



1 **Reviews & Syntheses: Arctic Fire Regimes and Emissions in the 21st** 2 **Century**

3 Jessica L. McCarty¹, Juha Aalto^{2,3}, Ville-Veikko Paunu⁴, Steve R. Arnold⁵, Sabine Eckhardt⁶, Zbigniew
4 Klimont⁷, Justin J. Fain¹, Nikolaos Evangeliou⁶, Ari Venäläinen², Nadezhda M. Tchebakova⁸, Elena I.
5 Parfenova⁸, Kaarle Kupiainen⁹, Amber J. Soja^{10,11}, Lin Huang¹², and Simon Wilson¹³

6 ¹Department of Geography and Geospatial Analysis Center, Miami University, Oxford, OH, USA

7 ²Finnish Meteorological Institute, Helsinki, Finland

8 ³Department of Geosciences and Geography, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

9 ⁴Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE), Helsinki, Finland

10 ⁵Institute for Climate and Atmospheric Science, School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds, Leeds, United
11 Kingdom

12 ⁶Norwegian Institute for Air Research, Kjeller, Norway

13 ⁷International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), Laxenburg, Austria

14 ⁸V. N. Sukachev Institute of Forests, Siberian Branch, Russian Academy of Sciences, Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation

15 ⁹Ministry of the Environment Finland, Aleksanterinkatu 7, Helsinki, P.O.Box 35, FI-00023 Government, Finland

16 ¹⁰National Institute of Aerospace, Hampton, VA, USA

17 ¹¹Langley Research Center, Hampton, VA, USA

18 ¹²Climate Research Division, ASTD/STB, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Toronto, Canada

19 ¹³Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) Secretariat, Tromsø, Norway

20
21 *Correspondence to:* Jessica L. McCarty (jmccarty@miamioh.edu)

22 **Abstract.** In recent years, the Pan-Arctic region has experienced increasingly extreme fire seasons. Fires in the northern high
23 latitudes are driven by current and future climate change, lightning, fuel conditions, and human activity. In this context,
24 conceptualizing and parameterizing current and future Arctic fire regimes will be important for fire and land management as
25 well as understanding current and predicting future fire emissions. The objectives of this review were driven by policy
26 questions identified by the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) Working Group and posed to its Expert
27 Group on Short-Lived Climate Forcers. This review synthesises current understanding of the changing Arctic and boreal fire
28 regimes, particularly as fire activity and its response to future climate change in the Pan-Arctic has consequences for Arctic
29 Council states aiming to mitigate and adapt to climate change in the north. The conclusions from our synthesis are the
30 following: (1) Current and future Arctic fires, and the adjacent boreal region, are driven by natural (i.e., lightning) and human-
31 caused ignition sources, including fires caused by timber and energy extraction, prescribed burning for landscape management,
32 and tourism activities. Little is published in the scientific literature about cultural burning by Indigenous populations across
33 the Pan-Arctic and questions remain on the source of ignitions above 70°N in Arctic Russia. (2) Climate change is expected
34 to make Arctic fires more likely by increasing the likelihood of extreme fire weather, increased lightning activity, and drier



35 vegetative and ground fuel conditions. (3) To some extent, shifting agricultural land use, forest-steppe to steppe, tundra-to-
36 taiga, and coniferous-to-deciduous forest transitions in a warmer climate may increase and decrease open biomass burning.
37 However, at the country- and landscape-scales, these relationships are not well established. (4) Current black carbon and $PM_{2.5}$
38 emissions from wildfires above $50^{\circ}N$ and $65^{\circ}N$ are larger than emissions from the anthropogenic sectors of residential
39 combustion, transportation, and flaring, respectively. Wildfire emissions have increased from 2010 to 2020, particularly above
40 $60^{\circ}N$, with 56% of black carbon emissions above $65^{\circ}N$ in 2020 attributed to open biomass burning - indicating how extreme
41 the 2020 wildfire season was and future Arctic wildfire seasons potential. (5) What works in the boreal zones to prevent and
42 fight wildfires may not work in the Arctic. Fire management will need to adapt to a changing climate, economic development,
43 the Indigenous and local communities, and fragile northern ecosystems, including permafrost and peatlands. (6) Factors
44 contributing to the uncertainty of predicting and quantifying future Arctic fire regimes include underestimation of Arctic fires
45 by satellite systems, lack of agreement between Earth observations and official statistics, and still needed refinements of
46 location, conditions, and previous fire return intervals on peat and permafrost landscapes. This review highlights that much
47 research is needed in order to understand the local and regional impacts of the changing Arctic fire regime on emissions and
48 the global climate, ecosystems and Pan-Arctic communities.

49 **1 Introduction**

50 For more than a decade, climate modeling studies have projected an “invasion” of fires to the Arctic regions (Krawchuk et al.,
51 2009). In this paper, we review the current understanding of the changing Arctic fire regime, and its impacts on fires emissions.
52 Previous published reviews on fires in the high northern latitudes have linked increasing fire activity in the Arctic and the
53 Boreal region to climate-driven warming and drying (Hu et al., 2015; Walsh et al., 2020). While fires in the Arctic, defined as
54 latitudes above $66^{\circ}N$ by the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) definition (AMAP, 1998), are not new
55 (Wein, 1976), a consensus of evidence suggests that tundra fires are increasing (Hu et al., 2015; Masrur et al., 2018) with a
56 potential for novel fire regimes (Young et al., 2016). Fire regimes are often defined as the main characteristics of fire activity
57 for a given location: frequency, typical sizes of fires, annual burned area, severity, seasonality, type (surface, ground, or crown
58 fires), and ignition cause (human or natural) (Hanes et al., 2019).

59
60 Over the past four decades, fire activity has increased in Alaska and the Sakha Republic of Russia but decreased slightly in the
61 Northwest Territories of Canada, indicating large spatio-temporal variability of Pan-Arctic fire dynamics (York et al., 2020).
62 Further, in the past three years, there have been large fires in Fennoscandia in 2018, Alaska and Greenland in 2019, and the
63 Russian Federation in 2020, mainly in the Boreal zone, i.e., at and above $50^{\circ}N$, but with expanding fires into the Arctic region
64 (Walsh et al., 2020), even reaching as far north as the Arctic Ocean in eastern Siberia (Kharuk et al., 2021). Thus, quantifying
65 the impact of climate change, human ignition sources, and biophysical parameters, such as availability and/or distribution of
66 aboveground fuels, permafrost thaw, and drying of peat, on increased fire activity in the Arctic and Boreal are needed to



67 understand the emerging Arctic fire regime (Krawchuk and Moritz, 2011). Here we define an emerging fire regime in the
68 Arctic as documented increased frequency and lengthened seasonality (both earlier and later) of both natural and human-
69 caused surface and ground fires (i.e., peat) increasing total fire emissions within the Arctic (see Suppl. Table 1 in the
70 Supplement for a list of all key terms).

71
72 Open biomass burning is a known disturbance in the Arctic Council region¹ (AMAP, 2011; 2015). The 2015 Arctic Monitoring
73 and Assessment Programme (AMAP) assessment on black carbon (BC) and ozone as Arctic climate forcers noted key
74 characteristics of open biomass burning in the Arctic region, including human influence on both ignition and fuels
75 management, significant interannual variation of fire events and emissions, spatial and seasonal clustering of burning related
76 to active land management, and fuel conditions (AMAP, 2015). Since 2015, evidence of direct climate change influence on
77 large, early season fires has increased (Wang et al., 2017) as well as fueling extreme wildfires at the wildland-urban interface
78 (WUI) and not just remote Boreal forests and Arctic tundra (Abatzoglou and Williams, 2016; Kirchmeier-Young et al., 2019).
79 In terms of burned area, 2015 was the largest fire year for the Alaskan tundra ecoregion (Michaelides et al., 2019).

80
81 Under future climate change, an overall increase in fires is expected in the Arctic Council region, indicating that associated
82 emissions are also likely to increase. For instance, natural fires, defined as lightning-caused fires, may increase as lightning is
83 predicted to increase (Púček et al., 2017; Veraverbeke et al. 2017; Bieniek et al., 2020), under Representative Concentration
84 Pathways (RCPs) 4.5 (stabilising emissions) and 8.5 (high emissions) developed for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate
85 Change (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report (AR5). Likewise, using the same scenarios, wildfire emissions of BC, CO, NO_x,
86 PM_{2.5}, and SO₂ could exceed anthropogenic emissions in northeastern Europe, including Sweden and Finland, by 2090 (Knorr
87 et al., 2016). There is a clear consensus that the emerging Arctic fire regime will be marked by shifts in fire seasons, i.e.,
88 likelihood of extreme fires later in the growing season, will occur in the Boreal forests of eastern Canada (Boulanger et al.,
89 2013); central and northwestern Canada (Boulanger et al., 2014); and European Russia, West Siberia, and the Far East
90 (Sherstyukov and Sherstyukov, 2014). By the end of the 21st century under RCP6.0 (stabilising emissions with higher CO₂
91 equivalency than RCP4.5), the annual chance of large tundra fire in Alaska will be almost one in four, i.e., a range of 13-23%
92 predicted increases (Hu et al., 2015). Moreover, Wang et al. (2017) noted that a recent lengthening in the fire season in Canada
93 has led to the increase in the total number of fire spread days, leading to large increases in total fire size and emissions for
94 early season fires like the Fort McMurray megafire in Alberta. Lengthening the fire season, a component of the emerging
95 Arctic fire regimes, means increased potential for more and larger fire emissions throughout the fire season, starting earlier in
96 spring and lasting later into autumn.

¹ The Arctic Council membership comprises the eight member states: Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States of America, as well six permanent participants representing Arctic Indigenous peoples, including the Aleut International Association, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, the Gwich'in Council International, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, and the Saami Council.



97
98 For the past two decades, it has been well established that understanding fire regimes improves emission estimates from fires
99 in high northern latitudes (Conard and Ivanova, 1997; Soja et al., 2004a) and may even be necessary for creating emission
100 models (van der Werf et al., 2010). Further, climate change is expected to alter fire regimes and likely increase emissions
101 (Sommers et al., 2014). For that reason, this review also includes emission estimates from adjacent boreal fires as well as
102 temperate fire sources known to impact the Arctic region via increased atmospheric abundance and deposition of black carbon
103 as well as greenhouse gas emissions. This review paper spawned from policy questions (Table 1) that the Expert Group on
104 Short-Lived Climate Forcers (SLCF EG) of AMAP, a Working Group of the Arctic Council, was asked to answer for its 2021
105 Assessment Impacts of short-lived climate forcers on Arctic climate, air quality, and human health (AMAP, 2021). Our specific
106 objectives are to (1) identify and review the key drivers of the Arctic fires today and in the future to characterise an emerging
107 Arctic fire regime, with potential changes; (2) characterize fire emissions from ground- and satellite-based data sources in the
108 Arctic, boreal, and temperate regions that impact the Arctic; (3) contextualize emissions from the Arctic fire regime with other
109 sectoral sources for the Pan-Arctic; and (4) identify key challenges and research questions that could improve understanding,
110 monitoring, and management of Arctic fires in the 21st century. We focus on SLCF emissions but note that wildfires are also
111 a source of CO₂ and other contaminants of environmental and human health concern in the Arctic, including mercury and
112 polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH).

113 **2 Drivers of Arctic fire regimes**

114 For this review paper, the definition of open biomass burning in the Arctic will include wildland fires (i.e., wildfires, forest
115 fires, peat fires) and fires in human-dominated landscapes (i.e., agricultural open burning, prescribed burning). Given the
116 strong influence of boreal systems on the Arctic in terms of fire disturbance, emissions, and shifting vegetation, we have
117 included boreal fire regimes in this review, while specifically identifying each climatic zone as needed. Broadly speaking,
118 wildfires are driven by climate and weather, fuels and fuel conditions, and ignition sources (Silva and Harrison, 2010; de Groot
119 et al., 2013). Human-caused fires are driven by fuels management to reduce fire risk, land management in agricultural and
120 timber landscapes, and cultural practices (Granström & Niklasson, 2008; Bowman et al., 2020). Pollen-based reconstructions
121 show prehistoric and early historic human settlements increased during wetter climates in Minusinsk Hollow in south-central
122 Siberia, where grain and pasture yields increased twofold, rather than dry periods that favoured pastoralist (Blyakharchuk et
123 al., 2014), highlighting the dependence of human-dominated landscapes and fire on climate. Reported statistics and geospatial
124 methods from Earth observations were used to quantify and differentiate open biomass burning as human-caused fires, i.e.,
125 agricultural open burning, timber and agroforestry, and natural fires, i.e., lightning-caused fires. Fire risk, or the likelihood of
126 a fire occurring, in the Arctic region is often driven by climate and fire weather, fuel type, availability, and condition, and
127 presence of people as ignition sources (more in Suppl. Table 1).

128



129 Ignition from lightning strikes, fire weather (i.e. temperature, humidity and wind), and fuel conditions (moisture) are the typical
130 controlling processes for ‘natural’ fires, i.e. fires not caused directly by human activity. End of century modeled fire-climate
131 interactions under RCP6.0 for Alaska showed summer temperatures and annual precipitation are the most important climatic
132 factors driving the likelihood of new wildland fire regimes in tundra and the boreal forest-tundra boundary (Young et al.,
133 2016). Burned area is predicted to increase 40 to 50% in the high latitudes under climate-forcing scenario 8.5 given modeled
134 changes in fuel loads, fuel moisture, and increased lightning frequency (Krause et al., 2014). Increased convective cloud
135 formation has been documented in the Russian Arctic (Chernokulsky and Esau, 2019) and the North American boreal forest
136 (Veraverbeke et al., 2017), with a 5% increase in convective storms in Northern Europe projected by the end of the 21st century
137 under RCPs 4.5 and 8.5 (Púček et al., 2017). In general, lightning frequency is expected to increase over areas north of 50°N.
138 The strongest projected relative increase is approximately 100% across northern Europe under RCP 8.5 scenario by the end of
139 the century (Groenemeijer et al., 2016). Moreover, since summers are expected to become drier in the future (Venäläinen et
140 al., 2020), the role of lightning as an ignition source for wildfires may increase for northern Europe. These future models agree
141 with observations of past natural fires in the Arctic region. Paleofire meta analysis of boreal biomass burning during the
142 Holocene (4,000 to 200 years BP) for the boreal zone of North America and Fennoscandia show general trends in boreal
143 biomass burning were primarily controlled by climatic changes, mainly mean annual precipitation in Alaska, northern Quebec,
144 and northern Fennoscandia and summer temperatures in central Canada and central Fennoscandia (Molinari et al., 2018).
145 Boreal needleleaf evergreen fuel composition at the landscape-level across Alaska and central and southern Fennoscandia was
146 secondary to climatic controls. These paleofire results align with recent findings by Walker et al. (2020), showing fine-scale
147 drainage conditions, overstory tree species composition, and fuel accumulation rates across 417 sites in boreal and taiga
148 ecoregions of northwestern Canada and Alaska were more important than incidental fire weather in terms of fire severity and
149 subsequent carbon emissions.

