

Editorial: Fire prevention projects save money in long run

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the April 29, 2014, Bakersfield Californian.*

It's the classic pay-me-now or pay-me-later situation.

A study released this month by the U.S. Forest Service, the Nature Conservancy and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy confirmed that treating fire-prone forests in the Sierra to prevent the increasingly prevalent "megafires" would have benefits worth two to three times the cost.

The study bolsters the case for a plan before Congress that would protect funding for critical fire prevention and restoration programs that have been short-changed in recent years to pay for fighting fires.

With the number and size of massive wildfires expected to increase again this year because of warming temperatures and drought in the West, it's more important than ever that forest managers have the money they need for thinning overgrown forests and conducting controlled burns while they have the opportunity.

That's particularly true at Lake Tahoe, where wildfire is considered the No. 1 threat to the clarity of the lake.

Read the whole story