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226 Bordeaux St - Chadron, NE 69337
308-432-5545 fax 308-432-5601
E-mail: kcsr@chadrad.com

(Neb.)- Tree Species Cited As Contributor To Neb. Fires

By: Jeremy Anderson Posted at: 02/22/2013 03:53 PM

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) - Nebraska fire experts are pointing to a fast-spreading tree species as a major contributor to last year's wildfires.

The Legislature's Natural Resources Committee heard testimony Friday from state forestry and fire experts who echoed a common theme: The eastern red cedar tree is fueling many of the blazes.

Nebraska State Forester Scott Josiah testified that the trees are spreading over an estimated 38,000 acres per year. The tree is a pine, with needles and a resin that are both highly flammable. Josiah says extreme heat and drought are also to blame.

The hearing was called for a bill introduced by Sen. Al Davis, of Hyannis. Davis is urging lawmakers to act quickly on the measure, which would pour additional firefighting resources into Nebraska.