



Speak Out Now

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End Times? or Seize the Time!

Wildfires have scorched more than five million acres, an area the size of Connecticut, as they raged through California, Oregon and Washington this month. At the same time, states in the southeastern U.S. have been battered by powerful hurricanes.

The number of human casualties is tragic and still mounting. The decimation of both wilderness and populated areas has been immense. Although the two events – fires and hurricanes – are totally different phenomenon, they are closely linked.

They are, in large part, the consequence of human activity – but not just any humans. They are the consequence of those who control the wealth of society and direct the production of energy, putting profits before all else. They have ignored scientists' warnings about the impact of massive carbon emissions and their impact on the Earth.

The emissions of carbon, through the burning of oil, coal and gas have led to what is known as the 'greenhouse effect.' The carbon acts like a blanket, trapping the heat from the sun once it passes through the Earth's atmosphere, leading to an overall warming of the planet. Carbon emissions have increased year after year - with the U.S. is a major contributor. This has had an impact – warming both the land and the sea.

On the land this means drought or severe decreases in rain and snowfall. Plant life dries up and may die and trees in a weakened state are more susceptible to insects which attack them. The warming of the oceans, especially the Gulf of Mexico, means that storms increase in intensity with higher winds and carry more water because of the warmer water and air. As a result we are seeing a record number of storms of increasing ferocity bring about more destruction as they hit land.

In the west, the majority of the forests burning are near or on government-owned land. For nearly a

century the practice of “managing” forests has been to put out fires before they spread. This replaced a system of controlled burns, where fires were allowed to burn or were deliberately set and contained within a specific area. This accomplished a number of things. First it prevented large amounts of branches and leaves from building up which could be easily ignited. Also there are many ecosystems that thrive when there are periodic fires because it prevents other species from invading and crowding out the plants that live there.

The problem has been magnified due to more people moving to rural wooded areas, some pushed out of the cities because of the high cost of housing or trying to escape the deteriorating city conditions. Because there aren't real guidelines for building fire resistant structures and there is no analysis of where it is safe to build, So, the response to fires is focused on trying to save and preserve property.

The fires brought orange skies to California, and the evacuation of more than ten percent of the population of Oregon. The smoke is spreading across the U.S. and is even reaching Europe. Along with the massive destruction and evacuations along the Gulf Coast, this should be a wake up call for us all.

In the past six months, the COVID-19 pandemic has put this system on trial. The responses to the spread of the virus have been guided by concerns for the economy not our lives and our health. This is no different from the response of those in power to global warming and climate disruption.

We can't sit back and wait while more and more species go extinct and human life is threatened with disaster in this new globally warming world.

The crisis was brought about by humans and it can and must be stopped by humans. We are the 99%, the majority. That task is up to us. This is our time. We must organize and act now to seize it!