

Subject: Hands-off approach has hurt the nation's forests

Story Summary: Wildfires have burned more than 3-million acres of forests and wildlands so far this year. That actually makes this a pretty good year because the potential for catastrophic fires is much greater. The Healthy Forests Initiative would change the hands-off approach to forest management that some blame for increasing fire danger.

TRT: 2:00

Suggested Lead: Catastrophic wildfires are sparking controversy about how to prevent them. Can a new plan really make the nation's forests healthier and safer? Johnna Miller reports.

Suggested Supers:

- Lincoln National Forest
Southern New Mexico
@ :01
- Bernard Cleve
New Mexico Rancher
@ :11
- Dr. John Fowler
NMSU Natural Resources Professor
@ :50
- Johnna Miller
Reporting
@ 1:51

Suggested Tag: The Healthy Forest Initiative has passed the House, but is stalled in the Senate.

Hands-off approach has hurt the nation's forests
Johnna Miller Reporting
September 25, 2003

<p>Cleve walking in forest</p> <p>Lincoln National Forest New Mexico</p> <p>Burnt forest</p>	<p>VO/ NEW MEXICO RANCHER BERNARD CLEVE SAW THE FIRE THAT SCORCHED THIS MOUNTAINSIDE IN THE LINCOLN NATIONAL FOREST.</p>
<p>Bernard Cleve New Mexico Rancher</p>	<p>SOT/ THE FLAMES WERE SHOOTING UP. YOU COULD SEE THEM FOR 15 MILES DOWN THE CANYON. WE COULD SEE THE FLAMES SHOOTING UP AMONGST THE SMOKE. IT WAS A VERY SCARY SCENE.</p>
<p>More burnt stuff</p>	<p>VO/ FROM THE SITE OF THESE CHARRED SLOPES IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THIS HAS BEEN A RELATIVELY MILD YEAR FOR FOREST FIRES – ONLY 3 MILLION ACRES.</p>
<p>Cleve sot</p>	<p>SOT/ THE FRUSTRATION IS IT DIDN'T HAVE TO HAPPEN. IT WOULDN'T HAVE GONE SO FAR HAD THE FORESTERS BEEN ABLE TO MANAGE AS THEY SEE NECESSARY.</p>
<p>Forest shot</p> <p>Dissolve to Fowler</p> <p>Scraggly forest</p>	<p>VO/ MANY FORESTRY SPECIALISTS LIKE NEW MEXICO STATE PROFESSOR JOHN FOWLER FEEL THE SAME FRUSTRATION. FOWLER SAYS GOVERNMENT POLICY AND LAWSUITS HAVE PREVENTED THE FOREST SERVICE FROM MANAGING THESE WILDLANDS. NOW MILLIONS OF ACRES ARE UNHEALTHY AND VULNERABLE.</p>

<p>Dr. John Fowler Natural Resources Professor New Mexico State University</p> <p>Debris on forest floor</p> <p>Smokey the bear sign</p>	<p>SOT/ WE ARE IN A STATE OF EMERGENCY. IT'S A SITUATION WHERE OUR FORESTS HAVE VIRTUALLY OVERGROWN THEMSELVES. WE'VE HAD HUGE INSECT OUTBREAKS. WE HAVE DEAD AND DYING TREES. (BIG EDIT) WE HAVE CONDITIONS WHERE WE HAVE NOT MANAGED OUR FORESTS AND IF YOU DON'T MANAGE FORESTS MOTHER NATURE WILL MANAGE THEM FOR YOU AND IT'S CALLED A CATASTROPHIC EVENT.</p>
<p>Wide shot of forest</p> <p>Logging</p>	<p>VO/ A NEW GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL IS AIMED AT HELPING THIS DANGEROUS SITUATION. THE HEALTHY FOREST INITIATIVE WOULD GIVE LOCAL FOREST RANGERS MORE ABILITY TO CLEAN UP AND THIN OUT OVERGROWN AREAS WITHOUT FIGHTING CONSTANT LAWSUITS BY THOSE WHO, FOWLER SAYS, DON'T UNDERSTAND THE FORESTS' NEEDS.</p>
<p>Fowler SOT</p> <p>Shot of woodpecker</p> <p>Shot of eagle</p>	<p>SOT/ THEY NEED TO REALIZE A HEALTHY FOREST MAKES FOR ABUNDANT WILDLIFE. PEOPLE LIKE TO SEE ELK AND MULE DEER. IN OUR SITUATIONS THEY'RE NOT SUSTAINABLE. IF YOU HAVE NOT LIGHT GETTING TO THE FOREST FLOOR YOU HAVE NO FORAGE PRODUCTION. THERE'S NOTHING TO FEED THE WILDLIFE. GOOD HEALTHY FOREST MANAGEMENT IS CONDUCIVE TO MOST OF OUR THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES IN THE COUNTRY.</p>

<p>Sun through trees</p> <p>Sunset on road</p>	<p>VO/ APPROVAL OF THE HEALTHY FOREST INITIATIVE WILL HOPEFULLY PUT THE NATION'S FORESTS ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY.</p> <p>IN SIXTEEN SPRINGS CANYON, NEW MEXICO, I'M JOHNNA MILLER.</p>
--	--