

Tree Mortality

Issues, Needs and Actions

30 August 2016

1. WE must be prepared to deal with this for years to come and support the solution with funding.
 - A. In Colorado, a similar incident lasted from 1996 to 2008. 12 years until the bark beetles literally ate themselves back to normal or below normal levels because there was no trees left to eat.
2. WE must look at policy and incentives to rebuild our logging infrastructure and infrastructure operational support. Without it, we lose our ability to deal with the problem of too much fuel in our overgrown forests. The alternatives are not good.
 - A. Bio-Mass energy facilities have been on life support for a long time. We are pulling the plug on many of these units rapidly. As we speak, they are shutting down and will be very difficult to restart. They need long term power purchase agreements 10 to 12 years. California must take a realistic big picture view of the socio-economic costs of letting this industry go away.
 - B. Many of our existing sawmills are now on life support. Those that are not may well be there soon. We already have a huge shortage of logging infrastructure in California. We create jobs and improve our economy if we maintain what we have and grow the industrial capacity to deal with our forest management issues. There is significant synergy between the logging infrastructure and bio-mass energy facilities.
 - C. Bio-Mass Energy facilities often go hand in hand with the economic vitality of the sawmills. When you lose the Bio-Mass Plant, the sawmill often falls with it or shortly thereafter WE saw this in Arcata earlier this year and it seems to be happening right now at Burney.
3. WE need to obtain a Federal disaster designation to extend the County matching funds or eliminate matching altogether because we will run out of local financing options long before the problem goes away. Financial Resources are a big part of the game, at least for the rural Counties
4. WE need to deal with the private lands issue soon.
 - A. Tree mortality does not recognize any boundaries – SRA, BLM, USFS, National Parks Service, public or private. The hazard threats are often the same. We have

seen these trees come down through houses already and similar was seen in Colorado. People got hurt in Colorado.

- B. To date we have understated the magnitude of the problem. In Tuolumne County, we are only dealing with roughly 600 miles of County maintained Roads. Cal Trans is dealing with their roads and PG&E is dealing with their infrastructure threats. We have about twice as many more public roads that are not County maintained. Those 1200 miles are not talked about or considered but they represent public infrastructure which is both access and egress normally but especially important in an emergency. We need to keep these on the radar screen and prioritize them for action..
 - C. We have an enormous population in the rural sierra counties who are retired, on fixed income, who are now faced with threats to their homes but maybe not the public infrastructure. Some are trying to do what they can but they are running out of money and other resources too. Some have already used up their life savings and have borrowed money to get the dead trees on the ground.
5. WE need to support the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2015 (HR 2647) that addresses forest health issues especially in Western States..
 6. Resources will always be an issue. Cal FIRE is “all-in.” Cal TRANS is “all-in.” Cal OES is “all-in.” Not everyone is playing in the game consistent with the Governor’s proclamation. WE still do not have enough resources. WE need more qualified labor. More equipment is needed and more will be needed as the problem grows and we will need trained crews to operate that equipment. The demand already exceeds the supply. Think about utilizing the California Conservation Corps to help with vegetation reduction, removal and disposal.
 7. Look at NEPA / CEQA reform to improve our ability to deal with this issue by Categorical Exemption relief. Tree mortality and massive wildland fires should have additional Categorical Exclusion tools to deal with what is largely a “no brainer.”
 8. WE need to recognize and include additional counties which are newly recognizing and experiencing this issue right now. We added Calaveras, Amador, El Dorado, and Placer recently. Many more will appear soon as they are contacting Tuolumne County about how to get started in the process.

