

OREGON **Fish & Wildlife** JOURNAL

Winter Issue 2019



Furthering The Concept of Multiple Use of Our Lands For Over 40 Years!

WHAT'S INSIDE...

- My Voice...** By Cristy Rein...5
- To Rope A Bull Elk...** By Cam Ghostkeeper...7
- Wolf De-Listing Passes House..** By John Myers...13
- Ticks Really Tick Me Off...** By Mickey Bellman...17
- Help California Rebuild
By Managing Our Forests...** By Dr. Bob Zybach...19
- Abolition of the "WOTUS" Rule Means Less
Burden For Rural America...** By Representative Greg Walden...23
- A Deer By Any Other Name...** By Devon Monk...25
- Call To Action...** By Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities...29
- Trouble In Paradise: Why This Fire Should
Not Have Taken Place...** By Dr. Bob Zybach...31
- How To Fish For Steelhead...** By Bill Palmroth...41
- Basal Area and Forest Health
We Can't Have Our Cake and Eat It Too...** By Dick Powell...47
- Cause Of California Wildfires...**52



This issue's cover photograph of an Oregon wolf was taken by ODFW.

PUBLISHER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Cristy Rein

FORESTRY EDITOR
Mickey Bellman

ADVERTISING SALES
Cristy Rein

CONTENT CONTRIBUTORS

Cristy Rein, Cam Ghostkeeper, Mickey Bellman,
Dr. Bob Zybach, Dick Powell, Bill Palmroth,
Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities,
Rep. Greg Walden, Devon Monk, and John Myers

We can be reached at (503) 657-6962
FAX (503) 657-3410 • P.O. Box 1325
Clackamas, Oregon 97015
email: RZPublish@aol.com

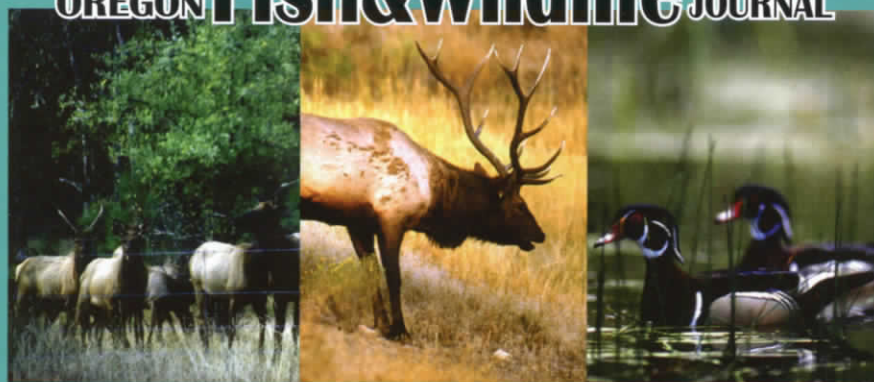
www.OregonFishAndWildlifeJournal.com

Oregon Fish & Wildlife Journal is published quarterly by R-Z Publishing, Inc. Unsolicited editorial contributions are welcome but should be accompanied by return postage. Editorial contributions will be handled with care; however, the Publisher assumes no responsibility for safety of artwork, manuscripts or photographs.

Publisher is not liable for any claim based on contents of published advertising. Publisher is not liable for content supplied by contributing editors.

© Copyright 2019 Oregon Fish&Wildlife Journal


Subscribe Today! OREGON **Fish&Wildlife** JOURNAL



To Subscribe: Send a check or money order to, P.O. Box 1325, Clackamas, Oregon 97015
To use your VISA/Mastercard call 503-657-6962 or fax information to 503-657-3410
or email to, RZPublish@aol.com • www.OregonFishAndWildlifeJournal.com
One Year (4 issues) \$24.95 • Two Years (8 issues) \$46.50 • Four Years (16 issues) \$83.95

Help California Rebuild By Managing Our Forests

By Dr. Bob Zybach



Last month I wrote a magazine article regarding this year's catastrophic wildfires in Western Oregon. The article mentioned that in the past, forest fires have killed thousands of people -- the 1871 Peshtigo Fire in Wisconsin, for example, killed an estimated 1,500 to 2,500 people. Today, people not actively engaged in firefighting seldom die in forest fires, due in large part to modern transportation and communication systems.

