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BOS Meeting, Oct 24, 2017 - Comments

1 message

Roger Lewis <re.lewis@comcast.net>

Fri, Oct 20, 2017 at 4:26 PM

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Dear Supervisor Veerkamp,


Attached are our comments pertaining to adoption of the biological resource policies scheduled for discussion at the upcoming BOS meeting on Oct. 24, 2017. We support Staff's recommendation that you certify the Environmental Impact Report and approve the overall project including a more streamlined appeal process for in-lieu fees.

We are concerned that there continue to be efforts from community activists and environmental groups to undermine the task at hand. To reiterate previously stated concerns, the process has gone on far too long causing continuing financial harm to our Company.

Thank you,

Roger Lewis

El Dorado Sr. Housing, LLC.

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Comments for the Board of Supervisors Meeting of October 24, 2017 Pertaining to Adoption of the General Plan Biological Resources Policy Update, Oak Resources Management Plan, and Oak Resources Conservation Ordinance

By El Dorado Sr. Housing, LLC

October 20, 2017

Recall that initially the overall objective of this project was simply to produce a justifiable in-lieu fee for the mitigation of oak tree impact. After the extraordinarily lengthy time of more than five years, the expenditure of millions of dollars in County funds, prolonged delays in project developments, and substantial losses in County tax revenues, this objective has finally been met. Fees of \$8,285/ac of woodlands, \$153/inch diameter of individual trees, and \$459/inch diameter of heritage trees have been determined to be fair and justifiable amounts. We now encourage you to accept the recommendations of the County Planning and Building Department and approve and authorize the resolutions necessary to permit development in the county to once again proceed.

We hope you are not swayed by recent comments from the public to reconsider the recommendations from the Planning Commission to adopt these policies that will allow projects to move forward in the County. Individuals like Ellen Van Dyke, and Cheryl Langly, and groups such as California Oaks, Querus Group, Center for Sierra Nevada Conservation, and the Sierra Club's Maidu Group have for years been opposing almost every effort to come to a quick and equitable solution to the issue of biological resource management. What they have all failed to recognize or admit to is the fact that the magnitude of proposed development in El Dorado County is nearly insignificant in comparison with the vast resources of the County. By the County's own reports, annual development over the past 25 years accounts for removal of no more than 100 to 150 acres of oak trees and associated habitat. The idea that the County's zoning regulations are going to result in decimating the County's 250,000 acres of resources is absurd.

Another omission in their biased objections to development is the fact that trees, and their canopies (i.e. wildlife habitat) grow each year. It is that growth, conservatively estimated at between 1% and 4% per year, that far surpasses any recorded impact of development. If the growth of tree canopies had been considered a factor in the environmental impact study, it could likely have been shown that the impact of development on resources was insignificant.

By the way, it is the growth of this wildlife habitat that is now directly contributing to the disastrous fires raging throughout California. El Dorado County should seriously be considering measures to reduce the amount of growth in the forest rather than focusing so much energy on "protecting" the trees.

Attached are two relevant articles by James Delingpole of Breitbart News regarding forest management California wildfires.

Delingpole: Urgent Memo to Donald Trump—Biggest Threat to the Environment Are Environmentalists



Genna Martin /seattlepi.com via AP

by James Delingpole 17 Sep 2017

Did you hear the scary rumor at the weekend that President Trump was about to renege on his promise to quit the UN Paris Climate Agreement?

The good news is that it was #fakenews. (Shame on you, WSJ!)

The bad news is that it wasn't so implausible as to make anyone go "Donald Trump? Cave to the Greenies?? That would never happen in a million years!!!"

Because the fact is, he still could very easily.

After all, on green issues it's not just a case of Donald Trump vs. Greenpeace, the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, the New York Times, CNN, MSNBC, National Geographic, the Weather Channel, the Democrats, the Washington Post, the National Academy of Sciences, the UN, the European Union, the Nature Conservancy, the WWF, most university professors, and your kids' schoolteachers, etc.

It's also a case of Donald Trump vs. large chunks of Congress and most of his administration, from all the Obama holdovers at the EPA to the majority of his inner circle including Javanka, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Chief Economics Advisor Gary Cohn.

So how is Trump ever going to win this uphill struggle?

Simple: by owning the environmental agenda and reminding the American public that it is conservatives—not shrill, rancid greenies with their soap issues, their plaited armpit hair and their obsession with the non-existent issue of climate change—who are best at conserving the natural world.

