

**Jack Venrick**

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**From:** "Jack Venrick" <jacksranch@skynetbb.com>  
**To:** <jacksranch@skynetbb.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 17, 2007 12:00 AM  
**Attach:** Your album has been shared!.eml; The dark side of America.doc  
**Subject:** Fighting The Fires of Tyranny and Taking



The Sun and Forest on Fire above Darby, Montana 8-18-2007

**To: Americans Whose Roots Grow Deep Into Their Land:**  
**bcc: WA State House, Senate, AWC, Media, King County AG, King County Council**

Roni Sylvester of [www.goodneighborlaw.com](http://www.goodneighborlaw.com) asked a simple question regarding some pictures of forest fires I recently took in Montana that spurred me to respond.

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*"Jack,*

*Do you think these fires are as a result of the ban on logging? "*

## I. The following is my opinion based on;

- My Father's opinion and his 30 year career as a U.S. Dept. of Agricultural Forest Ranger in Montana
  - - on the Helena, Beaverhead and Gallatin National Forests
    - including 5 Ranger Stations in Western Montana
- Plus the opinions of people I talked to in Montana whose roots are from Montana.

## II. The Pros of Logging

1. [View my recent pictures of forest fires in Montana - double click on attached email and click on View Photos.](#)
2. Editorials/Articles on Forest Management - <http://www.idahoforests.org/fire.htm>.
3. **Easing Logging Regulations to Prevent Forest Fires -**  
<http://usgovinfo.about.com/library/weekly/aa082302a.htm>
4. **Recent forest fires traced to reduced logging -**  
<http://www.heartland.org/Article.cfm?artId=10411>

## III. The Cons of Logging, from a green extreme group in the Northwest.

Their agenda is clear, i.e. to shut down use of all natural resource using selective cherry picked facts. They do not want to harvest timber so they address only those reasons why harvesting timber causes problems. It would be like writing an article on how many things go wrong when you do any project without giving you the complete perspective, i.e. the benefits of the project itself. This is the same ploy used with so called man caused global warming. First they give you a few points of data without the total

picture (lie), then they start taking from there.

## **Commercial Logging For Fire Prevention: Facts -vs.- Fantasies**

[http://www.wildrockiesalliance.org/issues/wildfire/fact\\_fantasy.html](http://www.wildrockiesalliance.org/issues/wildfire/fact_fantasy.html)

Here are more environmental green extreme nonsense. The U.S.F.S is blocked from doing its job and our taxes are used to fight the green extreme in #1 and #2 below. Property owners are also fighting this same green extreme taking continually all over America. In many cases the government has become as much a target as the property owner of these eastern green groups.

These are nuisance suits that congress has encouraged by pandering government programs based on junk science. Congress has no scientific credentials and could not understand the data nor interpret it if it was laid out before them. But this does not stop them from making fools of themselves and us while they drive out all our basic freedoms and liberties.

### **1. Recent Court Ruling on the 2005 Planning Rule - <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/>**

The court must be in an awkward position of having to rule for the political party who put them into office or rule for the government for whom they are paid. Often it is one in the same. In this case it appears the court ruled for the political party over the U.S. Forest Service. The courts reflect directly and indirectly the prevailing agenda of the political correctness around them despite constitutional and natural laws. The courts have no checks and balance. They are no longer independent.

On March 30, Judge Phyllis Hamilton of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California enjoined the Forest Service from utilizing and implementing the 2005 Planning Rule.

The Court held that the Forest Service violated the Administrative Procedures Act (APA), for not adequately involving the public in developing the 2005 Planning Rule; the Endangered Species Act (ESA), for not properly consulting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), by improperly applying a categorical exclusion and not fully evaluating the environmental impacts in promulgating the 2005 Planning Rule.

The court remanded the decision to the Department of Agriculture for compliance with the APA, ESA, and NEPA.

