

You Should Care Too

by Stephen Skinner

Since we've entered this era labeled as the modern world, wildfires have been a major problem facing mankind. It's for this reason that I raise the compelling question, "Do those in power have any desire to end the spread of these blazing monsters, that destroy everything in their paths including man, beast and all plant life? I say resoundingly, NO!

From the wise words of famous writer Upton Sinclair, "It's difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding of it." A more recent quote by California Congressman Dana Rohrabacher stated in "Wildfire Periodical, "the USFS (United States Forrest Service) regulations establishing the requirements for airplane-based firefighting are obviously designed to protect the good old boys and to discourage anyone else with new approaches and new alternatives".

Where is the ignition time for wildfires posted within the NIFC (National Interagency Fire Center) Incident or Situation Reports? Answer, It's not listed at all. According to the Wild Land Fire Report User Guide, they are only required to record the discovery time, which is when the fire was first discovered. This is considerably later than when the ignition started, which is needed to understand the importance of time and the reason why a fire consumes enough fuel to become a wildfire, rather than just an incidental fire. If the NIFC, and all the decision makers don't see the importance of heat energy momentum, they are simply not doing their jobs. They claim they want to serve the public and protect animal habitats, that is completely false, evident due to their slow reaction times. The science of forensics can bring a reasonable useful answer to calculate the ignition time versus the start time. As this exercise is repeated many times over the accuracy will get better. This is useful data that can be used in creating computer software for simulation training and a fire incident prediction tool. Now I asked the question, "where is the science leadership and responsibility of the NIFC? Beyond the NIFC's apparent lack of concern for the time of record, more importantly is the response time. This most important measurement, whether it's Discovery or Ignition TIME to the start TIME of fire suppression, isn't even considered. This seems to be the most important factor to be recorded to show how efficient the fire management operation is working. This leads me to believe it's more important to create a veil over the eyes of the general public of the lack of efficiency of the NIFC. Clearly not much has changed since the writing of Upton Sinclair almost one hundred years ago.

Reference links: NIFC Situation Reports NIFC Incident Reports from Incident Management Situation Report. <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov> https://data-nife.opendata.arcgis.com/pages/new_firehistory_services