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Comments:

Over 100 years ago, it was believed with certainty that quickly extinguishing forest fires was in the best interest of forest health. Since then, we have learned that this may have been contrary to indigenous knowledge, and we believe today that the practice was contrary to natural cycles in the forest. How could we have gotten it so wrong?

Here we are in 2024, once again certain that we know what is best for forest health. But are we any wiser today than we were 100 years ago? Can we admit that we are lacking in knowledge about how to "manage" our forests for optimum health, especially with the quickly changing conditions caused by global climate changes? Or are we just as certain as we were 100 years ago that we have all the answers - certainty that caused seemingly irreparable harm to our forests. Can we admit that there is much we do not know?

These things I believe:

- Humans often lack humility and avoid saying "I don't know".
- Those making money with a chainsaw in their hands should not be deciding which trees live, and which trees die.
- The history of the west is rife with examples of rapacious over-use and destruction of natural resources.
- In our valley in recent years, "forest restoration" efforts have accomplished selling of marketable timber with little or no time or money left over for the promised restoration activities.
- We cannot save our complex forest ecosystems by building new roads, trampling and damaging fragile soils and plants, and damaging habitat for creatures large and small.
- We cannot save the old growth forest by cutting it down.

I am intrigued by new research coming to light about forest fires, forest health, and other methods of protecting communities effectively from wildfires. There are examples of community efforts elsewhere that can be explored and emulated - examples that downplay logging and instead make use of preparedness.

Please, let's discard this ill-conceived restoration plan. Let's forget the myth of paying for restoration that never happens with the sale of marketable timber resulting in profit-as-usual. Let's start over again, with humility, respect for all the life of the forest and all it provides us, and an effectual and informed plan for protecting ourselves from the effects of climate changes that are arriving rapidly.

Sincerely,

44-year resident of the Twisp River drainage,

Susan Koptonak