### **2. Citizens for Better Forestry vs. USDA -**

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/projects/plan\\_rule/wo\\_compliance\\_ltr\\_rfs\\_4\\_27\\_07.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/projects/plan_rule/wo_compliance_ltr_rfs_4_27_07.pdf)

"Citizens for Better Forestry" are to the U.S. Department of Agricultural as "1000 Friends of Washington" are to property owners in Washington State. The logic of the green

groups is only out done by the membership profile of their boards. These are groups of one sided, self righteous, unbalanced minds who have an agenda to lock out and lock down all public and private land.

**United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Washington Office**  
**1400 Independence Avenue, SW**  
**Washington, DC 20250**  
**Caring for the Land and Serving People**

"On March 30, 2007, the United States District Court for the Northern District of California issued a decision in the combined cases Citizens for Better Forestry v. USDA and Defenders of Wildlife v. Johanns. The Court held our Agency's adoption of new planning regulations at 36 CFR 219 in 2005 violated the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Court remanded the matter to us to comply with its order. Pending compliance, the Court enjoined us from implementing and utilizing the 2005 planning rule. A copy of the Court's decision is enclosed. The 2000 planning rule, including its transition provisions as clarified by the 2004 interpretive rule, is now in effect.

We have filed a motion with the Court to alter or amend judgment. In the meantime, please be advised that the Agency must comply with the District Court's order. Forests that were completing revisions under the 1982 regulations as allowed by the transition provisions of the 2005 regulations are unaffected, except that the authority for continuing under the 1982 regulations is now found in the transition provisions of the 2000 regulations, as amended. Forests that were completing revisions under the 2005 regulations must take certain steps. At least until the Court rules on the pending motion you may not implement activities specific to the 2005 rule such as: issuing proposed plans; proposed final plans; or final plans under the 2005 planning rule or resolving objections under §219.13 of the rule. "

#### **IV. The Grand Confiscation of Our Forests**

The bottom-line is this confiscation of our national, state, and private forests and ranges is exactly that, a confiscation. Fighting fires on the floor of our forests is not unlike fighting the fires on the floors of our courts, congress and executive offices. Congress has taken everything illegitimately and systematically. Or you can say it another way, congress has been bilked by special interest groups that keep them employed and empowered. Not only are our forest burning down while congress fiddles, but every sacred individual freedom and liberty is burning up.

Confiscation is defined in my Random House Dictionary:

1. to seize as forfeited to the public domain; by way of penalty.
2. to seize by authority; appropriate summarily.

Our national forests and our most renewable resource have been shut down by the green extreme. extreme.

- 20% of our lumber now has to come from Canada.

- **The rest comes from private forest, much from the SE states where plantations produce mature and harvestable timber in 35 to 40 years or less.**
  - **What is the outlook for timberland as an investment?**

Institutional investors own over 4 million acres of timberland in the South. Within a decade, this is expected to exceed 12 million acres. Timberland has been shown to provide excellent portfolio diversification. It is negatively correlated with most other financial assets, including real estate, and positively correlated with inflation. Professional timber management investment organizations can easily manage investment risk via geographical diversification and proper forest management. Timberland is above the capital market line; or another way of saying that is it produces significant returns that exceed those expected for its risk level. Timberland is expected to experience dramatic increases in its share of institutional investment over the next decade. Timberland's historic returns justify this interest. <http://www.americanforestmanagement.com/timberinvest2.shtml>

- **You have to ask how did "We The People" come to let the national forest be shut down ?**
- **Why did the lumber industry not fight this shut down of our public forests?**
- **Did this shut down of our public forests corner the lumber market?**
- **Is this shut down of our public lands by the green triangle for profit, i.e. government, environmental extremes and green business?**

Fallen timber is left on Montana forest floors to decay, in large part due to environmental groups groups in the university towns of Missoula and Bozeman, MT. These groups and many others like them circle the U.S. Forest Service and State forests and range lands like vultures. Billions of of dollars of lost resources go unharvested because of this network of green urban and eastern vultures fed from eastern born environmental megafunds.

Here are a couple of credible sites documenting this green extreme tyranny and taking.

