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Title:

Comments: To The Forest Service,

Topic: Proposal to Log and Clear Burn Areas.

Extreme droughts and wildfires are the norm now, with enormous acreages scarred. However, the proposal to "Log and Clear" these burned areas needs to be clearly described as to WHY such actions are needed and exactly where such logging and clearing would occur.

Would the logging and clearing impact wilderness zones in any way?

And, even if the logging and clearing is NOT near any wilderness zones, is such logging and clearing even necessary?

The main question should be, does logging and clearing a burn site help wild ecosystems to recover, or harm them, or slow down recovery, and what extent of dead tree removal might be beneficial, and to what extent of tree removal would it risk more harm than good.

The next question must be "who benefits", meaning "who profits" from the logging and clearing plans? We've all read about the lumber shortages. Is this new plan simply a method to obtain salable lumber and has little or nothing to do with what is best for the ecosystem?

A direct analysis of who and what companies (and which politicians) will benefit or profit from these plans must reveal whether or not this proposed plan is to benefit nature or someone's (or some company's) profits (or political ambitions)! This may sound insulting, but we all know that profit and political gain can skew decisions, oftentimes against what is best for wild ecosystems.

Nature has a remarkable way of recovering, often all on its own, and while there are certainly times when humans can greatly aid in that recovery, like wildlife breeding programs for endangered species and relocation back into the wild, or restoring wetlands, or collecting and distributing locally sourced native plant seeds, or even just ending pollution sources and cleaning up polluted sites, these efforts are usually well studied first, with clear goals set and monitored for effectiveness.

The Logging and Clearing proposal must first be put through a full review of the benefits it would provide to WILD ecosystems, and also the harm it might cause.

The Forest Service has been VERY long-winded in its insistence that wild ecosystems, especially forests and chaparral zones, are designed to burn on recurring schedules, and to try to stop fires is a mistake because fire suppression leads to a build up of much bigger fuel loads. The evidence for this argument is debatable as to the extent of regular fires being good because there were far more old growth ecosystems before Europeans arrived in the Americas, and perhaps burning away undergrowth prevents massive fuel build up while letting the larger trees survive cooler burns.

But, this message from The Forest Service has been to allow fires to burn through wild habitats so that the entire ecosystem can experience successional phases, such as wildflowers and grasses that assume control after a fire and provide excellent habitats and food for various wild species, and after that first phases comes the earliest phase regrowth of the shrub and tree species, which provides another kind of habitat, and finally, the maturation (climax) phase of the ecosystem, and, then, at some point in time, another fire (small or large) burns through and

starts the process all over again.

For many decades, the argument has been that by allowing a variety of successional phases to co-exist within the larger ecosystems, many more species can be supported, so there is much higher biodiversity and resiliency.

The Forest Service has argued that leaving dead trees standing was very good for the ecosystem, as it gave raptors a place to hang out and spy for prey.

During my many decades of backpacking, the Forest Service usually forbid any collection of dead wood because, it was argued, dead wood and fallen trees provide habitat for a variety of species, and decay of dead plant material provides food for fungi and assorted species that break down dead material, and the decayed material then provides nutrients and renewal of soils, which assists with regrowth of new plants.

Okay, that does make sense as death and decay and rebirth from decayed material is how life has regenerated, so, sure, leave the dead wood be and do NOT collect it and do NOT burn it for campfire wood. Just allow the dead wood to decay naturally! Duly Noted!

But now this plan is to "log and clear" dead trees after a Fire??
What???

That is pretty strange considering that after Mt. St. Helena blew its lid and wiped out forests for huge areas around it, the Forest Service demanded that visitors NEVER take even 1 handful of ash (as a souvenir) lest the pocketing of ashes and removal of ashes from the blast zone might cause irreparable harm and would dramatically distort recovery of the charred and buried ecosystems, and that wild nature should be allowed to heal all on its own, without the interference or disturbance of humans!

So, the demand from the Forest Service at the moonscape blast zone of Mt. St. Helena was, "EMPTY YOUR POCKETS AND PUT THOSE ASHES DOWN!" Oh Yes, I was told to surrender the ashes from my pocket, and I was treated as a criminal on my visit to Mt. St. Helena. So, Okay, I complied, but I also thought, is this just a tad bit of an over-reaction??.

