

[Virtual Lecture by Stephen Pyne: “The Pyrocene: How Humanity Created a Fire Age”](#)

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Lecture

Date:

October 28, 2020

Location:

North Carolina, United States

Subject Fields:

American History / Studies, Environmental History / Studies, Geography, Public Policy, World History / Studies

The Forest History Society is excited to announce that acclaimed fire historian and author Dr. Stephen J. Pyne will deliver the Lynn W. Day Distinguished Lectureship in Forest and Conservation History on October 28, 2020. In his talk, “The Pyrocene: How Humanity Created a Fire Age,” Pyne will be discussing how we are living in a Fire Age of comparable scale to the Ice Ages of the Pleistocene, and whether our relationship with fire is a mutual assistance pact or a Faustian bargain. The presentation will be given through Zoom at 2 pm EDT and will last about 60 minutes. Registration is required but the event is free.

Writes Dr. Pyne, “The Earth is a uniquely fire planet, humans a uniquely fire creature, and how they have interacted has been shaping our world throughout the Holocene. First through the control over ignition, and then by adding some control over living biomass, people have been reshaping biogeography and even climate. The process went on afterburners when humanity’s quest for more firepower led to the burning of fossil biomass. This pyric transition has passed over every environment that humans inhabit. It upset fire regimes in living landscapes, leading to fire crises. Its impact on the atmosphere has globalized that effect, quickening a fire epoch. We are creating a fire age I call the Pyrocene—the fire-informed equivalent to an ice age.”

Stephen Pyne is an emeritus professor at Arizona State University, where he has been on faculty since 1985. He has published 35 books, most of them dealing with fire, but others on Antarctica, the Grand Canyon, and the Voyager mission. His fire histories include surveys of America, Australia, Canada, Europe (including Russia), and the Earth. He recently completed a ten-volume survey of wildfire in the United States called “To the Last Smoke.” He's the author of the Forest History Society's

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Issues Series book *America's Fires: A Historical Context for Policy and Practice* and a frequent contributor to its magazine *Forest History Today*.

The lecture is sponsored by the Forest History Society, Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment, Duke University's Department of History. For more information, please visit [the Forest History Society's website](#).

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