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Comments: It's easy to say that there would be less fires if there were less trees to burn. Despite what the logging industry wants us to believe, logging does not prevent fires.

In the last few years, we've seen an increase in high severity fires during seasons that have a higher amount of droughts and strong winds. These high severity fires have become devastating to communities that live among these forested areas. Our current management plan for combating these fires mostly consists of thinning rural areas and suppressing fire completely. In recent years we've seen that these methods work about 90-95% of the time. However, the remaining percentage is typically the infrequent, high severity burns that are the most damaging. I believe that we are right in thinking that our old management plan needs updating in order to protect these communities that have been affected, and preserve our land. What I disagree with is the use of logging as a source of prevention. Not only is logging not directly correlated with prevention of wildfires, but it has a plethora of other lasting effects that are problematic within themselves. Such as reducing habitats for animals, having less temperature control in forests, and other domino chain reactions.

After researching forest ecology I have learned that one of the best methods for combating high severity fires is actually low severity fire. If we use native land management practices as an example we see more land diversity, and a decrease in severe fires. Native tribes often used controlled burns as a method to maintain prairies, and protect land from fires that destroy communities. I believe that we should introduce prescribed fire as a way to responsibly address fire as a powerful element of the Earth, rather than suppressing it completely and letting it spiral out of control. Low severity fires are proven to eliminate ground fuel and give succession to the soil. This is a way to get nutrient cycling to the forest without allowing trees to burn and embers to spread far and fast. This also would supply jobs for people. The key difference being instead of logging trees, we're responsibly prescribing fire to the land.

Our current management plan does not address climate change as a factor of cause and effect in our ecosystems. If we look back at historical fires we can see a pattern that is droughts, strong east winds and hot/dry temperatures for long periods of time (i.e the early 1900's to the dust bowl 1930's) all being pieces of high severity, historical fires. So, why are we not addressing climate? It's time that we start changing the way we conserve our land. By educating individuals (especially those directly affected by wildfires) about prescribed burning and being realistic about the way we use fire.