- [www.sovereignty.net](http://www.sovereignty.net)
- <http://takingliberty.us/>



Range management GFI on the Gallatin District, August 1965  
John Venrick, Howard Foulger, Lew Feck

## V. Montanan's Are Angry

I was raised in a U.S. Forest Service family from 1942. Dad passed away in 1981. He is pictured on the left in the old photo above. On a rare trip back to Montana or Idaho, I will run into one of Dad's old forester friends and we will share many stories and some tears. This was a era when the universities and the government and the people worked more closer together in in common sense. Dad always spoke well of the university forestry and agriculture schools.

Dad was encouraged by the USFS, to become involved in the community. He socialized with the the ranchers and often took Mom and I for barbeques with them. He joined the Mason and Mom Mom joined the Eastern Star. He took "Show Me" pack trips for key public and Forest Service personnel into the national forests. The forest was for everyone to enjoy. It was there for the loggers, the hunters, the miners, the campers, horse back riders. His crews kept the trails clean during the summer and staffed up for fire control. The national forest was used primarily by locals. I do not remember any eastern environmental interference up into the 1960's when I left home in 1966 to start work with The Boeing Company. The Forest Service was well respected at at that time.

Clear cutting of our forest was the accepted economical harvest policy. It was easier and cheaper to cut and manage. It worked for decades and made America prosper. Dad cruised these these cuttings as part of his job. They were well managed. Logging was a science and an art evolving continually just as any science. Logging gave us everything important to our lives. Logging gave us our homes, paper, jobs, small town independence, thriving communities based on renewable resources from the land. Cattle, sheep, timber, copper, minerals of all kinds kept

Montana filled with abundance and a spirit that I find gone now, when I return.

Montanan's are angry and bitter about the environmental extreme takings. I recently talked to a wife of a logger in Darby, MT whose husband was out fighting on the fires.

"Loggers are the pruners of the orchard of our forests. Good logging practices are a corner stone to good forest stewardship. Urban and eastern mythology would have you think you can grow a garden or an orchard and walk away from it. Smearing the logging industry and shutting down the forests is green political distortion."

This same Chicken Little "Sky is Falling" fear mongering is used for "man caused" global warming, "alternative" energy and Agenda 21 - "sustaining" development.

- The green triangle has squeezed out the lives of thousands of forest related jobs in the Rocky Mountain and Pacific NW states.
- Small towns and rural families have been ruined, broken and scattered based on junk science.
- The environmental extreme groups, government including academia and green industry have foisted this urban myth for the profit of themselves.
- Eastern and urban environmental agenda junk science has metastasized to the forest industry industry and destroyed the forest and the local economy.
  - This junk science includes the most destructive program out of Congress, ESA
  - What they don't tell you is over 90% become extinct naturally
  - In 32 years of this forest shut down by congress, only 9 out of the 1300 (.6%) recovered, recovered, 9 went extinct anyway, 14 were improperly listed.
  - The greens, the courts and congress used the spotted owl to do this.
  - Now we know, the spotted owl was being killed by a predator, the barred owl and
  - The spotted owl is a sub-species of Mexican spotted owls which are not endangered.
  - Concern over protections for the spotted owl has led to panic cutting in the Pacific Northwest.
  - The ESA takings go on [http://www.goodneighborlaw.com/articles\\_GNL/2007/9-3EndangeredSpecies.htm](http://www.goodneighborlaw.com/articles_GNL/2007/9-3EndangeredSpecies.htm)

They don't tell you;

- weather changes are normal in the epochs of time
- man contributes only .017% of the Green House Gases
- there is no such thing as "alternative energy"
- the agenda of sustaining and smart growth are to rat pack the cities for tax revenue and
- park out the public and private forests for eastern and urban environmental extremists.
- the costs of environmental extremism on our national forests

- the costs of clearing cutting vs. selective cutting
- the costs of shutting down access into our forests making it more difficult for fire crews
- the costs of helicopter water drops are \$13,000/hour to the tax payers.
- the use of helicopter water drops are more for local PR. (this is straight from the Ranger's mouth, half blind from the smoke)
- we have as much forest as we did one hundred years ago.

## VI. How The West Was Really Won

Most of this gangrene taking nonsense comes from the east coast and spreads west.