150
151 Open biomass burning from anthropogenic activities like agriculture, timber, and energy extraction are expected to increase
152 in the Arctic as climate change expands human-dominated landscapes northward, increasing potential ignition sources (Fig.
153 1). The 2019 Greenland wildfire, which consumed surface vegetation and high carbon soils for nearly a month, was caused
154 when a campfire ignited dry ground near a public camping site of the world-renowned Arctic Circle Trail (McGwinn, 2019),
155 indicating that tourism will need to adapt to increased fire risk in tundra landscapes. Greenland wildfires in 2017 and 2019
156 occurred east of Sisimiut in tundra areas with low vegetative cover and degraded permafrost, but high carbon soils, during
157 warm, dry, and sunny summers (Evangelidou et al., 2019). Timber extraction and site preparation currently cause large wildfires
158 in the Arctic Council region, including the 2014 Västmanland fire in Sweden (Lidskog et al., 2019), which actively burned for
159 18 days creating a burn scar of over 14,000 ha (Pimentel and Arheimer, 2021). Northward agricultural expansion will likely
160 increase human-caused open burning as wheat and maize establish in previously permafrost areas of West Siberia (Parfenova
161 et al., 2019), expanding into the cold regions of the boreal zone (King et al., 2018) and nearing the Arctic Circle for Central
162 Siberia (Tchebakova et al., 2016). Of course, the northward agricultural expansion will also be dependent on local and/or in-



163 situ conditions limiting its expansion, such as inferior soils, existing land uses not compatible with agricultural conversion,
164 and topographic limitations (Ioffe and Nefedova, 2004; Dronin and Kirilenko, 2011; Tchebakova et al., 2011).

165 3 Climate change and future Arctic fire activity

166 Many future fire modelling approaches use greenhouse gas emission scenarios to project the impact of climate change on
167 future temperature and precipitation - both influencing fuel ignition and subsequent burning (Veira et al., 2016). Increased fire
168 risk will not be uniform across the Pan-Arctic (Fig. 1). For instance, permafrost thaw will lead to a rewetting of soils (Wrona
169 et al., 2016), reducing above-ground and below-ground fire risk. Boike et al. (2016) increasing areas of thermokarst lakes were
170 not coincident with areas of increasing fire in central Sakha Republic. Further, changing precipitation regimes in the form of
171 more rainfall in the Arctic for the months of March through December by end of century using RCP8.5 projections (Bitanja
172 and Andry, 2017) could both reduce fire risk through increased wetness but also increase fire risk through more vegetation
173 growth and/or shifting fuels regimes.

174
175 Fig. 1 depicts transition themes and associated fire risks taken from the scientific literature, with general locations on the map
176 derived from the locations of these studies. These ecological and meteorological studies rely on gridded climate scenarios from
177 future greenhouse gas emission scenarios in order to predict fire risk for mid- (2050) and late-century (2100). First, as boreal
178 forests experience permafrost thaw, where initially wet soils (Wrona et al., 2016; O'Neill et al., 2020) are followed by
179 increasingly dry ground fuels (Turetsky et al., 2015; Box et al., 2019). Topography plays a crucial role in determining shifting
180 habitats, where drying will dominate on tilted surfaces and bogging will dominate on flat terrain (Tchebakova et al., 2009).
181 The Siberian Arctic tundra is dominated by relatively flat terrain, consequently bogging is predicted to prevail. Second,
182 anticipated transitions of boreal forest to deciduous forest stands would decrease fire risk in eastern Canada and small regions
183 of interior Alaska (Terrier et al., 2013; Foster et al., 2019; Mekonnen et al., 2019). Third, expansion of grassland ecosystems
184 is predicated in northwestern Canada and Alaska (Wang et al. 2019; Whitman et al., 2019) and Siberia (Tchebakova et al.,
185 2009, 2016). Fourth, increased lightning strikes will in turn increase fire risk in Alaska (Veraverbeke et al. 2017) but also
186 northern Europe (Púčik et al., 2017). Fifth, the interaction between climate-driven changes in fire regimes and permafrost will
187 compel a decrease in and a northern migration of Siberian taiga, which will result in the transition of tundra to taiga in northern
188 Siberia (Tchebakova et al., 2009, 2011; Sizov et al., 2021). Permafrost is not predicted to thaw deep enough to sustain dark-
189 needled taiga (*Pinus sibirica*, *Abies sibirica*, and *Picea obovata*), nonetheless light-neededled Larix is predicted to continue to
190 dominate in eastern Siberia. Sixth, forest-steppe and steppe is predicted to dominate over half of Siberia, largely forced by
191 climate and increases in fire regimes (Tchebakova et al., 2009). Seventh, northward agricultural expansion may increase
192 human-caused agricultural burning as wheat and maize (silage) establish in previously permafrost areas of East Siberia
193 (Tchebakova et al., 2009; Parfenova et al., 2019), expanding into the cold regions of the boreal zone (King et al., 2018) in
194 North America as well. Finally, a threefold increase of permafrost thaw in the boreal zone under RCP4.5 by 2100 is likely to



195 increase the amount of peat fuels available for burning (Nitzbon et al., 2020). As stated earlier, climate warming can cause
196 more ignitions from lightning (Veraverbeke et al., 2017) and degraded permafrost due to increasing dry ground fuels that can
197 increase fire severity (Teufel and Sushama, 2019). Using the RCP8.5 scenario, Teufel and Sushama (2019) estimate that a
198 2.0°C global threshold in temperature increase, which could be reached around 2031, may cause 42% of pan-Arctic permafrost
199 to abruptly degrade and increase fire severity in Russia, Canada, and Alaska. Surface fires can cause permafrost to thaw,
200 producing thermokarst lakes (Jones et al., 2015), which previously have been considered to reduce fire risk (Sofronov et al.,
201 2000) but are not perfect fire breaks as wildfires can “jump” (Sofronov and Volokitina, 2010). By the end of the century,
202 wildland fire risk is expected to increase, with length of fire seasons - measured in terms of daily severe fire weather occurrence
203 - predicted to expand by as much as 20 days globally (Flannigan et al., 2013). Similarly, Sherstyukov and Sherstyukov (2014)
204 predict an increase of > 50 days of high fire risk days by 2100 for Russia under RCP 8.5 scenario, with a potential to double
205 annual forest fire burned area. Using CMIP5 model intercomparisons, Lehtonen et al. (2016) estimate large (≥ 0.1 km²) boreal
206 forest fires in Finland to increase by 1.9 times under RCP4.5 and 2.3 times under RCP8.5 by mid-century. Robust predictions
207 of future burned area in wildland and human-dominated landscapes for the Arctic require an understanding and quantitative
208 simulation of the major drivers of fire (specifically climate and fire weather, ignition, fuels, and humans), including coupled
209 dynamics between and among these drivers (Riley et al., 2019).

210

211 **3.1 Climate change will increase number of natural fires**

212 The boreal and Arctic landscape is diverse, and thus so are natural fires, spanning from forests to grasslands and peatlands.
213 Near-term warming means more ignitions from lightning (Veraverbeke et al., 2017) and degraded permafrost increasing dry
214 ground fuels, including peat (Turetsky et al., 2015), and fire severity (Teufel and Sushama, 2019). By the end of the century,
215 wildland fire risk is expected to increase, with length of fire seasons - measured in terms of daily severe fire weather occurrence
216 - predicted to expand by as much as 20 days for high northern latitudes using the A1B (roughly corresponding to RCP6.0), A2
217 (~ RCP8.5), and B1 (~RCP4.5) scenarios (Flannigan et al., 2013). Similarly, Sherstyukov and Sherstyukov (2014) predict an
218 increase of > 50 days of high fire risk days for Russia under RCP8.5 scenario, with a potential to double annual forest fire
219 burned area by 2100. Using CMIP5 model intercomparisons, Lehtonen et al. (2016) found that large (≥ 0.1 km) boreal forest
220 fires in Finland may double or even triple by the end of century, using RCP4.5 and RCP 8.5 scenarios, but with large inter-
221 model variability. Robust predictions of future burned area in wildland and human-dominated landscapes for the boreal and
222 Arctic require an understanding and quantitative simulation of the major drivers of fire (specifically climate and fire weather,
223 ignition, fuels, and humans), including coupled dynamics between and among these drivers (Riley et al., 2019).

224

225 The climate-induced vegetation shifts, which would also modify fire risk and related emissions, present a complex matrix for
226 the Arctic Council member states. Predictions of boreal forest transition to deciduous forest stands would decrease fire risk in
227 eastern Canada and interior Alaska (Terrier et al., 2013; Foster et al., 2019; Mekonnen et al., 2019). Wang et al. (2019) found



228 that these trends are already occurring in Alaska and Northwestern Canada using three decades of Landsat imagery with a 30
229 m resolution, as climate drives grass and shrub expansion in the Arctic and wildfires drive most of the evergreen forest
230 reduction and expansion of deciduous forests in the boreal. Further work in mature deciduous forests of Interior Alaska show
231 that current canopy “gaps” are related to ecological shifts to evergreen shrubs, lichens, and mosses, thus increasing overall fire
232 risk due to presence of these high flammability coniferous species in these small areas within low flammability deciduous
233 stands (Alexander and Mack, 2017). Further, moderate to high spatial and temporal resolution satellite mapping of taiga-tundra
234 vegetation show an northern expansion of trees, but with complex patterns of diffuse and abrupt transitions from forests to
235 non-forests (Montesano et al., 2020).

236

237 There is a consensus that prolonged fire seasons will become more common, increasing in the eastern boreal forests of Canada
238 (Boulanger et al., 2013); central and northwestern Canada (Boulanger et al., 2014); and European Russia (particularly the
239 Republic of Karelia and Leningradskaya oblast), West Siberia, and the Far East (Tchebakova et al., 2009; Sherstyukov and
240 Sherstyukov, 2014). Wang et al. (2017) note that recently the fire season in Canada is characterized by more total number of
241 fire spread days, leading to large increases in total fire size and emissions for early season fires like the Fort McMurray megafire
242 in Alberta, which burned both forests and peatlands and was caused by humans (Hanes et al., 2019). Lengthening the fire
243 season means increased potential for more and larger fire emissions throughout the fire season, starting earlier in spring and
244 lasting later into autumn. Further, suppression of wildfire in Canadian boreal communities has increased their likelihood of
245 flammability, allowing fuels to build up in and near populated places (Parisien et al., 2020), calling into question what other
246 wildland-urban interfaces in the Arctic region may have similar risks due to long term aggressive fire suppression. Ignition
247 likelihood is often modeled by considering the moisture conditions of ground fuels (i.e., litter) and the organic layer (i.e., forest
248 canopy), whereby humans are the most likely source of fire on the ground and lightning the source for canopy fires (Wotton
249 et al. 2003). Veraverbeke et al. (2017) introduced a positive feedback loop between climate, lightning, fires and northward
250 forest expansion, whereby surface energy fluxes from forests appeared to be increasing the probability of lightning in Alaska.

251

252 Climate change may have both positive and negative impacts on boreal forests and forestry (Reyer et al., 2017). Moreover,
253 fire regimes and related changes in spring albedo (relative reflectance) and the radiation balance are distinct in North American
254 (crown-fire dominated) and Northern Eurasian (surface-fire dominated, smaller negative shortwave forcing) systems (Rogers
255 et al., 2015). In the near future, these changes may be positive but become negative in the mid- and long-term. In general,
256 climate change accelerates forest growth at high northern latitudes due to a longer growing season. Moreover, elevated CO₂
257 concentration decreases transpiration and increases photosynthetic rate and thus enhances forest growth (Peltola et al., 2002;
258 Kellomäki et al., 2018). However, abiotic and biotic damages in particular may have opposite effects on forest growth (Seidl
259 et al., 2014). For example, drought increases the risk of forest fires, but also negatively impacts the growth of Norway spruce
260 (*Picea abies*) and exposes trees to biotic damages. Snow damages are estimated to increase in northeastern Europe but decrease
261 elsewhere in Europe by end-of-century under RCP scenarios 4.5 and 8.5 (Gronemeijer et al., 2016). Wind damage risk is



262 expected to increase due to the shortening of soil frost period (Venäläinen et al., 2020). Many forest insects responsible for
263 bug kill of trees will benefit from climate change due to established linkage of increased habitat range and increased winter
264 temperatures (Pureswaran et al., 2018). Climate-driven bug kill increases the amount of easily burnable material in forests and
265 can influence fire risk. For example, a large-scale bark beetle invasion could increase the amount of fuels via dead wood,
266 increasing ignition risk and crown fire risk as well as increasing the need, danger, and cost of fuels and fire management of
267 insect attacked forests (Jenkins et al., 2014). According to Venäläinen et al. (2020), a warming climate is likely to increase the
268 risk of bark beetle outbreaks and wood decay caused by *Heterobasidion* spp. root rot in Finland's coniferous forests. Siberian
269 forests have already experienced a northern progression of the destructive Siberian moth (*Dendrolimus sibiricus*
270 *Tschetvericov*) by a distance of ~ 0.5 degree and a decrease in the regeneration cycle from two to one year, prompted by
271 drought and increasing temperatures (Baranchikov and Montgomery, 2014; Kharuk et al., 2017). Moreover, the probability of
272 forest-damaging cascading and compounding events, i.e., large-scale wind damage followed by a widespread bark beetle
273 outbreak, may increase remarkably in the future for the High Northern Latitudes. Future climate conditions are expected to
274 become more favourable for forest fires in the boreal zone, even in highly managed regions.

