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## Enemy in the Forests: Narratives and Fires in the Pacific Northwest

Narrative has long been an important part of forest ecology and management.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Dr. Charles Cowan, Chief Fire Warden of the Washington Forest Fire Association (WFFA) famed for his career in fire prevention in Washington, capitalized on and perpetuated the use of fire narrative in his 1961 book, *The Enemy is Fire!*, a history of forest fires and fire prevention.<sup>2</sup> *The Enemy is Fire!* depicts a history of fire “holocausts” raging across the West, devastating pristine forests and lumber. According to Cowan, private land and timber owners sacrificed their own money and capital to ward off the demon fires and save the forests of the Northwest. In Cowan's book introduction, the president of WFFA, Garrett Eddy, predicted that “The enemy will still be fire for the next fifty years and beyond.”<sup>3</sup> By constructing fire as an enemy, a force responsible for holocausts, and as a destructor of pristine places and natural resources, these prominent foresters were branching far beyond wildland fire policies and management: they were waging a discursive war against fire. Cowan and Eddy, like hundreds of others, generated powerful rhetoric and narratives to portray forest fires as the evil villain, simultaneously representing foresters and timber companies as victims in need of protection from a wild aggressor, the fire enemy.

Narrative still dominates the way historians, ecologists, forest managers, and journalists discuss fire. However, Eddy was wrong in predicting that the fire-enemy narrative would remain the governing paradigm for “fifty years and beyond.” The following year after the publication of the book, in 1962, the Tall Timber's Research Station held its first fire ecology conference, marking the beginning of mainstream scientific skepticism of the exclusion of fire from forests.<sup>4</sup> Today, most recognize that fire is an important part of forest ecology. They thus maintain that Cowan's 1962 belief of the “fire enemy” was misplaced, and the decades of forest suppression policies such contemporary thinking fostered disrupted the natural fire cycles in forests and caused the proliferation of flammable fuels that only led to larger and more frequent fires.<sup>5</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> See the volume of historical essays published in forest ecology and management journals: Geoffrey H. Donovan and Thomas C. Brown, “Be Careful What You Wish for: The Legacy of Smokey Bear,” *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 5, no. 2 (2007): 73–79. Bruce Evan Goldstein and William Hale Butler, “The U.S. Fire Learning Network: Providing a Narrative Framework for Restoring Ecosystems, Professions, and Institutions,” *Society & Natural Resources* 23, no. 10 (August 23, 2010): 935–51, doi:10.1080/08941920903012494. Paul F. Hessburg and James K. Agee, “An Environmental Narrative of Inland Northwest United States Forests, 1800–2000,” *The Effect of Wildland Fire on Aquatic Ecosystems in the Western USA*. 178, no. 1–2 (June 3, 2003): 23–59, doi:10.1016/S0378-1127(03)00052-5. Alexandra Murphy et al., “Living among Frequent-Fire Forests: Human History and Cultural Perspectives,” *Ecology and Society* 12, no. 2 (2007): 17.

<sup>2</sup> C. S. Cowan, *The Enemy Is Fire* (Seattle, Washington: Superior Publishing Company, 1961).

<sup>3</sup> Garrett Eddy in *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen J Pyne, *Fire in America. A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural Fire* (Princeton University Press, 1982), 490.

<sup>5</sup> Michelle Nijhuis, “How Fire, Once a Friend of Forests, Became a Destroyer,” *National Geographic News*, November 22, 2015, <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/11/151122->

naturalist and journalist Ted Williams paints a strong picture of the current narrative around forest fires: “Smokey, like Pooh, is a bear of very little brain...Smokey never stopped swinging his shovel long enough to perceive that, along with flames, he was extinguishing ecosystems.”<sup>6</sup>

Most present-day explanations of fire suppression echo Williams, pointing to Smokey Bear as a symbol of the naïve forester who misunderstood fire ecology. This association began in the early 1970s, soon after fire suppression came into question. A 1972 *Wall Street Journal* bore the front page headline: “For Shame, Smokey! Why Are You Setting That Forest Fire?: Actually, Rangers & Ecologists Now Say, an Occasional Fire May Do Animals, Trees, Good.”<sup>7</sup> In 2012 NPR had a series on the increase in “megafires” in the Southwest with one report on the “Smokey Bear effect,” interviewing ecologist Thomas Stewman and fire historian Stephen Pyne. The reporter explained the “Smokey Bear effect” as the fire suppression policy and science behind it, claiming that “it was the experts who approved the all-out ban on fires in the Southwest. They got it wrong.”<sup>8</sup> Numerous other scholarly works echo this trend invoking Smokey Bear as the naïve forester. Despite the frequent mention of Smokey, relatively few studies contextualize the relation between fire prevention campaigns and fire suppression.<sup>9</sup>

