

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM YOUR FOREST?

EVERGREEN

FOUNDATION



Lincoln County, Montana The Counties On Fire Project

A Presentation by James D. Petersen

Founder and President, The non-profit Evergreen Foundation

National Association of Counties Legislative Conference

Washington Hilton Hotel

Washington, D.C.

Feb. 12, 2022

Good morning. I am here courtesy of Jonathan Shuffield, who you know, and two Evergreen Foundation board members that some of you know:

Doug Crandall, who was Director of Legislative Affairs for the Forest Service for many years, and Rich Stem, a Forest Service retiree who still busies himself solving federal forestry's Rubik's Cube for counties seeking help. I have known Doug and Rich since the 1980s.

Rich is here somewhere. Doug is in Florida where we should all be.

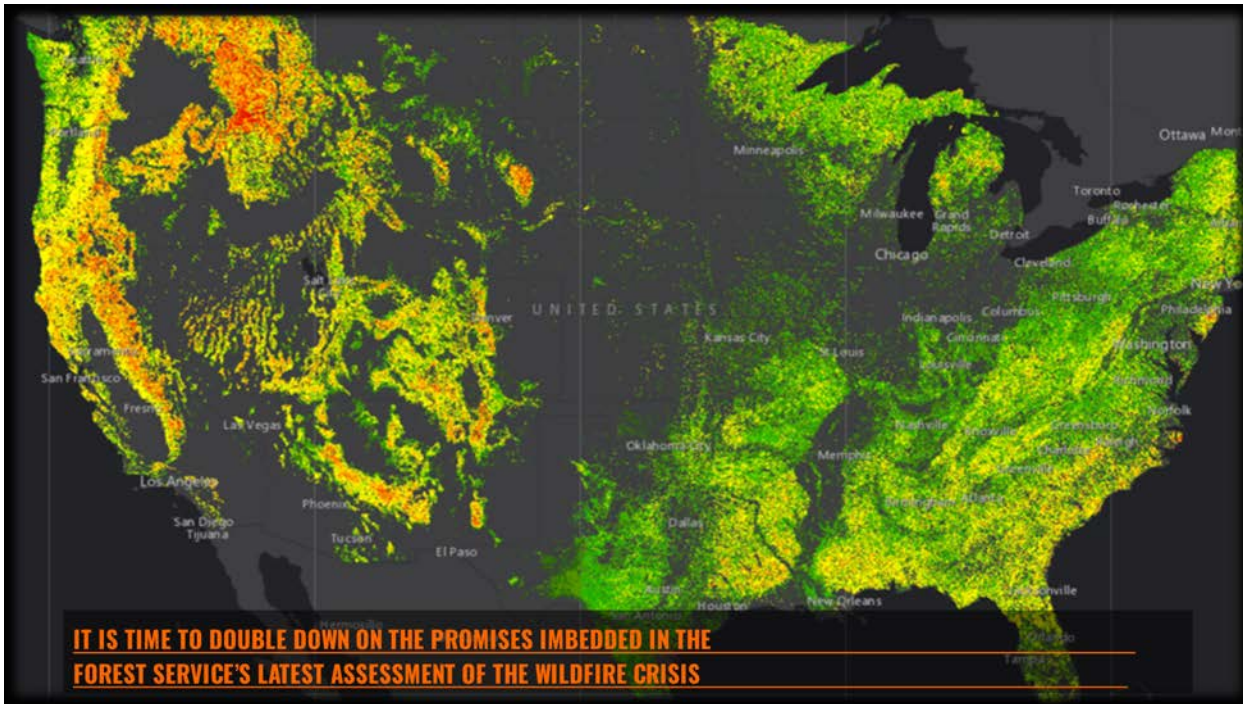
I have two topics for you. First, our recently published *Lincoln County, Montana Counties on Fire* booklet and, second, our non-profit Evergreen Foundation. We have been at the forefront in forestry education in the West since 1986. Forest health and wildfire have been the driving forces in our outreach since the early 1990s.

I know some of you have been up to your eyeballs in our shared cause for years. I commend you – and NACO - for urging the federal government to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration work in western national forests that are dying and burning in horrific wildfires.



This is the cover of our *Lincoln County Montana - Counties On Fire* booklet. We mailed copies to every known address in the county – that’s about 12,500 homes.

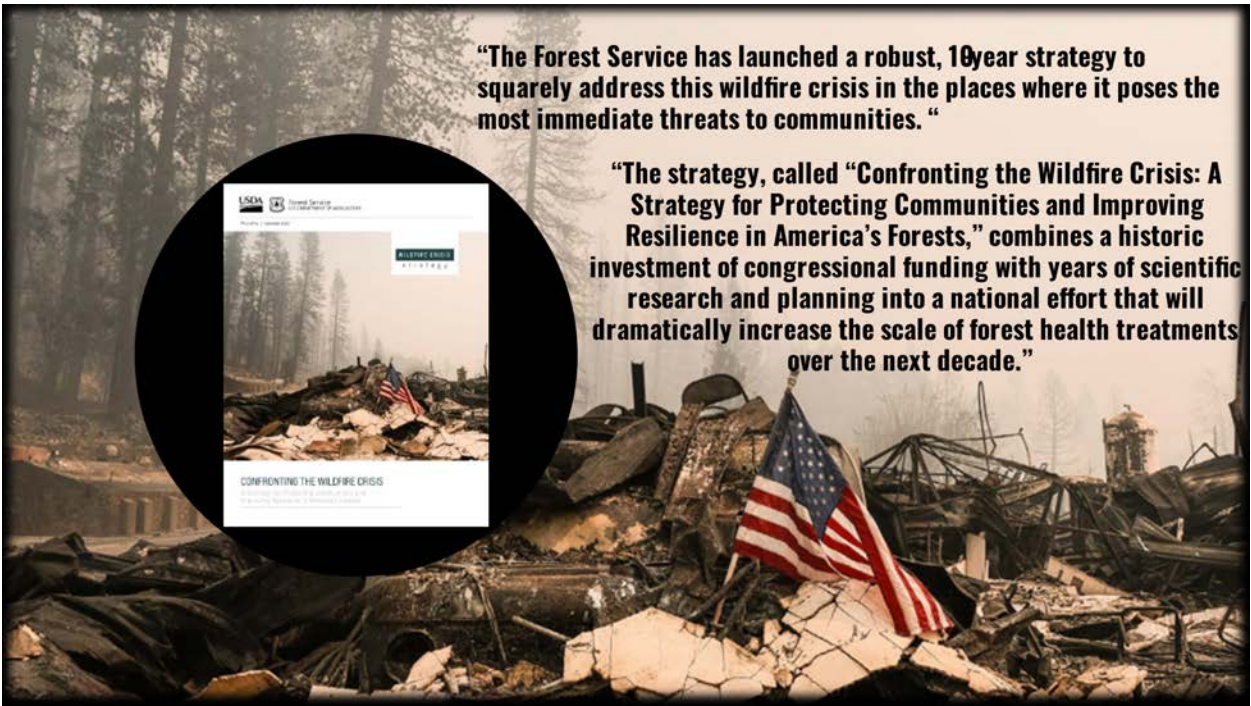
The booklet is filled with lifesaving information citizens need to protect their property, homes and families from the increasing risk of killing wildfire in Northwest Montana.



The red and orange areas on this map span more half of the West’s 193-million-acre federal forest estate. These acres are ready to burn or soon will be.

