
Wildfire Prevention and Countermeasures

Kazakhstan II

The province of West Kazakhstan, which covers an area of 151,300 square kilometers and has a population of 650,000 people, is located in the flatlands in the steppes of western Kazakhstan.

This province is bordered by the Kazakhstan provinces of Atyrau and Aqtobe and the Russian provinces of Astrakhan, Volgograd, Saratov, and Orenburg.

Most of the forests in the province were planted for protection against the wind (windbreak forests). In other words, these are protected forests within environmentally protected areas of the province in the Ural River flood plain, along motorways, around reservoirs in the Ural-Kushum irrigation system, and around the city of Ural'sk. The total area of protected forests is 3,000 hectares. The forest with the highest risk of fire is the protected forest zone along the Ural River. It is especially difficult to fight fires in this area because of the oil and gas pipelines that pass through Zelenov, Taskala, Dzhangala, and Akzhaik. Summer temperatures that climb to 40 - 45°C and low rainfall make July and August prone to forest and steppe fires.

Analyses of the occurrence of natural fires in the past point to the occurrence of large-scale natural disasters due to delays in discovering and reporting fires and the lack of nearby fire stations.

To successfully deal with natural wildfires in West Kazakhstan, the West Kazakhstan Fire Department has been involved in certain activities in collaboration with the Forest and Animal Protection and Revitalization Bureau.

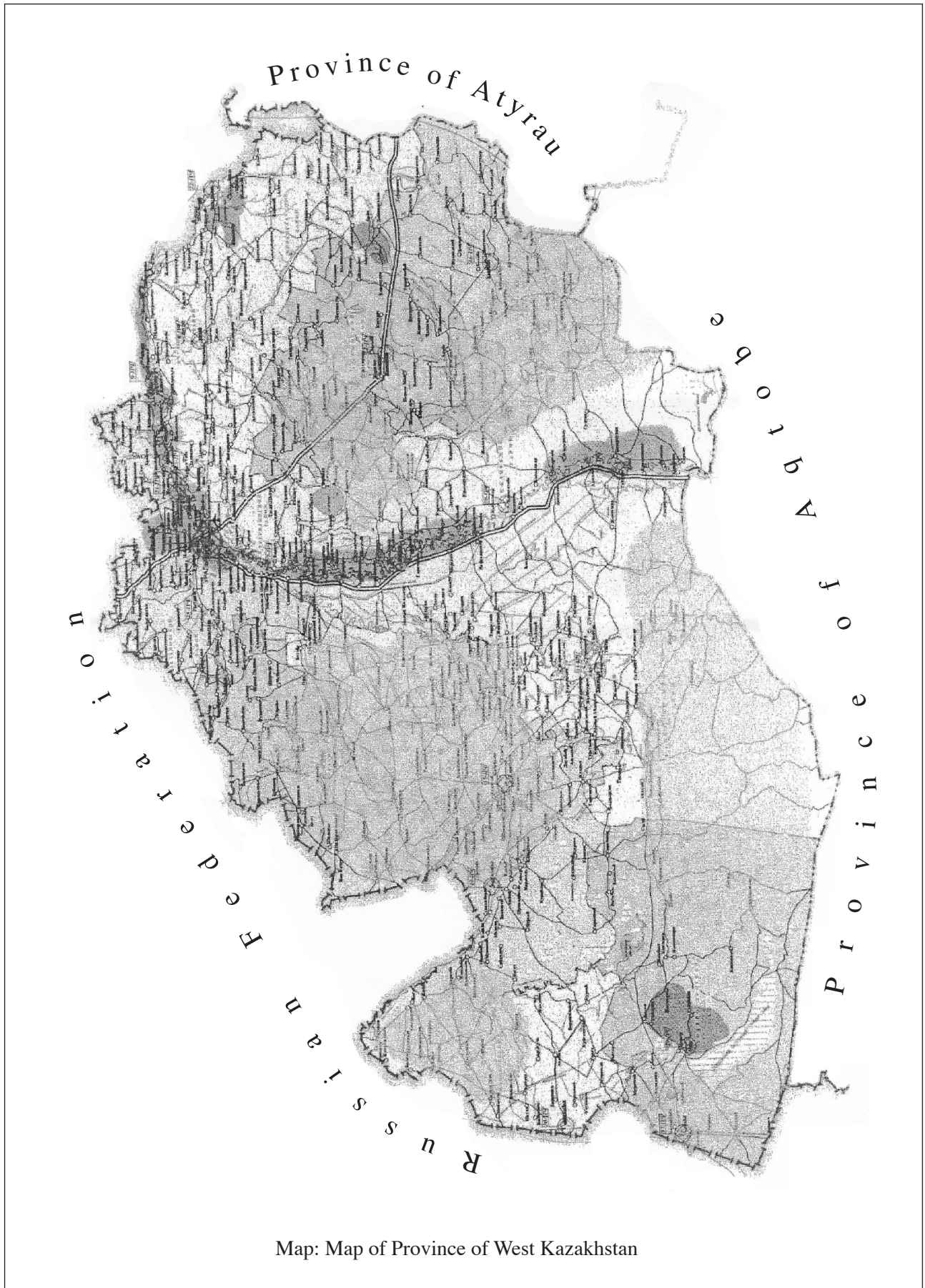
The government of West Kazakhstan approved the "Provincial Agencies Joint Action Plan for Combating Forest Fires in West Kazakhstan in 2006." The contents of this plan reflect issues related to preventing and fighting natural wildfires and the basic problems confronting joint action between local government agencies and the federal agencies of the Fire Department, Interior Ministry, and Defense Ministry.

The province's personnel/equipment mobilization plan for fighting large-scale fires has been revised.

In 2006, a series of forest fire prevention measures was devised by the province's Forest and Animal Protection and Revitalization Bureau. Fire prevention zones were created and have been preserved and managed. Warning signs and posters have been hung inside and around forested areas. In the high-risk fire season, chemical fire stations will be established in all the subsidiary sections of the Forest and Animal Protection and Revitalization Bureau. The staff for these stations will be conscripted from the forest protection staff.

To successfully deal with wildfires in national border areas, a joint action plan was prepared and approved for cooperation between a stage agency branch (Fire Emergency Rescue Bureau) and the Russian Federal Fire Department.

Because of analyses of fires that have occurred in the past, the location of national forest and animal protection agencies and areas prone to natural wildfires have been marked on the provincial map of West Kazakhstan. In the high-risk fire season, the fire brigades in every part of the province will shift into high-vigilance status and prepare additional auxiliary equipment (tractor with plow, etc.), and in rural communities, volunteer firefighting teams will be formed and fire conditions will be monitored by satellite.



Map: Map of Province of West Kazakhstan