275 276 **3.2 Climate change will increase number of non-forest fires**

277 Under RCP8.5, Stralberg et al. (2018) estimated that by 2100, grasslands will replace much of the upland conifer, mixed
278 forests, and deciduous forests for a large area of the boreal forest zone of northern Alberta. Shorter fire return intervals
279 combined with climate change-induced drought will reduce the resiliency of evergreen and broadleaf species to re-seed and/or
280 establish after wildfires, leading to expansion of grassland ecosystems in what is now Northern Canadian forests (Whitman et
281 al., 2019). Increased grass-dominated landscapes would create a new fire regime of frequent but low severity fires, with the
282 likelihood of SLCF transport to the Arctic most likely in the spring months of March through May (Hall and Loboda, 2018).
283 Grassland fires produce less energy, with smoke plumes more similar to crop residue burning, and are unlikely to breach the
284 tropopause for consistent, year-round transport of smoke to the Arctic (Hall and Loboda, 2017), unlike the current observed
285 deposition from boreal forest fires in the Arctic (Thomas et al., 2017). Further, Smirnov et al. (2015) found forest fires in
286 European Russia during 2008-2012 occurred mainly in June and August, with Siberia and the Russian Far East being the main
287 sources of BC emissions during a time when transport to the Arctic is unfavourable. In the Sakha Republic, Kirillina et al.
288 (2020) found that from 2011 onwards, fire seasons have been 13 days longer than previously, on average, and starting from
289 2009 onwards, fire seasons have started earlier in April, sooner than previous years. A peak fire occurrence across a three-
290 month period of May to July persists in Sakha. During the 2020 extreme fire season in Siberia, high resolution satellite data
291 from the European Space Agencies' Sentinel-2 detected fires around still-frozen thermokarst lakes above 70°N (McCarty et
292 al., 2020). This indicates that BC from early season burning in and near Arctic Siberia could be available for transport, and
293 thus deposition on snow and ice that accelerates melting as well as associated climate feedback due to effect on albedo. Given
294 this, early season fires are particularly relevant because Arctic snow and sea-ice coverage are much more widespread in the



295 early burning season than late season. Emission factors for biomass burning in grassland and steppe ecosystems are generally
296 smaller from those of boreal forests (Akagi et al., 2011; Andreae, 2019), which potentially implies different impacts on
297 atmospheric chemistry and SLCFs. Therefore, while boreal forest fires emit more SLCFs than grasslands and cropland fires,
298 the springtime burning of northern grasslands, peatlands, and croplands - often human-caused - means these emissions are
299 more likely to be transported to the Arctic than summertime forest fires.

300 **4 Arctic fire emissions**

301 In Section 4 and 5, we present new emissions work that builds on the 2015 AMAP assessment of BC and ozone (AMAP,
302 2015), which included 2005 biomass burning emissions from an the Global Fire Assimilation System (GFASv1.2; Kaiser et
303 al. 2012), Global Fire Emissions Database version 2 (GFEDv2; van der Werf et al. 2006), GFEDv3 (van der Werf et al. 2010),
304 the Global Inventory for Chemistry-Climate studies (GICC; Mieville et al. 2010), MACCity (Lamarque et al. 2010), and the
305 Fire Inventory from NCAR (FINNv1.5; Wiedinmyer et al., 2011) for above 60°N. For the 2021 AMAP assessment, we focused
306 on longitudinal biomass burning emission models for years 2005 through 2018 using the Global Fire Emissions Database with
307 small fires (GFEDv4s; van der Werf et al., 2017), FINNv1.5 (Wiedinmyer et al., 2011), GFASv1.2 (Kaiser et al., 2012), the
308 Quick Fire Emissions Dataset (QFEDv2.5r1; Koster et al., 2015), and the Fire Energetics and Emissions Research (FEER;
309 Ichoku and Ellison, 2014). These versions of GFAS, GFED, FINN, FEER, and QFED analyzed rely on Moderate Resolution
310 Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) thermal anomalies, with GFEDv4s integrating the MCD64A1 burned area product with
311 the MODIS active fire product to account for small fires. It should be noted that the MCD64A1 algorithm used in GFEDv4s
312 embeds the MODIS active fire data to seed burned area detection and growth (Giglio et al., 2009). For each global fire
313 emissions model, the area of interest was defined roughly as 45° to 80° North (N) globally, split by latitude ranges of 45° to
314 50° N: Temperate, 50° to 60° N: boreal, 60° to 70° N: Low Arctic, and 70° to 80° N: High Arctic. Average annual emissions
315 from open biomass burning from all sources (agriculture, boreal forest, tundra, peat, etc.) were calculated for 2005-2018 for
316 BC, methane (CH₄), carbon monoxide (CO), and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}).

317
318 Since the Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS) provides daily, global observations of low-intensity fires
319 (Johnston et al., 2018), a custom AMAP open biomass burning emissions inventory was developed for the year 2018 to utilize
320 VIIRS's capabilities to detect smouldering fires which are common in peat landscapes. Suomi-NPP VIIRS active fire from
321 day and night detections (Oliva and Schroeder, 2015) were assumed to completely burn each 375 m² pixel. A 'best-guess' land
322 cover was created from three different land cover products, with a sample (n = 30 locations) validation of land cover type
323 performed for each country. Ultimately, the 750 m VIIRS Surface Type land cover product (Zhang et al., 2018) was used for
324 North America, Greenland, and the Russian Federation, augmented by the revised 1 km Circumpolar Arctic Vegetation Map
325 (Raster CAVM; Reynolds et al., 2019) for missing values in the high northern latitudes. For Norway, Sweden, and Finland,
326 the 10 m Land Cover Map of Europe 2017 from the Sentinel-2 Global Land Cover Project (Gromny et al., 2019) was used.



327 All land cover maps were reclassified into the International Geosphere-Biosphere Program (IGBP) classes for ease of emission
328 calculations. Fuel loadings and combustion completeness were taken from Van Leeuwen et al. (2014), with tundra values used
329 for Greenland. Emission factors were taken from Akagi et al. (2011), with updates from Andreae (2019).

330
331 Most fire activity and emissions occur between 50° and 60° N, with very few open biomass burning emissions between 70°
332 and 80° N and zero satellite observations of fire above 80° N (Fig. 2). The latitude band of 50° to 60° N corresponds to the
333 southern extents of the boreal region, an area experiencing increasing fires due to climate change (de Groot et al., 2013) and
334 includes the largest wildfires in British Columbia's history, burning 1,200 km² in summer 2017 (Kirchmeier-Young et al.,
335 2019). Note also that fire activity detected by the 1km MODIS MCD14 Collection 6 active fire data (Giglio et al., 2016), with
336 confidence values > 50%, has a positive trend for fires occurring between 60° and 70° N, but not for the latitude bands of 45°
337 and 50° N or 50° and 60° N (Fig. 2).

338
339 In the 14-year emissions estimates from GFAS, GFED, and FINN, a clear shift has occurred in the zonal distribution of fire
340 since the mid-2000's. More fire is now taking place north of 60° N than in the temperate zone of 45° to 50° N, where large
341 amounts of human-caused burning and wildfires throughout North America, Europe, and Eurasia occur (Fig. 2). This trend is
342 more pronounced in GFED and GFAS than in FINN, though all models show a positive trend (note the dotted line in Fig. 2).
343 The 2005 to 2018 multi-model annual average BC emissions from all open biomass burning sources in the Arctic (60° to 80°
344 N) and adjacent regions known to impact smoke transport into the Arctic (45° to 60° N) is 0.34 Tg. The years with the highest
345 multi-model average are 2012, 2008, and 2015 with BC emissions of 0.45 Tg, 0.44 Tg, and 0.41 Tg, respectively. The lowest
346 annual average BC emission from the five global fire emissions models are 2008 and 2013, with 0.27 Tg. The fire emissions
347 model with the consistently highest BC emissions is QFED, with an annual average of 0.68 Tg (Fig. 3). FEER, GFAS, and
348 GFED have more agreement, with annual BC emission averages of 0.32 (±0.07) Tg, 0.30 (± 0.07) Tg, and 0.25 (± 0.06) Tg,
349 respectively. FINN has the lowest annual average BC emissions of 0.130 Tg, with higher emissions in 2012 (0.20 Tg) and
350 2008 (0.19 Tg). The AMAP model designed specifically for the Pan-Arctic, which was based on VIIRS active fire data and
351 region-specific land cover types, produced slightly higher emission estimates than FINN (Fig. 3) for year 2018. The AMAP
352 model predicts BC emissions of 0.13 Tg and CH₄ emissions of 1.39 Tg, compared to FINN's 0.11 Tg of BC and 1.19 Tg of
353 CH₄. Compared for 2018 only, GFED has marginally higher BC emissions than GFAS, while methane emission estimates
354 from GFAS are substantially higher than GFED.

355
356 Ground-based official statistics vary greatly by country or sub-region (i.e., Alaska and Greenland) for circa 2019 (Table 2).
357 Suppl. Table 2 provides the emission variables used to calculate emissions for each country or sub-region of the Pan-Arctic
358 reporting official burned area statistics. The Russian Federation has the highest burned area, with over 100,000 km² burned.
359 In 2019, open biomass burning in European Russia - comprising Northwestern, Central, Southern, North Caucasus, and Volga
360 Federal Districts - accounted for only 190 km² of burned area (ФБУ "АВИАЛЕСООХРАНА", 2019). Approximately 98.2%



361 of burned area in Russia occurred in the Urals, Siberia, and Far East Federal Districts. In general, Greenland, Fennoscandia,
362 and European Russia are the regions with the lowest burned area and open biomass burning emissions, with all regions
363 experiencing the most burning in 50° to 60°N and the second most burning in the latitudinal band of 60° to 70°N. Alaska and
364 Canada account for approximately 29,000 km² of total pan-Arctic biomass burning and 17% of the BC emissions, while the
365 contiguous United States (CONUS) accounted for 24% of BC emissions. It should be noted that while Canada and CONUS
366 reported similar official statistics for burned area, fires in temperate zones of the CONUS tend to emit double the emissions of
367 boreal ecosystems (Table 2). Greenland is a novel fire regime in the Arctic, with two relatively substantial wildfires in 2017
368 and 2019, that accounted for more burned area and emissions than Norway or Finland. In 2019, the majority of open biomass
369 burning and related emissions for the Arctic Council member states originated in Siberia and the Russian Far East, followed
370 by the CONUS, Canada, and Alaska.

371
372 Focusing on a potentially novel Arctic fire regime in Greenland allows us to localise the impact of fires on deposition and ice,
373 and what that may hold for the future. Unusual fires were observed in western Greenland by pilots and also confirmed by
374 satellites between 31 July and 21 August 2017, after a period of warm, dry and sunny weather. The largest wildfire grew to
375 approximately 22 km² in size, eventually extinguished by rain (Cartier, 2017). The fires burned > 20 km² of high carbon soils
376 - potentially peat due to smouldering and fire spread behaviour - that became vulnerable due to permafrost degradation (Daanen
377 et al., 2011). Work by Evangeliou et al. (2019) estimated the 2017 wildfire consumed a fuel amount of about 0.12 Tg of Carbon
378 (C) and emitted about 0.00002 Tg of BC and 0.0007 Tg of Organic Carbon (OC), including 0.00014 Tg of Brown Carbon
379 (BrC - the portion of OC that absorbs towards shorter wavelengths). Although these fires were small compared to fires burning
380 at the same time in North America and Eurasia, a large fraction of the BC, OC, and BrC emissions (30%) was deposited on
381 the Greenland ice sheet. Measurements of aerosol optical depth in western Greenland showed that the air was strongly
382 influenced by the Canadian forest fires. Even so, the Greenland fires had an observable impact, doubling the column
383 concentrations of BC. The spatiotemporal evolution and, in particular, the top height of the plume was also confirmed using
384 the vertical cross section of total attenuated backscatter (at 532 nm) from Cloud-Aerosol Lidar and Infrared Pathfinder Satellite
385 Observations (CALIOP) Lidar. The maximum albedo change due to BC and BrC deposition from the Greenland fires was -
386 0.007 at maximum, while the average instantaneous BOA (Bottom Of the Atmosphere) radiative forcing over Greenland at
387 noon on 31 August 2017 (post-fire) was between 0.03 and 0.04 Wm⁻², with locally occurring maxima up to 0.77 Wm⁻². The
388 summer 2017 fires in Greenland had a small impact on the Greenland ice sheet, causing almost negligible extra radiative
389 forcing. This was due to the comparably small size of the fires in Greenland, in a global and Pan-Arctic context. However,
390 with 30% of the emissions deposited on the Greenland ice sheet, the 2017 Greenland wildfires were very efficient climate
391 forcers on a per unit emission basis. Thus, while the fires in 2017 were small in size on a global scale, if the expected future
392 warming of the Arctic (IPCC, 2013) produces more and larger fires in Greenland (Keegan et al., 2014), this could indeed cause
393 substantial albedo changes and, in turn, contribute to accelerated melting of the Greenland ice sheet.