This map was assembled by the Forest Service’s Forest Inventory and Analysis program. FIA has been surveying growth and mortality in U.S. forests since the 1930s. We have been FIA customers for more than 30 years.

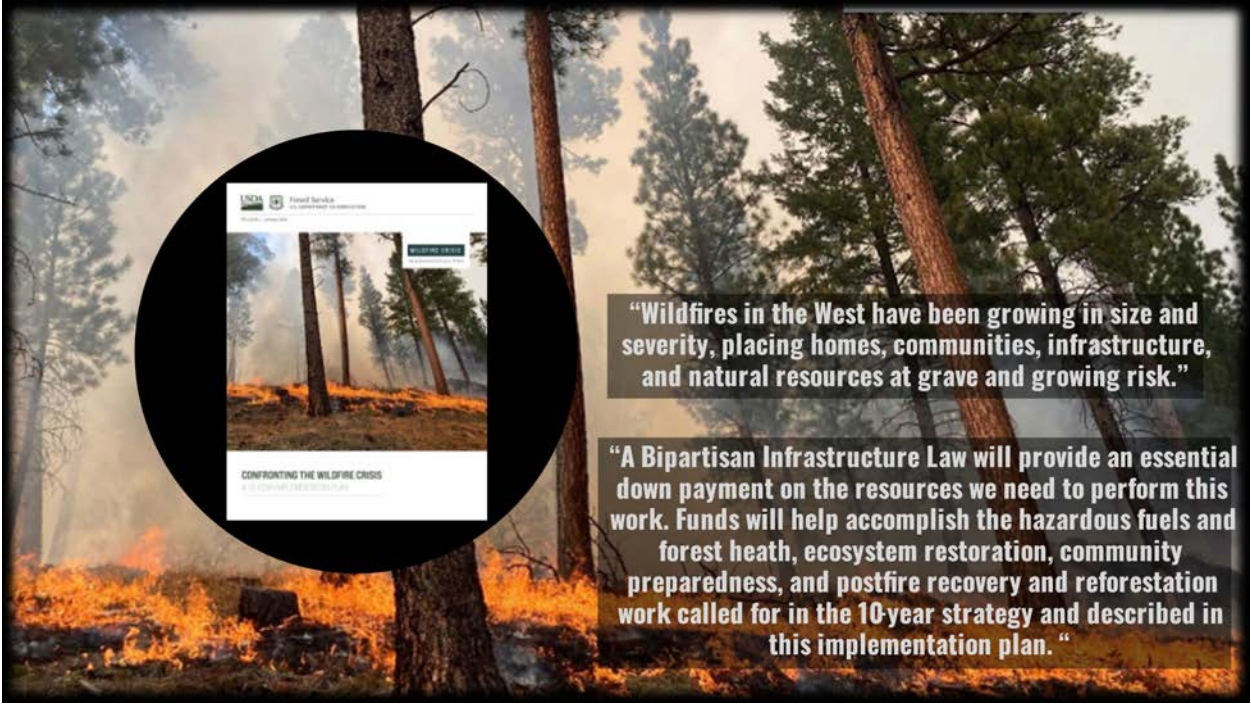
This map underscores our belief that it’s time for western counties to double down on the promises imbedded in two documents recently released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



“The Forest Service has launched a robust, 10-year strategy to squarely address this wildfire crisis in the places where it poses the most immediate threats to communities. “

“The strategy, called “Confronting the Wildfire Crisis: A Strategy for Protecting Communities and Improving Resilience in America’s Forests,” combines a historic investment of congressional funding with years of scientific research and planning into a national effort that will dramatically increase the scale of forest health treatments over the next decade.”

Here are the reports: *Confronting the Wildfire Crisis: A Strategy for Protecting Communities and Improving Resilience in America’s Forests* does an impressive job of describing the risks facing western states, counties and landowners.



“Wildfires in the West have been growing in size and severity, placing homes, communities, infrastructure, and natural resources at grave and growing risk.”

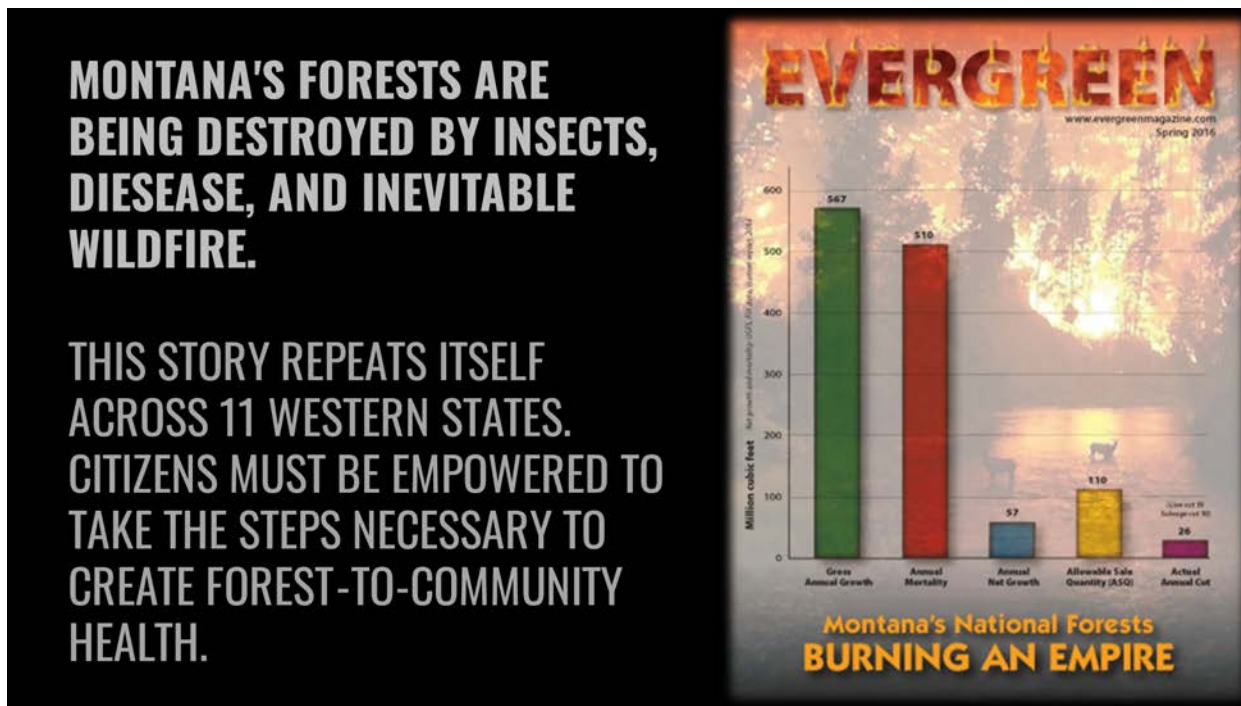
“A Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will provide an essential down payment on the resources we need to perform this work. Funds will help accomplish the hazardous fuels and forest health, ecosystem restoration, community preparedness, and postfire recovery and reforestation work called for in the 10-year strategy and described in this implementation plan. “

And the *10-year Implementation Plan* describes what the Forest Service hopes to accomplish over the next decade in partnership with states, tribes and counties.

We take Forest Service Chief Randy Moore at his word when he says he will deal aggressively with the causes of our wildfire pandemic. His Feb. 2 letter to Forest Service employees addresses pace, scale and staffing.