Analysis and Commentary
28 August 2016

- 1) USFS Region 5 ("R5") has 8.3 million acres of productive forest land that is suitable for active forest management out of roughly 20 million
- 2) 3.5 million acres has been entered into the USFS FACTS Database as "Reforestation Backlog" (translated – type converted from productive forest land to brush fields primarily due to wildfires). R5's track record is reforesting less than 10% of moderate and high severity burned acres)
- 3) The 200,000 acres destroyed by insect and disease so far hasn't been entered yet into the USFS FACTS database as "reforestation backlog"
- 4) Scientists say the trend in size and intensity of "mega fires" will continue to increase
- 5) According to FIA data, in their 2005 publication, R5 average tree density was 266 trees/acre; in their 2010 publication, the average tree density is 312 trees/acre. Hum, coupled with the drought, I wonder what the outcome will be? 100 years ago Healthy forests were between 20 and 80 trees/acre.
- 6) Over the past 15 years, on average, we're burning 320,000 acres per year of the national forests in CA; we're now at 50% of the burned acres being high severity (incinerated); what we've learned on the Rim Fire is the portion that was mapped as low and moderate burn severity is now also dead (insect and disease wiped it out). Over the last couple of years 2103 – 2015, the numbers have grown.
- 7) That means over the next 15 years we're likely to see at least 4.5 million acres will burn in wildfires on the national forests of which ½ of the burned acres will be incinerated
- 8) AND, by end of October, the biomass power plant industry will have virtually disintegrated unless there is some serious intervention.

Let's see – 8.3 million acres suitable to manage; 3.5 million acres of it is reforestation backlog (brushfields) and likely to burn an additional 4.5 million acres in the next 15 years --- where does this end? Nothing left or not much!

This is what the 27 remaining sawmill owners are worried about and why we must retain and maintain the existing infrastructure as a 1st priority. WE must also develop a plan to rebuild the logging infrastructure to support Region 5 if we are going to have any forest left.

By the way, Shasta Green sawmill, next to Burney Forest Power, has recently given their employees 60 days' notice of shutdown. We're likely to lose a sawmill because of the State not being interested in having a biomass power plant industry. Schmidbauer in Eureka and Trinity River in Weaverville are in a tough position as well as neither one has any outlet for their mill residuals with DG Fairhaven and Wheelabrator without energy price agreements.

The Governor's proclamation of 29 October 2015 in items 8 – 10 to the CPUC in support of the bio-mass industry. Not much has happened. We must all understand that allowing the biomass power plant industry to disintegrate likely means 1 or more sawmills go with it. Last time I checked, the Governor has said he wants more sawmills in the State. Of course, the Governor's Aug. 2012 Bioenergy Action Plan called for a 50% increase in biomass power plant operating capacity. We're headed for a 50% decrease on his watch.

What is not working here? Who is not playing in the game? Who is not following the Governor's orders?

We have a land management problem, not a fire problem

DALE BOSWORTH, DAVID A. MIHALIC AND RYAN ZINKE Aug 24, 2016 10

IR Opinion

While reasonable people might disagree on any number of issues, we agree that Theodore Roosevelt was right. Our public lands belong to all Americans and are best managed under federal protection. Roosevelt defied convention and courageously acted to save America's diminishing natural resources, bringing 230 million acres of public land under increased protection as national forests, refuges, parks and monuments.

He and Gifford Pinchot, whom Roosevelt appointed first chief of the U.S. Forest Service, are credited with establishing the modern "conservation ethic" by using scientific management principles that have become the bedrock of public land management policy. Indeed, their vision that conservation means promoting resource management along with strict protection is well reflected in our diverse system of national parks, forests, wilderness and public lands.

Today, Roosevelt's conservation ethic is in jeopardy as special interests, endless litigation, and political gridlock threaten proven best practices, balanced use, and common sense while tying the hands of our resource professionals. The result is catastrophic wildland fires, destruction of critical habitat, management decisions made by lawyers, and the loss of millions of dollars in local revenue that funds schools, infrastructure and preservation.