- The green straggling takings can be traced further back east to Europe and the UN.
- When you start to connect ALL the dots of taking, you will see this trail over centuries of taking.
- This is another "Trail of Tears" in history as you connect the dots of taking of all our freedoms and liberty.

Undue profiteering and social engineering of America has devastated every facet of our freedom and liberty plus every family who lives off the land. Freedom is taken via a strange collusion of powerful forces who have only one interest, i.e. to take your money, your freedoms and your liberties for their selfish gain.

Shutting down our public and private forests on urban based myths is the same game the urbanite elite play with man caused global warming, the confiscation of the government ability to print money and pay bills without interest to central bankers, the extraction of our gold and silver to European central bank families, the trumpeted up excuses for wars for profiteering, etc. etc. Markets and government are created, destroyed and cornered for greed and power. Free markets are feared by sharking big nationals and multi nationals and big government.

The American West has been taken of all its natural and God given resources by this European, urban and east coast ideology. The anti fossil fuel green extreme has shut down all our natural resources to corner the market for elite green national and multi national businesses. The socialist socialist make deals with the globalist. Big government and monopolistic/oligopolistic industry industry squeeze out individual freedom and liberty. We The People become enslaved.

## VII. The Game Of Taking - Still the Same After All These Years

- Our public forests have been shut down,

- Our minerals including huge oil and coal reserves are closed
- Investors refuse to build new refineries because the ROI is too long, e.g. 15 to 20 years to pay pay back, i.e. green extreme regulation
- The green government pretend there is an alternative energy beside fossil fuel and nuclear
- Government is forced to pay its debt with interest from money it prints for free.
- We The People are forced to pay the interest to the banks on freely printed money
- The original defined boundaries of the federal and state government are merged
- There is only a central government with state pawns
- American's have a system of taxation without representation
- Private property including wages, private land and private personnel property is unconstitutionally taxed.
- Income taxes mean taxes on gain and profit not wages and private property.
- Our power to control our own government, including our courts, congress and executive and and been shut down.
- Every facet of our life is now invaded, controlled, taxed and taken by special interest groups through big government and big business
- More takings - see "The dark side of America" attached.

## VIII. Winning The Battle And Loosing The War

The rural West has been systematically taken by eastern power centers.

- The Western frontier starting on the west edge of the newly formed colonies, have been increasingly taken out of ignorance.
- What was once a land of individual sovereignty, where each individual ruled his own life, land, home, business, crops, timber, cattle, family, is gone.
- Everything has been taken and confiscated by big government, central bankers, socialists, green movements, teacher unions, etc.
- This nation lived on indirect import taxes from 1776 to 1913, i.e. the government was limited.
- Our present tax structure against all private property including our personal homes, land, automobiles and wages is unconstitutional and fraudulent.
- The takers have unconditionally expanded government and taken public and private property property of all kinds.
- Private property is directly correlated with freedom and liberty. "Property and Freedom" Richard Pipes
- As private property goes, so goes the nation. Ibid
- What is happening to America, is exactly what happen to the Colonies leading up to and after after the American Revolution.
- While George Washington won the battle despite 99.9% of the colonists being derelict and apathetic,

- We The People quickly lost the war for our freedom and liberty.

## George Washington Supporting Quotes:

1. "We were very much in the minority and often felt the sting of ostracism to which our opponents treated us. We were drifting rapidly into sectionalism and the enmity engendered was ready to burst into a dangerous conflict. We championed the poor landowners - our opponents, the rich ones. We had little encouragement from either the churchmen or the schoolmen. The former, of course, were on government payroll and were never inclined to speak one way or the other on the subject of the taxes. The schoolmen, supported by the State taxes, seemed to feel they would lose the patronage of the great land owners if they spoke up for the poor, so we saw that only those who suffered would be with us. The least important of the settler were our supporters."

"An Autobiography of George Washington" As Told To Edith Ellis scribe, pg. 94.

