

Fuels management with fire is essential to forest health

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It may be suggested across the nation that fire and hazardous fuels management on tribal forestlands is misguided. The suggestion may be that management offers an approach based on road closures, defensible space, replacing combustible roofs and limiting the spread of non-native grasses and “sprawl” in areas prone to wildfire. Critics proclaim this approach is not fully informed by sound science, citing historical documents from land surveys done in the mid 1800s.

We all agree that the top priority for fire management is the protection of lives and property.

We also support defensible space around homes, agree that fire has a positive ecological role in natural forests, and share their concern for the potential invasion of non-native vegetation.

However, we know that forest thinning and the reduction of hazardous fuels do indeed address forest health.

Surviving fires

Those of us who spend time in the forests have probably noticed fire-burned trees, charred logs, and charcoal.

Evidence of previous fires is observed in virtually every forest stand in Indian country.

Prior to settlement and before there were barriers to fire such as roads and farmland, fires would burn across the landscape, sculpting the forest with every pass.

We know many trees survived dozens of fires. In fact, by repeatedly thinning stands and reducing competition for the established trees, it was fire that created the possibility for trees to survive and grow.

History shows

Research conducted into the history and frequency of fires reveals that nearly every old-growth forest stand on the reservation has experienced multiple fires, and many older stands survived six or more fires each century.

Because of these frequent fires, trees became large enough and accumulated bark thick enough to survive low-intensity fires, leading to park-like stands that were not nearly as novel as claimed by past experts.

With fires excluded, forests continue to grow, becoming denser and accumulating fuel. This dynamic has been the subject of many studies, including a recent study, which measured a 10-fold increase in forest density since the 1800s.

... Uncharacteristically high tree density, coupled with a huge increase in homes, creates an environment where high-intensity fires are not desirable for the forests and not compatible with current management objectives.

Fire intensity

Similar numbers have been documented across the neighboring forests that border the reservation on the north, south and west.

Practically all the increases are a consequence of fire exclusion over the past century.

Fire intensity effects on forests and tree mortality are likely the most studied concept in the field of fire ecology.

There are more than 30 models in use today that incorporate real data on potential weather, topography, fuels, structure, moisture and quantity of available fuel.

They all agree that more fuel leads to more extreme fires, which mean greater tree mortality regardless of size or age.

Tribal land managers recognize the ecological role of fire.

Prescribed burns, thinning

The Warm Springs Fire Management department has the experience to combat wildland fires for the safety of the reservation. Because Indian country is primarily used for everyday living and cultural needs, the objective for all fire starts is full suppression.

Fire management agencies have robust prescribed fire and thinning programs that treat thousands of acres each year, and Warm Springs Fire Management is a leader in this field.

The typical burn or thinning project may not take place directly adjacent to developments.

They are designed to strategically treat areas that will allow for the protection of all tribal properties should a large fire become established during the long, hot and sometimes windy days of summer.

Fuel specialists and ecologists believe the pre-settlement forests were “a patchwork of densely grown areas intermixed with oak woodlands and scrublands.”

They advocate that management is not necessary because high-intensity fires are natural and beneficial to the forests. There is no doubt that under the right conditions and in the right fuel types, high-intensity fires did occur.

However, we now have a completely different forest than was present in the late 1800s.

Uncharacteristically high tree density coupled with a huge increase in homes creates an environment where high-intensity fires are not desirable for the forests and not compatible with current management objectives.

The Warm Springs Fire Management department is responsible for about 650,000 acres of tribal land, most of which is managed for multiple objectives via the Natural Resources Branch.

For example, watersheds are often managed for wildlife habitat, clean water, recreation, and riparian and stream values while generating both economic and cultural benefits. These objectives are designated by tribal council and the tribal members and implemented through local plans and policies.

Thinning and fuel treatments are designed to promote and protect these values and objectives by reducing the chances of high-intensity fires.

Given the potential for intense fires, the responsibility for the protection of lives and property, the commitment to preserving and enhancing wildlife habitat, and the obligation to manage these lands for multiple objectives, we simply cannot afford to treat fire and fuels on the tribal lands cavalierly. To do so is not in the best interest of the forests or tribal members and their resources.

Community notes...

The **Warm Springs Outdoor Market** is open this Friday, July 20 from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. on campus by Kalama's Fry Bread.

The Madras Saturday Market is open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Sahalee Park.

The Warm Springs **Boys & Girls Club** is having a penny drive through the end of summer. The proceeds will go towards incentives,

supplies, a playground and other things for the club. Stop by the Club to donate or contact Club Director June Smith if you have questions.