Within days of the article's publication, wildfires in Northern California killed more than 40 people, burned nearly a quarter of a million acres and destroyed more than 5,700 homes, businesses and other structures. This is the most people ever killed in West Coast wildfire history.

The California wildfires of 2017 are a true catastrophe, whether measured in acres, dollars or human lives.

Western Oregon forest fires also burned more than half a million acres this year. The fires cost millions of dollars to fight, killed millions of wild animals and subjected most of the state to foul-smelling, unsightly, unhealthy, choking smoke in August and September. But no one was killed during these events.

Compared to landslides, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, the loss of 40 lives might seem relatively minor. For families directly affected, though, it is a true catastrophe. When added to the destroyed homes, jobs, mementos, neighborhoods and communities, the loss must be nearly unbearable.

What can we in Western Oregon do to help rebuild

Northern California's homes and communities, and to help reduce the increasing frequency, size, costs and destructiveness of these events?

The best answers likely rest with the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior. Lands managed by those agencies are where the large majority of fires are taking place, and those lands hold most of the dead trees that will likely fuel future fires if they are not removed.

Last month Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue joined forces in directing their agencies to "prevent and combat the spread of catastrophic wildfires through robust fuel reduction and pre-suppression techniques."

These statements were made before the California wildfires took place. Much of their focus was on controlling and suppressing wildfires, but "robust fuel reduction and pre-suppression techniques" imply long-term solutions via active management of our forests. That would signal a major shift from how many federal lands and wildfires have been managed during the past 30-plus years.

From 1951 until 1987, only one forest fire in Western Oregon exceeded 10,000 acres. Since 1987 there have been dozens of such fires, including 10 this year alone. Almost all of these fires have been on federal lands. Very few large fires in the past 70 years have burned on private or state lands -- and those few were mostly affected by

adjacent burning federal lands.

The principal difference is that private lands are actively managed for use and protection of their resources, while federal lands have increasingly become passively managed, allowing “natural processes” to take place with little or no human interference.

Active management in forested environments involves timely marketing and salvage of dead and dying trees; selective thinning of some areas; clearcutting, prescribed burning or reforestation in other areas; good road access; maintaining native wildlife populations and

areas, spotted owl habitat, and other large preserves in which active forest management was discouraged or even outlawed.

Recurring large-scale and catastrophic wildfires in these areas has become a predictable result, beginning in 1987 and growing worse since then.

Quickly salvaging trees killed in this year’s fires would produce thousands of direct and indirect jobs, greatly improve the economies of rural Oregon and California, rebuild infrastructures harmed by the fires, reduce future wildfire risks and costs, and help provide economi-



providing recreational opportunities. From World War II until the 1980s, most federal forests were actively managed to provide for national defense, post-war housing, wildfire control, public recreation and wildlife habitat. There were only a few large-scale wildfires during those years.

Passive management of federal forestlands largely began with the 1964 Wilderness Act, creation of the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970, and the 1973 Endangered Species Act.

This process accelerated in following decades with government land-use designations, burgeoning ESA and EPA policies, and public litigation resulting in roadless

cal, high-grade construction materials to restore ruined homes, businesses and communities. Safer, more beautiful forests for both people and wildlife would be another important result.

There are humanitarian reasons for shipping finished lumber and other building materials to Northern California as quickly and cheaply as possible. There are sound economic and environmental reasons for doing so as well.

Bob Zybach of Cottage Grove, a forest scientist with a doctorate in the study of catastrophic wildfires, is program manager for the Oregon Websites and Watersheds Project (www.ORWW.org). This was originally published as an editorial in the Eugene Register Guard in October, 2017.



