

and started to put out the fire. A Forest Service agent came by almost immediately and ordered him back into his truck to drive away from the fire and to not put the fire out, which was at that point controllable. He got back in his truck, started to pull forward, he emitted sparks from the dragging axle, started a couple of other little fires, a local policeman came by and ordered him to stop. He said, Just be consistent. Do I stop or not? At that point a group of river runners stopped by. They had water in their car. They jumped out to help put out the fire. The Forest Service agent told them not to do that. The fire then raged out of control and burned hundreds of thousands of acres. As the news reports, the cost was \$3 million to suppress the fire. The local rural electric cooperatives there tell me that it cost them over \$600,000 just to replace the poles with their electric power lines on them. The lost revenue from tourism that did not come has not been evaluated, but the area was hit hard by irrational activity, irrational activity that resulted, that came from the fact that we have unhealthy forests.

I would like to just show some pictures, including some of the areas where we have the aftermath of a fire. So if we could focus the camera here, we have the burned area in the Squires Forest. It is devastating. We thought of drawing an owl in here, an endangered owl with a little wisp of smoke coming out of his head to point out that this is bad for endangered species. The following pictures are pictures that were taken in a little town called Santaquin just outside my hometown of Mapleton. If we can focus tightly on that, what we see is a river of mud that has come downhill and affected these homes. Here is a closeup picture. You can see that that mud has come down from this direction and affected these houses. We do not think of mud as having a lot of power because it normally does not come knocking on the door, but you can see as you look down here how high up the mud has come, halfway to the door and windows and filled the whole yard.

In this picture, we can see that it has carried rocks and debris that are going to crush things. Here you have a whole area of the house has been torn out by this mud as it comes down. You can see the devastation of this home here. This is just dirt that got saturated with water after a forest fire. We had similar forest fires just north of this area in Provo. The difference is we had three-quarters of an inch in a very short period of time, in a very harsh storm that caused this to flow, whereas we cannot control nature. In Provo we had about the same amount of water, but it was more gradual over a longer period of time. We can see the terrific destruction, cars buried, windows shattered, mud going into basements, cars stranded. When you unleash the forces of nature, it is just almost beyond imagining how much damage can be done to an area because of that.

We have a problem today, Mr. Speaker. We have a problem. We have forests that are not healthy. That is the result of years and years and years of neglect. It is the result of years and years and years of people who have been narrow in their interests and who have stopped the sale of timber, who have stopped the thinning of timber, who have stopped our forest men and women who understand how to have healthy forests, stopped them from doing what they know how to do and left us with desperate circumstances, 70 or 75 million acres of forestland that is ready to be destroyed by fire.

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We have suffered in the West with the worst drought in recent history, probably as bad as anything back to the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. These are terrible things. They have displaced people, destroyed farms and lives, and now we are going to add to that the further destruction of the forests through fire.

We had thought, and, in fact, we had some charts earlier that showed the anticipated fire damage in the West was going to be less this year than it was last year. Last year, of course, was a record year. We burned much of that which was ready to burn last year. Unfortunately, this year we have had some water over much of the West, and that, unfortunately, has created a fire ladder so that what was not as endangered 2 months ago is now viewed as being subject to devastating fires.

If we look at Utah today, it is as green as I have ever seen it. Unfortunately, that green over the next month or 2 or 3 is going to turn to brown grass that will light at any provocation, a lightning strike, a match or a cigarette carelessly thrown out of a window, a campfire burning out of control. Those things could all happen and will happen, we suspect, this summer with devastating effects.

We need to pass the forest health bill now.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. JANKLOW).

Mr. JANKLOW. Mr. Speaker, I am going to be extremely brief. This healthy forest initiative is an initiative that is incredibly important. It is not very often that we deal with things of that much substance. This is one of those opportunities. For too long we have made the forests into political issues where people fight with each other. The reality of the situation is every time we get that strong of emotions on all sides, usually we end up with a bad result. That is what we have here.

There is no one, there is no one, who says these forests are healthy, and when I say forests, I am talking about a couple hundred million acres of land in America, virtually the entire part of many of our States. In my State it is the Black Hills, which is the westernmost portion of the State. But there is no one who says these forests are being

properly managed. There is no one who says we have been doing the right thing.

The arguments are what do we do to fix the problem, or do we just let God burn them down? It is okay to let God burn them down, but we are burning up people in the process. We are burning up people's homes in the process. We are destroying people's lives. We are shortening the lives of people. We are making it incredibly unhealthy for human beings. We are contributing to the wiping out of endangered species, be they plant life or be they animal life. So what we need to do is something different.

This is a reasonable approach that involves input from all corners of the philosophies. It preserves the right of anybody who does not like the decision to go to court, but more than anything else, it starts us on another track away from the track that we all agree has not worked.

For the sake of this country, for the sake of its resources, for the sake of our families, for the sake of endangered species, for the sake of our economy, and for the sake of our health, we need to pass this initiative.

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. JANKLOW). I appreciate that, and I am reminded of his earlier words about the unanimity of the Committee on Agriculture, and it dawns on me that those people who see the problem and understand it have a tendency to agree. Locals who know it have a tendency to agree. We have lots of people with incoherent or separate, disparate ideas who get to pursue those ideas, through litigation or otherwise, stopping the process.

What we have here before us with this bill is a coherent and considerate approach that is good for the air, will help with clean air, will help with clean water, will help people in the economy, will help endangered species, and will also help species that are not endangered now. So I urge passage of this bill, Mr. Speaker.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CASE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of official business in the district.

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today and the balance of the week on account of illness.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PALLONE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extra-neous material:)

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.