The National Association of Forest Service Retirees estimates that the agency needs to hire about 13,000 engineers, foresters, technicians and ologists. I don't doubt it. Doubling and redoubling the size of the Forest Service's firefighting operation has come at great cost on the forestry side.

As you know, there is a tsunami of federal money headed west that states, counties and tribal governments can use to reduce wildfire risks in federal forests that encircle hundreds of at risk rural communities.



This is the cover of *Burning an Empire*; a Montana report we published in 2016. It's a good example of the work we do. Herein we interviewed then Governor, Steve Bullock, Peter Kolb, a PhD forest ecologist and Evergreen board member, former Forest Service Chief, Dale Bosworth, the leaders of five conservation groups, a University of Montana forest economist and two loggers who do forest restoration work.

Everyone told us the same story: Insects, diseases and wildfire are destroying Montana’s national forests.

This story repeats itself across the 11 western states. Citizens *need* to hear it, need learn *how* to protect their homes, families and communities and need to take the lead in publicly encouraging the Forest Service to stuff the Bad Wildfire Genie back in her bottle.



This is the Bad Genie threatening elk in Montana’s Bitterroot River in 2000. The current meltdown in western forests, may lead you to ask: “What’s in Evergreen’s educational message for my county?”

You might even add: “We’ve been down this road before, and nothing has changed. In fact, it’s worse than ever.”

**IF NOT YOU,
THEN WHO?**

**IF NOT NOW,
THEN WHEN?**

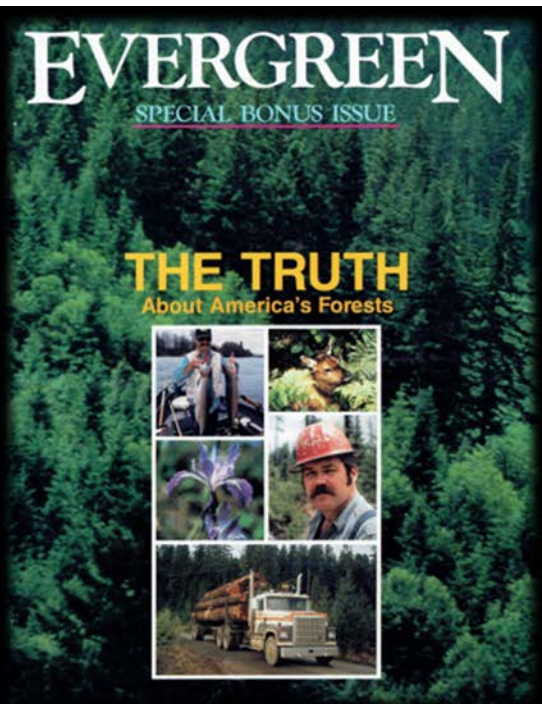


Smokey is here to remind us that we all travel the same road together - and it is worse. But no one else is going to do this for you, so the question you need to ask yourself is, "If not me, then who – and if not now, then when?"

There isn't anyone else – and the time is now. The voters in your county elected you, not the Forest Service or your state forester. It is you that they look to for help. This is why the Lincoln County commissioners turned to us. We have been doing work like this for 36 years and are uniquely positioned to help counties find their voice.

**EVERGREEN FOCUSES ON
SCIENCE-BASED DATA.**

**WE COLLECT INFORMATION FOR
PUBLIC USE FROM A VARIETY OF
RELIABLE, PUBLICLY FUNDED
SOURCES. INFORMATION IS
FORMATTED TO BE EASILY
ACCESSIBLE TO A WIDE
DEMOGRAPHIC WITH VARIOUS
LEVELS OF UNDERSTAND OF
FORESTRY AND FOREST PRACTICES.**



This is the cover of *The Truth About America's Forests*. A precursor to Counties on Fire.

We've updated this report six times since 1988 and gave away more than one million copies.

Like all of our projects, this one features lots of information from publicly funded forestry sources.

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM YOUR FOREST?

EVERGREEN

FOUNDATION

EVERGREEN'S MISSION IS TO ADVANCE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT FOR SCIENCE-BASED FORESTRY AND FOREST POLICY.

EVERGREEN FOUNDATION IS A NON-PROFIT FORESTRY RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION WITH OVER 36 YEARS INVESTED AS A LEADING VOICE FOR AMERICAN FORESTRY.

EVERGREEN REPRESENTS THE COLLECTIVE RESOURCES OF OVER 70 YEARS OF WORK IN CREATING CONTENT THAT ADDRESSES THE STATE OF OUR PUBLIC LANDS AND "FOREST-TO-COMMUNITY HEALTH" - RESILIENT FORESTS THAT SUPPORT RESILIENT COMMUNITIES.

WWW.EVERGREENMAGAZINE.COM

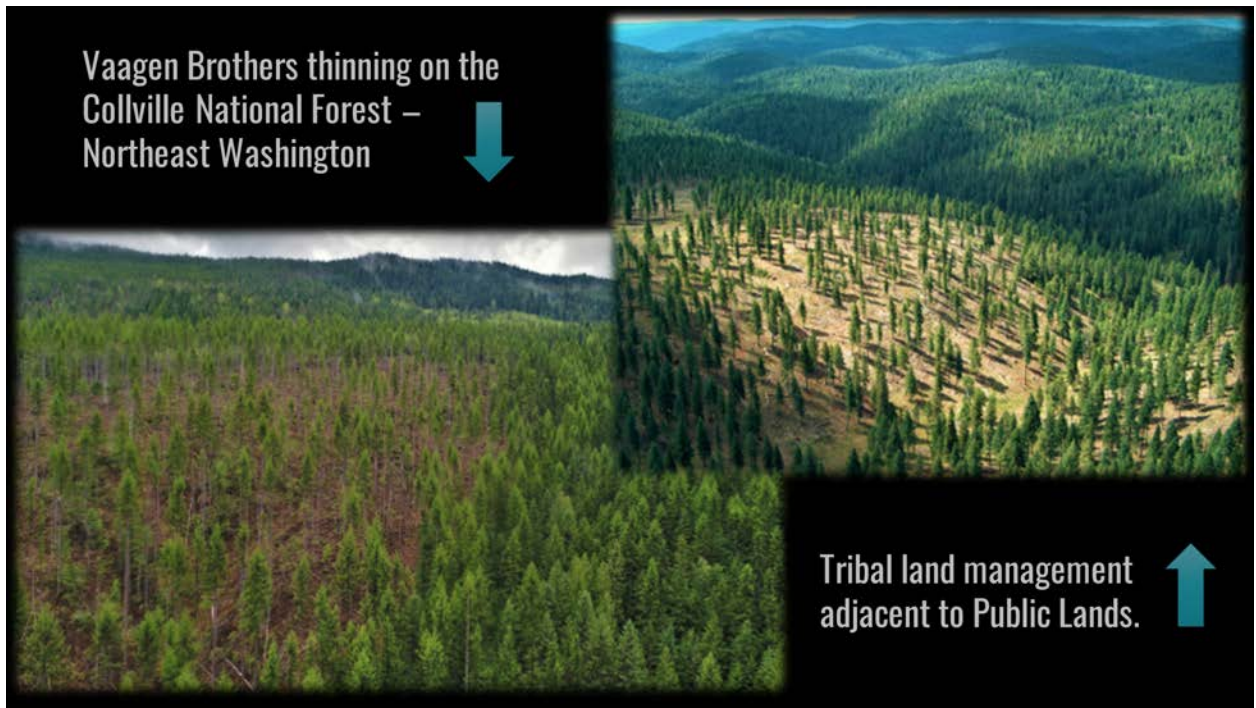
A bit about Evergreen:

We are a 36 year old non-profit committed to forest-community- health. Resilient forests that support resilient communities.