Trouble in Paradise: Why This Fire Should Not Have Taken Place

By Dr. Bob Zybach

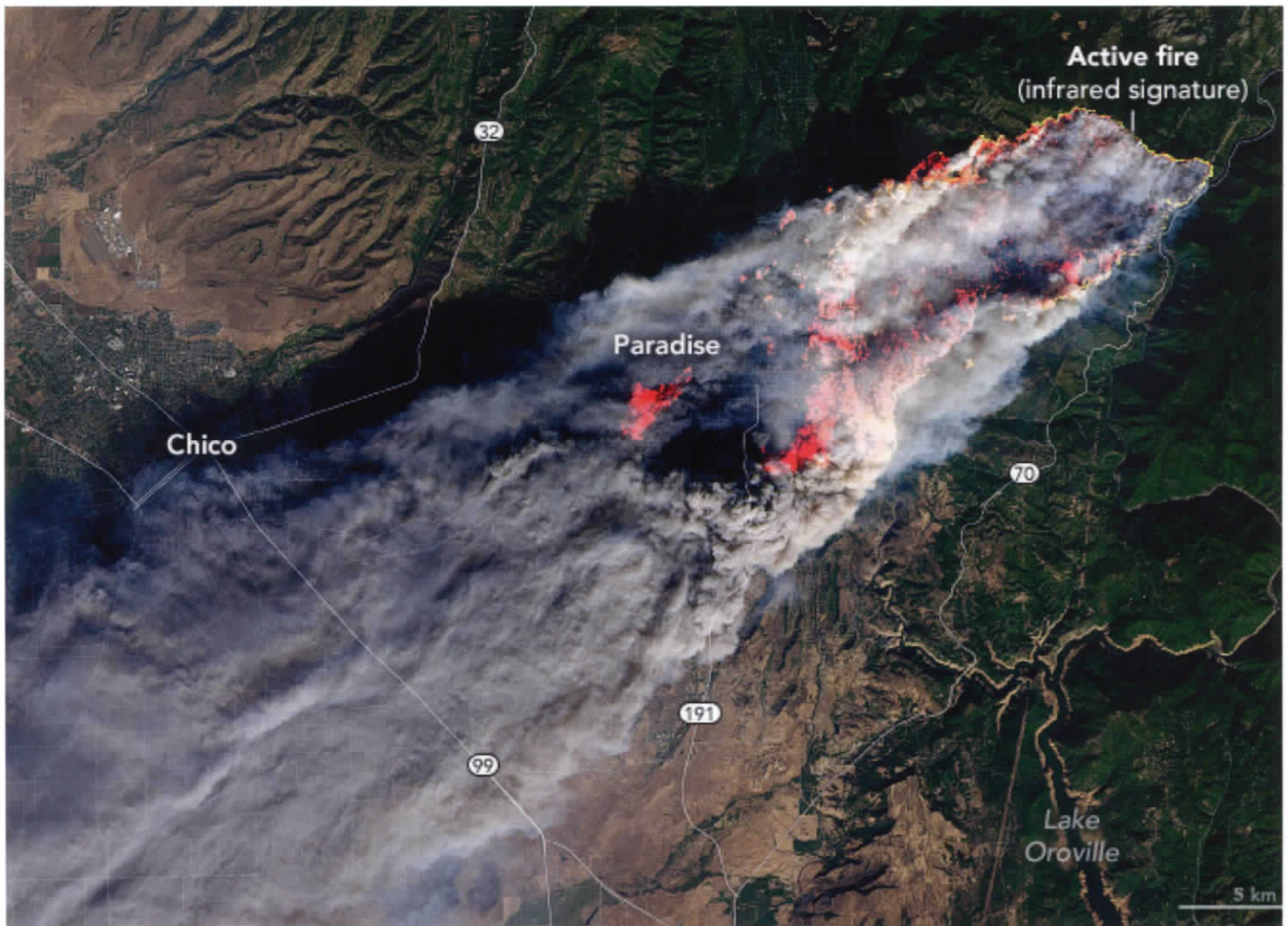


Photo courtesy of NASA.

