

Hannigan, Edith@BOF

From: Alicia Forsman <aliciaforsman@me.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 26, 2016 10:26 PM
To: Vegetation Treatment Program@BOF
Subject: California's sensitive eco systems

Greetings,

I am not a scientist, or a firefighter. I am a Californian, who enjoys being able to get out into the fresh air and wild flowers whenever I can.

I do not know what mix of experience those who make up the Board of Forestry must have. Certainly, there are some that don't necessarily

have as good of a grasp about our wildlife as some others. Your contribution to the board is your expertise in other important areas. I would

like to appeal to those who do not have much knowledge about the plants and animals that are native to our State.

When I hear about the various plants, for example, referred to as "brush" and "fuel" I feel like there is little appreciation for their unique value.

Just for one example, the Monarch Butterfly lays it's eggs on one type of plant only, the milkweed. When the eggs hatch into caterpillars, they

eat the leaves of that one kind of plant exclusively. The controlled burn method of preventing wildfires, could seriously endanger the Monarch

by depleting the available milkweeds. No milkweed, no Monarch. The "weeds, brush, fuel build up" is not just a bunch of plants, easily replaced

by any other bunch of plant that will typically invade a burned area given the opportunity.

This is just one example of the relationship of the plants, insects, flowers, shrubs, birds, trees, and so on, have to each other. They are interwoven

into a living eco system that has evolved over thousands of years. The native plants that have evolved here have special mechanisms to help them

survive without much water. They have developed mechanisms that help them retain moisture and survive through the dry months. The invasive

plants that take up residence after the natives have been wiped out, do not have those unique mechanisms to retain moisture. They become the

bone dry fuel for fires. Wherever the native plants have been lost, and periodically burned again, before the individual species can have a chance

to recover to maturity, the more likely it is to be lost permanently.

For some folks, like some I know, there is an attitude of "who cares!" They have interests that are elsewhere. As long as the firefighter's don't

let the neighborhood burn down, let them do their job! Those individuals don't see that as a neighborhood, they have a job to do. They need to

be educated about how to keep their areas "fire safe". That is where there is a need for education.

Anyway, I hope you will reconsider the use of controlled burning as one of those methods for keeping a handle on the threat of fire. It is so very

destructive to our native plants and animals, and not really accomplishing increased safety for the residents here.

Sincerely,

Alicia L. Forsman

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