394 5 Non-fire anthropogenic versus fire emissions

395 To place current Arctic fire emissions into context, GFASv1.2 emissions (Kaiser et al., 2012) were compared to non-fire
396 anthropogenic emissions from the integrated assessment Greenhouse gas – Air pollution Interactions and Synergies, or GAINS
397 model (Amann et al., 2011, Klimont et al., 2017), with a focus on BC and PM_{2.5}. The GAINS model was chosen because it
398 considers explicitly environmental policies and assess their impact on current and future emissions (Amann et al., 2011;
399 Klimont et al., 2017; Amann et al, 2020) and projects emissions from various anthropogenic sectors on five-year time steps.
400 For this comparison, we use 2010, 2015, and 2020. Global GFAS data was downloaded from the European Centre for Medium-
401 Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF, <https://apps.ecmwf.int/datasets/data/cams-gfas/>). GFAS was chosen for this comparison
402 because it produced in near real-time on the global scale, unlike GFED which is a historical product and at the time of this
403 writing had not completed the 2020 emission estimates. GFAS also did not show consistently low emissions for the Pan-Arctic
404 region, like FINN (Fig. 2). Further, GFAS is currently used as an operational product for global and regional forecasting
405 (Inness et al., 2019), thus likely to be integrated into policy-making decisions on fire management. The GFAS “wildfire”
406 emissions include all open biomass burning activity, with no differentiation between human-caused ignitions and natural
407 sources, like lightning, but attempt to remove spurious fire emissions from industrial, volcanic, and geothermal sources (Rémy
408 et al., 2017). Data was clipped to Pan-Arctic extents at 50°N, 60°N, and 65°N. GFAS wildfire emissions data has a spatial
409 resolution of 0.1°, so it was aggregated to 0.5° for comparison with GAINS. Since the 2020 wildland fire season in the Arctic
410 was unprecedented (Witze, 2020), with approximately 27% of fires in Siberia burning above 65°N (Conard and Ponomarev,
411 2020), we used the 2020 GFAS emissions to replicate potential future fire regimes by mid-century, i.e., 2050, with climate
412 change-driven expansion of fire seasons and likelihood for extreme fire weather and risk (see Sect. 3).

413
414 Fig. 4, 5, and 6 present 2010, 2015, and 2020 annual BC, PM_{2.5}, and CH₄ emissions, respectively, from four main source
415 sectors of GAINS ECLIPSEv6b (Höglund-Isaksson et al., 2020) and biomass burning from GFAS at the global-scale (left)
416 and above 50° N and 60° N. Globally, residential combustion, i.e., oil, coal, wood, etc. used for heating, is the main
417 anthropogenic source of BC emissions for these years and is the largest overall when compared with GFAS wildfire emissions
418 (Fig. 4, left). Bond et al. (2004) estimated BC emissions from open biomass burning from wildlands and agricultural fires to
419 be higher than other sources, but we did not find that when comparing GAINS emissions with GFAS fire emissions at the
420 global scale. However, in the northern latitudes, wildfires surpass the four anthropogenic sources: residential, transportation,
421 gas flaring during oil and gas exploration and production, and the sum of all other sources, i.e. ‘Others’. North of 60° N, gas
422 flaring is the main anthropogenic source, with comparable but still smaller emissions than GFAS wildfire emissions estimates.
423 As Fig. 4 shows, 2020 was an extreme year for Arctic wildfires (York et al., 2020), with BC emissions above 60° N twice as
424 high as in 2010 and 2015. For PM_{2.5}, wildfires have higher emissions than the anthropogenic sectors globally, and the difference
425 increases in the northern latitudes (Fig. 5). Globally, the agriculture sector is the main source of CH₄, with energy, flaring, and
426 waste sectors all emitting more than wildfires (Fig. 6). Above 50° N, the same anthropogenic sectors are the main CH₄ sources,



427 though in 2020 wildfires emitted more methane than the energy sector. A similar phenomena occurred above 60° N, where
428 depending on the year, wildfire emissions are comparable to the energy sector, while flaring has higher emissions than all the
429 other sectors combined, including agriculture.

430
431 Arctic shipping is often brought up as a potentially important source of BC within the Arctic in the future. According to
432 GAINS, in 2015 shipping comprised only 0.6 % of anthropogenic BC emissions north of 60° N. However, according to a white
433 paper by the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT; Comer et al., 2020), BC emissions from Arctic shipping
434 increased by 85% between 2015 and 2019. Their definition of Arctic is as described in the International Maritime Organization
435 (IMO) Polar Code, i.e., they assessed shipping in much of the High Arctic above the Barents and Kara Seas but inclusive of
436 waters between Alaska and Russia as far south as 60°N. In our comparison, shipping is included in the transport sector of
437 GAINS emissions.

438
439 Fig. 7 shows the monthly BC emissions averaged from 2010, 2015, and 2020 for the globe and the three northern latitude
440 breaks of 50°N, 60°N, and 65°N for the two leading sectors - wildfires and residential combustion. As with global annual
441 emissions (Fig. 4), residential combustion is the main source sector in most months. However, in July and September the
442 wildfire emissions are similar to residential combustion, and in August they are higher at the global-scale. These two sectors
443 show opposite temporal profiles during the year (Suppl. Fig. 1). Residential combustion is highest in the winter months, but
444 wildfires grow during the spring and reach their maximum in the summer, generally falling off in September with the exception
445 of 2020 fire emissions. In the northern latitudes, strong spring emissions in April correspond with the global signal (upper
446 panels of Fig. 7), while the summer months comprise an even larger share of the annual emissions than in the global average.

447
448 Consistently, wildfire emissions account for more than half of all black carbon emissions north of 60°N and 65°N (Fig. 8),
449 representing up to 74% and 82% of 2020 BC emissions, respectively (Suppl. Table 3). At these northern latitudes, wildfires
450 and flaring are the main sources of black carbon, especially north of 65°N with these two sectors accounting for 93% of black
451 emissions, compared to 88% for 60°N. North of 50°N, residential, transport, and flaring are proportionally larger than north
452 of 60°N and 65°N, but still less than wildfire emissions (Suppl. Fig. 2). North of 60°N, wildfire emissions have increased from
453 2010 to 2020, particularly above 65°N. Of those wildfire emissions from GFAS that were above 60°N, 21% in 2010 and 27%
454 in 2015 occurred above 65°N (Suppl. Table 3). However, in 2020 the percentage was 56% (Fig. 8), indicating how extreme
455 the 2020 wildfire year was in the Arctic.

456
457 Given the large portion of black carbon emissions from fires in comparison to anthropogenic sources as modeled by GAINS,
458 understanding the local climate and air pollution impacts for the Arctic Council region is key. For example, the timing of fires
459 in agricultural landscapes, boreal forest fires, and the Arctic tundra occur during the early spring to early summer months (i.e.,
460 March through May for 50° N and May and June for 60° N and 65° as seen in Suppl. Fig. 1) when BC transport and deposition



461 to the Arctic is possible and critical for the cryosphere (Hall and Loboda, 2018) and air pollution (Law and Stohl, 2007), both
462 from long-range (Thomas et al., 2017) and local sources of BC deposition (Evangelidou et al., 2019). For example, BC transport
463 is possible as early as March into mid-May for agricultural landscapes of eastern Europe (Hall and Loboda, 2017) and
464 peatlands, grasslands, and forests in North America (Qi and Wang, 2019), with fires grasslands, forests, and agricultural lands
465 most common in southern Siberia (Kukavskaya et al., 2016) and the Russian Far East (Hayasaka et al., 2020) during the spring
466 months of March, April, and May. The boreal forest fire season starts in April and May in Canada (Tymstra et al., 2020) and
467 Siberia (Soja et al., 2004b; Conard and Ponomarev, 2020), moving north into Alaska by early June (Partain et al., 2015). Fires
468 and associated transport of black carbon to the Arctic in the spring months of March to June tend to be climatically important
469 when deposition on the cryosphere can accelerate surface melting (Bond et al., 2013). In spring and summer of 2020, fires in
470 the Arctic landscape of northern Sakha Republic were burning as early as the beginning of May (McCarty et al., 2020),
471 indicating a local source of black carbon. Likewise, wildfires in Greenland in July 2017 and July 2019 confirm that a local
472 source of BC deposition on the Greenland Ice Sheet is possible (Evangelidou et al., 2019). Wildfire PM_{2.5} emissions are local
473 sources of air pollution for urban and rural communities across the Arctic (Mölders and Kramm, 2018; Schmale et al., 2018),
474 often peaking in summer months.

475 **6 Fire management in the Arctic**

476 Active fuels management, like prescribed fires and even allowing wildfires to burn under non-severe fire weather conditions,
477 may be more effective than fire suppression and/or efforts to eliminate all fire from northern landscapes (McWethy et al.,
478 2019), including in novel landscapes caused by warming in the Arctic. Fuel treatments in the boreal zones of Alaska were
479 modeled to be effective for at least 14 years post-treatment, especially in shaded fuel breaks that reduce canopy cover and
480 ladder fuels (Little et al., 2018). However, in dried and degraded peatlands of the Arctic region, fuels management will be
481 more complicated outside the boreal forest and forest-tundra gradient, where mulching treatments that convert canopy and
482 surface fuels to a masticated fuel bed can limit peat burn depth in Black Spruce (*Picea mariana*) stands (Wilkinson et al., 2018).
483 Privately-owned grassy tussock tundra and dwarf shrub tundra vegetation types are more likely to burn than low shrub tundra
484 in Alaska (Hu et al., 2015), showing relatively rapid vegetation re-greening within a decade after burning for shrub and tussock
485 tundra (Rocha et al., 2012). While prescribed burning could be effective in fuel management for tussock and dwarf shrub
486 landscapes of the tundra, prescribed burning effectiveness for peatlands is less clear. Peat fire risk and burn depth, however, is
487 less influenced by canopy and ground vegetation and more by soil bulk density (impacting air availability in soils), the water
488 table depth, and precipitation (Kieft et al., 2016). After the devastating 2010 fires in the Moscow region, the regional
489 government undertook an ambitious 70,000 ha peatland rewetting project to reduce fire risk (Sirin et al., 2014), a landscape-
490 scale process that can be monitored using existing Earth observation sensors at the moderate resolution (30 m Landsat to 10
491 m Sentinel-2; Sirin et al., 2018). To date, the effectiveness of this campaign is unclear, but in practical terms it should reduce
492 fire risk. In the larger context of CH₄, Günther et al. (2020) used a radiative forcing model to determine that methane emissions



493 from peatland rewetting are less significant in the short-term when compared to the CO₂ emissions from degraded or drained
494 peatlands increasing long-term warming when rewetting is postponed. Adaptive management strategies of the timber industry
495 in Fennoscandia could also reduce fire risk. Intensive management via ditch network maintenance and fertilization of drained
496 peatlands will increase timber values while also rewetting the peat (Ahtikoski and Hökkä, 2019). Prescribed burning for
497 silvicultural retention and maintaining and regenerating pure stands can also reduce fuel loadings while increasing biodiversity
498 (Lindberg et al., 2020).

499

500 Human ignition sources and determining how demographic, migration, and/or development patterns in these changing
501 landscapes will impact fire activity and related emissions (Robinne et al. 2016; Reilly et al. 2019). For example, consider
502 agricultural landscapes as one source of fire. Expanding climate-driven agricultural frontiers in the high northern latitudes
503 under RCP8.5 scenario for 2060-2080 could add 8.5 million km² of new croplands in Canada and Russia alone, expanding
504 wheat and maize production into areas with carbon-rich or peat soils (Hannah et al., 2020). Further, Parfenova et al. (2019)
505 found crop growing conditions would be established in some of the permafrost zones of Siberia under RCPs 2.6 and 8.5 by
506 2080, favorable for wheat and maize (silage) production. These crops are commonly managed via open burning practices in
507 the U.S., eastern Europe, Russia, and Canada (Kutcher and Malhi, 2010; McCarty et al., 2017; Theesfeld and Jelinek, 2017;
508 Shiwakoti et al., 2019; Thompson and Morrison, 2020). Thus, seasonality of burns and management of croplands, grasslands,
509 and deciduous forests may occur at times when transport of emissions to the Arctic is likely, i.e., late winter/early spring for
510 Russia (Hall and Loboda, 2018; Qi and Wang, 2019) and Canada and north central U.S. (Viatte et al., 2015), respectively.

511

512 While open biomass burning emissions are episodic in nature when considering emissions from single extreme wildland fire
513 events and even wildfire seasons, the spring to early summer human-caused fires are a consistent source of BC and PM_{2.5} that
514 can be managed and potentially reduced. From the policy perspective, and how these events will contribute to Pan-Arctic
515 pollution, is important to consider for future Arctic Council collaboration and coordination among Member States, Arctic
516 Indigenous Permanent Participants, and non-Arctic Observer States. For future Arctic fires, policy controls are effectively
517 limited to fuels management, reduction of human ignitions, and wildland firefighting in the Arctic and the boreal zone
518 (Flannigan et al., 2013). Further, wildland firefighting techniques in the boreal forest will not be appropriate for the more
519 fragile permafrost- and peat-dominated Arctic tundra and will need to be specifically tailored, for example, to the tundra
520 (French et al., 2015). Collaboration, cooperation, and innovation are needed for future Arctic wildland firefighting techniques,
521 practices, and implementation, particularly in the context of emissions reductions.

522 **7 Knowledge gaps and associated uncertainties**

523 Here we highlight the key problems summarized from the review of scientific literature in an attempt to focus future research
524 efforts. It is important to reduce the uncertainties below to understand Arctic fire regimes and emissions, especially given that



525 climate change potentially introduces a new fast-moving uncertainty. Improving the understanding of the current and future
526 Arctic and boreal fire regimes will be important for Arctic policymakers as well, given a rapidly changing Arctic and the
527 influence of these fire regimes on climate systems, fragile Arctic ecosystems, and society (Rogers et al., 2020). Overall, a
528 major uncertainty exists in conceptualising and documenting what constitutes a shift in fire regimes of a certain region or even
529 Pan-Arctic (i.e., current fire climatology versus fuel types) and what happens when a new regime is about to emerge (i.e.,
530 future projections of climatic and ecological conditions). Specific recommendations are made in each subsection to propose
531 next steps.

