

America’s Forests in the Balance, A National Emergency: A *Call to Action*¹

The 2024 wildland fire season is well underway; 15,689 fires have already burned 1,925,038 acres as of May 30, 2024. These amounts are well ahead of the same time in 2023. This *A Call to Action*, started almost four years ago, is an attempt to keep a National Emergency of unplanned wildfires at the forefront of the American people. To date, 78 professionals [and counting] have contributed to this *A Call to Action*. Sign-on to the *Petition* [Petition Link: <http://chnng.it/bGsyZvSb>]. As of May 30, 2024, there are 5,817 signatories. In 2022, 68,988 fires burned 7,577,183 acres. More wildfires ignited in 2022 than the past 10-year average; about 20 percent more. In 2023, 56,580 wildfires burned 2,698,910 acres. While the number of wildfires is slightly above the 10-year average, the number of acres burned is well below it; the 10-year average at 6,220,360 acres. Notable incidents in 2024 include the Blue and Blue 2 Fires in New Mexico. Check out this sequence: 5/17/2024 = start, “monitoring”; 5/19/2024 = 10 acres burned. 5/31/2024 = 7,457 acres! Also, check out the *Indios Fire* in New Mexico; now about 12,000 acres needlessly burned. This is not surprising. *Monitoring* is not a strong Initial Attack. Please, continue to review the concept of “*managed or beneficial wildfire*.” Putting all fires out immediately is cost effective; large fires are unimaginably expensive and destructive. Annual damages from unplanned wildfires are approaching \$1 trillion! It is time for a renewed, more contemporary “10 AM” policy by the USDA Forest Service. Let us not forget that smoke is also a horrendous killer. So, for now, it is critical to put all wildfires out quickly with an aggressive Initial Attack. *The 2024 Annual Chief’s Letter of Intent for Wildfires* is out! It’s business as usual. None of our *six recommendations* were included. You must see the latest *Appendices A.52, A.53, and A.54*. We think they are powerful reads. And, *What If Forests Could Speak?* America’s forestlands are at risk; lack of forest maintenance is a key culprit. Please get involved to alter the direction of this destructive force – uncontrollable wildfires. *A Call to Action* is continually updated. **This is Revision 17.8.** Please archive or delete all previous revisions. Just click on the following two *hyperlinks* to see the latest versions:



THE FULL DOCUMENT: *A Call to Action*, rev. 17.8, June 1, 2024

THE SUMMARY: *A Call to Action*, rev. 17.8, June 1, 2024

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A Call to Action

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In 2001, when “Managing the Impacts of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment” -- the *National Fire Plan*² – was completed, there were about 38 million acres of our national forestlands [forests are more than just trees] classified as high risk to fire. It is now about 90+ million acres. Why? Because for at least the last three decades, we have significantly underfunded forest maintenance [aka, forest management] work that could help restore the health and resiliency of our forested landscapes and help prevent large, intense unplanned wildfires. By shifting money *from* sustainable forest maintenance actions *to* fire suppression, today’s forests have become overgrown and act like tinderboxes. Federal forests call for at least 8-9 million acres to be restored annually for the next decade, including timber harvesting, fuel reduction, thinning of non-commercial sized trees, various fish and wildlife habitat improvement projects and plantings; about 20 million acres per year for all forestlands.

These are different times. With the current land conditions and the impacts of a changing climate, the idea of allowing a wildfire to burn anywhere, for whatever reason, is unacceptable and must be stopped; no exceptions. Check out again the earlier contribution sustained in this revision of *A Call to Action*, including, the extremely instructional interview between

¹ Coordinated by Michael T. Rains with input from a wide-range of professionals; 78 and counting.

² Michael T. Rains, USDA Forest Service [ret.]. Lead Author, US Department of Agriculture. 2001.

“...Strive to Put Out All Unplanned Wildfire Ignitions Within 24 Hours After Detection.”

June 1, 2024

Jim Petersen and Frank Carroll [[Appendix A.45](#)]; it’s a classic. And the new Appendices in the full document [[A.52](#); [A.53](#); and [A.54](#)]. Glance at the Graphic Organizer on page 2. Each box has a *hyperlink* for additional detail.

This latest revision of *A Call to Action* is again being sent far and wide to decision-makers – members of the current Administration and Congress; County leaders; and more. Please, share your voice so we can begin to alter the direction of this destructive force – uncontrollable unplanned wildfires. As usual, I urge all of you to not be confused by the [intellectual argument](#) that unplanned wildfires are helpful to ecosystem health. At this point in time, they are not. The current landscape scale conditions, especially in the western part of America, will not allow the “managed” or “beneficial” fire concept to work effectively; it’s simply too dangerous. To make it easier for the reader, we have created a “Graphic Organizer.” Put your cursor in the desired box and “click”. Detailed information from *A Call to Action* will come up.

A Graphic Organizer: A Call to Action [Rev. 17.8], June 1, 2024 [rev.]