The Warm Springs Youth Center facility is now shared with the **Prevention and Family Preservation** programs.

They are located on the South end of the building. To ensure youth safety during Boys & Girls

Club program hours, all adults going to the Prevention or Family Preservation offices need to use the south entrance doors off of Wasco Street.

The Warm Springs Police Department has an **anonymous crime tip line** at 541-553-2202. If you have information about criminal activity and wish to report without identifying yourself, call and leave a message. There is no caller ID used on this line. You remain completely anonymous.

Head Start recruiting for fall

Warm Springs Head Start and Early Head Start are recruiting children for the next school year.

Early Head Start is for children up to age 3. Head Start is for 3-5

year olds. Call or stop by the Early Childhood Education center to get an application. Their number is 541-553-3240.

Summer Bridge for 9th graders

Madras High School offers the Summer Bridge program for its incoming ninth graders.

Summer Bridge is two weeks of classroom work that will give students a jump start to high school, while earning half of an elective credit upon completion.

Summer Bridge starts Monday, August 13. Class will be from 8:30-12:30 each day. Breakfast, lunch and transportation will be provided. If your student will not participate, please contact Madras High School to let them know, 541-475-7265.

Public notice - Ground Water Rule - Failure to Take Corrective Action Within Required Time Frame

Important notice about your drinking water:

The Warm Springs Community Water System violated a drinking water requirement. Although this incident was not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened and what we are doing to correct this situation.

A routine inspection conducted on January 27, 2015 by the US Indian Health Service on behalf of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found deficiencies as listed below. We have developed a corrective action plan and anticipate resolving these deficiencies in the next 90 days.

| Uncorrected Significant Deficiencies | Corrections to be Made |
|---|--|
| Source – Deschutes River: Improper turbidimeter calibration | Needed part ordered and installed. Sampling pumps to be repaired. Provide maintenance records of quarterly calibration. |
| Treatment – Treatment: Improper instrumentation or process controls | Repair streaming monitor. Provide maintenance records that operators are regularly verifying coagulant doses through jar tests or charge analyzer. |
| Distribution – Distribution: Improper contact time before first customer. | Provide maintenance records that sludge has been removed from sedimentation basin. |
| Treatment – Treatment: Sedimentation basin needs settled solids removed. | Provide maintenance records that settled solids have been removed. |
| Finished storage – Finished storage: Corrosion on tank vent stack welded area in need of repair. | Trees to be removed from tank foundation, tank to be inspected to determine if corrosion penetrates through the tank and repair if needed. |
| Treatment – Treatment: Septic system has failed and surfacing wastewater is flowing toward backwash basins and river. | Repair or replace septic tank and determine if the drain field is still failing with runoff in close proximity to the backwash reclamation basin. |
| Treatment – Treatment: River intake air scour system inoperative. | COMPLETE – air scour has been replaced. |

As required by EPA's Ground Water Rule, we were required to take action to correct these deficiencies. However, we failed to take this action by the deadline established by EPA.

What should I do?

· There is nothing you need to do. You do not need to boil your water or take other corrective actions. However, if you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor.

· If you have a severely compromised immune system, have an infant, are pregnant, or are elderly, you may be at increased risk and should seek advice from your health care providers about drinking this water. General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

What does this mean?

This is not an emergency. If it had been, you would have been notified within 24 hours.

For more information, please contact Travis Wells, Branch of Public Utilities General Manager, at 541-553-3246 or:

travis.wells@wstribes.org

This notice is being sent to you by the Warm Springs Public Water System. State Water System ID#: 104101247. Date distributed: July 9, 2018.

If you have questions, you can reach Warm Springs Utilities at 541-553-3246.

Public notice - Ground Water Rule - Failure to Take Corrective Action Within Required Time Frame

Important notice about your drinking water:

The Sidwalter Public Water System recently violated a drinking water requirement. Although this incident was not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened and what we are doing to correct this situation.

A routine inspection conducted on April 25, 2017 by the US Indian Health Service on behalf of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found deficiencies as listed below. We have developed a corrective action plan and anticipate resolving these deficiencies in the next 90 days.

| Uncorrected Significant Deficiencies | Corrections to be Made |
|--|---|
| Sidwalter Pump House – Sources – No finished sample tap | A sample tap will be provided on the well discharge pipe following treatment. |
| Sidwalter Well – Sources – Improper or missing well or spring vent | The well vent will be screened with the return bend facing downward and terminating 18-inches above ground level or above minimum flood level, whichever is higher. |
| Sidwalter Well – Sources – Unsealed electrical conduit at groundwater source | The conduits and junction boxes will be sealed to prevent contaminants from entering the well casing. |

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