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Adaptive thinking and the global fire crisis

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Vegetation fires are an ancient, powerful, and pervasive biogeophysical process that affects the Earth System through complex interactions and feedbacks. The evolution and geographic spread of fire-wielding hominins in the Pleistocene has led to drastic, and ongoing, changes to the Earth System, a syndrome captured by the Anthropocene concept. Contemporary fire regimes are increasingly causing detrimental social, environmental and economic impacts, driven by the interaction between climate change and inappropriate land management practices. Achieving global environmental sustainability demands rethinking the relationship of humans, landscapes and fire. This requires careful blending of transdisciplinary thinking, translational research practices, and incorporation of indigenous and local knowledge.