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wildfire-forest-service-firefighting-history-pyne-climate-ngbooktalk/. Kirk Siegler, “Worsening Wildfire Seasons Tax The Forest Service,” *NPR.org*, August 28, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/2015/08/28/435552748/worsening-wildfire-seasons-are-taxing-the-forest-service>. Philip E. Dennison et al., “Large Wildfire Trends in the Western United States, 1984–2011,” *Geophysical Research Letters* 41, no. 8 (2014): 2928–33, doi:10.1002/2014GL059576. Richard L. Hutto, “The Ecological Importance of Severe Wildfires: Some Like It Hot,” *Ecological Applications* 18, no. 8 (December 1, 2008): 1827–34, doi:10.1890/08-0895.1. David J. Parsons and Steven H. DeBenedetti, “Impact of Fire Suppression on a Mixed-Conifer Forest,” *Forest Ecology and Management* 2 (January 1, 1979): 21–33, doi:10.1016/0378-1127(79)90034-3.

<sup>6</sup> Ted Williams, “Only You Can Postpone Forest Fires,” in Hutch Brown, “Smokey Bear and the Myth of Nature,” *Fire Management Notes* 59, no. 3 (1999).

<sup>7</sup> David Carle, *Burning Questions: America’s Fight with Nature’s Fire* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002), 93.

<sup>8</sup> Christopher Joyce, “How The Smokey Bear Effect Led To Raging Wildfires,” *NPR.org*, accessed July 4, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/2012/08/23/159373691/how-the-smokey-bear-effect-led-to-raging-wildfires>.

<sup>9</sup> Donovan and Brown, “Be Careful What You Wish for: The Legacy of Smokey Bear.” The title is misleading as Donovan and Brown only mention Smokey briefly in the introduction and last sentence, without any discussion of fire prevention campaigns and the narratives they produced. Roberta Robin Dods, “The Death of Smokey Bear: The Ecodisaster Myth and Forest Management Practices in Prehistoric North America,” *World Archaeology* 33, no. 3 (2002): 475–87. Dods links Smokey Bear to the myth of the primeval forest and pristine wilderness perpetuated by European colonizers; Hutto, “The Ecological Importance of Severe Wildfires.” Hutto argues for the importance of severe wildfires ending his paper with a suggestion that Smokey Bear should change his message. Marc Abrams, “Native Americans, Smokey Bear and the Rise and Fall of Eastern Oak Forests Symposium: Wildfire in the East,” *Penn State Environmental Law Review* 18 (2010 2009): 141–54. Abrams calls fire suppression history the “Smokey Bear era”; Warren G. Abrahamson, “Fire: Smokey Bear Is Wrong,” *BioScience* 34, no.

Considering the socio-ecological and retrospective nature of this discourse, Smokey Bear and fire prevention campaigns should be of particular interest to environmental historians. As William Cronon writes, environmental historians are tasked with writing “stories about stories about nature,” and contained within the contemporary explanation of Smokey Bear and fire suppression are both layers of stories.<sup>10</sup> To avoid ambiguity, I will call the “stories about nature,” *environmental narratives* and the “stories about stories,” *historical narratives*. The environmental narrative in the contemporary Smokey Bear discourse tells a story about the state’s relation to fire. The line of rhetoric that “Smokey the Bear was wrong all along” suggests that the USFS naively suppressed fires because of a misunderstanding of forest ecology and political inertia from conservation ideology. This narrative parallels what sociologist Mark Hudson terms the “state-centric” history from fire historians such as Stephen Pyne and Nancy Langston. Hudson demonstrates that throughout its history the USFS, while certainly not monolithic or static, pursued the primary goal of maintaining production of timber capital. Rather than backing their policy with the best science of the time, Hudson explains, the USFS suppressed alternative viewpoints from ecologists and managers as vehemently as they suppressed forest fires.<sup>11</sup>

