

How Can We Mitigate Wildfires?

Bill Pekny offers up some steps we can take moving forward—and shares some interesting facts about the causes of wildfires.

MIDWAY, UT, UNITED STATES, August 12, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As wildfires rage across the western U.S., incinerating hundreds of thousands of acres, destroying entire communities, and polluting the air, Bill Pekny has a message: We need to get more educated on what causes these disasters. It's the only way we'll be able to reduce the devastation.

"There are a lot of misconceptions around wildfires," says Pekny, author of *A Tale of Two Climates: One Real, One Imaginary* (Two Climates LLC, 2021, ISBN: 978-1-73493-960-6, \$34.59). "One of the biggest is that they are 100 percent preventable. They aren't, and in fact, prescribed burns are beneficial. Still, we can and should do certain things to lessen their frequency and severity."

For example, says Pekny, we can take the following steps:

- Use smart, strategic logging. Trees leave the forest in two ways: smoke or lumber. With judicious logging practices, we will also create much needed firebreaks and access roads in the process.
- Build more dams and reservoirs, especially in drought and fire prone areas. Find ways to trap seasonal floodwater for drought, fire mitigation, and hydropower, rather than simply wasting the water by allowing it to flow unchecked into the oceans.
- Relax regulations that stymie dam and reservoir construction, forest thinning, and removal of brush that fuel wildfires.
- Insist that forest policy decisions be based on life-cycle cost-benefit analyses, in order to make the best use of our nation's money.
- Last but not least, keep learning. Teach ourselves and our children about forest safety and security.

Pekny says that in order to make these changes happen, we need to brush up on our understanding of wildfires. For example...

Two Facts About Wildfires

Humans cause most wildfires. Yes, lightning and high winds that down power lines sometimes play a role. But, humans—not weather or climate—actually ignite the majority of wildfires, whether they are set intentionally (e.g., arson or prescribed carefully controlled burns), or accidentally (e.g., bad camping habits, vehicle fires, and the like).

There are several major contributing causes that ramp up the intensity of wildfires...

- Drought conditions that happen naturally and cyclically, in spite of 71 percent of the Earth's surface being covered by water, as well as 67 percent cloud cover, on average.
- Periodic, natural, downslope winds, such as the Santa Ana winds of Southern California and the Diablo winds in Northern California.
- Maintenance issues that result in downed power lines and the fires they ignite.
- Environmental and/or forest management policies that prevent or discourage the thinning or clearing of underbrush that fuel wildfires.

The bottom line?

"Let's focus on what we can reasonably and affordably do to mitigate the devastation and pollution caused by any wildfire," says Pekny. "And let's do a better job of educating people on the causes of wildfires. The more we learn, the more likely we'll be able to make needed changes."

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About the Author:

Bill Pekny is the author of *A Tale of Two Climates: One Real, One Imaginary*. He holds physics M.S. and B.S. degrees from Georgia Tech and DePaul University, plus graduate study in physical meteorology and numerical analysis at Florida State University and the University of Utah, and a visiting scholar appointment at the Ginzton Laboratory of Applied Physics at Stanford University.

Bill's career in science spans over 50 years in the U.S. Armed Forces and the aerospace industry.

His career highlights include: Project Stormfury with the U.S. Navy Hurricane Hunters; applied atmospheric physics and meteorology research; LASER RADAR development; new product testing in various atmospheric environments; aviation optics and electronics; global climate research; and more.

For more information, please visit: <https://twoclimates.org>

About the Book:

A Tale of Two Climates: One Real, One Imaginary (Two Climates LLC, 2021, ISBN: 978-1-73493-960-6, \$34.59) is available from major online booksellers.

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