532 **7.1 Future fire landscapes and regimes**

533 Future Arctic fire regimes will be impacted by changing vegetation on the landscape (Tchebakova et al., 2009; Sizov et al.,
534 2021), with both climate change and subsequent fire seasons, i.e., fire disturbance, impacting the species and locations of
535 future vegetation on Arctic and boreal landscapes (Foster et al., 2019). For example, fire and the thawing of permafrost are
536 considered to be the principal mechanisms that will shape new vegetation physiognomies for Siberia (Polikarpov et al., 1998;
537 Tchebakova et al., 2010). Important to note that moisture from summertime thaw of the active layer of permafrost provides
538 necessary moisture for forest growth in the dry environment of interior Siberia, otherwise only steppe could exist without this
539 additional moisture (Shumilova, 1962). In the dry climate in interior Siberia, frequent fires eliminate any of the dark conifer
540 undergrowth that may have become established in suitable sites within the permafrost zone. The fire return interval in the light
541 conifer (larch, *Larix spp.*, and Scots pine, *Pinus sylvestris*) middle taiga in central Siberia is 20–30 years (Furyaev et al., 2001),
542 compared to 200–300 years in dark conifer (Siberian pine, *Pinus sibirica*, and fir, *Abies sibirica*) forests in southern Siberia,
543 including mountain taiga. Slowly growing dark conifers are not adapted to frequent fires and typically die; additionally, they
544 are not light-tolerant, so they are not likely to be the first species to succeed following fire events. On the other hand, *Larix*
545 *dahurica* is evolutionarily adapted to fire and successfully regenerates when cones open following fire events. For East Siberia,
546 Polikarpov et al. (1998) speculated that post-fire succession would mean that dark conifers would be replaced by Scots pine
547 in southern dry climates and by larch on cold soils in a warmer climate. Zonal dark conifers would shift northwards and
548 eastwards following permafrost retreat, and light-needed tree species (e.g., *Pinus sylvestris* and *Larix sibirica*) would follow
549 them, expanding from the south. In the transition zone between dark-needed and light-needed tree species, birch and mixed
550 light conifer-hardwoods subtaiga and forest-steppe would dominate, likely reducing fire risk. In the southern tundra of Yamalo-
551 Nenets Autonomous Okrug in northwest Siberia, a transition from dry dwarf shrub to woodlands (< 50% of area is covered by
552 trees) has been documented in previously burned areas (Sizov et al., 2021).

553
554 Siberian forests are predicted to decrease and shift northwards and forest-steppe and steppe ecosystems are predicted to
555 dominate 50% of Siberia by 2080 under RCP 8.5 (Parfenova et al., 2019), meaning agriculture in Siberia would likely benefit
556 from climate warming. About 50–85% of central Siberia was predicted to be climatically suitable for agriculture (Tchebakova
557 et al., 2011), although potential croplands would be limited by availability of suitable soils. Crop production may increase by



558 twofold. The introduction of new agricultural crops could likely be less costly than afforestation with new tree species
559 climatotypes. Farming may be a preferred land use choice in the future where forests would fail due to climate change, with
560 regional business and economy authorities determining what specific measures may be undertaken to support forestry,
561 agriculture, or mixed agriculture and forestry practices in order to optimize economic loss or gain effects of climate change.
562 Therefore, understanding how climate change and ongoing fire disturbance in the boreal and Arctic will impact species
563 distribution, and thus fuel availability, remains complex (Shuman et al., 2017) and more work in coupled fire-climate-
564 ecological models, with considerations for permafrost and human-driven land use and ignition in emerging agricultural
565 systems, for the Arctic and boreal is needed.

566 **7.2 Peatlands**

567 Peat smouldering can emit large quantities of smoke, contributing to hazardous air quality (Hu et al., 2018). Current global
568 fire emissions inventories underestimate peat fires, as forest fuel types currently drive fuels maps and profiles (Liu et al., 2020).
569 Boreal zone peatland fires are not well quantified in terms of fuel loadings (Van Leuwen et al., 2014). High uncertainty in
570 emission factors for boreal peat fires (Hu et al., 2018) has led to improved laboratory-derived emission factors from sampled
571 peat from Russia and Alaska (Watson et al., 2019). Burn depth is also not well captured outside of localized spatial scales, like
572 sampling plots, given lack of Earth observation sensing capabilities and pre-fire and post-fire soil surveys (Rogers et al., 2014),
573 which can lead to emissions underestimations.

574
575 With a warming climate, there is a risk of increasing peatland and “legacy carbon” fires (Ingram et al., 2019) in boreal forests,
576 particularly in stands younger than 60 years where drying limits the resilience of the carbon rich soils (Walker et al., 2019)
577 and in drying fen watersheds near large settlements, like the costliest wildfire in Canada’s history - the May 2016 Horse
578 River/Fort McMurray fire (Elmes et al., 2018). Future emission estimates from peat fires will need to be informed by where
579 and in what condition these carbon-rich soils reside, particularly as predicted moderate and severe drought in boreal peatlands
580 western Canada are expected to increase fire size by over 500% (Thompson et al., 2019). Mapping pan-Arctic peatlands has
581 proved challenging (Yu et al., 2010; Xu et al., 2018), with recent improvements linking permafrost to peat storage (Hugelius
582 et al., 2020). Further, difficulties in estimating and/or accounting for water table depth and moisture content of peat when
583 modeling depth of burn and associated emissions during smouldering is a key observational uncertainty (Kiely et al, 2019).
584 Future fuels data will need to account for how the complexities of the boreal and Arctic peat topography will impact rate of
585 post-fire peat soil accumulation (Ingram et al., 2019), with some landscapes remaining resilient with other marginal peat areas
586 with severe smouldering and fewer sediment inputs becoming sources of legacy carbon emissions, thus driving future fuels
587 availability. Current Earth system models underestimate evaporative water loss and overestimate current and future water
588 availability for boreal peatland systems under RCP 4.5 and 8.5 warming scenarios, perhaps underestimating fire risk, activity,
589 and emissions in peat systems (Helbig et al., 2020).

590



591 Climate mitigation efforts, like restoration or rewetting of peatlands, do not eliminate the role of fire as a management tool
592 (Davies et al., 2016) nor the risk of wildland fire in peat landscapes. Thus, estimates of future fire emissions will need to
593 assimilate complexities associated with peat fuel conditions and loadings. For example, restoration of peat is not a linear
594 process, with previous results in Canada showing one to two decades needed for restoration and rewetting of degraded
595 peatlands that have residual peat and vegetation to ‘seed’ the sites (Nugent et al., 2019). Until these restored peatlands have
596 sufficient moisture and vegetation cover, they are still susceptible to fire risk. Burn depth in peat can be limited in naturally
597 wet and rewetted peatlands if the surface maintains a high moisture content via hydrological and vegetation processes (Granath
598 et al., 2016). Maintaining these needed hydrological processes is difficult for degraded, unmanaged peatlands. In Alberta,
599 wildland peat sites lacking constant sources of water and depositional inputs experienced severe burning on margins (Ingram
600 et al., 2019), while Wilkinson et al. (2019) found forested peatland margins were extremely vulnerable to peat smouldering
601 combustion, especially in previously burned areas with > 60 years since fire. Ronkainen et al. (2013) expect a warmer climate
602 to lower water tables via evapotranspiration for unmanaged peatlands in Finland, thus increasing wildfire risk. Producing more
603 complete estimates of fuel loadings for peatlands across the Arctic region can follow methodologies set by Johnston et al.
604 (2015) to augment the dynamic boreal, taiga, and tundra fuel loadings, e.g. Innes (2013) and Ivanova et al. (2019).

605 **7.3 Permafrost**

606 Approximately half of all peatlands in the Northern Hemisphere are coincidental with permafrost (Hugelius et al., 2020), with
607 many discontinuous permafrost sites dominated by peatlands in Canada (Estop-Aragonés et al., 2018; Gibson et al., 2018),
608 Russia (Hugelius et al., 2014), and Sweden (Chang et al., 2019). In the flat West Siberian terrain, Kotlyakov and Khromova
609 (2002) and Malevsky-Malevich et al. (2001) show no continuous or discontinuous permafrost below 65°N, which influences
610 the viable vegetation for the tundra and sparse *Larix sibirica* taiga. Current climate models may be missing the link between
611 melting ground ice, sometimes referred to as thermokarst processes, and potential permafrost degradation of the currently
612 stable and carbon-rich northeast Siberian Arctic lowlands (NESAL). Nitzbon et al. (2020) indicate that we can expect a
613 threefold increase of permafrost thaw in the NESAL region under RCP4.5 (a stabilization scenario) by 2100 when thermokarst
614 processes are combined with increased temperature projections in numerical modelling, potentially increasing the amount of
615 peat fuels in an already high fire activity region. Combining current peatland distribution maps with newer modeled datasets
616 of predicted mid-century and late-century permafrost extent and geohazard indices under climate-forcing scenarios
617 (Karjalainen et al., 2019) can reduce uncertainties to determine: 1) increased peat fire risk and locations due to permafrost
618 thaw and 2) decreased capability to deploy ground-level wildland firefighting, thus limiting ability to control future peat fires
619 and fire emissions in the Pan-Arctic. Further, permafrost thawing changes hydrology (e.g. greater river discharge or
620 disappearing lakes) and geomorphology (solifluction and thermokarst processes) across broad expanses of the contemporary
621 permafrost zone. In a warmer and drier climate, many locations in the Arctic may be affected by solifluction, with thermokarst
622 modified by frequent catastrophic fires, and deeper active layer thaw. As a whole, retreating permafrost should cause a



623 reduction in the area of forests and their replacement by steppe on well-drained, tilted geomorphology (Lawrence and Slater,
624 2005) or by bogs on poorly-drained plains (Tchebakova et al., 2009).

625
626 Permafrost areas, especially at their southern distributions, are being disturbed by wildfires (Holloway et al., 2020). In Alaska
627 and northwestern Canada, the impacts of wildfire disturbances on permafrost have been well quantified. For instance, post-
628 fire permafrost change in Alaska showed surface warming greater in boreal sites than tundra, with surface temperatures higher
629 for previously burned sites than at unburned sites, even after vegetation recovered for one to four decades (Jiang et al., 2017).
630 In the North Slope of Alaska, recent evidence suggests that a transition from grasses to shrubbier conditions is occurring post-
631 tundra fires (Jones et al., 2013). Though the vast majority of fires in the continuous and discontinuous permafrost zones occur
632 in deciduous needleleaf forests (Lorantý et al., 2016), knowledge gaps on post-fire permafrost resiliency exist for larch-
633 dominated forests (*Larix spp.*) in Siberia. For instance, recent work in Sakha Republic found that a 36 km² wildfire in an open
634 larch with shrub and moss lichen landscape northwest of the Batagaika megaslump resulted in approximately 3.5 million cubic
635 meters of permafrost five years later (Yanagiya & Furuya, 2020). Likewise, uncertainties persist for post-fire permafrost
636 resiliency in the boreal forests of eastern Canadian, like Quebec and Labrador (Holloway et al., 2020). As with peatlands,
637 improved geospatial products advance our understanding of the potential for impacts of wildfires across large spatial scales
638 (Hugelius et al., 2020).

639

640 **7.4 Satellite-based fire emissions**

641 Fire regimes for the boreal are often described by impacts to and from fire emissions (Rogers et al., 2020), with many modeling
642 emissions in the high northern latitudes using Earth observations. Uncertainties in emission models are driven by availability
643 and quality of fire activity data from satellite- and ground-based sources, as well as incomplete knowledge of fuels and
644 emission factors. Current global fire emission inventories rely on satellite-derived fire activity from active fire detections,
645 burned area mapping, and fire radiative power (Liu et al., 2020). A comparison of four satellite-based global fire emissions
646 databases over North America - GFED, FINN, GFAS, QFED - found that assumed portions of dry matter in fuels and not
647 emission factors were creating biomass burning aerosol estimates that differ by factors of four to seven, essentially limiting
648 the ability to accurately quantify the impact of smoke on climate and air quality (Carter et al., 2020). Given the international
649 scientific community's reliance on two main fire emissions factor sources (Akagi et al., 2011; Andraea, 2019 as an update to
650 Andraea & Merlet, 2001), information available for a robust uncertainty analysis for this variable is limited (Pan et al., 2020).

651

652 Satellite-based observations of fire in the Arctic and boreal regions underestimate open burning in agricultural landscapes,
653 surface fires in boreal forests, and smouldering peat fires. For example, current emission inventories based on satellite-derived
654 products of burned area, like GFEDv4, underestimate human-caused burning in agricultural landscapes and mixed forests in
655 Eurasia between 50° to 65° N by approximately 2,100 km² annually (Zhu et al., 2017), indicating that actual burned area from



656 anthropogenic ignitions in the Eurasian boreal zone is currently underestimated by as much as 16%. Surface fires under forest
657 canopies dominate fire regimes in much of Northern Eurasia, but these fires are not well quantified in current satellite-based
658 burned area products (Rogers et al., 2015; Duncan et al., 2020) and thus emission inventories. Smouldering fires in carbon-
659 rich humus and peat landscapes will be difficult to detect, as smouldering combustion occurs at much lower temperatures than
660 flaming combustion; 500°C to 700°C versus 1500°C to 1800°C, respectively (Rein et al. 2008). As previously mentioned,
661 daily, global observations of low-intensity fire from existing satellite systems are limited currently to VIIRS (Johnston et al.,
662 2018), as it was designed to detect smaller and cooler fires than MODIS. For this review, the versions of GFAS, GFED, FINN,
663 FEER, and QFED analysed rely on MODIS thermal anomalies, unlike the custom AMAP fire emissions which used VIIRS
664 only. Smouldering fires in the Arctic can be mapped via regionally-tuned algorithms designed to ingest daily active fire
665 detections from multispectral VIIRS (Waigl et al., 2017) and hyperspectral Hyperion (Waigl et al., 2019) sensors. In general,
666 satellite and drone detections (Burke et al., 2019) of smouldering peat fires are difficult because ground fires are low
667 temperature and can burn underground and re-emerge in new locations (Rein, 2016), with additional existing detection
668 constraints from coarse resolution (> 1 km) global satellite sensors, canopy cover, and cloud cover (Johnston et al., 2018).

