Forest and Wildfire Myths and Facts

Myth #1: "Overgrown forests require management"
Fact: Forests are not "overgrown" — this is a timber industry myth. Historical forest density was much higher than the Forest Service claims, when all data are considered.[1] Overall, there is *less* biomass and less carbon in our forests now than there was historically, due to many decades of logging.[2] Forest dwellers (like fawns) require dense thickets. Density increases humidity, slows wildfires[3], and can even generate rainfall.[4]

Myth #2: "Thinning makes forests healthy"
Fact: Tree mortality is greater from thinning than from wildfires on any given acre.[5] Thinning damages and sterilizes forest communities — leaving them *more* vulnerable to drought, flooding and wildfires. Evidence suggests wildfire intensity is reduced in protected areas of forest that have not been thinned.[6]

Myth #3: "Thinning forests protects communities"
Fact: There is ZERO evidence that logging or brush removal 100+ feet from structures increases structure survival in a wildfire.[7] Evidence suggests that thinning leads to greater moisture loss and faster fire spread into communities, *reducing* evacuation times.[8] In the Camp Fire, Paradise neighborhoods were destroyed by ember intrusion and house-to-house spread while surrounding trees remained green. Home hardening / defensible space are the most effective investment to prevent home loss.[9]

Myth #4: "Native Americans managed the forest"
Fact: Historical indigenous land practices typically included burning, often around settlements — NOT industrial equipment. This did not involve the landscape-level damage we see from industrial logging activities.

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[1] Baker et al, 2023

[2] McIntyre et al., 2015

[3] Bradley et al., 2016

[4] Sheil, 2018

[5] Campbell et al. (2012) and Bartowitz et al. (2022)

[6] Bradley et al., 2016

[7] Syphard et al 2014; Syphard and Keeley 2019

[8] Cruz et al., 2014; Banerjee, 2020; Atchley et al., 2021

[9] Cohen and Stratton 2008; Cohen 2019

Myth #5: "Hazardous fuels need to be removed"
Fact: Large, old trees 30"- 40" in diameter (~8-10.5 ft. around) are being removed in the name of 'fuel' reduction, and so are many mature trees less than 30" in diameter. These are fire-resistant trees that store moisture and carbon and provide shade, cooling, and wildlife habitat. What's "hazardous" is living in tinderbox towns!

Myth #6: Forest management is essential to combat climate change.
Fact: Logging releases 5 times the amount of carbon as wildfires per acre.[10] The USFS estimates that their 400 sq. mile Central/West Slope logging plan in Plumas Natl. Forest would emit 6 million tons of carbon[11], the equivalent of a small country. Letting forests naturally regenerate is one of the easiest ways to draw carbon from the atmosphere.[12] Recent extreme wildfires are linked to climate instability from fossil fuel emissions, logging and other causes.[13]

Myth #7: Wildfires harm forests, and need to be prevented.
Fact: While wildfires can pose risks to unhardened communities, forests are adapted to wildfire, insects and other disturbances and often depend on them. Though it may appear stark after an intense wildfire, ecosystems depend on a patchwork of mixed-intensity fire to remain healthy and, in the years after high-intensity fire, rich, colorful, and vibrant natural forest regeneration occurs. The combination of this regeneration and the standing snags makes this "complex early seral forest" one of the most biodiverse of all forest habitat types.

Myth #8: "Thinning" / tree removal is required prior to burning.
Fact: Many studies have found that fire can be applied in even the very densest and long-unburned forests, during mild to moderate fire weather.[14]

Look up the science for yourself: PDF version with links available in the "Forest Myths and Facts" section of

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[10] Hudiburg et al., 2019

[11] https://www.fs.usda.gov/r05/plumas/projects/archive/62873

[12] Erb et al., 2018; Law et al., 2018; Strassburg et al., 2020

[13] Williams et al 2019; Goss et al 2020; Abatzoglou et al 2020; Higuera and Abatzoglou, 2021; Zhuang et al 2021; Turco et al 2023

[14] Collins and Stephens (2010), Keifer (1998), McClure et al. (2024), Knapp and Keeley (2006)

FOREST CLIMATE EMERGENCY!

$650,000,000 US FOREST SERVICE "COMMUNITY DESTRUCTION PROJECT" USES WILDFIRE FEARS AS COVER FOR

EXTREME LOGGING

- INDUSTRIAL LOGGING ON 200K+ ACRES: TAKING TREES ~8 FT. AROUND / UP TO 75% CANOPY CUTS
- WOULD RELEASE ~6 MILLION TONS CO2
- 40% OF MATURE FOREST ELIMINATED, RISKING ENDANGERED WILDLIFE, CLIMATE, & SAFETY
- **$30 MILLION IN CARCINOGENIC HERBICIDES** INCL. SOME BANNED IN EUROPE: DR. O'BRIEN PHD CALLS IT AN **"EXPERIMENT ON THE PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENT (OF THE FEATHER RIVER)"**
- THINNED FORESTS ARE DRIER AND MAKE WILDFIRES TRAVEL FASTER (AS IN PARADISE)

PROTECT PUBLIC FORESTS

COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY MEANS HARDENING STRUCTURES. THIS PROJECT WILL INCREASE FIRE RISKS! PUBLIC FORESTS ARE NOT TREE FARMS!

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