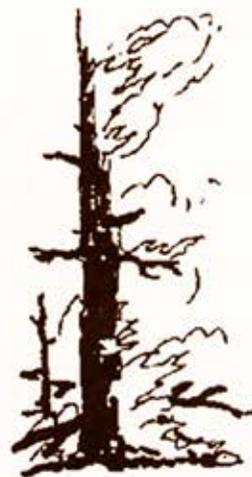
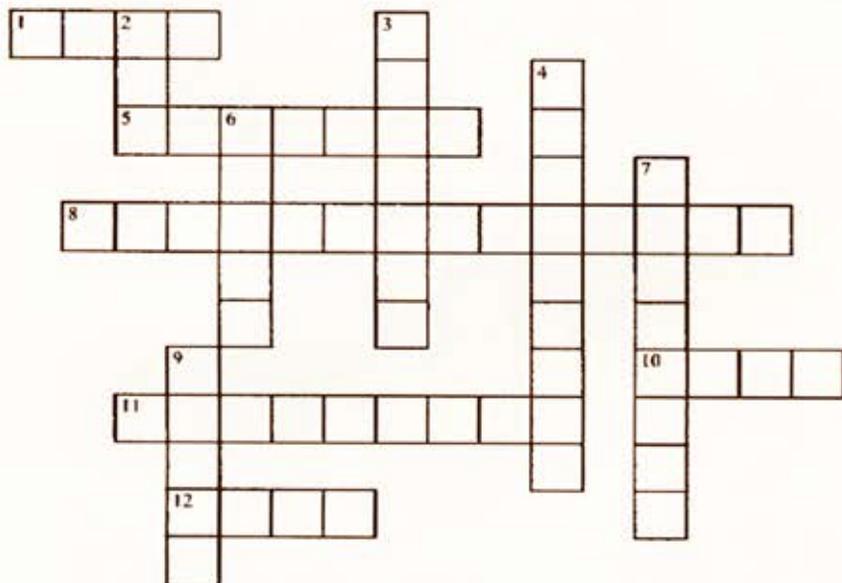


Fire is an important tool rangers use to improve park habitats. Prescribed fires, set by rangers under strict guidelines, help reduce the amount of fuel and protect prairie grasses. Fire releases minerals into the soil which help plants grow. Because there is more food, grazing animals have more to eat. Fire also thins the forest, opening up places for shrubs and other plants to grow. Elk, deer, birds, and small animals find more berries and plants to eat and places to nest.

Fire is a very dangerous tool and should only be used with great planning, care, and knowledge of its power. The effect of a fire on animals and plants depends on the type of fire. Fires in a thick forest with heavy fuel can burn hotter and can kill animals and plants. These unplanned fires are called wildfires. Instead of helping habitats, wildfires can destroy them. We should always be careful with fire and remember it is a powerful force that must be respected.

Explore the upstairs visitor center exhibits to find the answers for this crossword puzzle.



Across

1. A fire can leave a ___ in the tree rings.
5. An animal's home is its ___.
8. A fire set by park rangers to improve the park's habitat is called a ___.
10. Prescribed fires help rid the forest of excess ___.
11. By examining ___ scientist can learn many things about a tree.
12. A fire can help improve the ___ in which plants grow.

Down

2. A fire can change dead plant material into a rich ___ and help improve the soil.
3. Prescribed fires help protect the prairie grasses for bison and other ___ animals.
4. The pine tree most common in the Black Hills is the ___ pine.
6. Another name for the large mammal called a buffalo is a ___.
7. A prescribed fire helps rid the forest of excess fuels resulting in a less severe ___.
9. Food for bison and other grazing animals.