Trump should make more, for example, of the excellent work being done by his Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue in the field of wildfires and forest management.

You'll almost certainly hear nothing about their efforts in the mainstream media because it concerns conservatives taking control of environmental regulation and working it to the benefit of the environment, as opposed to what liberals and greens generally do which is take control of environmentalism and then abuse it to advance a political agenda which has little if anything to do with saving the environment.

This story has to do with one of the most enduring threats to the environment in the U.S. and beyond—poor forest management and the related problems of wildfires and tree disease.

This is a danger more clear and present than any threat currently posed by "climate change." In fact, it's happening across the U.S. right now, as Paul Driessen [describes](#) here:

As of September 12, amid this typically long, hot, dry summer out West, 62 major forest fires are burning in nine states, the National Interagency Fire Center reports. The Interior Department and Ag Department's Forest Service have already spent over \$2 billion fighting them. That's about what they spent in all of 2015, previously the most costly wildfire season ever, and this season has another month or more to go. The states themselves have spent hundreds of millions more battling these conflagrations.

Millions of acres of forest have disappeared in smoke and flames—1.1 million in Montana alone. All told, acreage larger than New Jersey has burned already. However, even this hides the real tragedies.

The infernos exterminate wildlife habitats, roast eagle and spotted owl fledglings alive in their nests, immolate wildlife that can't run fast enough, leave surviving animals to starve for lack of food, and incinerate organic matter and nearly every living creature in the thin soils. They turn trout streams into fish boils, minus the veggies and seasonings. Future downpours and rapid snowmelts bring widespread soil erosion into streambeds. Many areas will not grow trees or recover their biodiversity for decades.

Most horrifically, the conflagrations threaten homes and entire communities. They kill fire fighters and families that cannot get away quickly enough, or get trapped by sudden walls of flames.

In 2012, two huge fires near Fort Collins and Colorado Springs, Colorado burned 610 homes, leaving little more than ashes, chimneys and memories. Tens of thousands of people had to be evacuated through smoke and ash that turned daytime into choking night skies. Four people died. A 1994 fire near Glenwood Springs, CO burned 14 young firefighters to death.

Yup. You might imagine that all those dead trees and animals—the dead humans not so much, I fear—would galvanize all those Greenies to do whatever they can to help the Trump administration deal with this major ongoing problem, but they won't for one simple and shocking reason: It's a problem almost entirely of the green movement's making.

When I first read about this a few years back in Elizabeth Nickson's superb book *Eco-Fascists*, I was aghast to discover the degree to which so many of the world's worst environmental disasters are the creation of environmentalists. There's so much evidence it's undeniable. From the millions of birds and bats slaughtered by wind turbines or fried by solar arrays to the acres of rain forests chopped down to create "eco-friendly" biofuels, the greens are doing tremendous damage to the very environment they claim to be trying to preserve for "future generations."

Almost nowhere is this man-made blight more evident than the damage the greens have done to America's forests. It's the result of their ideological opposition to the thing they sneerily call "the logging industry" but which really ought to be called by its less-loaded name "forest management." Driessen continues, saying:

Environmentalists abhor timber cutting on federal lands, especially if trees might feed profit-making sawmills. They would rather see trees burn, than let someone cut them. They constantly file lawsuits to block any cutting, and too many judges are all too happy to support their radical ideas and policies.

Thus, even selective cutting to thin dense stands of timber, or remove trees killed by beetles or fires, is rarely permitted. Even fire fighting and suppression are often allowed only if a fire was clearly caused by arson, careless campers or other human action—but not if lightning ignited it.

Then it's allowed to burn, until a raging inferno is roaring over a ridge toward a rural or suburban community.

The result is easy to predict. Thousands of thin trees grow on acreage that should support just a few hundred full-sized mature trees. Tens of billions of these scrawny trees mix with 6.3 billion dead trees that the Forest Service says still stand in eleven western states. Vast forests are little more than big trees amid closely bunched matchsticks and underbrush, drying out in hot, dry western summers and droughts—waiting for lightning bolts, sparks, untended campfires or arsonists to start super-heated conflagrations.

Flames in average fires along managed forest floors might reach several feet in height and temperatures of 1,472° F (800° C), says Wildfire Today. But under extreme conditions of high winds and western tinderboxes, temperatures can exceed 2,192° F (1200° C), flame heights can reach 165 feet (50 meters) or more, and fires can generate a critter-roasting 100,000 kilowatts per meter of fire front. Wood will burst into flame at 572° F. Aluminum melts at 1,220 degrees, silver at 1,762 and gold at 1,948° F!