I have been a co-moderator of, and irregular contributor to, a discussion blog titled “Global Warming Realists” for several years. We have more than a hundred members, including a number of scientists on at least three continents, professional meteorologists, knowledgeable citizens, a few politicians, and at least one member of the media, Lars Larson -- who hosts a popular radio talk show that exists on two levels: his afternoon “Northwest Show” that covers Oregon,

Washington, Idaho, and northern California, and his evening “National Show,” which also covers most of the remaining 46 states and much of southern Canada.

In early November, as part of a blog discussion regarding the Paradise Fire in northern California, I wrote:

“The area around Paradise had been oak savannah maintained by annual Indian fires for many centuries. Then the Spanish and their cattle moved in and

the area was kept free of flash fires by mass seasonal grazing for another century or more. Then the USFS banned cattle grazing, too, and predictable wildfires have followed.

The reason the towns burn so quickly is that they are constructed of kiln-dried lumber — essentially a bone-dry forest dismembered and moved onto a

made arrangements for me to be interviewed on the following day.

For many years I have been interviewed by Larson on his radio shows. These interviews usually take place during wildfire season and focus on their cause, effects, and mitigation. We have also discussed other topics, such as spotted owl “habitat” and the



Photo courtesy of NASA

prairie.

Zero to do with “climate change” and everything to do with mismanaged forests and grasslands created by federal regulations on federal lands. This is where junk science and “scientifically managed resources” bump heads.”

The next day, Larson quoted this statement on both his Northwest and National programs and we

management and ownership of the Elliott State Forest, but mostly our discussions have focused on wildfires – and usually as they were taking place, or shortly thereafter.

This year’s Paradise Fire was the focus for both his regional and national shows on November 14, while the fire was still burning. The following transcript is edited from our conversation to highlight

the historical magnitude of this fire, why it occurred, and what can be done to minimize future such occurrences:

Lars Larson: We've been talking a lot over the last week about the fires that began last Thursday, the fires in several places in California. But the most serious, one of the most deadly, in Paradise, California, just up the hill in the Sierra Nevada from Chico, California, the one that's now identified as having killed almost 50 people. Several hundred people are still missing and unaccounted for. And the question is, what caused these fires? Or what could have made this situation better? The president sounded off by blaming the state forestry management, and I think there may be some blame there, but I think most of it is federal forestry management.

But I thought I'd consult with a guy who actually knows the subject well. Dr. Bob Zybach is a forest scientist, president of NW Maps Co., and the author of *The Great Fires: Indian Burning and Catastrophic Forest Fire Patterns of the Oregon Coast Range, 1491-1951*, his doctoral work that actually covered about 500 years. Dr. Zybach, good to have you back on the program.

Bob Zybach: Thank you, Lars. Good to be here.

Larson: Is there anything that would have made a difference in how the fires turned out for Chico, for Paradise, California?

Zybach: Oh, absolutely. If the fuels had been managed reasonably as had been done for 30 or 40 years by the Forest Service, there would have been a lot fewer fires, including the Paradise Fire. And they would have been a lot less magnitude, a lot safer, a lot less damage, and a lot more tenable.

Larson: Now when you say manage the fuels, you're talking about the wood mass that's grown up in

those forests, and of course, the brush and the grass in the areas that are mostly federal lands around Paradise, California -- the same kind of federal lands that we have in much of the northwest.

Zybach: Yeah. Last year we had 10 major fires in Western Oregon. All 10 started on federal land. This year we got the Klondike fire, which is the fourth major fire to come out of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness since 1987. Between 1952 and 1987, there was one fire of this magnitude in western Oregon. It was also on government land in Western Oregon -- but one fire in 30 years when the land is being actively managed, compared to four fires coming out of the Wilderness or 10 fires all occurring on federal land last year are the patterns that are just the same this year.

