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Hello, this is Tom Cookman with a Community Comment

A few years ago, I made a prediction that as we see a reduction in logging, we are also going to see an increase in wildfires. This is obviously not rocket science - it just makes sense. When there is more fuel to burn, it will burn more. Environmentalists don't care that this will occur because they want everything to go back as natural as possible. The popular phrase in that regard is to lessen man's footprint in the world. It is a good thing to be aware of the impact we make in nature, but sometimes our common sense gets overruled by our emotions when tackling this issue, which brings me back to the forest fires. A friend of mine recently asked me why we even fight them. In the last several years, not only have we stopped logging, we are also paying tremendous amounts of taxpayer monies to remove forest service roads that previously helped fire personnel get into and out of difficult terrain. If we are striving to get the mountainous areas back to what they were like before man began using them, then why intervene in any way whatsoever? If it's to protect structures built near or in these forested areas, well then, shouldn't we just let them burn? After all, these homes and businesses encroached into this natural habitat of the forest and subsequent wildlife. We should be letting nature run its course, and consequently, let the fire burn everything in its path. Why waste money demolishing the roads needed to fight the fires, and then still trudge our way in? Why should we spend a penny trying to fight a fire, if we are so hell-bent on returning the environment to its totally natural state? Let those houses burn along with the trees! As ludicrous as this sounds, this is probably what environmentalists truly want. And the reality is that we have government officials in key positions who are making idiotic decisions inline with this extremist mentality. Just to recap, we are paying

millions and millions of tax dollars to remove the roads, and we are paying these government employees who promote the will of the minority very lucrative salaries and benefit packages. The majority of us would like to see sustained-yield logging. The majority of us would like to see roads in these mountainous areas because most of us can't afford our own private ranch, and this is one of the ways we can experience the wilderness in all its splendor. The majority of us would like these roads to be kept intact to help firefighters with their extremely dangerous job of protecting our natural beauty and homes nearby. The majority of us would like to see our tax dollars not spent on dismantling perfectly good, useful, and practical roads. But, the extremest minority is the one with the loudest, most obnoxious voice. The minority has had a game plan to infiltrate every aspect of the public domain. While we have been busy working and quietly raising our kids, this small vocal segment of our population has ran for and been elected in every office, from water boards, school boards, even to the President of the United States. We are left holding the bag and the bill, and trying to play catch up. We have believed that logic will prevail, but it hasn't. Let me remind you again of the illogical approach we have to fighting fires: don't manage our natural resources of trees and bring in much needed funds; further reduce our available income by paying to have already existing roads removed; and then paying even more to fight these fires that rage with the abundance of fuel we have let grow. Yeah, that sounds really intelligent!

This has been Tom Cookman with a Community Comment