



Fire Management in the American West: Forest Politics and the Rise of Megafires

Mark Hudson

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Most journalists and academics attribute the rise of wildfires in the western United States to the USDA Forest Service's successful fire-elimination policies of the twentieth century. However, in *Fire Management in the American West*, Mark Hudson argues that although a century of suppression did indeed increase the hazard of wildfire, the responsibility does not lie with the USFS alone. The roots are found in the Forest Service's relationships with other, more powerful elements of society--the timber industry in particular.

Drawing on correspondence both between and within the Forest Service and the major timber industry associations, newspaper articles, articles from industry outlets, and policy documents from the late 1800s through the present, Hudson shows how the US forest industry, under the constraint of profitability, pushed the USFS away from private industry regulation and toward fire exclusion, eventually changing national forest policy into little more than fire policy.

More recently, the USFS has attempted to move beyond the policy of complete fire suppression. Interviews with public land managers in the Pacific Northwest shed light on the sources of the agency's struggles as it attempts to change the way we understand and relate to fire in the West.

Fire Management in the American West will be of great interest to environmentalists, sociologists, fire managers, scientists, and academics and students in environmental history and forestry.

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