Most of this heat goes upward, but super-high temperatures incinerate soil organisms and organic matter in thin western soils that afterward can support only stunted, spindly trees for decades.

These fires also emit prodigious quantities of carbon dioxide, fine particulates and other pollutants—including mercury, which is absorbed by tree roots from rocks and soils that contain this metal, and then lofted into the sky when the trees burn.

Rabid greens ignore these hard realities—and divert discussions back to their favorite ideological talking points. The problem isn't too many trees, they insist. It's global warming and climate change. That's why western states are having droughts, long fire seasons, and high winds that send flames past fire breaks.

Yep, the Trump administration has no business concerning itself with fake environmental problems like “man-made global warming,” but it can definitely take the lead in dealing with real environmental problems like tree disease and deforestation, as currently being addressed in an excellent bill put forward by the only forester in Congress, Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.)

Westerman's Resilient Federal Forests Act (HR 2936) is a timely and necessary bipartisan proposal to cut through all the environmental red tape which currently prevents federal forests being correctly managed.

As Nick Smith urged earlier this year at the *Hill*:

Congress should pass this legislation without delay, because the Forest Service estimates that at least 58 million acres of national forest are at high, or very high, risk of catastrophic wildfire. Due to bureaucracy, litigation and the unsustainable costs of fighting today's mega-fires, the agency treats only a small fraction of this amount on a yearly basis. The Forest Service has also identified over 1.1 million acres in need of reforestation as a result of these fires. Without action

we will continue to lose more forest lands that support rural economies, recreation and wildlife habitat.

He's right, but Trump can go further than this.

In the last ten years America has lost over 500 million deciduous trees. The hardwood trees in America and around the world are under attack by a tsunami of fungi, bacteria and insects.

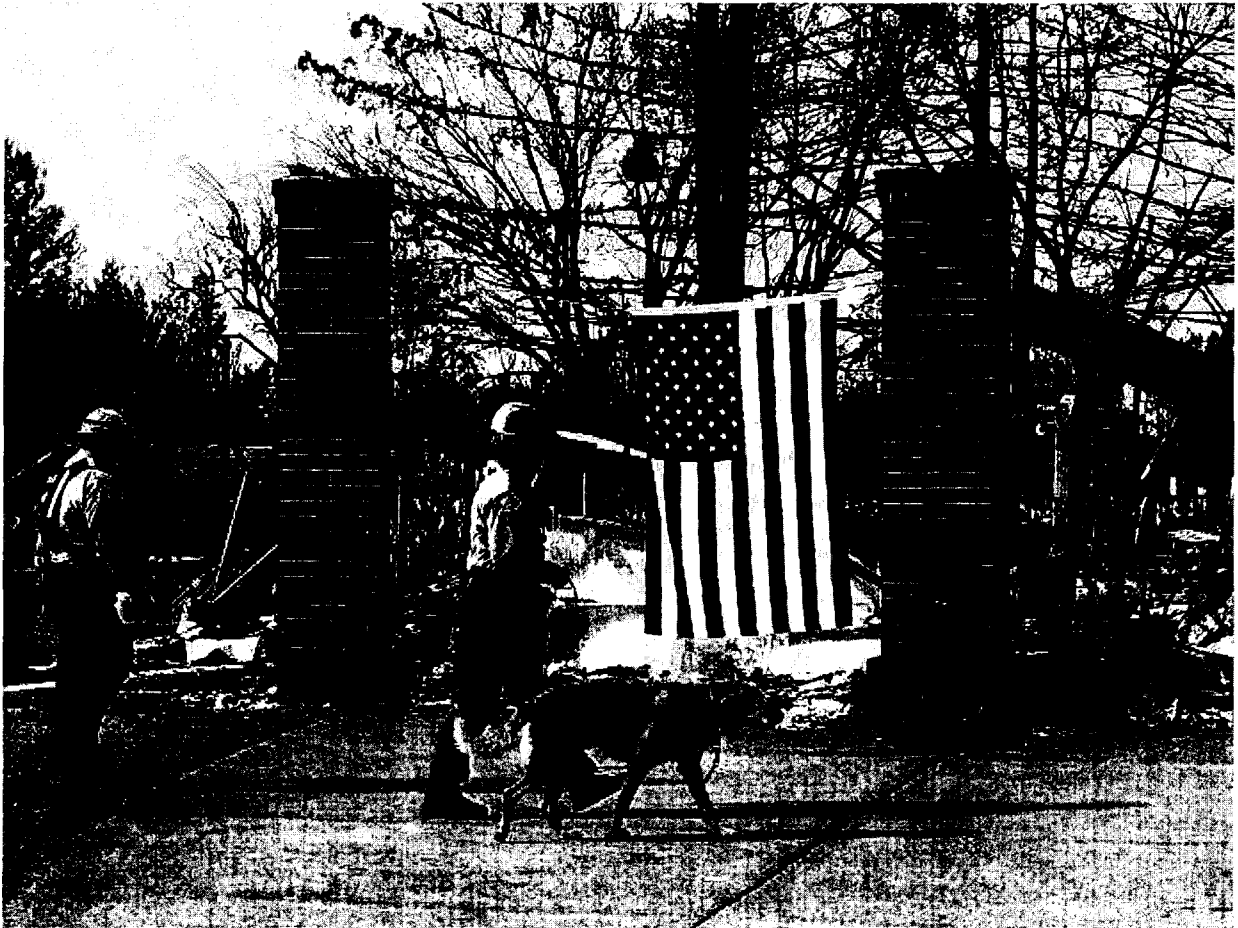
There is nothing more emblematic of our environment than our trees. Our trees absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen. There are reports that globally trees annually take up between 20 percent-40 percent of man-made CO². These trees shelter birds and wildlife, and are the backbone of our natural ecology. Trees are the lungs of our city; reducing pollution, providing oxygen, and humanizing our urban areas.