So, it is now quite stunning to see the Forest Service rapidly pushing through a post wildfire "logging and clearing plan", with NO recollection of the decades of admonishing people to allow nature to "heal itself". Don't touch the dead wood and put down those volcanic ashes!

But, I am keeping an open mind. I want the Forest Service to explain (in detail) how this logging and clearing plan can possibly fit into the decades long mantra of allowing nature to recover from fires on its own, naturally!

Why the change of heart? And, if there has been a 180 degree reversal of the Wisdom of the Forest Service and its decades long advice, then the public needs a very deep explanation of WHY has this reversal of thinking occurred? And why would "logging and clearing" of burn zones help nature to recover? What has changed?

Well, a lot HAS changed and is getting much worse each year.

Every part of nature is impacted by humans in some way, especially the few remaining wild ecosystems and the millions of rapidly disappearing wild species.

Human triggered wildfires, be it from climate extremes, or just a careless trash burning that escapes the property and tears through an entire county, or a car that pulls off the road into dry brush and sets the bushes ablaze due to the heat of the car's undercarriage, or millions of people moving into once wild areas, and installing more electrical lines, and houses with fireplaces, both of which have led to massive wildfires, and these are all human

caused impacts.

Even natural lightning strikes cause FAR more damage now due to extreme drought conditions, much dryer and diseased plants, and the alarming loss of wetlands and wet riparian zones that used to provide "fire stops" so that most fires were locally contained. But those are just the recent changes causing more wildfire impacts.

But lots of things changed LONG BEFORE just the recent decades, and we need to look deeply at how that has been affecting a long list of problems that plague humans and nature today.

Starting in the 1400's, with the arrival of Europeans, North America (and South America) have suffered staggering impacts that have lingered and continue to impact us today, and FIRES and DROUGHT and CLIMATE CHANGE today are also dramatically increased due to long ago behaviors and attitudes of Eurasian colonial immigrants.

BEAVERS, WETLANDS, & WILDFIRES

The hundreds of years of slaughtering Beaver resulted in much higher fire dangers because beavers used to be all over the United States and Canada, including in the deserts where their ponds once provided huge oasis for wild species to survive, thrive, and migrate through deserts, and even during decades long droughts these oasis still provided water, grasslands, shrubs, and even trees. The millions of ponds beavers created provided extremely high hydration zones that were safe zones during fires and also STOPPED FIRES from spreading too far.

Beavers were mostly eliminated before the Euro-American westward expansion because the Hudson Bay Company (and similar fur trapping companies) had already trapped out most beavers in the middle and western portions of the country about 100 to 200 years prior, so the wild ecosystems that Euro-Americans saw in the 1830's through the 1890's had already been heavily damaged and altered by Fur Trapping.

Due to the loss of beavers, by 1830, there were fewer wetlands and fewer hydration zones, and less wildlife because the carrying capacity of entire ecosystems had been reduced due to elimination (or reduction) of beaver populations. Loss of Beavers and Loss of wetlands (and hydrated zones) is a recipe for more and larger fires, yet the Euro-Americans expanding westward during the 1800's did NOT write in their historical records of massive burned out wildfire zones, though some accounts of small local fires set by Indigenous peoples were recorded.

As the Euro-American population mushroomed higher, even more wetlands were drained and removed, and creeks and rivers were channeled, diverted, dammed and radically altered, which greatly reduced the remaining wetlands.

The United States has suffered a 50% loss of wetlands, and, in California, an astonishing 91% of wetlands were lost over a span of 80 years between 1850 and 1930! By the time the post World War I immigrants, dust bowl immigrants, and the later World War II immigrants came to California, very little remained of "wild ecosystems"; most ecosystems had been heavily altered and damaged or just removed entirely. Most forests we see today are 3rd to 5th growth forests, and almost NONE of the wetlands remain (about 9% remain) and many of those are heavily damaged or polluted and isolated from other habitats, making them only meager habitats, at best. In fact, most major and minor roads in most of the U.S. are exactly where riparian zones (and wetlands) used to be.