2. "Our name for the Party was the "Farmers". The word "farmer" was despised by our Aristocrats, as a farmer in England is usually a tenant of a great landowner. Our Aristocratic settlers, on the grants of land given by the King, called themselves "Planters", and a "Farmer" was a lesser landowner with, as a rule, fewer acres and slaves. My father was the largest landowner of the Farmers' Party and led the movement." "An Autobiography of George Washington", pg. 129

3. "Our reports were probably destroyed to save political face for obvious reasons. No amount of whitewashing that was indulged in after the British surrender was sufficient to cover the betrayal of me and my troops." George Washington. Ibid pg. 255

4. "We were always at the mercy of the damned politicians, who never see further than their own local or personal interests and have been ever the curse of all countries." George Washington. Ibid pg. 284

5. "Despite all the whitewashing, back-scratching, and falsifying of history that has one to cover up the sins of that Congress, the fact remains it was they who were the poltroons and the deserters. We survived thanks to five patriots - Burr, Adams, Franklin, Claiborne and a foreigner - Lafayette. They were our saviors and incidentally, the saviors of the Revolution." George Washington. Ibid pg. 311.

6. "George, you see they don't want a Republic. They don't really understand the vision or significance of their Republic yet. They won't shoulder the responsibility of thinking for themselves." Benjamin Franklin to George Washington. Ibid. pg. 193

7. "We argued with the men who were with us in the debates and in private conversations, but they were motivated largely by the commercial interests who wanted a quick growth of population

population drawn from abroad, in order to create great markets from their products. The settlers and planters also were against us. Business, money and politics are evil bedfellows and always will be." George Washington. Ibid pg. 194

## The Two Revolutions

The Concord authors were inspired by the Revolutionary battle that occurred in their town; the events of 1775 shaped their thoughts and writings. Motivated by the political Revolution of the 1700s, they helped create an American literary revolution in the 1800s.

They expanded on the ideals of community and self-government that the Minute Men fought for. They developed principles of individual independence that greatly influence our thinking today.



*"The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual."*

Henry David Thoreau

*"It is marvellous to see how many powerful writers, orators, and soldiers started up just at the time that they were wanted. There was a man for every kind of work. It is equally wonderful that men of such different character were all made to unite in the one objective of establishing the freedom and independence of America."*

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Photo J. Venrick Concord, MA Battle 10-2-2006

## IX. Prayer For Return Of Our Individual Freedoms and Liberties

We pray:

- to learn to walk and talk all over again,
- as free men and women, anew
- to govern in absolute free choice
- to govern without meddling
- to govern without taking
- to limit government to only the bare essentials of the U.S. Constitution
- for each citizen to be independent from all government

- to govern and live without using force or deception on others
- to respect each individual's right to struggle
- to respect pain and suffering as a badge of courage not the right for welfare and more government
- that American's quickly wake up from their hibernation
- that American's learn fast the difference between our current state of pretend freedom and liberty and absolute freedom and liberty
- that cities, counties, states and federal government clean up their own house before they take private property from others
- that American's may dream a New Dream.
  - For the gift of absolute individual freedom and liberty, unconditionally
  - For freedom that must be given freely without conditions, force, coercion, deception or corruption

God Bless America in this new journey into higher realms of freedom and liberty.

Jack Venrick

Envisioning Absolute Individual Freedom and Liberty

Free To Use My Natural Resources

Free To Choose

Free From All Taxes

Free From Big Government and Non Government Tyranny

Enumclaw, WA

<http://www.idahoforests.org/fhealth1.htm>

**Idaho Council on Industry and the Environment**

ICIE Newsletter December 2000

## **Forest Health: The next critical issue in Western land management**

This year's fire season was, reportedly, the worst in five decades. Hundreds of large and small forest and range fires raged throughout the western United States. Regular fire crews, even supplemented by the military and firefighters from overseas, could do little more than protect structures - and even some historic-buildings were lost.

Why did it happen? What could have been done to prevent it? Can we expect more calamitous fire seasons in the future? Historically, fire was nature's way of renewing the forest. Periodically, relatively small fires created a shifting mosaic of all types of tree cover including patches of seedlings, groups of

young trees and open stands of mature groves.