Our mission remains unchanged from 1986. We are here to help advance public understanding and support for science -based forestry and forest policy. Our goal also remains unchanged. It is to help public and private reforest landowners grow their social license to grow and harvest trees.

We have about 70,000 followers. Amazing given that when we started *Evergreen*, the Internet did not exist, and cell phones came in bags the size of brief cases.

Our website contains thousands of citations explaining why western national forests are dying and burning.



These drone shots – lower left, the Vaagen Brothers A-to-Z thinning on the Colville National Forest in northeast Washington and upper right, a nearby Colville tribal thinning.

These photos underscore one of our core beliefs: It is much easier to thin trees from green forests than it is to pick up the burnt pieces afterward.



Here's Duane Vaagen thinking about picking up the pieces following the 2015 Stickpin Fire. Removing smaller trees from dense forests like this one beats killing wildfire and, as you can see, Stickpin killed most everything in sight. The exploded boulders at Duane's feet give you an idea of how intense the fire was.



This aerial from Oregon's 2021 Bootleg Fire tells a powerful story. On the left, an area that was prescribed burned, in the center, an area that was first thinned then burned - and on the right, an area that was not treated.

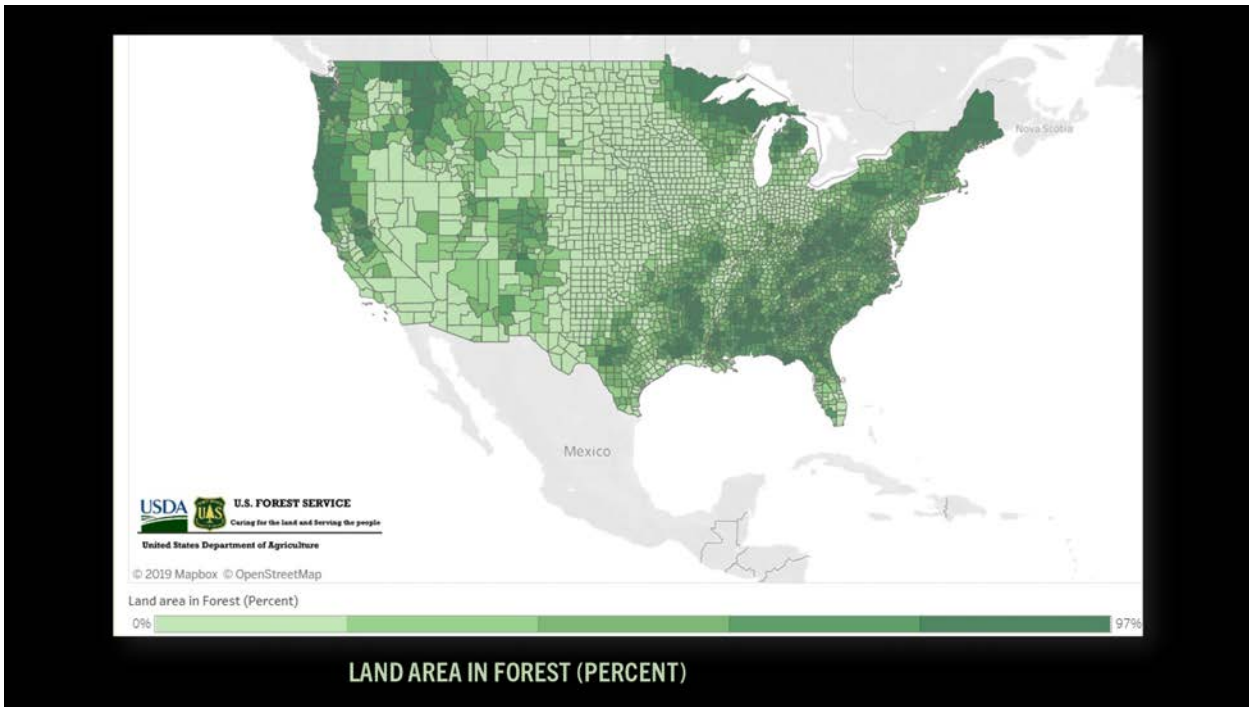
Bad fires – the area on the right - often melt the soil's organic layer into a waxy substance that water cannot penetrate. Minus an organic layer, seeds have nowhere to take root.



Here's Dave Ehrmantrout near Bonners Ferry, Idaho. Removing small trees from dense forests resets nature's clock. Sunlight, soil nutrients and moisture re-energize residual trees and encourage growth in wildflowers and shrubs.

Dave looks like he's chewing my butt but he's actually explaining how he and his sons did this job for the Forest Service.

What the Ehrmantrout's did here is much cheaper and far more environmentally beneficial than chasing raging wildfires for months on end.



Here's an interactive FIA map. If you come from a county, borough or parish east of the Mississippi River you know less about our wildfire pandemic than your western colleagues. That's unfortunate because the millions of acres of national forest we lose every year in big wildfires belong to you as much as they belong to us.

**First,
put out the
FIRE!**

Rescuing Western National Forests
From Nature's Wildfire Pandemic.

By James D. Peterson

Praise for *First, put out the Fire!*

Those who read *First, put out the Fire!* will not look at America's trees and forests the same way ever again. I loved reading this book and I know you will, too.

Michael Rains, U.S. Forest Service retiree, Broomall, Pennsylvania

First, put out the Fire! is a fast-paced treatise about the devastating impacts of wildfires in western national forests. Jim's narrative style and his grasp of forest history are exceptional. He avoids the usual traps in his explanations of the roles that thinning and prescribed fire can play in reducing the frequency and severity of much larger wildfires. This is an excellent book that deserves its own niche in forestry and forest policy classrooms.

Phil Aune, U.S. Forest Service retiree, Nine Mile Falls, Washington

Jim's book is laced with a robust history of wildfire. His words will grab you. He has strong opinions, but he also offers some well-grounded solutions. Although the topic is complex, his book is surprisingly easy to digest. I suspect it will inspire strong and timely debate among people who themselves hold strong and diverse opinions about the roots of the West's wildfire crisis.

Rich Stern, Aldee, Montana

Finally, the true story about what's happening in our national forests. Have government agencies forfeited their right and responsibility to manage our precious natural resources? You decide. My opinion is that Congress has turned a blind eye to our wildfire massacre.