Wolves, Cougars, Grizzly, Fox, Raptors

The horrifying mass killings by Eurasians of predator species also radically altered wild ecosystems, making those ecosystems far LESS resilient while reducing the carrying capacity of those ecosystems because prey species (deer, rodents, etc) tended to over-populate and over-grass certain areas, including near the dwindling

riparian zones.

After the near total extinction of wolves in the lower 48 states, a 50 year recover effort under the ESA resulted in a tiny rebound to about 7,500 grey wolves, and this was touted as a "huge success story", but, in reality, those 7,500 grey wolves represented well under 2% of the grey wolf numbers that existed in 1810, which are estimated to have been 500,000 to 1,000,000. And those numbers were likely much higher prior to the arrival of Europeans in the 1300's and 1400' when gray wolves likely numbered 2 million to 3 million.

In other words, the "recovered" 7,500 grey wolves in 2020 was a tiny 1.5% of the lowest estimated population of 500,000 in the early 1800's, but everyone knows that wolf hunting had been an aggressive business since the 1400's. How in the hell can a 1.5% remaining population of grey wolves be considered a success story? Worse, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service used the ridiculous story of "successful recovery' to remove grey wolves from the Endangered Species list, setting of a new slaughter, cruel staughters, that have already taken down a large portion of that meagar 7,500 wolves.

Thus, wild ecosystems had been radically altered by over-hunting of key species (especially predators that wore fur), and also over-hunting of prey species (buffalo, caribou, moose, elk, even deer, rabbits, and a wide variety of wild birds) to the point where even the prey species suffered near extinctions and actual full extinctions. And those extreme alterations (eliminations and reductions) of wild species populations heavily altered what later generations of Americans THOUGHT was "Wild" ecosystems.

Take into account the massive logging out of endless zones of forests since the 1400's, and the enormous human population explosion and massive human development of cities, suburbs, and agricultural lands, and mining and grazing zones that complete with wildlife, and what we see today as "WILD Ecosystems" is so changed that Indigenous people circa 1450 would barely recognize it.

But, Eurasians also practiced genocides and over-populating the Indigenous Peoples in exactly the same manner as they treated wild nature.

So, this begs the question.

Is the Forest Service using historically accurate information of what exactly is "Wild and Natural" as their baseline for studying how human decisions to manage Forest Fires and post fire burn zones should be done?

I doubt it because even the Forest Service consults with specialists who are heavily questioning what "WILD" is now and what "WILD" was, prior to the European arrival in the late 1400's when the huge environmental impacts started to radically alter wild ecosystems. You can't know what a healthy wild ecosystem is and how to manage it if you are in the dark because most Americans, even biologists, are struggling to understand what Wild was prior to the late 1400's.

Furthermore, in my estimation, every ecosystem "recovery plan" has been short lived and with limited successes because humans REFUSE to discuss the #1 root cause that is creating these problems and also is preventing LONG TERM recoveries of ecosystems.

Climate Change, droughts, water shortages, wildfires, and weather extremes are the most recently discussed impacts caused by humans, but few people and few organizations will publicly admit that Human Over-Population is the #1 Root Cause of ALL environmental impacts and mass species extinctions, as well as also being the root cause of most human problems, including high cost of living, concentration of wealth, endless conflicts and wars and mass human migrations, all of which stem from resource depletion, environmental damage, and hyper competition over dwindling resources, all caused by Human Over-Population!!

The #1 Disease of Human Over-Population is NEVER discussed in environmental reviews, and that is quite intentional because talking about the painfully obvious might actually result in an honest analysis of WHY the

biosphere is being so dramatically damaged and at accelerating rates (due to human over-population).

Global Trade is also NEVER discussed, but Global Trade at the massive scales we have had over the past 500 years and even more now, absolutely results in every single region of the world (and nature) being damaged, raped, pillaged, or simply destroyed to make room for currently Over-Populated humans and all the "stuff" that we want for modern living standards, and then add to those impacts the rapidly accruing impacts of the tidal wave of 3 Billion MORE humans that are currently projected to be added to the global population over the next 78 years.

That's right. Look at the insane environmental impacts and resource depletions humans have already caused over the past several thousand years when the human population was far lower.

In 2021, humans now number 7.9 Billion, which is 16x more humans than in the mid 1500's, and, despite slowing global birth rates since 1968, there is still exponential population growth because, each year, there are more births than deaths, and that is currently projected to continue well into the next century.