669
670 A further complication is that peat fires can smoulder for months, years, and even decades (Hu et al., 2018), burning laterally
671 and vertically below surface, appearing to be extinguished, but releasing smoke at the surface in a different location from the
672 original ignition site. This phenomenon is referred to as holdover, overwintered, and/or zombie fires, and makes it difficult to
673 allocate as a single - but complex - fire event from cumulative satellite active fire and burned area pixels. For example, in April
674 2020, the Alaska Division of Forestry was monitoring several active smoldering peat fires from the ~ 5 km² Dushka Landing
675 Fire of August 2019 that had overwintered near Willow, Alaska despite heavy snow melt (Alaska Wildland Fire Information,
676 2020). Preliminary results by Scholten and Veraverbeke (2020), indicate that overwintering fires are more likely to be
677 holdovers from high severity fires, emerging more frequently in lowland black spruce-dominated boreal forests. McCarty et
678 al. (2020) hypothesize that some of the earliest fires along still-frozen thermokarst lakes of Sahka Republic in May 2020 may
679 be holdover fires, as the drivers and extent of early season human-caused ignitions are still not well-documented in the
680 scientific literature for much of the Arctic.

681

682 **7.5 Lack of agreement between official statistics and satellite observations**

683 Earth observations from satellite products are powerful tools for forecasting (Pickell et al., 2017), improving rapid response
684 post-fire modelling (Miller et al., 2017), and quantifying fire in the boreal and Arctic regions (Hislop et al., 2020). Consistently,
685 however, there has been little correlation between satellite-derived and official estimates of burned area (Fusco et al., 2019).
686 Loepfe et al. (2012) found that multiple satellite fire products had high correlation with official reports of burned areas for
687 Sweden, but little to no correlation with official statistics for Finland. Agreement of official Russian burned area statistics from
688 fires in Siberian forests was less than 10% when compared to four satellite-based burned area products (Kukavskaya et al.,



689 2013). Average official satellite-derived Russian burned area estimates differ by a mean of 48% for 2002 to 2015 in comparison
690 to the Loboda et al. (2017) regionally-tuned product, which only differs by a mean of 18% in comparison official burned area
691 statistics for Alaska and Canada. North American and Nordic countries have long-term ground-based boreal burned area
692 records that span 50 years or greater, which aids in calibrating current satellite data records and analysing relationships between
693 fire regimes, vegetation, weather, and climate. Long-term accurate fire records do not exist for much of Russia, primarily
694 because fire was not historically recorded in the remote ‘unprotected territories’ (Sofronov et al., 1998; Soja et al., 2004).
695 Consequently, understanding of the balance between surface-to-crown fire and the ecosystem-dependent areas that burn in
696 Siberia is limited, which adversely affects fire emissions estimates. The Global Wildfire Information System (GWIS;
697 <https://gwis.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>), a joint program between the Group on Earth Observations (GEO;
698 https://www.earthobservations.org/geoss_wp.php), Copernicus (<https://www.copernicus.eu/en/services/emergency>), and
699 NASA (<https://www.nasa.gov/>), uses the MODIS MOD64A1 Collection 6 Burned Area product (Giglio et al., 2018) to create
700 country-level burned area statistics. GWIS satellite-derived burned area overestimates open biomass burning in both Norway
701 and Finland by 199% and 129%, respectively, when compared to official statistics (Table 3). GWIS underestimates open
702 biomass burning in Sweden by 48%. Future open biomass burning emissions will need improved satellite fire detection
703 methodologies for the Arctic and boreal regions and also shorter latency in ground reports and statistics from official agencies.
704 Further, verifying satellite detections of fires via ground-level verification will require a concerted effort and likely lead to a
705 better understanding of how and why these two fire data sources do not presently align.

706 **8 People and future Arctic fire regimes**

707 Prevention and management of Pan-Arctic fires are limited to reduction of human-caused ignitions and management of
708 landscape fuels (Flannigan et al., 2013). The impact of humans on fire risk is dependent on local- to national-scale actions that
709 may increase fire and emissions via deforestation, transportation networks, energy extraction, and agricultural open burning
710 as well as decrease fire and fire emissions via active suppression. On a practical level, people are the main ignition sources for
711 fires in the Arctic region, while lightning ignitions tend to lead to larger fires. In interior Alaska, where lightning-caused fires
712 account for 95% of total burned area (Veraverbeke et al., 2017), 52% of total ignitions were human in origin but occurred in
713 areas of high fire suppression resulting in only 5% of total burned area from 1990 to 2016 (Calef et al., 2017). Archard et al.
714 (2008) estimated 65% of all forest fires in the Russian Federation were caused by human ignition, and a more recent study
715 found approximately half of all fires in Sakha Republic are caused by anthropogenic activities (Kirillina et al., 2020).
716 Throughout boreal Canada, anthropogenic factors increase fire probability (Parisien et al., 2016), with humans igniting most
717 fires close to roads while lightning-caused fires are responsible for the majority of burned area in the more remote locations
718 (Gralewicz et al., 2012). Blouin et al. (2016) found that 45% of wildfires in Alberta were started by lightning, but responsible
719 for 71% of burned area. In Finland, lightning-caused fires account for less than 15% of forest fires (Larjavaara et al., 2005).
720 Machines used for forestry operations in stony areas of Sweden account for 7-10% of total annual ignitions and 40% of total



721 burned area (Sjöström et al., 2019). For the 19 European countries reporting fires and ignition sources to the European Forest
722 Fire Information System (EFFIS; <https://effis.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>), de Rigo et al. (2017) determined only 4% of fires were from
723 natural sources, with half of the fire records lacking a verified cause.

724
725 Indigenous Fire Management (IFM) and understanding Indigenous use of fire, as well as fire risk and response to fire events
726 (Mottershead et al., 2020), are needed in a changing Arctic environment. IFM is more frequently being deployed in fire-prone
727 and/or fire-adapted areas (Nikolakakis et al., 2020), which accounts for much of the boreal but not necessarily Arctic ecosystems.
728 Cogos et al. (2019) documented historical place names in northern Sweden (e.g., *roavve* and *roavvi*) related to historical Saami
729 practices of burning pine heath landscapes to improve long term foraging of reindeer. Approximately one out of every ten
730 people in the Arctic are Indigenous (Nordregio, 2019), comprising an estimated 15% of the population of Alaska, 53% of
731 the northern territories of Canada, and 98% of Greenland, for a total of 1.13 million Indigenous peoples in the Pan-Arctic
732 (Young and Bjerregaard, 2019). Arctic communities are demanding more leadership roles in climate research and applications
733 (Stone, 2020). Research- and experiential-driven recommendations on how to incorporate traditional, Indigenous knowledge
734 into Arctic Council working groups efforts, including (1) Use of participatory methodology; (2) Use of Indigenous
735 methodologies; (3) Recognition that traditional ecological knowledge is local; (4) Application to policy; and (5) Cross-cultural
736 understanding (Sidorova, 2020), align well with community- and landscape-driven fire science methodologies needed to
737 predict future fire risk (Bowman et al., 2020; Johnston et al., 2020) and to answer many of the fire regime and emission,
738 including ignition and fuel type, uncertainties raised in this review. Who better to ask - and to lead - than the people who live
739 there?

740 **9 Conclusions**

741 Since the mid-2000s, emissions from open biomass burning have increased above 60°N, with fires above 66°N occurring
742 earlier in the year and burning later into the growing season, indicative of changing Arctic fire regime. Compared to
743 anthropogenic sources in the GAINS model, biomass burning already accounts for more BC and PM_{2.5} emissions than
744 anthropogenic sources north of 60°N, including flaring from associated gas from oil and natural gas extraction. Increased
745 length in fire seasons is coupled with prediction of increased fire severity, with predictions of essentially physically
746 unmanageable crown fires in the boreal as soon as 2050 (Wootton et al., 2017). Future emissions from fires are difficult to
747 predict and here more work is needed. For example, emissions from functionally uncontrollable fires in boreal forests are not
748 well quantified due to uncertainties in combustion efficiency observations and estimates (Xu et al., 2020).

749
750 In contributing to the AMAP 2021 assessment of SLCFs, this review was driven by policy questions identified by member
751 states of the Arctic Council (Table 1), and builds on the 2011 (AMAP, 2011) and 2015 (AMAP, 2015) reports, which included
752 some analysis and discussion of natural, ‘semi-natural’ (i.e., human-caused ignitions in wildland landscapes), and agricultural



753 field burning. We did not perform a systematic review of the fire research literature (Robinne et al., 2020), and the existing
754 literature cited was not assessed for limitations or errors. Further, while the authors attempted to cite published literature and
755 official fire statistics for the seven Arctic Council states experiencing open biomass burning (excluding Iceland), we know that
756 bias may still be present in the over 200 peer-reviewed sources of literature and data chosen for this review (Johnston et al.,
757 2020). This review is a starting point, a foundation for future Pan-Arctic research agendas for fire monitoring and needed
758 systematic reviews (Haddaway et al., 2020) of future fire risk, fire emissions, and fire prevention and management in the Arctic
759 - all needed to accurately describe future Arctic fire regimes.

760
761 Future Arctic fire regimes will likely be driven by climate change impacts on fuels, including the interactions between peat
762 and permafrost, fire weather, and ignition sources as well as the complexities of climate and fire disturbance changing
763 vegetation types (Tchebakova et al., 2009; Shuman et al., 2017). The consensus of current literature is that climate change and
764 human activity will increase fire risk in the Arctic, via increased lightning strikes, thawing of permafrost, transitions to grasses,
765 taiga, and dry peat, and more human-caused ignitions. In eastern Canada, the northward expansion of deciduous forests will
766 likely decrease fire risk, which may also be true for portions of southern Siberia and Fennoscandia. Human- and lightning-
767 caused fires are likely to increase given expansion of energy extraction, transportation networks, tourism, and climate change.
768 Further, Arctic landscapes are complex, with high levels of localized heterogeneity due to polygonal tundra landforms (Lara
769 et al., 2020), complex and endemic vegetation types and communities (Raynolds et al., 2019), and topography (Morin et al.,
770 2016). Future fire emissions studies will need to integrate multiple datasets to accurately quantify Arctic fire regimes (Masrur
771 et al., 2018), including climate, permafrost conditions, aboveground, surface, and peat fuels, topography, land use, Indigenous
772 and local fire management, seasonality of burns, and ignition sources.

773
774 Human activity and communities in the Arctic will need to adapt to increasing fire risk. To prepare for these 21st century
775 changes to the Arctic fire regime, evidence-based fire monitoring and management - including prevention strategies - must
776 incorporate Indigenous and local knowledge in the Arctic. This will require increasing transdisciplinary research (Sidorova,
777 2020) to understand and predict fire in the North, how humans are and must adapt to a new fire prone landscape in the
778 Anthropocene (Bowman et al., 2020), and Pan-Arctic collaboration and cooperation. Understanding ecological landscape
779 changes, predicted to substantially increase across Asian Russia, is crucial information for developing viable strategies for
780 long-term economic and social development in preparation for climate migration and strategic adaptation planning (Parfenova
781 et al., 2019).

782
783 The Arctic Council's role as an agent of change in the region is promising, as it has moved its role from policy informing to
784 policy making (Barry et al., 2020). Given the extreme fire season of 2020, an Arctic Council-led initiative for Pan-Arctic fire
785 monitoring, prevention, and management is strongly needed for a rapidly changing Arctic (McCarty et al., 2020). Such efforts
786 have started, including the Arctic Wildland Fire Ecology Mapping and Monitoring Project (Arctic FIRE;



787 <https://www.caff.is/arcticfire>) led by the Gwich'in Council International, an Indigenous Permanent Participant, via the
788 Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) working group of the Arctic Council, as well as other Arctic Council activities.
789 Potentially expanding existing efforts or coordinating with new initiatives to incorporate the five other Indigenous permanent
790 participants, as well as more efforts from the science and disaster response agencies of the eight member states and the expertise
791 of other Arctic Council working groups, could create the type of community- and Arctic-centric science needed for Pan-Arctic
792 fire policies and to increase the capacity for the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic to monitor and protect their Arctic homelands
793 (Wilson, 2020) from fire risk and to adapt to the changing Arctic fire regime.
794

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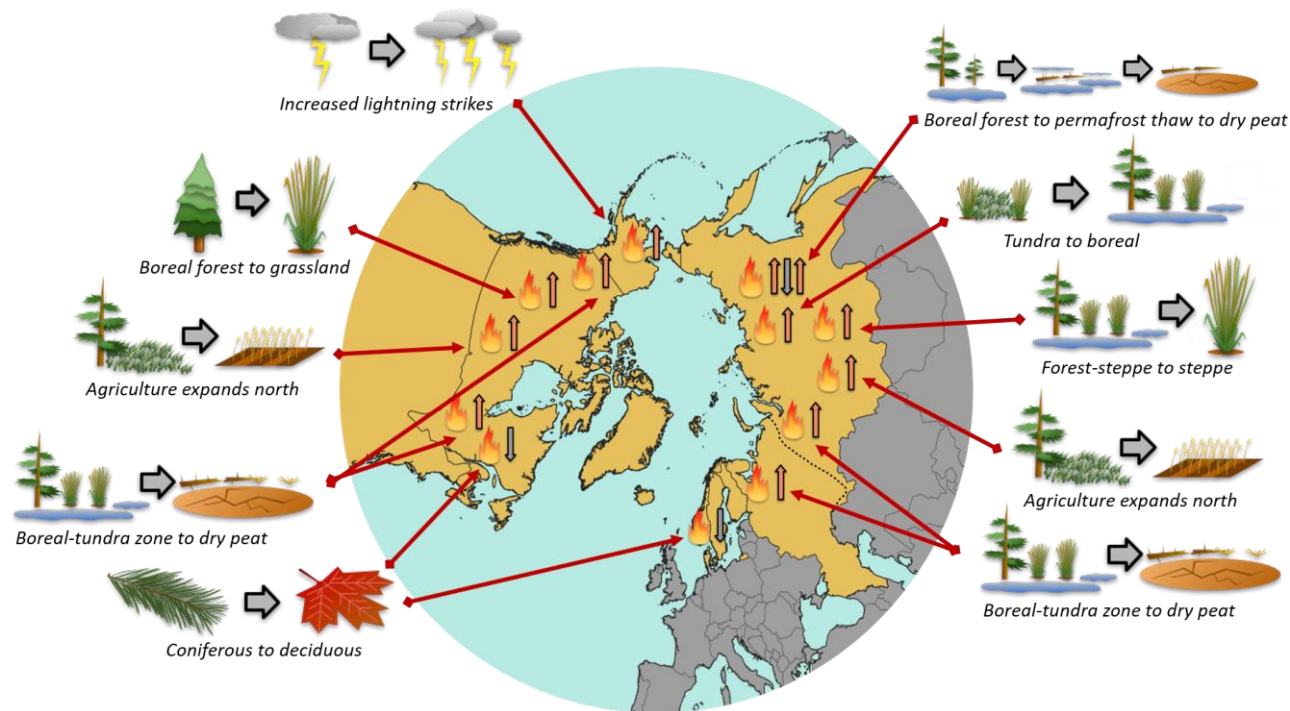


