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Comments: Better late than never: proposing sound science and facts to formulate national forest management policies. Let's go back a few hundred years. Lightning storms ignited forests and the fires burned until winter rains doused them or all the fuel was consumed. The Native Americans living here were quick to notice that these fires created open areas adjoining forests. These "edges," as they began to grow back, were areas of tremendous biodiversity, which resulted in vastly improved hunting and foraging for the people living here then. They set fires themselves to achieve the same results. When the European and other newcomers settled here, displacing native peoples, they utilized the vast timber resources for building and used cleared land for farming. Fire was viewed as wasting valuable timber, and the twentieth century gave birth to Smokey the Bear and "Keep Oregon Green," etc. So-called "conservationists" groups formed and decried both fire and logging. Vast areas of timberland were set aside as preserves by federal and state governments. This series of events has led us to have tracts of old growth and old reprod timber that have been deemed untouchable as "natural" but are (compared to edges) biological deserts. Fire is now a problem to our current population. But leaving woodlands untouched increases that danger and also deprives local areas of income for schools and roads. The solution is to clear areas of fire danger, log areas to increase local revenues and rotate logged areas to create the "edges" which provide biodiversity. I strongly support the new proposal to increase logging as part of sound scientific forest management.

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