



# 90% Of California Wildfires Are Caused By People, Not By Climate Change

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 Profile picture for Tyler Durden

by Tyler Durden

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*Authored by Daisy Luther via The Organic Prepper blog,*

***Wildfires have been particularly bad the past few years. It's part of the reason my family and I moved out of California. (Only part – the laws there are crazy!)***

And while this year seems worse than ever, the first 6 months are it's actually not quite as bad as last year, according to the [National Interagency Fire Center](#).

**So far this year, we've seen 37591 fires and 4,810,195 acres have burned.** By this time last year, there had been 39,227 fires and 5,639,919 acres had been devastated. Of course, this is of little comfort to those

dealing with this year's fires. And right now, wildfires are burning across the nation, from Alaska, all the way to Florida. Here's the [current map from the NOAA](#) that shows where the fires are.

So, basically, everywhere west of Chicago with a couple in the east.

## **What's causing all these fires?**

Of course, the headlines are all **breathlessly claiming that the fires are due to climate change** because that's the current agenda in the straw-seizing, politically correct world.

**But the fact is, they're caused by people.** 90% of the fires that are burning and have burned in the United States have been caused by the carelessness or deliberate intent of human beings. The US Department of the Interior says:

*Wildfires can be caused by nature - mostly due to lightning strikes - but the vast majority are caused by humans. Research estimates that 90 percent of wildland fires in the United States are caused by people. Some human-caused fires result from campfires left unattended, the burning of debris, and intentional acts of arson. It can also be caused unintentionally by heat and sparks from vehicles and equipment. Public education and personal responsibility can greatly reduce the number of wildfires each year. ([source](#))*

## **Does anyone else remember the Smokey Bear ads?**

**“Only YOU can prevent forest fires?”** Something tells me they need to bring Smokey back to teach people how to enjoy nature more responsibly. But human error is only part of the issue.

The fires are more intense now because of the increased fuel loads. Dry grass, unchecked forest growth, and brush all add to the intensity and speed at which a fire burns.

*There are three conditions that need to be present in order for a wildfire to burn, which firefighters refer to as the fire triangle: fuel, oxygen, and a heat source. Fuel is any flammable material surrounding a fire, including trees, grasses, brush, even homes. The greater an area's fuel load, the more intense the fire. Air supplies the oxygen a fire needs to burn. Heat sources help spark the wildfire and bring fuel to temperatures hot enough to ignite. Lightning, burning campfires or cigarettes, hot winds, and even the sun can all provide sufficient heat to spark a wildfire...*

*...Dry weather and drought convert green vegetation into bone-dry, flammable fuel; strong winds spread fire quickly over land; and warm temperatures encourage combustion.  
([source](#))*

Environmental policies that were designed in an effort to protect forests are actually responsible for destroying them

because it's increasing the fuel load for wildfires. A lack of forest management and yes, logging, has created forests so dense that it only takes a spark for them to go up in flames, and all of the fuel results in an intense, fast-moving blaze.

Obviously, drought conditions make everything worse, and California has been on-and-off in a drought forever – or at least [the past hundred years](#).

## **Wildfires have always happened.**

Wildfires have long been nature's method of forest management. The US Department of the Interior explains:

*Fire has always been a natural process that is essential to healthy ecological systems. In the early 1900s, land management agencies sought to suppress all fires in an effort to preserve the timber supply. Over the decades, fire exclusion led to more living and dead vegetation on the landscape, increasing the fuel and as a result, the risk of large wildfires in our forests, rangelands, and near communities. ([source](#))*

A report from the Clemson University newspaper said:

*"Fire has always been a natural occurrence in our ecosystem that has many benefits," said Derrick Phinney, a [Clemson Cooperative Extension](#) natural resources division leader based in Dorchester. "As far back as the American Indians, fire*

*was a main staple of forest management. Whether intentionally set or started by lightning strikes, fire regenerates forests, renews the soil and basically resets the clock. But in more recent times, the number of prescribed burns has greatly decreased because of numerous reasons, such as air-quality issues caused by smoke. When highways, schools and hospitals are built near or even within forests, this limits fire usage."*

*Because of these limitations, higher-than-normal buildups of undesirable fuel loads, such as invasive undergrowth, brush and ground litter, create conditions that, when combined with drought, low humidity and wind, can result in dire consequences. A fire that would normally flow through a forest doing relatively little harm to the larger trees instead burns so hot that it annihilates everything in its path.*

*"They burn too hot, they burn too fast, they burn uncontrollably, especially in hilly and mountainous areas," said Phinney, who has been involved in land management and environmental regulations for close to 20 years. "They say that fire runs up a hill and walks down a hill. Fire basically runs up hills because it*

*super-heats the vegetation above where it's burning. This can cause incredible damage.” (source)*

This leads us to another factor.

## **Humans live where the fires are.**

As mentioned previously, poor forest management has led to additional fuel. Humans have carelessly caused fire after fire. And a third of our growing population lives in areas that are much more prone to burn.

As our population grows, more and more people – [one-third of homes](#), specifically – live in or near the forests and natural areas, something called Wildland-Urban Interface. According to [a report by the USDA](#), if you are in that interface, sooner or later, you're going to be at risk of a wildfire. “Homes located anywhere in the WUI will eventually be exposed to wildfire, regardless of vegetation type or potential for large fires.”

