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## QuickPoint! – Better Forest Management Can Prevent Oregon Wildfires

By Justus Armstrong

Wildfires in Oregon this summer have burned thousands of acres, resulting in hazardous air quality conditions and the [evacuation of hundreds](#). As our firefighters face these fires, it's important to examine the policies and practices that may contribute to increased wildfire risks.

Environmental advocates point to carbon-induced climate change as a factor in intensified droughts and longer fire seasons, but dealing with climate change as a means of dealing with wildfires puts the cart before the horse. Wildfires are a [cause of carbon emissions](#) more than a consequence, since burning forests release higher amounts of stored carbon. Before addressing the impacts of carbon on our forests, we must address the impacts of [poor forest management](#).

Proposed strategies for preventing wildfires have included clearing overcrowded forests with commercial logging, or focusing the [Forest Service budget](#) on prevention today to save money on firefighting tomorrow. These solutions are a start, but the root of the problem exists at the top. The U.S. Forest Service simply doesn't have the same incentive to take care of Oregon forests as those most affected by wildfires. In addition to reevaluating regulations that hinder controlled burning and forest clearing, Oregon officials can advocate for the [decentralization](#) of federal forest management to state, local, or private levels. Rethinking forest management is one step towards preventing future wildfires.

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