If Trump can take ownership of this issue—involving everything from the Department of the Interior to the EPA on a radical program to control wildfires, interdict tree disease, and reforest America—then the benefits to his presidency will be almost incalculable.

1. It will genuinely make America a better place to live, with a healthier, better protected environment.
2. It will completely wrongfoot the greenies, pulling the rug from under their claims to being the only people who care about nature—perhaps even co-opting the support of some liberals who previously thought they hated Trump.
3. Trump will emerge as the greatest Environmentalist president since Theodore Roosevelt.

What could there be here not to like?

Delingpole: What the Greenies Don't Want You to Know About the California Wildfires



AP/Rich Pedroncelli

by James Delingpole 19 Oct 2017

What is the cause of the devastating fires in California which have killed more than 40 people, destroyed or damaged more than 5000 buildings, with an estimated financial loss running into the tens of billions of dollars?

Climate change, of course!

Well, at least it is if you believe all the usual suspects.

Here's Al Gore, trying to pin it on "global warming" while simultaneously promoting the renewables interests that have made him so disgustingly rich:

"All over the West we're seeing these fires get much, much worse," Gore said, noting that a number of factors contribute to this. "The underlying cause is the heat."

[...] "The heart of it is that we still depend on fossil fuels," Gore said.

Here's another failed presidential candidate Hillary Clinton:

"It's been a tough couple of weeks with hurricanes and earthquakes and now these terrible fires," Clinton told an audience at the University of California, Davis while promoting her new book "What Happened."

"So in addition to expressing our sympathy, we need to really come together to try to work to prevent and mitigate, and that starts with acknowledging climate change and the role that it plays in exacerbating such events," Clinton said, according to First Coast News.

Here's Jacques Leslie in the LA Times.

All those factors — high temperatures, low humidity, strong winds — are exacerbated by climate change, and as climate change intensifies, they will, too. Though Mill Valley has not experienced a calamitous fire since the 1920s, the odds of its occurrence will steadily rise. And what all these fires have shown us is that in the face of a firestorm, we're virtually defenseless.

Here's Scientific American failing to be scientific.

