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Redding, California: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esk90eT-3c8>

First, Put Out the Fire! and Stop Catastrophic Reburns

So we all, I mean all of the people in NWI [National Wildfire Institute], have been in the trenches now for decades. We all have watched this occur, and what the damage that's been done to our National Forests, with amazement.

It is unbelievable what we are seeing happen, and I think Jim Peterson put it well in his book [*First, Put Out the Fire!*]. There's been several books, lots of research done, and it continues to happen.

We all need to assure that the legacy, the beauty, and the bounty, of our National Forests are preserved -- and somehow, in the last 30 years or so, a lot of the things we, you know, did and fought for, for our entire careers, have been undone. And it's very, very sad to see.

So I was gonna start out with an op-ed I did August 24th, 2004. At that time I was Director of the Hayfork Fire Protection District, and we were very concerned with what we saw in terms of fuel loading and lack of attention to fuel conditions in Trinity County that was affecting the volunteer fire departments, the ability to do necessary fuels work, you name it.

There was a real concern. So on August 24th, 2004, I submitted an op-ed to the [Redding] *Record Searchlight* regarding the lack of fuels management on National Forest and Trinity County.

Since that time environmental zealots have shut down most logging and needed fuel mitigation. The influence of the Endangered Species Act, many court decisions favoring preservation and halting land management, made cleaning up the massive fuel loads after fire and insect and disease outbreaks nearly impossible.

We now have approximately half our National Forests, a hundred million acres, in a condition that is ready to burn, and that is a conclusion by the Forest Service. A hundred million acres ready to burn.

Multiple fires on the same landscape are converting our once prime forest to brush and invasive weedy vegetation. It is estimated it is now costing the American public over one trillion dollars a year to manage the fire situation, which is, as most of us agree, is unmanaged.

So as we continue to pay large nonprofit environmental organizations under the Equal Access to Justice Act, fuels management work on the public lands is still not near the pace and scale it needs to be to protect rural communities and rural forests.

How in the world can that be happening?

So in this op-ed that I did? It was entitled "Catastrophic 'Reburns' Threaten Forest Towns." I'll give you the 1st few paragraphs of that op-ed:

"It is time to redefine the political debate about salvage of fire killed trees. The fighting is about doing the economically responsible action, using fire-killed saw timber, and recovering economic value, or leaving the land alone and letting it naturally recover. Nothing is natural about the current fire threat to Western communities and families left with the remains of a forest fire on the edge of their community. The threat is very real and not a debating point."

We have areas around these towns now, because no fuels work has been able to occur, that have hundreds of tons of dead, dying, and drying fuel that they're going to have to deal with.

And right now the emphasis is on thinning. and of course we have to do some thinning, too, to get the fire resilience factors back into our forests. But it is absolutely ridiculous to me to drive around and see these risks remaining out there.

And we all know there's all kinds of research out there that says those landscape conditions with that dead fuel is going to be a time bomb.

And yet in California there are now hundreds of communities surrounded by that fuel type.

I'm totally amazed. So, I'm sorry I get a little bit upset when I speak about this, because I've been making PowerPoint presentations and talking about it for about

25 years, and can nobody look at these fuel conditions and reasoned about what they mean? But understanding it? It's unbelievable to me.

Anyway, I'll go on a little bit. In the past six years we have seen big stand . . . stand destroying fires burned to the edges of our towns. And then I mentioned a number of those fires, and I will say, you know, having written this 20 years ago, that four out of the seven towns that I mentioned have had large destructive fires that have burned houses, destroyed countless acres of National Forest. And I'm talking about, you know, total stand replacement.

One of the burnouts on the [2020] August Complex burned -- this is a burnout -- it burned about 70,000 acres of old-growth trees; over a hundred spotted owl nesting groves.

Anybody? That raise a red flag for anybody? Anybody really concerned about the owl? And all I'm seeing is pseudoscience that has taken the place of real science. And I'll say that Bob Zybach is a champion of somebody who has persisted in telling the truth and giving good examples of good research. And we need a lot more Bob Zybachs.

And if I could, I would turn the computer around and show you my refrigerator, which has my six great-grandchildren. And if we can't do it for anything else, let's try to save our National Forest for them. Thank you.

I'm Roger Jaegel. I'm coming to you from Redding, California, and I already mentioned, we're in the middle of an "atmospheric river" here. Nadine [Bailey], if she is outside, is soaked, believe me.

So I've lived in Redding for the last eight years, and before that I was in a small town in Trinity County. Nadine lived there for quite a while as well. Hayfork, California, and I was there for almost 70 years -- served a career in the Forest Service primarily in fire control, as we called it then. Fire control, engineering, and resource management.

So, in addition to that, I was timber utilization specialists for the Watershed Research and Training Center and their Training Director for about nine years and then served on the Trinity County Board of Supervisors for eight years, and that was the most challenging part of my working career.