This isn't to say that humans all need to live in the city.

*“People move into areas where fires have always been. But they don't prepare for them and, in many cases, aren't even aware of how dangerous they can be,” said Carolyn Dawson, an Extension forestry agent based in the Upstate. “Then they're shocked when a wildfire comes through and destroys their homes. We need to teach homeowners how to adapt to living with wildfire and encourage neighbors to work together and take action now to prevent losses in the future. There*

*are things residents can do, such as reducing wildland fuels and structure ignitability, to protect their homes during a wildfire. Homes that don't ignite don't burn.” (source)*

It's very important to know if you live in an area with a high potential for wildfire and if so, to prepare for the possibility.

## **What can you do to protect your home?**

There are numerous things you can do to protect your home from a wildfire if you live in an area prone to them. The US Forest Service is bursting with information about the topic with their FireWise program. [Here are some of their suggestions to prepare your home.](#)

### ***Immediate zone***

*The home and the area 0-5' from the furthest attached exterior point of the home; defined as a non-combustible area. Science tells us this is the most important zone to take immediate action on as it is the most vulnerable to embers. START WITH THE HOUSE ITSELF then move into the landscaping section of the Immediate Zone.*

- *Clean roofs and gutters of dead leaves, debris and pine needles that could catch embers.*
- *Replace or repair any loose or missing shingles or roof tiles to*



- prevent ember penetration.*
- *Reduce embers that could pass through vents in the eaves by installing 1/8 inch metal mesh screening.*
  - *Clean debris from exterior attic vents and install 1/8 inch metal mesh screening to reduce embers.*
  - *Repair or replace damaged or loose window screens and any broken windows Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.*
  - *Move any flammable material away from wall exteriors – mulch, flammable plants, leaves and needles, firewood piles – anything that can burn. Remove anything stored underneath decks or porches.*

### ***Intermediate zone***

*5-30' from the furthest exterior point of the home.*

*Landscaping/hardscaping- employing careful landscaping or creating breaks that can help influence and decrease fire behavior*

- *Clear vegetation from under large stationary propane tanks.*
- *Create fuel breaks with driveways, walkways/paths, patios, and decks.*

- *Keep lawns and native grasses mowed to a height of four inches.*
- *Remove ladder fuels (vegetation under trees) so a surface fire cannot reach the crowns. Prune trees up to six to ten feet from the ground; for shorter trees do not exceed 1/3 of the overall tree height.*
- *Space trees to have a minimum of eighteen feet between crowns with the distance increasing with the percentage of slope.*
- *Tree placement should be planned to ensure the mature canopy is no closer than ten feet to the edge of the structure.*
- *Tree and shrubs in this zone should be limited to small clusters of a few each to break up the continuity of the vegetation across the landscape.*

### ***Extended zone***

*30-100 feet, out to 200 feet.*

*Landscaping – the goal here is not to eliminate fire but to interrupt fire's path and keep flames smaller and on the ground.*

- *Dispose of heavy accumulations of ground litter/debris.*
- *Remove dead plant and tree material.*
- *Remove small conifers growing between mature trees.*

- *Remove vegetation adjacent to storage sheds or other outbuildings within this area.*
- *Trees 30 to 60 feet from the home should have at least 12 feet between canopy tops.\**
- *Trees 60 to 100 feet from the home should have at least 6 feet between the canopy tops.\**

Another thing you can do is proof your roof with a non-flammable material, like asphalt shingles, metal, slate, or tile. That can be incredibly expensive, so another option, although less effective, is treating your existing roof with fire retardant, or install a rooftop sprinkler system

These steps can be the difference between your home burning during a wildfire or being one of the homes left standing.

## **You need to be ready to evacuate.**

Despite the best preparations, there are some cases in which you must evacuate. Wildfires can spread rapidly, especially if they ignite things like propane tanks. In 2015, [the small town of Middleburg, California was literally burned off the map](#) when this occurred.

The videos in this article show [the horror of evacuating through a wildfire](#). We lived on the edge of a wildfire more than once in California, but I'll never forget the first one. [Here's that story](#) if you want to know what it's like. My former home of El Dorado County, California is currently under threat again, and all my dear friends and former neighbors are in my thoughts.

For evacuation checklists and vehicle emergency kit checklists, you can grab my new PDF, [The Prepper's Book of Lists](#) for \$9.49. It contains more than 40 lists to help you get prepped and ready for anything.

You should have a kit in your vehicle at all times for a rapid escape:

- **Swimming goggles:** This will protect your eyes and help keep you from being blinded by smoke
- **Respirator masks:** This doesn't mean you will be able to breathe if the fire sucks all the oxygen from your environment, but it will help to filter out some of the smoke so you aren't disabled by a coughing fit. If you don't have tons of money to spend, [even an N95 mask](#) will help. Worst case scenario, wrap a bandana or t-shirt around your nose and mouth.
- **Fire extinguisher:** In a worst case scenario if your vehicle catches on fire, you may be able to put it out if you attack while the blaze is small.
- **Welding gloves:** Remember the guy who burned his hands opening a gate? Welding gloves will offer some protection from hot surfaces.
- **Fill 'er up:** Keep your vehicle full of fuel at all times. Can you imagine running out of gas while fleeing for your life?

Remember, if you live near a forest, you are at risk of a forest fire. It can happen any place that there's fuel. Be prepared and be safe.

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