What is needed to restore the conservation ethic is better management by resource professionals, greater collaboration with citizens, and increased investment in our public lands. But "better" management does not mean the transfer or the sale of federal lands. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is an effective management tool to identify risks, mitigate potential impacts, and to prevent inappropriate use. But Congress never intended NEPA to be a tool to stop sound resource management. Today, the facts supporting the need for better management are clear. In just 20 years, the U.S. Forest Service has gone from spending 15 percent of its budget on fighting fires to over 50 percent. Last year, over \$2 billion were spent fighting fire. The season is longer, fires burn hotter, and the devastation to watershed and wildlife is undeniable.

The fact is, we do not have a fire problem; we have a land management problem. We need to restore scientific management principles, promote collaboration and balanced use, and allow professional land managers to manage.

Montana is proud that we lead the nation in collaborative land management efforts, but unfortunately we also lead in litigating their results. Collaboration is not easy. It takes time, resources, and commitment by all stakeholders to come together and reach consensus. Such efforts should be rewarded. But too often, the collective decisions are stopped by punitive litigation from objectors who believe their own agenda is more important.

The result is that all management progress stops and the collective will of stakeholders is subverted. The outcome is that good solutions are tossed out and stakeholders are told to start over. In the meantime, opportunities are lost and best practices disrupted due to the tyranny of a few. Too often, the next step is to lose heart or become frustrated and to fix the blame, instead of fixing the problem.

Meanwhile, the USFS spends the lion's share of their budget fighting fires and defending litigation. Foresters are faced with mountains of paperwork rather than being in the field. Parks face crowding, resource damage, and decaying facilities. Refuges remain short-staffed, and wildlife suffers while public lands lose native plants and suffer unmanaged use. Common sense would say we need more resource professionals and scientists on the land and greater collaboration with citizens to promote a healthier public landscape.

Montana is blessed to have world renowned national parks among our national and state forests and national wildlife refuges. The success of Glacier and Yellowstone may also be a threat to their sustainability unless we prepare now for the future. With visitors at record levels we already see those who believe people are the problem and the solution is to keep people out. It is time we demonstrate the courage of Teddy Roosevelt, invest in our parks and forests, and rethink the use of our adjacent public lands to relieve some of the burden. We believe this will take collaboration and both public and private resources to improve access, upgrade recreation amenities, protect habitat, and better manage public use and access.

We believe all Montanans cherish our public lands. We must act now -- together -- to restore a true conservation ethic. Roosevelt had it right when he stated "We have fallen heirs to the most glorious heritage a people ever received, and each one must do (their) part if we wish to show that the nation is worthy of its good fortune." We agree.

Former U.S. Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth, Former Yosemite and Glacier National Parks Supervisor David A. Mihalic, and Montana Congressman Ryan Zinke

**Natural Resource Summit
2016 Agenda**
Revised Draft 8/22/16 - Subject to Change

**Natural Resource Summit
Friday, October 7, 2016
Mother Lode Fairgrounds, Sonora CA - Sierra Bldg**

8:00 AM – Registration

9:00 AM –Welcome, Special Guest and Sponsor Acknowledgements
Emcee Mike Albrecht

9:05 AM – Pledge of Allegiance- Randy Hanvelt, Tuo. Cty. Supervisor (confirmed)

9:10 AM – Opening Comments
(25 mins) Congressman McClintock (invited)

9:35 AM – Randy Moore, USFS Region 5 Forester (invited)
(25 mins) *"Title of Presentation"*

10:00 AM –Office of the Governor
(25 mins) *"Title of Presentation"*

10:25 AM – Break

10:45 AM – Ken Pimlott, CAL-FIRE Chief (invited)
(25 mins) *"Title of Presentation"*

11:10 AM – Tree Mortality Panel
(50 mins) *"Working Smarter – Working Together"*
Mike Albrecht, SRM (confirmed)
Dan Tomascheski, SPI (invited)
Steve Brink, CA Forestry Association (confirmed)
Jim Branham, Sierra Nev. Conservancy (invited)
Chris Trott, YSS/Ultra Power/Biomass Energy (invited)

12:00 PM – Thank You's and Closing Comments; Invitation to visit information
booths around the room.

1:00 PM Summit Concluded