1442 **Tables and Figures**

1443 **Table 1: Policy driven questions tasked to be answered by the SLCF EG of AMAP, a Working Group of the Arctic Council, for the**
 1444 **AMAP Assessment 2021: Arctic climate, air quality, and health impacts from short-lived climate forcers (SLCFs).**

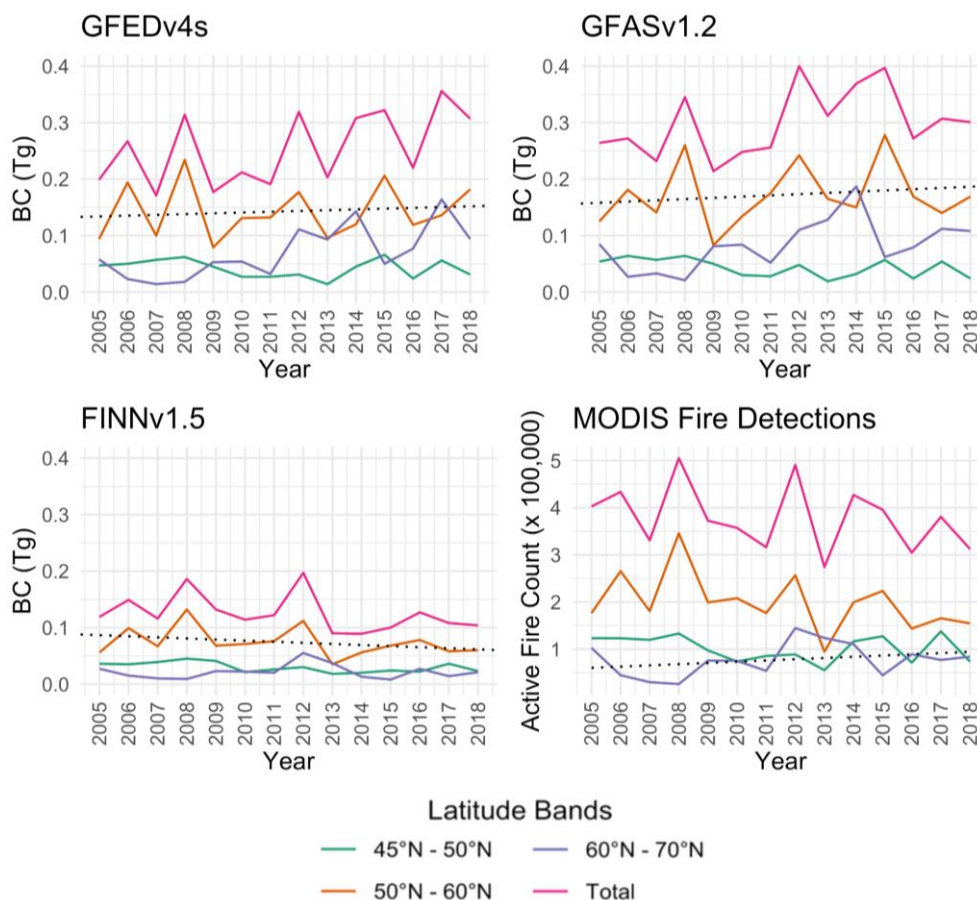
1. What are the impacts of climate change on fire risk and fire emissions?
2. What are current and future fire management strategies in the Arctic?
3. What are the long term emissions from open biomass burning?
4. What are the emissions from ‘natural’ fires?
5. What are the emissions from human-caused open biomass burning?
6. What are the uncertainties in future natural and open biomass burning emissions?

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 1448 **Figure 1: A sample of peer-reviewed future Arctic fire risk variables due to expected ecological and meteorological transitions by**
 1449 **mid- and late 21st century climate change for Arctic Council member states. ‘Up arrows’ indicate increase in fire risk and ‘down**
 1450 **arrows’ indicate a decrease in fire risk, with the location of the arrows approximate to the location of fire risk from the literature**
 1451 **and not projections for a given country; the dashed line indicates the boundary between European Russia, and Siberia and the**
 1452 **Russian Far East.**

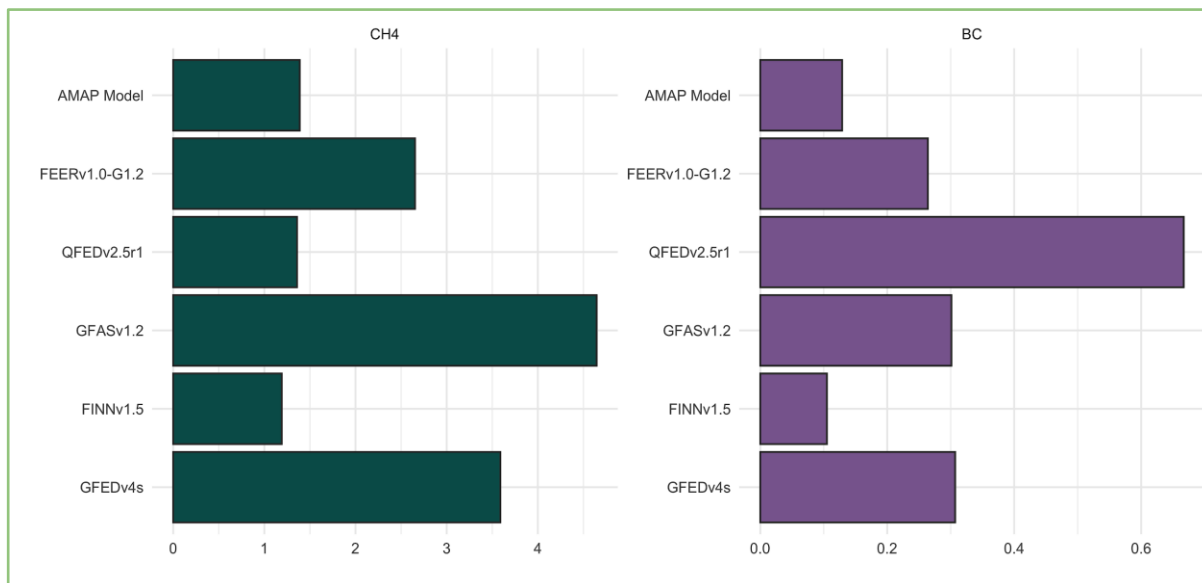
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1455 **Figure 2: Annual black carbon (BC) emissions in Tg from three commonly used global fire emissions models and annual fire activity**
 1456 **from the MODIS Collection 6 active fire product (Terra and Aqua) split by latitude ranges for the Arctic Council Region, 2005 -**
 1457 **2018; note the y-axis has been standardized for each model for ease of comparison; dotted line is the positive trend for BC emissions**
 1458 **from open biomass burning and 1 km MODIS active fire detections (Terra and Aqua) for 60° to 70° N.**

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Figure 3: Annual 2018 BC and CH₄ emissions in Tg from five global fire emissions models and a custom AMAP fire emissions model for north of 45°N.

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Table 2: Summary table of BC, PM_{2.5}, and CH₄ emissions in teragrams (Tg) from reported statistics on burned area from the Arctic Council members; sources for burned area include Norway (DSB, 2020), Greenland (Markuse, 2019), Finland (Ketola, 2020), Sweden (Betänkande av 2018 års skogsbrandsutredning, 2019), Canada (CIFFC, 2020), Alaska (Alaska Division of Forestry, 2020), the contiguous United States (NIFC, 2019), and the Russian Federation (ФБУ "АВИАЛЕСООХРАНА", 2019); fuel loadings and combustion completeness from Van Leeuwen et al. (2014) for boreal forests, with tundra values used for Greenland and temperate forests for the USA/CONUS; emission factors taken from GFED4.

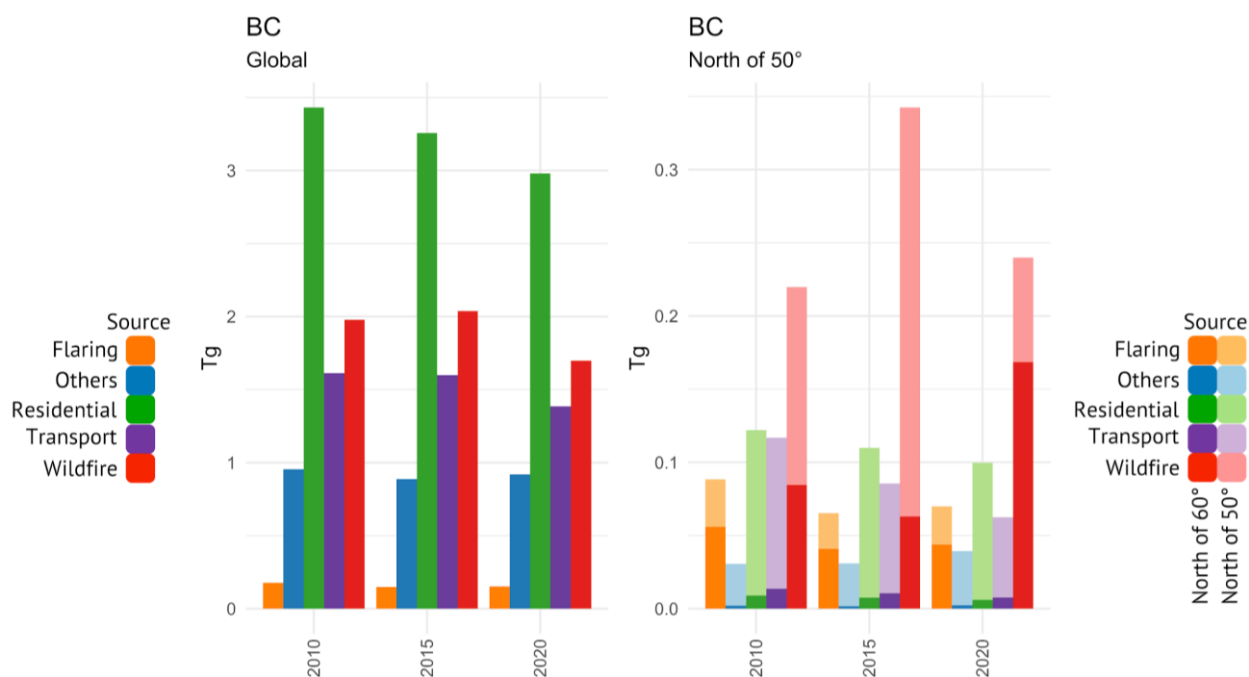
Country/ Region	Year	Official Burned Area (km ²)	BC (Tg)	PM _{2.5} (Tg)	CH ₄ (Tg)
Norway	2019	0.03	7.61E-12	2.33E-10	9.08E-11
Denmark/ Greenland	2019	8	1.27E-10	2.88E-08	6.59E-08
Finland	2019	6	2.00E-09	5.00E-08	2.00E-08
Sweden	2018	250	6.30E-08	1.94E-06	7.60E-07
Canada	2019	18,389	4.67E-06	1.43E-04	5.56E-05
USA/ Alaska	2019	10,481	2.66E-06	8.14E-05	3.17E-05



USA/ CONUS	2019	18,876	1.02E-05	3.43E-04	9.64E-05
Russia	2019	100,785	2.56E-05	7.83E-04	3.05E-04
Total		148,795	4.30E-05	1.35E-03	4.90E-04