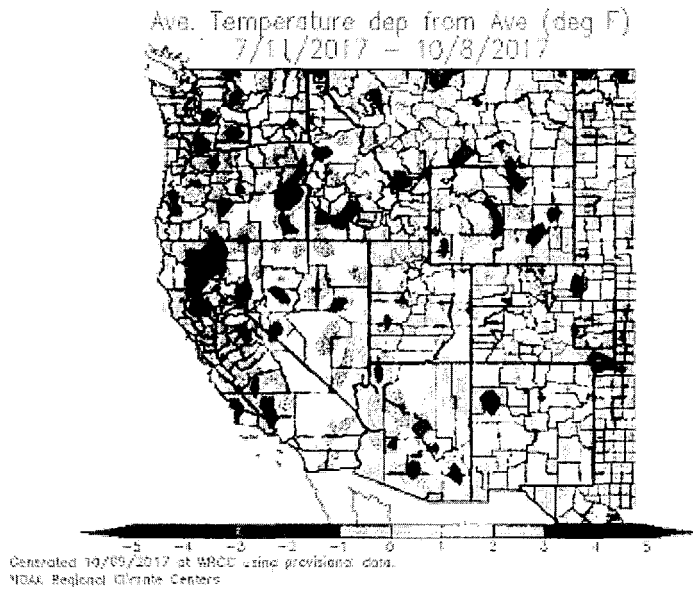
Some scientists are also concerned that if wildfires become more frequent or intense, the carbon emissions they release could exacerbate the progression of climate change, leading to a kind of feedback loop—more warming leads to more fires, which release more carbon, which causes more warming, and so on.

The truth of course, is rather different

The fires have nothing to do with "climate change." They were a weather event – not a climate event.

Meteorologist Cliff Mass (Professor, Atmospheric Sciences at University of Washington, Seattle) explains:

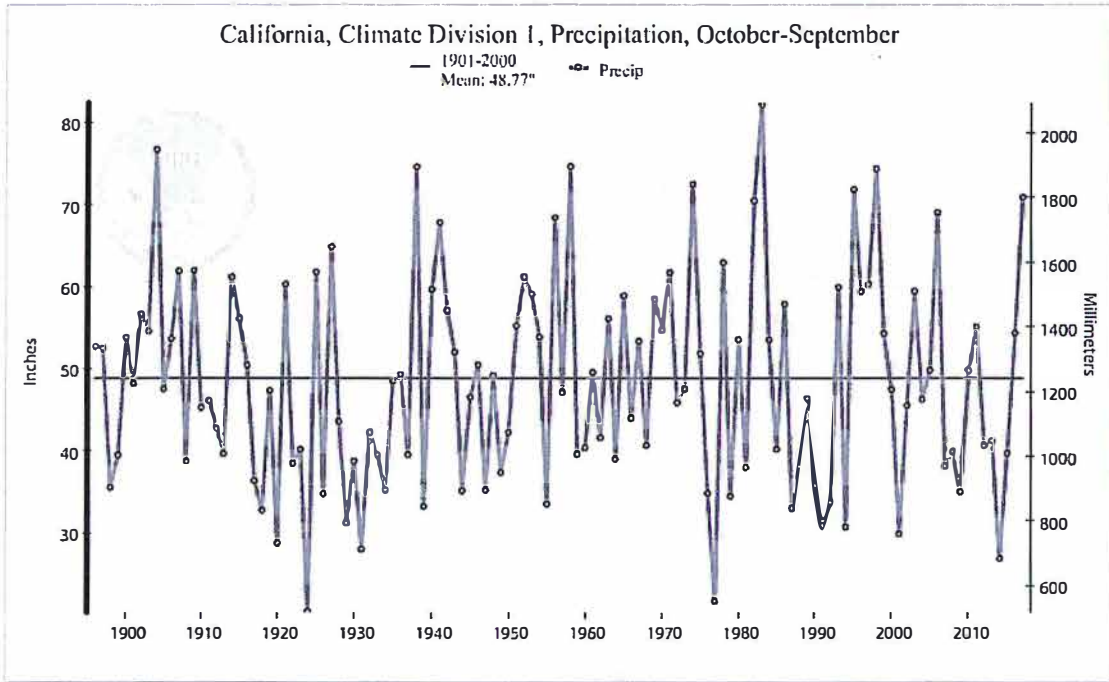
The vegetation was dry after little rain over the summer (quite normal). The ground vegetation was perhaps drier than normal because the summer had been usually warm (by 1-4 F as shown by the NOAA Western Region Climate Center map for the last 90 days.)



On Sunday afternoon, winds approaching the mountains of northern CA increased, and the vertical structure of an inversion over cooler air was established. A strong mountain wave/downslope wind event was initiated, bringing winds of 60-90 mph to the crests and upper lee slopes of the regional terrain. Such winds helped initiate the fires (possibly due to interaction with power lines) and then caused the resulting fires to explode. The fires, driven by the strong, gusty winds, pushed very rapidly into populated areas.