Larson: Now you might say, I know some people are going to say, "Well, the government can only do so much." But let's go back about 500 years and talk about how the Indians, who didn't have the federal government, who didn't have vehicles, who didn't have any of the rest of this, they managed these forests, and they did it sensibly and actually in a way that kind of mimics nature, did they not?

Zybach: Well, they managed the forests. I don't know about "mimicking nature." Some people think that's an area devoid of humans. But they used broadcast burning and fuel wood gathering, of course, to regularly burn tens of thousands of acres, sometimes to harvest crops, sometimes for hunting, probably sometimes for fun or occasionally even by accident. But that kept the underbrush and the flash fuels under control. It kept fewer stems per acre so the canopies didn't fill in in most areas so densely. So it couldn't get crown fires in many areas. And then a lot of the land such as that in Sacramento Valley or the Willamette Valley was oak savannah. So it was easy to har-

Serving The Pacific Northwest For Over 60 Years

Hamilton Engine Sales Inc. has been the authorized Isuzu industrial diesel engine distributor for Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Alaska and Hawaii for over 30 years.

Rely on us to provide the most cost savings on Genuine Isuzu Parts, Sales and Service.

 **Hamilton**
ENGINE SALES, INC.™
www.hamiltonengine.com

Call the diesel engine experts today.
1-800-437-3644



ISUZU
DIESEL

vest say the tarweed in this area, or acorns, or bracken fern by having large controlled burns for thousands of years.

Larson: Now Dr. Zybach, I'm not suggesting . . . I know some people do, but I'm not suggesting at all that we go out and have fires or deliberately set fires. Or that when a fire does occur, that we just let it burn and say, "That's Mother Nature's way." I know there's some tree huggers who like that.

But I'm suggesting something different that actually could be a money and job and tax revenue maker

down. It brought hundreds of millions of dollars into rural communities and to rural families, and it produced lots of building materials for the housing boom, the baby boomers, and so on. So there was a lot of good, parks, schools in rural communities that came from the income. So this was tax-producing operations rather than firefighting, which is an entire different industry and dependent almost entirely on taxes to support it.

Larson: So Doctor, tell me this. Is there any scientific reason not to go back to that same kind of log-



Inciweb (USFS) photo of downed powerlines on November 18, 2018 in Paradise.

if we did it. And that is, I think what you've suggested, and that is you go in and you actively do some logging. You take some of the revenue from that and you do some thinning and you do some clearing and maybe you do some controlled burns at the right time of the year when there's enough moisture that you don't get this kind of massive fire. Is that what you're talking about? If not, please correct me.

Zybach: No, that's exactly right. In the '60s and '70s, we didn't have these fires, and we brought in hundreds of millions of dollars off of federal lands through logging. Maybe they were poorly designed logging units by today's standards, but it kept fires

ging activity, while maybe altering a bit the way it's done so that everybody can be happy and feel warm and fuzzy about it?

Zybach: There's zero scientific reason for not doing so. There are, however, a lot of so-called scientific rationales, whether it's global warming or black-backed woodpecker habitat or marble murrelet habitat. There's excuses and rationales and, I would say, junk science to support these approaches. But biologically, there's no problem at all with active management. And economically, it's wonderful. As far as danger to humans, we've just had a relatively few die or be injured, which is really tragic -- but think

of the millions of wildlife; animals that are killed in these events.

Larson: My understanding is the pictures of that coming out of the Paradise area of California are actually horrific. So, Governor Jerry Brown, the lame duck governor of California came right out almost immediately and said, "This is global warming. This is the new normal." Is there any scientific basis for that?