The historical narrative embedded in the Smokey Bear discourse tells a story about the relation of fire prevention campaigns to forest management and the public, suggesting that the icon advocated for fire suppression and convinced the public that fires existed outside the natural state of forests. The problem is that Smokey Bear was only one piece in the history of fire prevention and suppression that began fifty years before his birth in XX year and involved a network of state, federal, public, and private organizations. The widespread appropriation of Smokey as an icon to discuss forestry in the 20<sup>th</sup> century implies a call for a discussion of the history of fire discourse. This paper fulfills the need for a larger historical analysis of the fire-enemy narrative in the United States, with particular attention to the characters it portrayed and the actors who produced it. The shift in the analysis of fire history from the policy and ecology orientation to the environmental narrative and discourse perspectives presented in this paper opens up not only a new way to understand fire history, but also demonstrates the importance of environmental histories that focus on images, propaganda, and public-oriented environmental materials. It is, after all, these discursive objects that generate the narratives undergirding environmental policies.

I seek to provide a more holistic understanding of the environmental narrative around fire during the suppression era by deconstructing the discourse around fire prevention in the Pacific Northwest from World War II through the early 1960s, the golden—or rather, green—age of fire

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3 (1984): 179–80, doi:10.2307/1309755. Abrahamson does not mention Smokey in the body of the paper.

<sup>10</sup> William Cronon, “A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative,” *The Journal of American History* 78, no. 4 (1992): 1347–76, doi:10.2307/2079346.

<sup>11</sup> Mark Hudson, *Fire Management in the American West: Forest Politics and the Rise of Megafires* (Boulder, Colorado, USA: University Press of Colorado, 2011), 61–2, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/uoregon/docDetail.action?docID=10502121>. Hudson supports this claim with the works of historian Carle, *Burning Questions*., who chronicles internal debates within the USFS over science and regulation and Ashley L. Schiff, *Fire and Water: Scientific Heresy in the Forest Service* (Harvard University Press, 1962)., who explains the struggle to challenge the USFS early into the paradigm shift.

prevention campaigns. The paper is divided into three sections. First it provides the historical context of political and social history in which the discourse emerged to show the roots of the fire-enemy narrative in the pre-war period. Second, it examines fire narratives during the war by tracing the actors involved in the origins and administration of three fire prevention campaigns: Keep Green, the American Forest Products Industries Inc. (AFPI), and the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Program (CFFP), demonstrating the substantial role the timber industry and fire suppression advocates in the USFS played. These organizations “othered” fire during the war. Third, the paper shows how the narrative continued after the war into the 1960s, when Cowan wrote *The Enemy is Fire!*, and the way in which the organizations founded during WWII used national defense discourse and “othering” of fire to promote private industry. In all, this paper demonstrates that fire-prevention publicity campaigns supported not only the fire-enemy narrative but also the capitalist pursuits of private land owners, timber companies, and anti-regulation bureaucrats within the USFS.

This case focuses on the Pacific Northwest and primarily Oregon because of the role of the timber industry in this region and because the Keep Oregon Green (KOG) and Keep Washington Green (KWG) associations that emerged in the early years of the second world war became models for similar state fire prevention campaigns across the country. I draw on records of organized public relations campaigns like Keep Oregon Green in addition to general media such as newspaper articles to understand how actors such as timber representatives, politicians, and journalists constructed the fire enemy narrative in the Northwest. However, because the USFS and many propaganda associations operated on the federal level, sources and details analyzed here could be expanded to discuss trends in fire discourse and the fire enemy narrative more broadly across the United States.