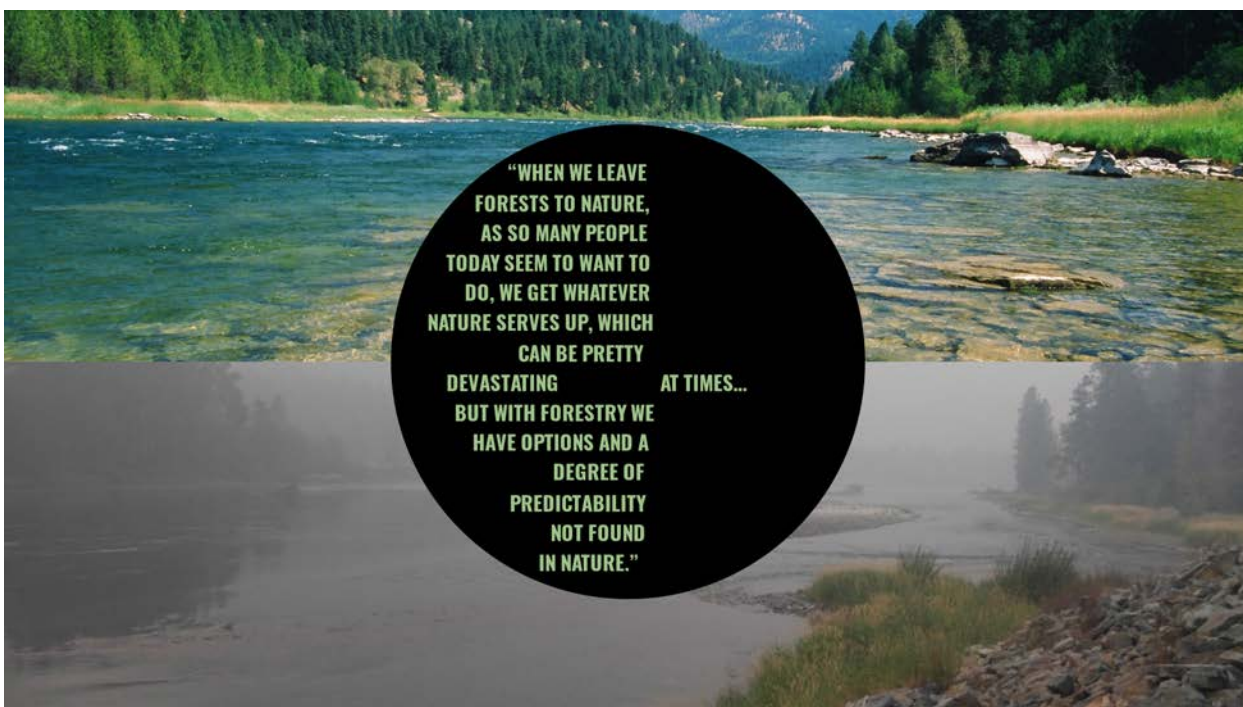
Ted Stubblefield, U.S. Forest Service, retired, former forest supervisor on two national forests. Prescott, Arizona

Here's the cover of my most recent book. *First, Put Out the Fire!* explores the underlying causes of our pandemic and offers a library of content imbedded in QR codes, science-based solutions for boosting natural resilience using the same techniques state, private, and tribal landowners have used for decades.

The Forest Service's new Wildfire Crisis Plan embraces most of these techniques.

I congratulate Chief Moore for driving this plan through a political mine field cluttered with lobbyists whose clients would prefer that the West's national forests be left to nature's furies

I won't belabor this point, but I will share a thought-provoking observation from my friend, Alan Houston, a PhD wildlife biologist in middle Tennessee. We were out hiking one morning in 1996 when he said something so memorable, I can still quote it verbatim...

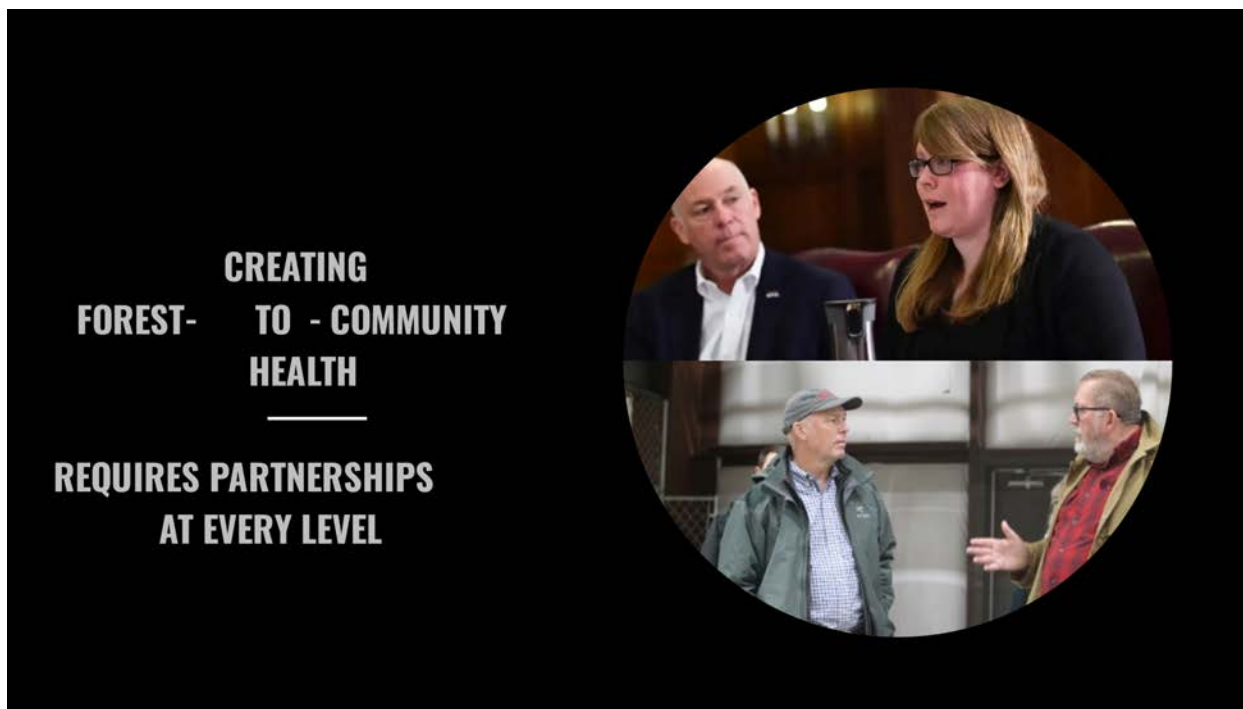


"When we leave forests to nature, as so many people today seem to want to do, we get whatever nature serves up, which can be pretty devastating at times, but with forestry we have options and a degree of predictability not found in nature."

Alan is telling us that choosing not to care for our forests comes with consequences we might not like.

These two photos taken a year apart in Montana's Belt Mountains by our Peter Kolb illustrate Alan's warning.

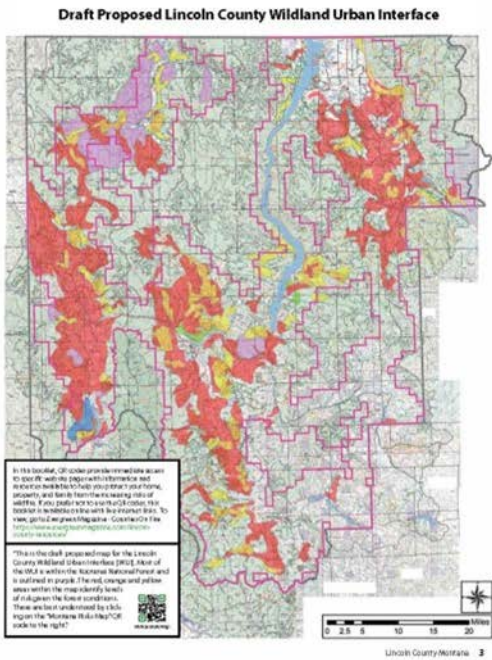
The previously managed areas you see here retain a full complement of vital structural and tree species diversity. Peter's main point – and my main message to you – is that restoring resiliency in at risk western forests will take time because it isn't just a matter of thinning and prescribed fire. Structural and species diversity must also be restored. Peter's Belt Mountain pictures show that where harvesting had occurred before wildfire, diversity can be more easily and more quickly restored. Where forests burned, brush and lodgepole pine thickets will make adding to structural and species diversity more difficult.



