

Forest fires and their impact on flash floods

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The destruction of the vegetation cover and the alteration of the soil by fire have crucial consequences on the hydrological properties of the subsoil. Mediterranean regions are subject to violent flash floods that could be intensified in the future due to forest fire and/or climate change. These factors should be taken into account in future flood warning systems and flood policy. Research on the Llobregat River near Barcelona has shown that in the 21st century peak flood discharge may increase up to 40%. As a consequence, the frequency of flash floods is projected to change.

Source: Versini et al. (2012). Natural Hazards. Published online 13 December 2012.

Photo: Ron Mader (www.flickr.com)