High Country News

FOR PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT THE WEST

Environmentalists for better land management

Felice Pace | **Jan. 22, 2018** | *From the print edition*

In his Editor's Note for the Dec. 11 issue (http://www.hcn.org/issues/49.21/editors-note-we-need-a-better-social-contract-with-wildfire), Paul Larmer repeats a widely held belief, writing that "neither side ("Republican lawmakers" nor "environmentalists") is doing much to create lasting solutions on the ground that could help overcome a century of fear-based (fire) management in the West."

That is false. All over the West, grassroots environmental organizations are working not only to change the policies and practices of the "Fire Industrial Complex" but also to help the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management better protect communities and prepare our forests for future wildfires.

One such effort is the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership. As part of it, the Klamath Forest Alliance is working with the Forest Service, local tribes and forest workers on projects that will prepare local communities and ridge-top shaded fuel breaks so that future wildfires that don't threaten life and property can be allowed to burn.

The Alliance also writes and publishes the natural and human (fire suppression) history of each large wildfire that burns in northwest California and southwest Oregon. We typically find that fire suppression does more damage and results in more risk to communities, water quality and the forest than the actual wildfires that are "suppressed."

The Klamath Forest Alliance is not an anomaly: Most grassroots environmental organizations that work on forest and public-land

issues have for decades supported and helped to design projects to restore fire regimes and other natural ecological processes. Several regional and a few national environmental organizations have also contributed to that effort.

Felice Pace
Klamath Forest Alliance Core Group
Klamath, California

Copyright © High Country News