For much of the past century, however, fire has been suppressed on western forests. This has allowed the buildup of massive fuel loads in many areas, fuels just waiting for an errant lightning strike, a tossed cigarette or a forgotten campfire. The U.S. Forest Service estimates some 39 million acres of National Forests in the interior West are at high risk of catastrophic wildfire.

According to a 1999 report by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO), "...large-scale fire suppression disrupted the historical occurrence of frequent, low-intensity fires, which had periodically removed flammable undergrowth without significantly damaging larger trees. As a result, vegetation has accumulated, creating high levels of fuels for catastrophic wildfires and transforming much of the region into a tinderbox." The number of large wildfires, and of acres burned by them, has increased over the last decade, as have the costs of attempting to put them out. Those who have said this disaster could not have been foreseen or prevented haven't been paying attention. The GAO report was just the latest in a series of warnings that have come from professional foresters and others over the course of the last decade.

### "Are our national forests healthy?"

In the winter of 1994-95, Evergreen Magazine devoted an issue to forest fires in the West. The issue was entitled "The West Is Burning Up! Should We Stop These Fires or Should We Let Nature Take Its Course?" Five years later the Winter 2000 issue is entitled "Should We Let Diseased National Forests Die and Burn?"

In the last five years, forest health has remained a major national issue. There have been GAO reports to Congress, a joint report on the health of Idaho forests by the Idaho Department of Lands and the U.S. Forest Service, Congressional hearings, numerous scientific studies and treatises - even a movie about fire fighting pilots.

The U.S. Forest Service was created in 1905 to manage the federal forest reserves which were established time "to improve and protect the forests within their boundaries, or to secure favorable water flow conditions and provide a continuous supply of timber to citizens." (*GAO Report, Forest Service Priorities, June 1999*)

In 1910, massive wildfires scorched 3 million acres in Idaho and Montana and 86 people were killed. The public demanded action. Suppressing and aggressively fighting any and all fires on federal forestlands became an unquestioned policy. Almost a century later, the political cause of the day is forest health with public voices across the nation demanding a change. National ad campaigns by environmental activists demand that no logging be allowed in our national forests in order to preserve them for future generations. Management has become a negative term along with logging, grazing, mining and multiple uses.

With more than 39 million of the 192 million acres of the national forest system ripe for catastrophic fires, a debate has raged for almost a decade on whether or not there is a problem and if there is one, how best to handle it. One might think that determining the health of a forest would be easy.

However, according to experts, there are 85 different definitions of forest health. The 2000 fire season has stirred the debate with more than six million acres burned along with homes and historic buildings across the West.

***"The actions we take will have consequences, just as the political decision in 1910 to fight all fires did..."***

The number of large wildfires, and of acres burned by them, has increased over the last decade, as have the costs of attempting to put them out. We are at a crossroads. As with many environmental issues, the political sometimes drowns out the scientific. The actions we take will have consequences just as the political decision in 1910 to fight all fires and the policy decision by the Clinton Administration to curtail logging on the national forests have consequences today.

Prior to settlement of the West by Europeans, fires played a role. These fires were moderate and more frequent, burning along the ground and clearing fuel and surplus plant life.

## Can ailing forests heal themselves?

The consequences of the decision to exclude fire from the national forests that resulted from the 1910 fires, coupled with the more recent legal and policy decisions to reduce logging and active management on the forest, has given rise to a forest health crisis. Without less intense ground fires and without active management using thinning and logging, the forest has become overloaded with fuel. Fire requires three things: heat, oxygen and fuel. Of the three, only fuel can be controlled by man. More and more scientists are sounding the alarm: our national forests are overgrown. The answer to this forest health problem would seem to be easy. All we need to do is go back to conditions that existed before 1850. If intense fire management has changed our forests, then re-introducing fire should take care of the problem. **Right?**

**Wrong.** More and more professional foresters and scientists are challenging the idea that fire is the solution. They question the value of turning back the clock to pre-1850, and even our ability to do that.

Analysis by the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Program scientists showed that the acres of federal forestlands at risk of catastrophic fires have tripled in the past century. Now 60% of the federal forests are in danger.