Partnerships are essential to get the work done. Here you see Amanda Kaster, Executive Director of Montana's Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. As a follow up to our Lincoln County project, we interviewed her concerning MDNRC's Forest Action Plan, which was collaboratively developed by volunteer stakeholder groups.

That's Montana Governor, Greg Gianforte listening to her – and that's the governor with former Lincoln County Commissioner, Mark Peck.

Mark was a huge help to us but most of the credit for our Lincoln County success goes to our Evergreen treasurer, Bruce Vincent. Lincoln County is Bruce's home. Last spring, he found a pamphlet at MDNRC's Kalispell office that offered helpful hints for landowners who live in or near what the Forest Service calls the "wildland urban interface." WUI's circumscribe private lands within or adjacent to national forests.



THE KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST, IS A REMOTE, HEAVILY TIMBERED, 2.2 MILLION - ACRE EXPANSE.

THIS IS A DRAFT PROPOSAL MAP FOR THE LINCOLN COUNTY WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE (WUI) – OUTLINED IN PURPLE.

RED AND ORANGE IDENTIFY HIGHER LEVELS OF WILDFIRE RISK.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT MOST OF THE WUI LIES WITHIN THE KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST. THIS SCENARIO IS COMMON FOR MANY RURAL COMMUNITIES IN THE WEST.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ARE UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO ADDRESS THIS GROWING CRISIS. THIS IS ON YOUR WATCH.

Here, from Page 3 of our booklet is the Lincoln County WUI. The pamphlet Bruce found in Kalispell was 20 years old, so it predated WUI's.

We were soon busy collecting new data about the Kootenai National Forest, a remote and heavily timbered hunting and fishing paradise about twice the size of Delaware.

THE YAAK



Here's a picture I took on the Yaak – a small river that meanders south through the Kootenai. It's a favorite float of ours. Lots of beautiful scenes like this one in northwest Montana.

Lumber manufacturing was huge in Lincoln County for more than a century but there are no mills there today.

The Stimson Lumber Company has signaled its interest in building a new mill in Libby if it can identify a sufficient Kootenai log supply to augment what it harvests from nearby private lands.



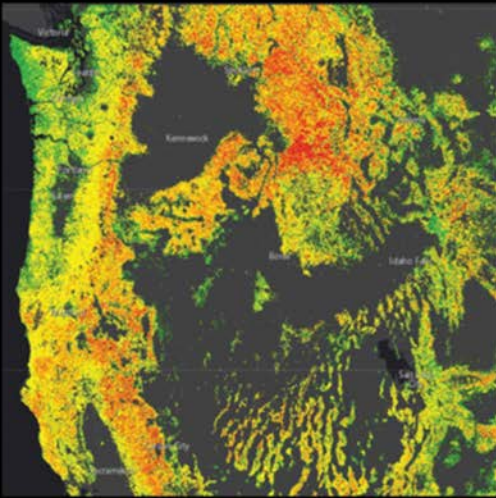
Here on Page 11 is a Stimson thinning in grizzly bear habitat in the Bull River valley southwest of Libby. Some of this work is so subtle that it's hard to identify if you don't know what to look for. Stimson used Fish and Wildlife Service guidelines to do this thinning

Our booklet does not advocate for a new sawmill. Instead, we provide talking points and "how to" information citizens need to proactively engage the Forest Service and state forestry officials who will be doing the heavy lifting described in Chief Moore's plan.

To quantify wildfire risk in Lincoln County we assembled bar graphs using FIA growth and mortality data for the Kootenai National Forest.

EVERGREEN

The Magazine of the Evergreen Foundation

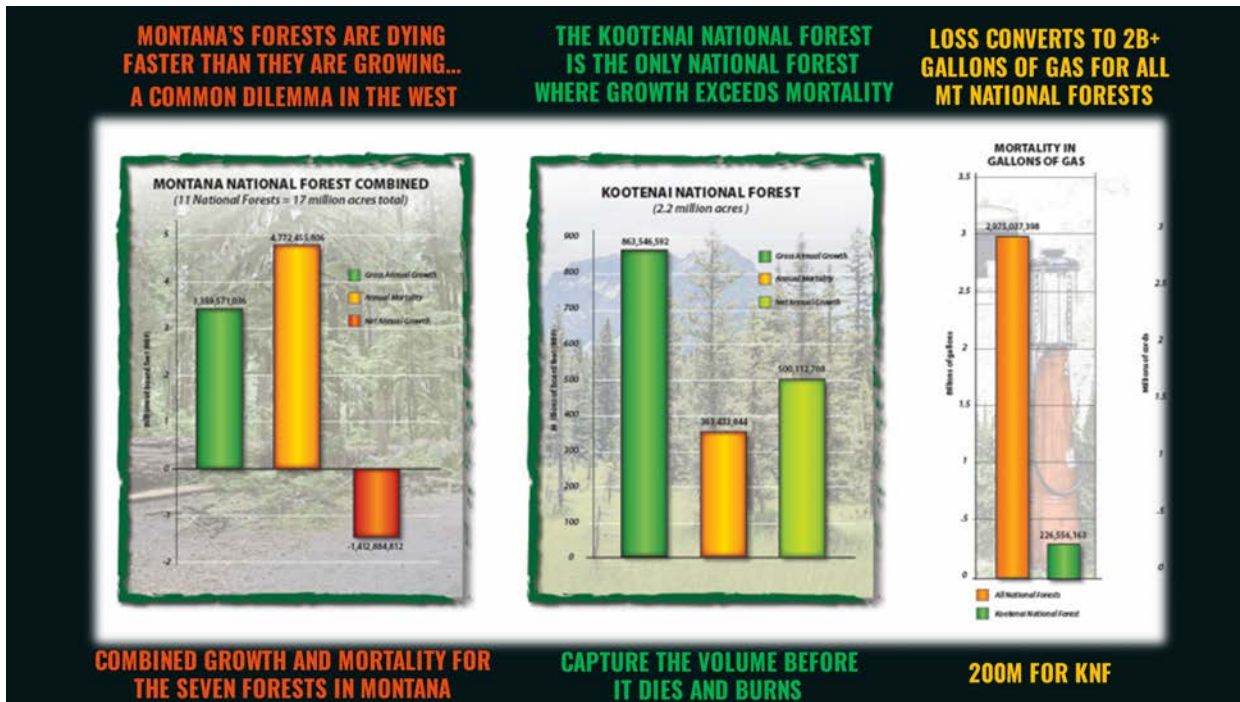


FIA: THE GOLD STANDARD

FIA: THE GOLD STANDARD DELVES INTO THE WORK OF THE FOREST INVENTORY ANALYSIS DEPARTMENT OF THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE. WE HIGHLIGHT THE 4 MAIN REGIONAL RESEARCH STATIONS WITHIN THE U.S. - AND THE SPECIFIC FOCUS AND WORK WITHIN EACH REGION, NATIONALLY, AND GLOBALLY.

FIA DATA IS A STAPLE FOR EVERGREEN'S SCIENCE - BASED MESSAGE. WE ENCOURAGE YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS TO EXPLORE AND UTILIZE THE VAST KNOWLEDGE BASE FIA HAS TO OFFER.

If you want more information about FIA download our "Gold Standard" report from our Evergreen website. I also have a few copies here with me.



