raising concerns about future fire regimes with global warming. The image above shows a recent (2009) bush fire in northern Australia (photo: www.morguefile.com/). Fire is recognized as an essential, natural process in most ecosystems but to fully appreciate fire's role in the Earth System requires an examination of its causes and consequences over multiple temporal and spatial scales. This newsletter highlights recent research efforts that seek to gain this broader perspective.