

Letter: Time to rethink fire policy

To the community,

At the time of this letter, 41 wildfires are burning in the West. Controlled burns have become big business for the Forest Service, spending millions of our tax dollars. There could never be enough controlled burns performed in the whole West that would stop fires created by random lightning strikes. Controlled burns/wildfires create massive air pollution. Unfortunately environmental groups busy fighting coal fired power plants have turned a blind eye to control burns and wildfires, our the biggest source of pollution. It is a scientific fact that smoke reduces the quality and length of many peoples lives. It also puts firefighters lives at stake unnecessarily.

Firefighters know the three rules to controlling a fire. No. 1 is remove the oxygen source. In the case of wildfires this is not usually possible unless the fire can be smothered easily.

No. 2 is to remove the fuel. Logging for fire breaks is the key to stopping wildfires in the Southwest. Also thinning, and grazing are essential. Unfortunately, environmental groups are micromanaging the Forest Service's attempts to log.

No. 3 is to remove the heat from the fire or surround and drown. Air tankers are desperately needed to put out wildfires immediately. Yes, air tankers are expensive, but after the initial cost they will save lives, provide clean air and generate peace of mind. Ask yourselves how expensive repeated useless control burns are and how much it costs to battle these huge wildfires?

The Forest Service says wildfires are a natural event. The bubonic plague was a natural event, but we don't want to

experience it in our lifetimes. It's time for our government to do something that makes sense. Invest in air tankers and log/graze our forest for fire breaks. Call your federal lawmakers today.

Marsha Honn, Snowflake, Ariz.