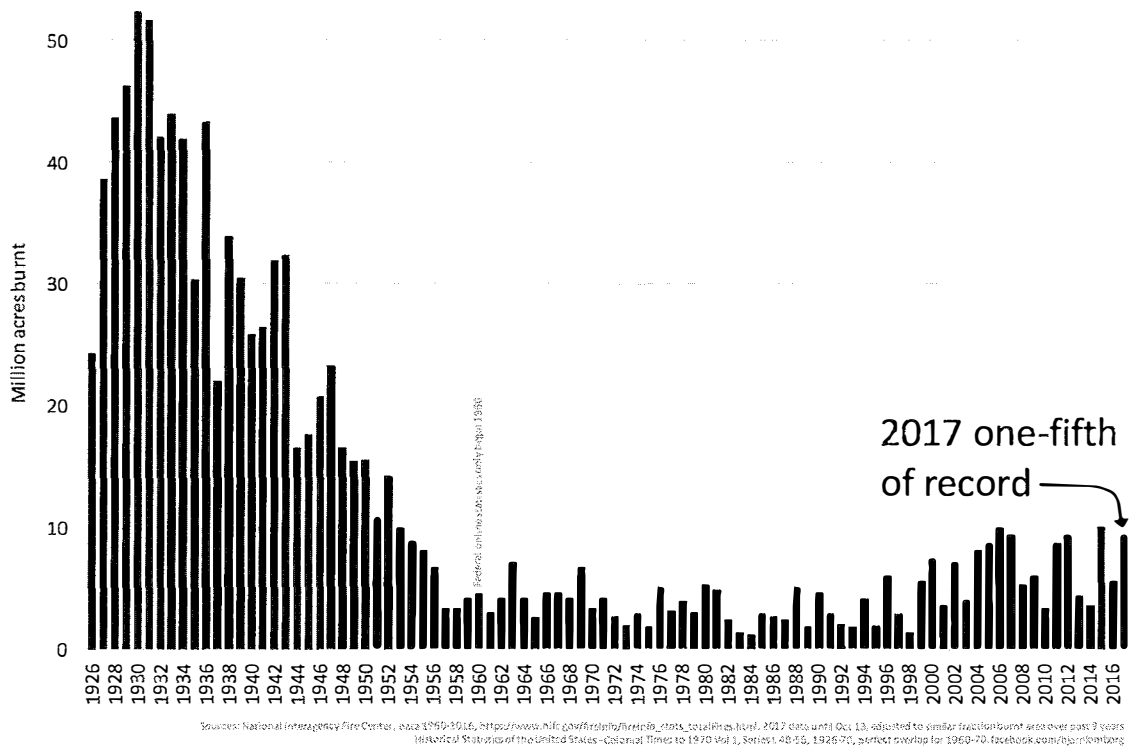
Actually it has been one of the wettest years on record in the affected part of California

Here, via [Paul Homewood](#), is the evidence:



There is nothing historically unprecedented about this wildfire season. Contrary to the claims made by green activists, wildfires destroyed many more acres of forest before the days of “global warming”.

US Forest Area Burned 1926-2017



Humans have undoubtedly made the problem worse – not through carbon dioxide emissions but through misguided green policy

As Bonner Cohen notes at [CFACT](#):

Wildfires have been a scourge in California and other areas of the arid West for as long as anyone can remember. California’s dry climate and strong winds – Diablo in the north and Santa Anna in the south – are often a wildfire’s best friend.

The region is also dotted with huge national forests, which for decades were governed by disastrous fire-suppression policies. In forests, wildfires, usually caused by lightning, can be nature’s way of removing undergrowth before it has a chance to build up to dangerous levels. When these relatively small fires are suppressed, forests can become veritable tinder boxes. Even after enactment of the Healthy Forests Initiative in the last decade, a law that allows for the removal of dead and diseased trees in national forests, many of the lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service, are still at risk of igniting a conflagration.

What’s more, restrictive zoning laws in cities like San Francisco and San Jose have put home prices out of reach for people of upper-middle, middle, and lower income. Unable to afford homes in high-end urban areas, many people are forced to live in distant suburbs, which puts them closer to areas where fire are likely to break out.

Greens and liberals created this mess. Looks like its going to be conservatives – again – who are going to get the U.S. out of it.

From the *Denver Post*

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke on Tuesday directed all land managers and park superintendents to be more aggressive in cutting down small trees and underbrush to prevent wildfires as the smoke-choked West faces one of the worst fire seasons in a decade.

In a memo, Zinke said the Trump administration will take a new approach and work proactively to prevent fires “through aggressive and scientific fuels reduction management” to save lives, homes and wildlife habitat.