

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

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The 2024 wildland fire season is coming to an end. 50,275 fires have burned 8,190,693 acres. The number of fires is slightly less than this time last year [52,179]. However, the acres burned is about three times more; +5,526,545 acres. 238,989 acres are currently burning. The 2024 fire season is one of the most destructive in recent memory. The ten-year average is 52,824 wildfires burning 6,554,599 at the same time this year. This *A Call to Action*, started almost five years ago, is an attempt to keep a National Emergency of destructive wildfires due to the lack of forest maintenance for the past 30+ year at the forefront of the American people. To date, 82 professionals [and counting] have contributed to this *A Call to Action*. Please get involved to alter the direction of this destructive force – uncontrollable wildfires and the madness of “managed” fire. With the current land conditions, wildfires are neither *managed* or *beneficial*. *A Call to Action* is continually updated. This is Revision 19.0. A special note for this revision: The 2024 fire season is about over. So many have had enough; too much destruction, no real strategy. Thus, a *Campaign* is emerging from a strong coalition. Here is the *Campaign* goal statement:

“We the people, Campaign to awaken the public to the national crisis that is actively destroying not only National Forests and rangelands, but public health, communities, wildlife and natural resources across the nation. Our goal is the restoration of truth and justice in governance and land management across America” (Tibbitts, 2024).

The first thing we must do is to have the USDA Forest Service stop the use of “managed” fire, NOW. The concept does not work in today’s changed conditions of land, climate and development. One small but so impactful action will be to ensure the annual Chief’s (Forest Service) Letter of Intent for 2025 includes the following: “...we will strive to put all wildfires immediately with a strong Initial attack.”

The wildfires of today are more intense than ever before. They are WILD and so destructive. This, until the Forest Service can help restore forestlands so wildfires are not so volatile, let us strive to influence this agency to put out all wildfires immediately. The mantra shall be, “First, Put Out the Fire.” Right now, about one-half of the National Forests are “dead, dying or burned to a crisp.” Destruction costs are approaching +1\$ trillion each year. Thousands of people die annually from fire and smoke. The carnage to wildlife is incalculable. Millions of acres of productive lands have been scorched, again. Water yield and quality have been trashed. We are faced with a National Emergency. Enough is enough. Did you know that up to 2.4 million acres that burned this year maybe did not have to burn if the “first, put out the fire” tactic were used?

In 2001, when “Managing the Impacts of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment” -- the *National Fire Plan*¹ – was completed, there were about 38 million acres of our national forestlands [forests are more than just trees] classified as high risk to fire. That number is now about 100 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 wildfires. By shifting money *from* sustainable forest maintenance actions *to* fire suppression, today’s forests have become overgrown and act like tinderboxes. Please help stop this tragedy. We must share our voices to those who “decide”, not just “play” (Hersey & Blanchard, 1974).

Just click on the following two *hyperlinks* to see the latest versions:

REV. 19.0

THE FULL DOCUMENT: [A Call to Action, rev. 19.0, November 17, 2024](#)
THE SUMMARY: [A Call to Action, rev. 19.0, November 17, 2024](#)

[Graphic Organizer](#)

¹ Coordinated by Michael T. Rains with input from a wide-range of professionals; 82 and counting, November 17, 2017