These graphs show that, mortality is increasing on the Kootenai National Forest - CENTER GRAPH - it is the *only* national forest in Montana in which growth still exceeds mortality.

The news is awful for Montana's other six national forests - LEFT GRAPH - Combined mortality now exceeds combined growth by a jaw-dropping *1.4 billion board feet annually*. The staggering cost of years of misguided neglect.

I know board feet is a hard concept to grasp if you don't often work with it, so consider this: When we ran Kootenai growth and mortality numbers for our 2016 *Burning An Empire* report we determined that if you could convert all this dead timber into wooden blocks one foot by one foot by one foot and stack them on the University of Montana football field the stack would stretch 1.67 miles into the sky. That's one year's mortality. Next year, add another 1.67 miles of dead timber.

Stimson is one of three companies that hope to capture some of the Kootenai's volume represented by the green bar *before* it dies and burns – the orange bar. THE GRAPH ON THE RIGHT – is similar - a conversion from board feet to gallons of gas, to illustrate the loss in a manner that the public can easily understand.



Despite Smokey's admonitions it has been very difficult for the Forest Service to guarantee certainty of supply, which is why most lumber companies in the West aren't investing in manufacturing capacity linked to federal timber.

Libby lost its last mill in 2002 because the Forest Service could not find 18 million feet that it could harvest annually. This in a forest that annually loses 20 times that amount to insects, diseases and fire.

This makes no sense to most people living in Lincoln County, but as I said earlier, the politics at play in national forests are controlled by players who believe nature knows best and players who believe it is unethical and immoral for the federal government to sell its timber to private interests.

We can store carbon in our lungs . . .

In his recent book, *First, Not Out*, the *Forest Service* writer Ben Peterson asks a timely question:

"How many cigarettes are there in a burning tree?"

The answer depends on the size of the tree, but his question would be designed to be a mouth opener. He asked burning that most people don't know that wood smoke is deadly - as lethal as the EPA recently estimated that the cancer risk from wood smoke is 13 times greater than from an equal amount of tobacco smoke!

We've all experienced the unpleasant irritation that comes with sitting around for weeks around with our head lights on in forest daylight because the smoke is so thick that other drivers have trouble seeing us.

In July and August of 2019 the air was so thick with smoke that outdoor breathing machines on the Klamath River couldn't see across it. These situations are just good for healthy people, but show how living in our country who have compromised health.

The series of QR codes at the bottom of this page lead to several government-sponsored reports that demonstrate that wildfire smoke is harmful because of the long list of chemicals released that are often the same as those contained in cigarettes.

Some say that smokers don't die from larger smoke plumes in "the new normal." There is an element of truth in this statement but it is irresponsible to assume that nothing can be done to manage forest fire in ways that mitigate the potential harm from smoke.

Contrails, white smoke from wildfires or those generated from being in the expected smoke we live in a forest that is defined by fire. But the wildfire problems we are witnessing across the West is also releasing billions of tons of carbon per year into the atmosphere.

When we breathe wildfire smoke, deadly microscopic particles settle in our lungs, but one might also be exposed by nose and health care organizations need particulate matter deposited on large water source cities. Now we're seeing lots of reports concerning new medical research that identifies the significant health risks linked to wildfire smoke.

Wildfires release millions of tons of carbon dioxide into the air we breathe, but by itself carbon isn't our enemy. In fact, it is a building block of life. Likewise, fire is a natural component of our fire-dependent forests. But the billions of tons of smoke that killing wildfires belch into western skies every year are not healthy for humans or other creatures that live in forests. Better that we store carbon in trees and wood products, not our lungs.

Lincoln County government and our partners plan to proactively address this crisis with our plan for managing these forests in the 21st century around our homes and communities. For many of us who live here, wildlife and its deadly smoke have become "unprecedented justice" issues. Rebalancing the amount of smoke we breathe by first reducing the risk of wildfire starts a strong case of our doing that Lincoln County residents have lived with for too long.

HOW DO YOU WANT YOUR SMOKE?

... or we can store carbon in our forests!

Before white settlement began, Lincoln County's forests were a source of food, clothing and shelter for Native Americans. European explorers and settlers relied on Klamath forests for the same resources.

Today, we expect even more from our forests. Spring, summer, fall and winter, we value their timber harvest. They are as much our home as the houses we live in. This is why the forest stewardship discussion is so important to all of us. All forests and non-timber alike.

Here at home and around the world, people are also developing an appreciation for not another forest quality: the moisture ability of healthy forests to store or sequester carbon while simultaneously releasing oxygen into the air we breathe.

Our watershed store of carbon is not just our forests, but carbon is also stored in rocks, soil, plants and trees. For decades global political leaders have been discussing a variety of climate change initiatives that involve rewilding, sequestering carbon and other beneficial greenhouse gases that offset the carbon we put into the atmosphere.

Photovoltaics is the process by which trees and other green plants store carbon by converting light energy into chemical energy. Light energy - the sun's glow - drives the conversion of water, carbon dioxide and minerals into oxygen and organic compounds, including cellulose that forms the walls in all plants. Cellulose is the basic ingredient in wood.

Trees are literally tubes of sequestered carbon. They grow upward and outward in layers using the same old division process that drives all living organisms. The outer layers of trees are living tissue. Most of the trunk is dead tissue - wood that supports the increasing height and weight of growing trees.

Trees store about 27 percent of atmospheric carbon. The rate of carbon uptake varies widely with species, age, and quality of carbon, such as heat, cold, sunlight and rainfall. Older, larger trees store less of carbon in their wood but sequester more carbon and store carbon at a much faster rate. As trees age, the rate at which they store new carbon slows and eventually stops.

One example on the Klamath National Forest is increasing as the carbon sequestration discussion is very important. We stand on the a better balance between new growth, storing growth and harvest. We stand on the forest as more diverse trees as possible before they burn - before they release the heat of their stored carbon into the air we breathe.

With forest stewardship goals shared by all of our partners - the Forest Service, our state and our private forest landowners - we can sequester lots of carbon. To see what this process looks like on the ground, while the forest photographs on the next page. They were taken from Pipe Creek Road near its intersection with Shiloh Mountain Road just north of Libby.

The top photo shows thinning in the foreground and a dense thicket behind it. These are conditions "big forest" forests like this one within the Lincoln County Wildland Urban Interface.

The bottom photo was also taken from Shiloh Mountain Road. This is what most of the Lincoln County WUI should look like - carbon sequestration at work in a well managed forest. This site burned in the early 1980s and has been repeatedly thinned by the Forest Service for more than 100 years.

The work on carbon sequestration in wilderness cut of our forests. We should do that it will reduce their size, frequency and killing fires. It will also bring our communities new wood processing technologies capable of manufacturing the amount of new timber useful products shown on this "Back to the Future" beginning on Page 15.

The environmental and economic benefits are great, but the main that come immediately to our minds are clean air, clean water, abundant fish and wildlife habitat, a wealth of year-round outdoor recreation opportunities and healthy wage jobs that are a product of our shared stewardship work.

This can all start in Lincoln County. Let's do it in our own backyards.