In scientific, peer reviewed studies and testimony before Congress, scientists and foresters call attention to the accumulated fuel. They point out the threat to ecosystem integrity, water quality, habitat and the long-term productivity of the forest if we do not do something to manage the fuel buildup. In 1999, professional foresters in eastern Washington and northern Idaho pointed out: "The severity of wild-fire, epidemic native insect populations and introduced diseases and insects have caused a serious decline in forest health ... Reintroducing fire as the only means of improving forest health is not a viable option." (*IESAF 1999*)

In 1997, the U.S. Forest Service announced its goal to improve forest health by resolving the problems of uncontrollable, catastrophic wildfires on national forests by the end of fiscal year 2015.

But, according to a 1999 GAO report, the Forest Service lacks adequate data

to develop the cohesive strategy it needs. And efforts to reduce accumulated fuels can adversely affect the agency's achievements of other stewardship objectives. For example: "Controlled fires can be used to reduce fuels, but (1) such fires may get out of control, and (2) the smoke they produce can cause significant air pollution. As a result, mechanical methods, including commercial timber harvesting, will often be necessary to remove accumulated fuels. However," the report continues, "mechanical removals are problematic because the Forest Service's (1) incentives tend to focus efforts on areas that may not present the highest fire hazards and (2) timber sales and other contracting procedures are not designed for removing vast amounts of materials with little or no commercial value."

### **"A cohesive strategy is needed..."**

The report says that removing accumulated fuels may cost the forest Service hundreds of millions of dollars per year. "But the problem is so extensive that even this level of effort may not be adequate to prevent many catastrophic fires over the next few decades. This report recommends the development of a cohesive strategy to reduce accumulated fuels on national forests of the interior West in an effort to limit the threat of catastrophic fires."

Such a cohesive strategy, forest experts now believe, will require active management, including commercial harvest. In a report prepared for the Idaho Land Board this year by Professor Jay O'Laughlin, Director of the Idaho Forest, Wildlife and Range Policy Analysis Group, he notes that "...the means of attaining forest restoration goals through active management are logging and prescribed burning, and these methods are not universally accepted. Some people distrust federal land management agencies, programs and projects featuring active management."

O'Laughlin notes that the only two methods of reducing fuel loads on our forest are prescribed fire and logging - and many sites are too heavily choked with small trees and vegetation to use fire without longterm, possibly permanent damage. Fires now burn hotter with more destructive potential than ever before, leaving effects on the terrain and in the soil that can last for generations and can even be permanent.

Other considerations also limit the use of prescribed fire to a fraction of the lands needing treatment. Professor William McKillop of the University of California, Berkeley, notes that "...air quality restrictions and budgetary constraints are major barriers to [fire's] large-scale implementation. In addition, there are limited periods when all of the factors such as fuel loads, moisture, existence of defensible perimeters and weather conditions are at levels appropriate to burn. Furthermore, ...the dangers of fire escapement require crews to stand by and have good access by road..."

### ***"Fires now burn hotter and with more destructive potential than ever before..."***

What does all this mean for the future of our national forests? It means we can restore them to good health. It means we can provide jobs while protecting clean air and water.

It means, over time, allowing fire to resume its natural role in forest management.

However, none of this can happen if inaction prevails. Professor Robert Nelson teaches, environmental policy at the University of Maryland. He's written a book length critique of the Forest Service. Here's a short excerpt: "The Forest Service in recent years has shown a preference for prescribed burning over mechanical treatment." This has caused several problems, he says. Not least among these is a reluctance to use logging in areas, which aren't suitable for burning.

In other words, if it can't be burned, it's left alone - allowing still more crowding and build-up of fuels. The time has come for action to restore our national forests to health, whether that means to their ancient conditions or something else. Continued inaction will mean more and larger catastrophic fires and the loss of one of our nation's greatest physical assets. It's time for the policy makers, the agencies and the public to become educated on the issues and reach some decisions. The forests are too important to leave to chance.

Contact the **ICIE** at: **208-336-8508** or [ICIE@cableone.net](mailto:ICIE@cableone.net)

Idaho Forest Products Commission

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