Zybach: No, it's a political basis. The climate's been the same for 500 years. It's weather events in which these fires occur are normal, east winds. It's just the fuel buildup and the management of those fuels, specifically on federal lands and specifically related to federal regulations of the last 50 years, that have predictably resulted in these events.

Larson: So when Governor Brown says, "This is something new," as though Northern California's never had these north and east winds, as though Northern California has never been a very dry place much of the year except the springtime when there's some rain. But most of Northern California is as dry as Eastern Oregon, maybe dryer, even to the point where there's less rain than there is evaporation. So it's very dry. But is that anything new based on the numbers?

Zybach: Nope, totally expected, normal, predictable, average. However you want to look at it, what's new is the fuel buildups: first from the elimination of Indian burning, second from the elimination of massive grazing. In the 1930s, we had what were called the "fern burners." That's one reason we had so many fires in the '30s, because it was a normal practice of people grazing sheep and other livestock in Oregon to fire the prairies after the grazing had been done to rejuvenate them for the following year. So that creates fire breaks and reduces opportunities for a catastrophic fire unless you have a prolonged drought and you have other fuels building up in adjacent lands, which is what also happened in the '30s.

Larson: The other thing I was intrigued by was your description of what a town is when a town is built the way most towns in the West are built, and that is, we build buildings out of stick lumber. We build it out of dimensional lumber that's dried in kilns. So it arrives relatively dried to the building site, and then gets even drier after you put the building together as what little moisture is in it goes away. How did you describe it again?

Zybach: I think a "dismembered forest of bone-dry firewood," was one of the ways I've described it. But it's a forest that's been essentially moved onto prairie lands. Almost all of the major towns in Western Oregon and Northern California are built on Indian prairies. They weren't forest; it wasn't cleared -- it was predominantly prairie land. Then you move

all these structures into those places.

One of the things they're blaming the fires on is people moving into the rural areas adjacent to forests and grasslands. It's government, so they give it an acronym, the "WUI" (pronounced "whoo-ee"). Then they create the "wild lands." So those are new designations for flammable areas; poorly managed Forest Service areas, quite often. They're saying all these people are moving into this acronym is the problem. Well, people have always lived there. But now it's 300,000 people or three million people instead of 300. They're bringing in massive amounts of firewood basically; structures built of flammable materials. That's what created the problem in Paradise and in Redding earlier.

Larson: The fires in Paradise actually started quite a distance outside of Paradise. As I understand, almost 10 miles out of town. But it moved very, very quickly once the winds got a hold of it. Is there the potential, perhaps, in situations where you know you've got a town and you got a forest that's very dry that could catch fire, to put in firebreaks in the form of clear cuts that would actually help protect a town by at least providing a defensible barrier between a town and the rest of the forest?

Zybach: Well, I think clear cuts, that's nature's way. Whether it's a volcanic eruption or a wildfire or a Columbus Day storm. It's how nature regularly clears off hundreds of thousands of acres at a time, usually within a matter of less than a week, rather than clear cutting, which might take years. But the real problem is the ladder fuels and the flash fuels in the savannah areas, such as around Paradise. That's an annual problem, or at least biannual.

Larson: The flash fuels are all that dried up buckbrush and grass and everything else that by this time of the year are bone dry.

Zybach: Yep. That's why the fire moved so quickly. Then it gets into town with all that fuel. It's driven by an east wind, and the east wind is coming down off the Sierra Nevada, so it's warmed as it's getting lower in elevation and rapidly drying out the fuels in advance, as well as creating its own weather patterns, which include winds that drive the fire further.

Larson: Dr. Zybach, anything you haven't said already that you would say if, say, Donald Trump put you in charge of the Forest Service, how you'd change things?

Zybach: We'd start making a lot of money, a lot of people would go to work, and there'd be a lot fewer catastrophic fires, a lot less smoke, and a lot more wildlife.

Larson: Unbelievable. Dr. Zybach, it's always a pleasure to have you on the program.

Zybach: Thank you, Lars.

