Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/3/2018 12:00:00 AM
First name: Anonymous
Last name: Anonymous
Organization:
Title:
Comments: Large wildfires have a considerable impact on the atmospheric concentrations of CO2, CO, O3, NOx, and CH4 across North America. Carbon releases can be as high as 4 to 8 kg C-m-2 per fire event. These emissions significantly affect concentrations far downwind. With funding from NASA, the Joint Fire Science Program, NSF, and the Canadian Government, US and Canadian researchers have been developing a uniform approach to estimate carbon, trace gas, and particulate emissions from wildfire. Models to estimate the consumption of the forest floor and peatlands in boreal North American are being developed to study terrestrial carbon cycling and estimate trace gas emissions. Measurements of atmospheric CO, O3, nitrogen oxides, and equivalent black carbon show boreal fires to be of great importance to levels of these gas and aerosol species on the continental to hemispheric scale. The work presented in this paper examines how fuel consumption varies in the deep surface organic layers found in many boreal forests and peatlands, and how factors controlling the variations in fuel consumption influence inter-annual to decadal variations in the North American terrestrial carbon budget and the emissions of CO, and ozone precursors.Our federal forests, managed by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM), urgently need active management to reduce the risk of severe wildfire. At least 58 million acres of national forest are at high or very high risk of severe wildfire, and over 4.5 million homes are at risk. Over 1.1 million acres of national forest need reforestation. But last year the U.S. Forest Service treated less than 204,000 acres, a small fraction of what's needed. A significant part of the problem is process and paperwork. It typically takes 18 months to four years for federal agencies to develop and implement forest projects. Forest Service employees typically spend 40 percent of their time doing paperwork instead of managing forests. In the West, this year's wildfire season has been one of the worst on record Portland and Seattle have both been covered in smoke for days on end, with ash falling in the streets, schools cancelled, children huddled inside, and health-sensitive individuals suffering distress. The more than 40,000-acre Eagle Creek Fire devastated many treasured recreational sites in the Columbia River Gorge and closed a key Interstate highway for weeks. Across the country, nearly 4.5 million homes are at risk from wildfire.

Catastrophic fires are the result of decades of fire suppression, coupled with unprecedented fuel buildups due to a lack of forest management activity. These catastrophic fires destroy valuable timber resources but also degrade many of the other uses of healthy forests. In one 2014 fire, nearly 20,000 acres of high-quality northern spotted owl habitat burned. In fact, over the past two decades, wildfire has become the greatest source of habitat loss for the northern spotted owl. Between 1995 and 2015, according to the Forest Service, habitat impact attributed to wildfire was ten times the impact from timber harvest. Since 2015, wildfire impacts have only worsened. One recent study showed that probability of extirpation of California spotted owls increases by a factor of seven after a severe fire.Congress should Fix the disastrous Cottonwood decision from the Ninth Circuit. In brief, fixing Cottonwood will allow projects to move forward under existing forest plans if an appropriate plan-level ESA consultation is completed. It will eliminate any requirement for the Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management to reinitiate consultation due to new ESA listings or critical habitat at the plan leveland only at the plan level. The bill does not change existing law regarding applicable requirements to consult on individual projects, new forest plans or plan revisions. Scientific consensus that active management decreases forest fire extent, severity, and impacts. An actively-managed forest will exhibit fire behavior more consistent with the historic role of fire in forested ecosystems. Owing to this scientific consensus, many groupsincluding environmental organizationshave changed their positions on active management, at least in the roaded "front-country."