

Letter: USFS, CTC negligent landowners

To the community,

“The Big Burn” by Timothy Egan is about the wildfire of 1910 that burned an area the size of Connecticut. And it is about the birth of the Forest Service and conservation in the U.S. The fire began in Idaho and spread to Montana and Washington. It is about good guys and bad guys. For examples: the role of the 25th Infantry, the Buffalo Soldiers, black men who saved the town of Avery, Idaho. And the book tells about the attempts of the timber and railroad barons to kill the Forest Service and the conservation movement.



Bill Crawford

“The Big Burn” compels me to focus on the role of the Forest Service and the California Tahoe Conservancy in the city of South Lake Tahoe. Both agencies own lots in the city; lots that are not maintained to help prevent fire. High grass and pine trees are a good mix in a dry season. We have had two dry years back to back.

It’s ironic that the Forest Service was created in 1905 with a top priority of prevention of wildfire, especially in the West. When I look at Forest Service lots in the city, that priority is on the back burner. The same can be said about the CTC. Pine trees aren’t properly limbed and high grass isn’t cut. If a crown fire with high wind happens, it’s disaster for

the city. Most of us in the city live in a subdivided pine forest.

I realize that some fires can't be prevented, but citizens and public agencies should do their best to help prevent wildfires. The Forest Service and the CTC have failed to do their job. So far the city has been lucky. How long will good luck hold?

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

PS: Doctors say an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. That should be the rule for wildfire prevention.