

Hannigan, Edith@BOF

From: Jim <homegrown53@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 24, 2016 9:29 PM
To: Vegetation Treatment Program@BOF
Subject: Veg Treat Prog PEIR

VegetationTreatment@bof.ca.gov, et al~~

25 years ago, I was a leading-edge wildfire policy activist. I co-authored the multi-precedent-setting Ecology of Fire Alternative for the Warner Fire Recovery Project (Willamette National Forest, PNW Region), at the time (and I think still) the only citizen alternative presented as comment on a US Forest Service Draft Environmental Impact Statement to be fully analyzed in the Final (and, to boot, verbatim as submitted.) I subsequently sole-authored the world's first proposal for a Fire Process Research Natural Area, 5 years later called by a sitting Region 6 Forester as having been too far ahead of its time. The list went on. I lived for 15 years quite literally *as* a wildland-"rural" interface under a lifeway that was reliant on the intact, fully-functioning, forest ecosystem. Recently, I stepped down from the Chair of the Southern Oregon Prescribed Fire Network after 5 consecutive terms served by unanimous request.

From that collective experience, I write now to **STRONGLY** alert you to the serious, systemic error in the April 16, 2016 draft of your Vegetation Treatment Program Programmatic Environmental Impact Report.

Many have tried to point it out to you, but somehow it seems to have been missed. Others will claim it was "ignored", but you and I know otherwise, and I shall hypothesize that it simply has not yet been articulated to you succinctly, which I will attempt now to do:

- 1) We can NOT prevent wildfire from burning human structures in, nor proximal to wildlands. Sometimes, yes. In many situations in the past, yes. But evermore, not, for even the degree of success we have had in the past and could have in the future, is and will be at ever-increasing cost, a clearly unsustainable approach.
- 2) The degree to which we can mitigate the **risk** of wildfires burning human structures in or proximal to wildlands by physically removing vegetation in the wildlands is indirectly proportional to the **actual** degree of degradation of the wildland ecosystems said removal results in, and it is not a 1:1 ratio -- it is heavily weighted towards the environmental degradation.
- 3) We humans insist on placing our structures in and proximal to wildlands and concurrently insist that our structures not be burned by wildfires and, by god, we will therefore reactively and preemptively strike those wildlands to make sure that their wildfires do not. That means it is those human structures that are the threat to the wildfires, not the other way around.
- 4) Wildfire is a vital Ecosystem Process, each ecotype evolutionarily adapted with and to particular fire regimes, conveying multiple benefits upon those wildland ecosystems, which in turn, facilitates us to benefit from those ecosystems as well (both types of benefits we call "ecosystem services".)
- 4) Therefore, Physician, Heal Thyself:
It actually IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY to MANAGE OUR **STRUCTURES** to minimize their susceptibility to being burned by wildfires, while also managing the wildlands in ways that *facilitate Fire to operate in them* in their

natural regimes.

Fire is not the enemy. As the saying goes, we have met the enemy . . .

Which reminds me of another saying I heard once from a Regional Forester retired from the early "Timber Wars" era in the PNW. "When people disrespect one another, they take it out on the land." Perhaps Cal Fire, the California Board of Forestry, and its critics in locked horns with them should reflect on who it is that they are not respecting, why, and need it really be that way?

Consider the opposite: truly collaborative brainstorming. I can say, beyond a shadow of a doubt, it produces *far* better outcomes, *AND* it feels way better.

Jim Wells
321 Clay St. #115
Ashland, OR 97520
541 968 8035

Hello, NSA and other snoops of all stripes! Auto-place it where the sun don't shine, ya' scurvy dawgs.