So, if we FAIL to discuss a rapid response to push birth rates down quickly such that we might bend the population curve downward before the end of the century, the current projections are that humans will ADD another 3 Billion more people to the global population to reach nearly 11 Billion by year 2100, which is almost 22x more humans than in the mid 1500's.

And, our goals of comfortable modern living standards, while not a crime, means that each person (of semi-middle class status) uses hundreds of times more resources PER PERSON than how humans lived 500, 5,000, or 50,000 years ago.

No one, not even the most nature oriented Indigneous peoples will opt to return to rudimentary living standards. Most people want modern conveniences, medical care, dental care, safe travel, cell phones, modern comforts to some extent, etc. The Human Over-Popuation problem is simply being enlarged greatly by modern living resource demands.

Human Population X Resources Used Per Person = Total Impacts

The best way to reduce impacts and provide great lifestyles for all people is to educate people and provide huge financial incentives (and penalties) to push people to have only 0-1 child (per 2 adults) for the next several decades. That is the ONLY way we can bend the human population curve downward before the end of the this century. If we do NOT do that, there won't be any nature remaining to burn.

Climate change is only the most recent insult to nature and to Indigenous peoples and to anyone who values wild nature. But Climate Change is also caused by Human Over-Population as wild ecosystems are removed, or destroyed, or burned due to Human Over-Population and its endless impacts.

Deforestation is the #2 cause of Climate Warming because forests sequester vast amounts of Carbon, and humans have also removed shrublands, grasslands, wetlands, and caused 50% of living soils to be destroyed, and those are all massive natural carbon sequestration systems that have been dramatically reduced. Read the World Biomass Distribution Study, published May 2018 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Humans have already removed so much of nature and its ability to regular the biosphere that we are not just facing Climate Warming, we are facing a global shift of the entire biosphere towards a planet with far less oxygen and few to no natural (and Free) methods to recycle nutrients, clean water, and shunt rainfall across continents, which is exactly what plants do because photosynthesis creates oxygen as well as creates humidity, which builds clouds that then travel inland and drop rainfall. Without huge zones of wild ecosystems, which is were nearly all remaining plant biomass is, humans will also have caused deserts across entire continents because the plants

won't be there anymore. Currently, plants and photosynthesis shunt about 70% of rainfall across entire continents.

It's time to listen to scientists who have been yelling about human over-population and its disastrous impacts for many decades, and we can and must discuss Human Over-population as THE #1 CAUSAL Disease that is causing all the problems and is also preventing restoration of earth's benevolent ecosystems that sustain millions of still existing species, including humans (for FREE).

The earth needs far more lands and waters for WILD ecosystems. We need massive restoration of wild zones and wetlands, and we cannot do that with such a grotesquely high human population, and adding more humans will only set ups permanently into a downward spiral of self destruction, while taking out millions of other species too, the species that actually co-exist and help the earth to have a higher carrying capacity.

Below are scientific reports to review.

It's time to wake up.

The best way to reduce your carbon footprint is one the government isn't telling you about

By Sid Perkins Jul. 11, 2017 , 4:30 PM

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/07/best-way-reduce-your-carbon-footprint-one-government-isn-t-telling-you-about>

Human weight minor, impact Major-The Guardian

Fishery Biomass Losses: 50% Loss ((fishery zone is 0-650 depth):

see p. 60 and 61 of the Biomass Study for human impacts.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/21/human-race-just-001-of-all-life-but-has-destroyed-over-80-of-wild-mammals-study>

World Biomass Study-2017 (full report 113 pages-WITH LINKS)

See pgs. 60-61 of the Biomass Study for Losses caused by humans.

<http://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/suppl/2018/07/13/1711842115.DC1/1711842115.sapp.pdf>

World Population Clock and Chart

Scroll down to the Population Chart to see Exponential Human Population!

<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>

World Population (Past and Present)

<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/world-population-by-year/>

Population Projections by year thru year 2100

Look at annual growth rates, yet by year 2100, humans are currently projected to ADD another 3 Billion more humans, which is EQUAL to ADDING the ENTIRE Global Population of 1960 to our already insanely over-populated 7.9 Billion humans today in 2021.

<http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/world-population-projections/>