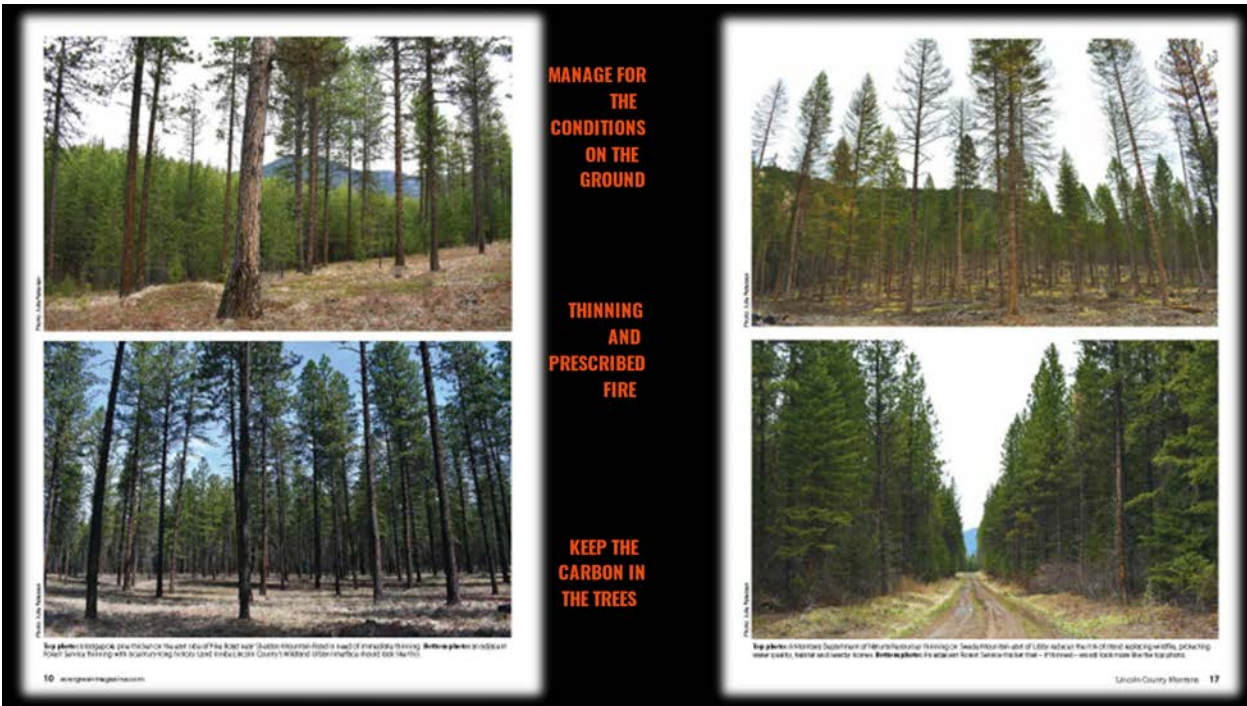
We'll spend the next carbon in our lungs and start storing it in our forests.

Lincoln County Booklet

Pages 8 and 9 of our Lincoln County booklet make a good case for storing carbon in forests, not in our lungs.

The six QR codes on these pages lead to reports detailing the health hazards associated with breathing wildfire smoke for weeks on end.

Many people don't know that wood smoke contains many of the same cancer-causing chemicals found in cigarettes but EPA and Forest Service reports confirm this truth.



Pages 10 and 17 feature before and after photographs that show Lincoln County’s citizens the visible results of our two best tools for reducing wildfire risk: thinning in forests that hold too many trees for the carrying capacity of the land – used in combination with prescribed fire: fires purposefully set by professionals to clean up logging debris and excess woody biomass.

SUMMARY: We have a growing wildfire crisis in Northwest Montana. The health of our forests, watersheds, communities and families are at risk.

Questions? We've got answers...

Q What is Lincoln County doing to protect forests and communities from wildfire?
A The Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) developed through the Pacific Council is a necessary plan that identifies areas at a high risk of the wildfire. This plan is periodically updated as it is based in part upon the most current National Fire Plan. Lincoln County has prepared a shared stewardship initiative between public and private landowners to address wildfire and safety. Lincoln County has long been the core benefit of Lincoln County Firefighters Council. The Council prioritizes areas at high risk for wildfire and with its coordinating level of management with a focus on the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) - where communities meet the forest. Montana DNR Lincoln County Service Bureau - 406-283-2751. Lincoln County has a fireline on staff at 406-283-2322. Explore other resources:

Q How can I increase safety for my family, my property, our forests and our community's firefighters from wildfire?
A The Fire Adapted Ecosystem website is the most source of current information on living with wildfire in Lincoln County. It offers key tools and resources on wildfire safety - including how to create a "zone of protection" or "defensible space." This website is continuously updated. Check often for new information. MSU Extension - Forestry and Landowner Program. Contact the Montana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) at 406-283-2326 to arrange a fire home assessment. Explore other resources:

To report any type of fire: Dial 911

A THIRD OF ALL HOMES IN THE U.S. ARE IN THE WUI

THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE WUI ARE UNIQUELY POSITIONED AS STEWARDS

RESOURCES AND EDUCATION ARE ESSENTIAL

You can read this publication online! Go to Evergreen Magazine <https://www.evergreenmagazine.com/lincoln-county-resources/> to open the publication. Click on the QR Codes to follow the links for more information.

Q I want to reduce fire hazard on my property. Can I get help?
A Cost Share Grants. Yes, you may be able to get financial assistance. Natural Resource and Conservation Service (NRCS) and other Cost Share Grants are often available to help landowners offset the costs of fuel reduction work on their property. Grants may not cover up to 100% of the costs. To learn more contact your Lincoln County Forester at 406-283-2322. Explore other resources:

Q What is a Firewise Community?
A In Firewise Communities, community members work together to lower wildfire risk. The goal is to create a "zone of protection" by reducing hazardous fuels - creating "defensible space" that helps keep wildfires away from homes and people. If you are interested in starting a program in your neighborhood, contact the Lincoln County Forester: 406-283-2322.

For additional information and resources on living with wildfire

For information on current wildfires and conditions:

To report any type of fire: Dial 911

Pages 18 and 19 of our booklet includes a schematic tracking “how to” resources available to Lincoln County citizens who want to protect their homes and families from wildfire. There are many – most of them free - but they were so scattered that it took my Julia two weeks to find and assemble them in one easy to follow diagram with QR codes that lead to primary sources. Simply download the free QR code app to your cell phone. It’s the same code you see people using in grocery stores to download coupons.



The obligatory picture of our youngest daughter also appears in our Lincoln County booklet. Sophie is clearly thrilled with the four-pound Kootenai River rainbow her guide is holding. It’s the first fish she ever caught on a fly rod. When I asked her if she wanted to go with us the next day she said, “No, I think I’ll read a book. I’ve already caught the biggest fish!” Such a lovely child. We’re glad she’s going back to Tanzania in May. No crocodile or hippo will be safe.

On a more serious note – this is what we are working to protect – so you can visit.



My reminder to you is that we can do what we did in Lincoln County in any county that is facing the wildfire pandemic. This template can also be adapted for other issues that put our forests at risk. We would love to help you increase grassroots support in your county. We view this as Step 1 in the process of helping state and federal forest managers regain their long lost social license to practice forestry.

We do everything in house: research, writing, photography, graphic production, and website management.

Incidentally, I have some copies of our *Lincoln County, Montana Counties on Fire* booklet if you'd like one, or you can download the PDF - as well as other publications - from our website. You can also order our book online. Likewise, this PowerPoint, which has live links in it, is available on our website - on the *Counties on Fire* page.

Rich and I will be here until early afternoon if any of you have questions. We are staged to move forward quickly. Thanks to NACO for granting us some time this morning. We have time for some questions. Anyone?