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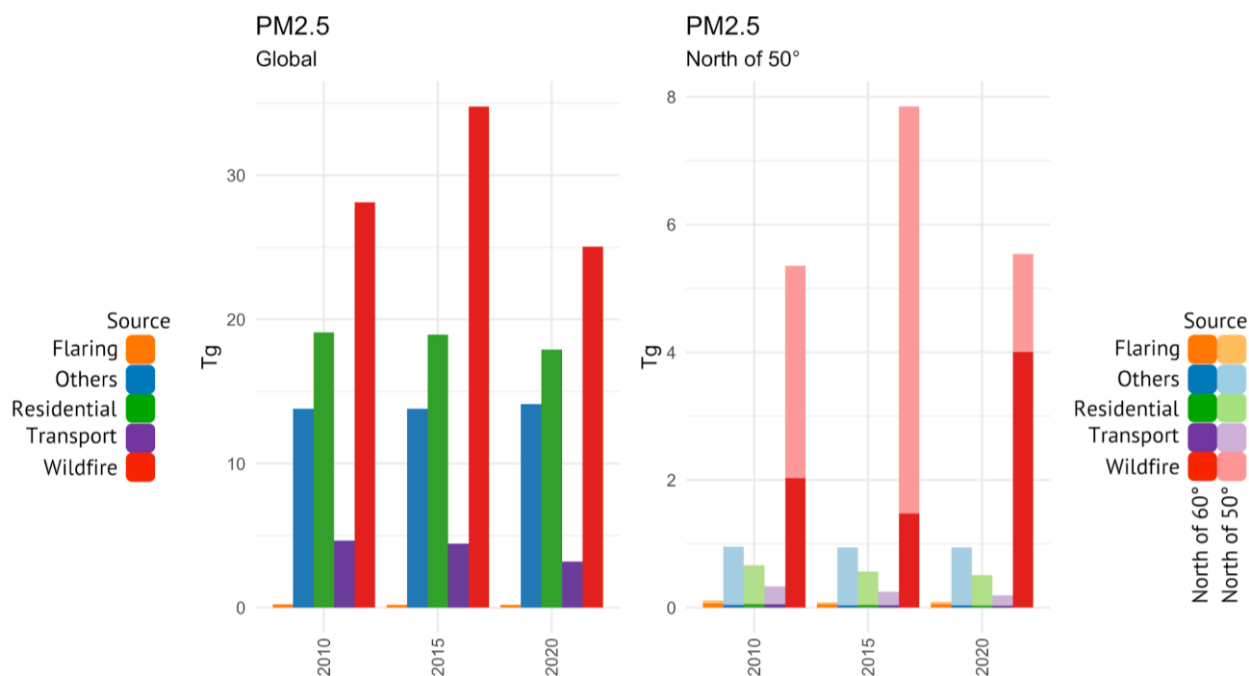
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1473 **Figure 4: Annual black carbon emissions for 2010, 2015, and 2020 from four anthropogenic source sectors (residential, transport,**
 1474 **flaring, others) from GAINS and wildfires from GFAS, presented globally (left) and (right) 50°- 60°N (lighter colours of the**
 1475 **cumulative bar) and north of 60°N latitude (darker colours of the cumulative bar).**

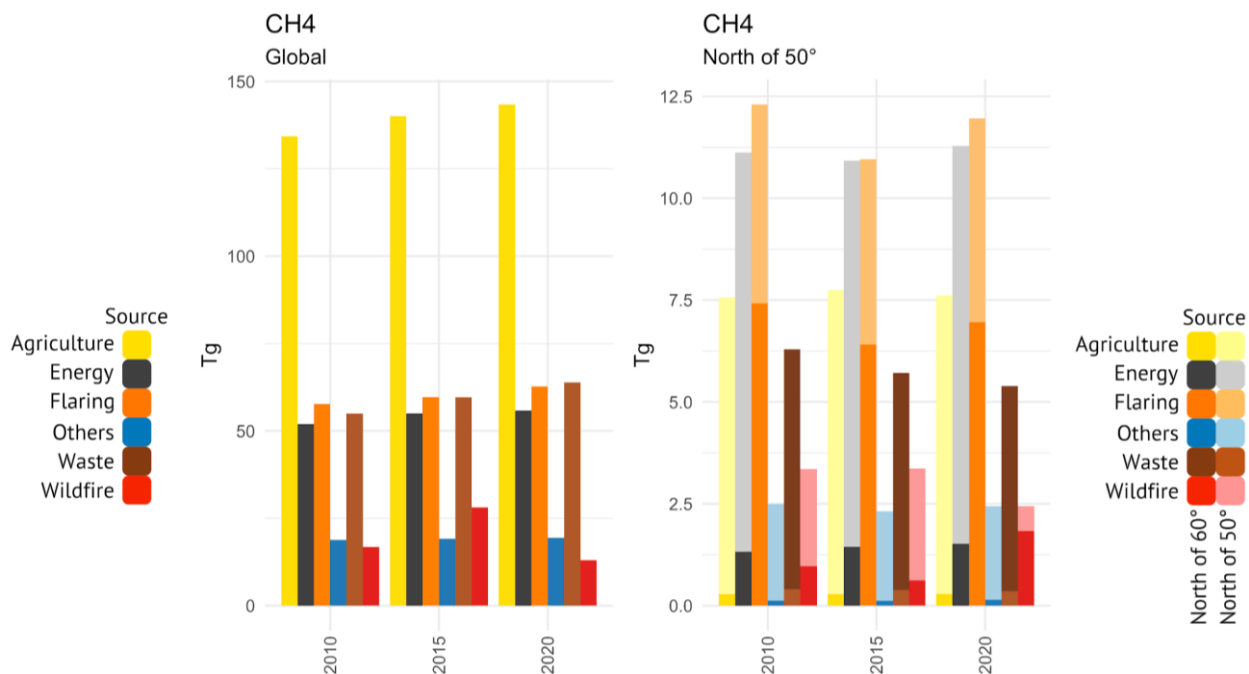
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1478 **Figure 5: Annual PM_{2.5} emissions for 2010, 2015, and 2020 from four anthropogenic source sectors (residential, transport, flaring,**
1479 **others) from GAINS and wildfires from GFAS, presented globally (left) and (right) 50°- 60°N (lighter colours of the cumulative bar)**
1480 **and north of 60°N latitude (darker colours of the cumulative bar).**

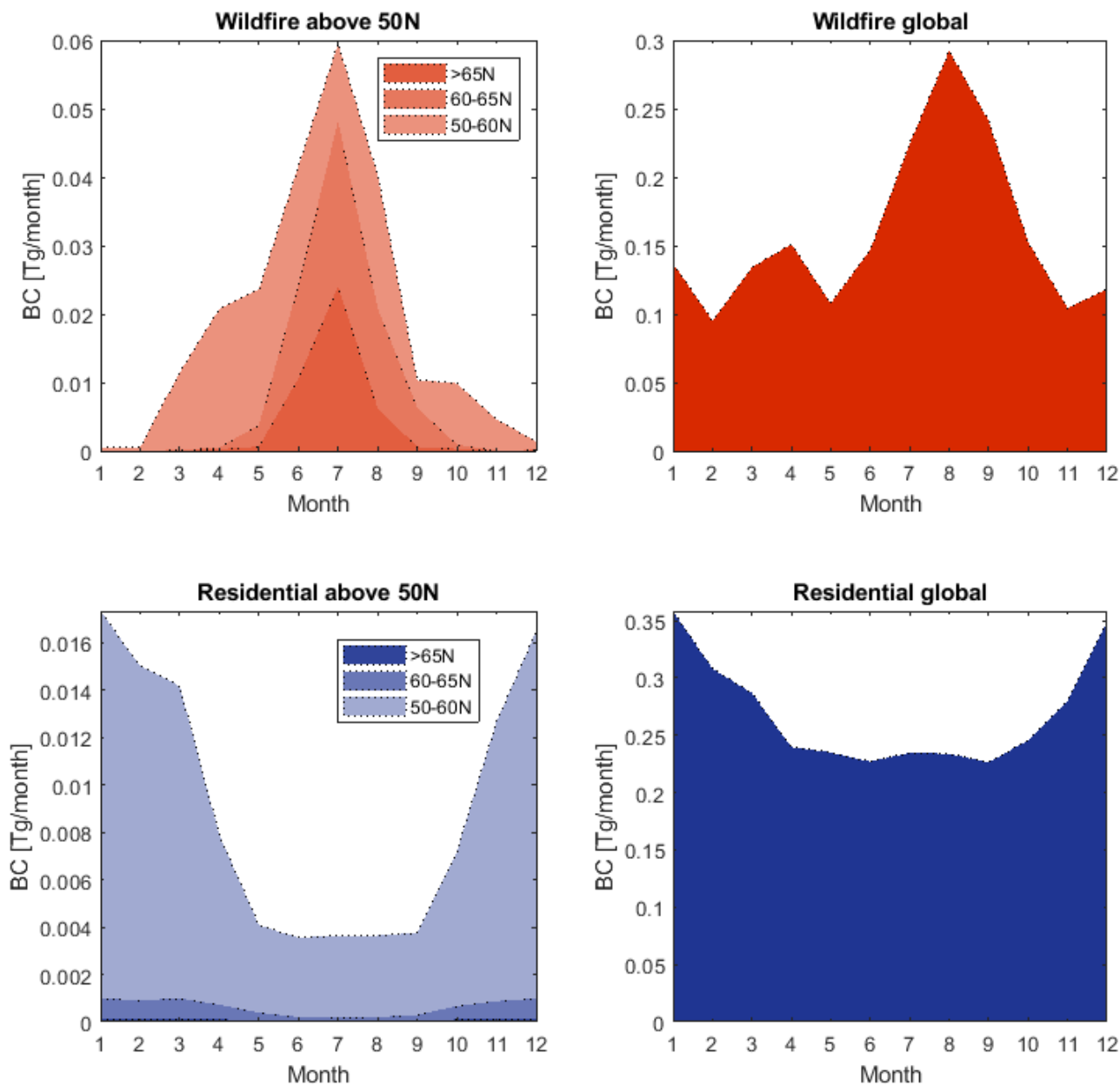
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1483 **Figure 6: Annual CH₄ emissions for 2010, 2015, and 2020 from four anthropogenic source sectors (residential, transport, flaring,**
 1484 **others) from GAINS and wildfires from GFAS, presented globally (left) and (right) 50° - 60°N (lighter colours of the cumulative bar)**
 1485 **and north of 60°N latitude (darker colours of the cumulative bar).**

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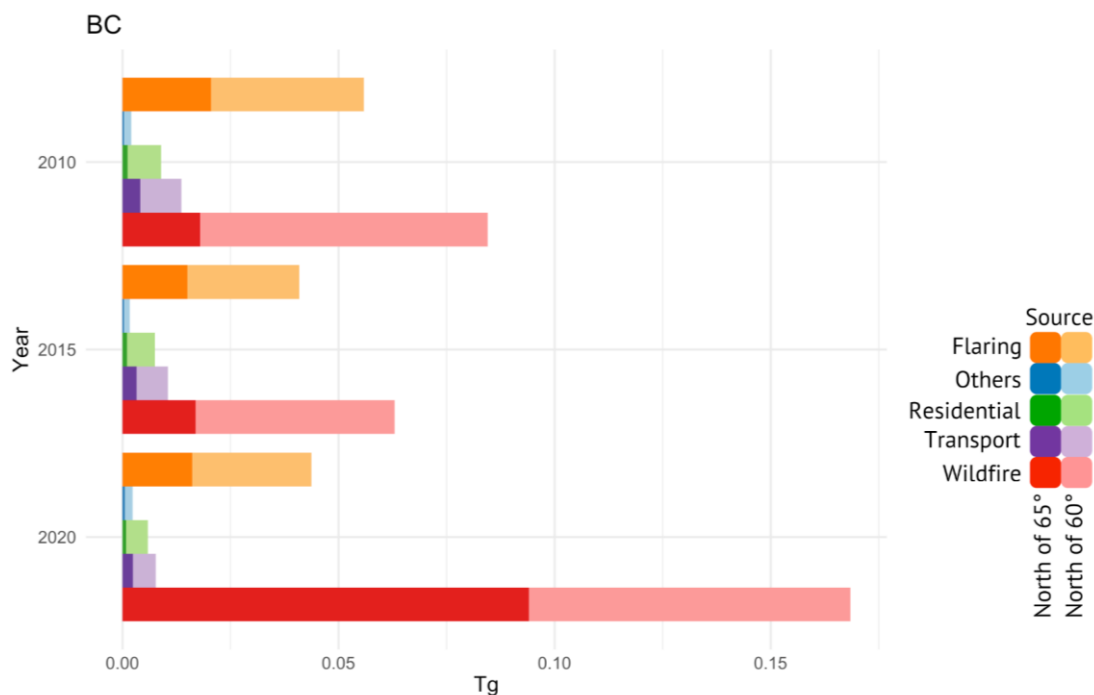


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1488 **Figure 7: Monthly black carbon emissions from the leading anthropogenic sector, residential heating, in GAINS and wildfires from**
1489 **GFAS by latitudinal ranges (left) and global (right); emissions are averaged from the given years of 2010, 2015 and 2020 to align**
1490 **with the GAINS data availability.**

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1494 **Figure 8: Sectoral black carbon emissions above 60° N (lighter colours) and 65° N (darker colours) for 2010, 2015, and 2020;**
1495 **anthropogenic emissions from GAINS and wildfire emissions from GFAS.**

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1497 Code and Data Availability

1498 The GFEDv4s, FINNv1.5, GFASv1.2, QFEDv2.5r1, FEERv1.0-G1.2 fire emissions data for 2005 through 2018 were
1499 downloaded from <https://globalfires.earthengine.app/view/firecam>. The AMAP SLCF EG 2018 Pan-Arctic fire emissions
1500 database can be downloaded at <https://zenodo.org/record/4648723#.YGTq469KhPY> (embargoed access until review is
1501 complete, can be provided to editors to share with reviewers) and R code used to compute it can be downloaded at
1502 <https://github.com/fainjj>. 2020 global GFAS emissions data was downloaded from: [https://apps.ecmwf.int/datasets/data/cams-](https://apps.ecmwf.int/datasets/data/cams-gfas/)
1503 [gfas/](https://apps.ecmwf.int/datasets/data/cams-gfas/). GAINS global emission data can be accessed at
1504 <https://iiasa.ac.at/web/home/research/researchPrograms/air/ECLIPSEv6.html>.

1505 Supplement

1506 The supplement related to this article is available online at:



1507 **Author Contributions**

1508 JLM coordinated the review, designed the fire emission models comparison, co-led the creation of the custom AMAP fire
1509 emissions model with JJF, archived the literature for the review, and wrote the manuscript. JA, SE, AV, SRA, NE, and KK
1510 provided major efforts in manuscript design and organization. VVP, JJF, ZK, and JLM led the GAINS and GFAS analysis.
1511 JJF, VVP, SE, and JLM created the figures and supplemental materials, with input from the remaining authors. All authors
1512 contributed to interpretation and verification of the review, as well as contributing to the writing of the manuscript.

1513 **Competing Interests**

1514 The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

1515 **Special Issue Statement**

1516 This article is part of the special issue “Arctic climate, air quality, and health impacts from short-lived climate forcers (SLCFs):
1517 contributions from the AMAP Expert Group”.

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