### *Conservationism and Context*

A history of fire discourse necessitates an explanation of the political and economic context in which the discourse emerged. The United States Forest Service (USFS) established in 1905, quickly claimed full responsibility of fire management after the “Big Blowup” in 1910. The Big Burn, one of the most famous forest fires in American history, swept through the Northwest in Washington, Idaho, and Montana, making national headlines throughout the season. The fire left a toll on the old growth forests and economy of the American west, but an even more lasting legacy on ideology, burning deeply into the hearts of men like Gifford Pinchot and William Greeley who dedicated their lives to the conservation of the American wilderness.<sup>12</sup> That year, Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the USFS, wrote that one of the principles of conserving forests was the prevention of wastes. This principle entailed a conception of fires that understood them to exist outside the natural state of forests: “It was assumed,” Pinchot wrote, that forest fires “came in the natural order of things, as inevitably as the seasons or the rising and setting of the sun. Today we understand that forest fires are wholly within the control of men.”<sup>13</sup> To Pinchot, the belief that fires were in the “natural order of things” was a primitive and archaic idea. To ensure the everyone understood that forests were supposed to be fireless, Pinchot called

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<sup>12</sup> See generally Timothy Egan, *The Big Burn: Teddy Roosevelt and the Fire That Saved America* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> Gifford Pinchot, *The Fight for Conservation*, 1910, [Gutenberg EBook, <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/11238>.]

for a public education campaign: “In all these matters of waste of natural resources, the education of the people to understand that they can stop the leakage comes before the actual stopping and after the means of stopping it have long been ready at our hands.”<sup>14</sup>

William Greeley, who later became Chief of the Forest Service from 1920-1928, declared after the 1910 Big Burn, “from that time forward, smoke in the woods has been my yardstick of the progress in American forestry.”<sup>15</sup> The fire suppression policy reached its apotheosis in the 1930s after a series of large fires, most notably the Tillamook Burn in northwest Oregon. After this, the USFS adopted the “10 AM policy,” mandating forest fire fighters control fires by 10 A.M. the day after they began. This policy persisted through into the 1970s.<sup>16</sup> While prolific and homogenously adopted across the country, the fire suppression policy was not the only strategy that foresters conceived as different management paradigms would cycle in and out of popular discourse amongst foresters. One was the possibility of using light or prescribed burning, the practice of purposefully starting fires for various reasons such as clearing brush or reducing fuel for future fires. Advocates ranged from ranchers to scientists and public foresters.<sup>17</sup> Of course indigenous forestry among numerous Northwest nations involved using fire to shape landscapes for cultivation, defense, and other purposes.<sup>18</sup> But when it came to US government policy as reflected in the USFS, fire suppression was the dominant approach to wildland fire management from the time of the Big Blowup until the late twentieth century, and thus the light-burning advocates were always fighting an up-hill battle.

In addition to the prescription-suppression debate, from the inception of the USFS until the late 1940s, a battle waged over the how the state was to govern the timber industry. On one side in the early years, Gifford Pinchot—the first Chief of the Forest Service, 1905-1910—and other politicians sought to regulate private timber and maintain state control of forestry, convinced that the forests were to be, in the words of Pinchot, “developed and preserved for the benefit of the many, and not merely for the profit of a few.”<sup>19</sup> Their opponents, such as Greeley advocated a doctrine of “cooperation not regulation,” whereby private industry and the USFS would work together to manage American forestry. This ideology developed legislation such as the Weeks Act of 1911 and the 1924 Clark-McNary Act establishing that the timber industry and USFS would cooperate to suppress fire—and thus protect timber capital. Ultimately Greeley and his timber allies won the fight, and regulation of private forestry remained in the domain of state government, if it existed at all. Before WWII, only five states had passed forest conservation regulation, and by 1945, only twelve. The legislation in Oregon, Washington, and California, the timber industry had written and lobbied for the regulating legislation as a means of preventing

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Pyne, *Fire in America. A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural Fire.*, 268.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 260-94.

<sup>17</sup> Edward Tyson Allen, *Practical Forestry in the Pacific Northwest : Protecting Existing Forests and Growing New Ones, from the Standpoint of the Public and That of the Lumberman, with an Outline of Technical Methods* (Western Forestry Conservation Association, 1911)., 91-103. Allen, in the chapter “Forestry and the Fire Hazard,” discusses prescribed burning as a practical approach to forestry and fire prevention.

<sup>18</sup> Pyne, *Fire in America. A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural Fire*, 325–6.

<sup>19</sup> Pinchot, *The Fight for Conservation*.

more overbearing regulation. State legislation primarily focused on fires and regeneration of forests rather than timber cuts.<sup>20</sup>

During debates over the possibility of light burning as a method of fuel reduction, those opposed to this policy developed fire as an enemy with racialized discourse. Drawing from John Wesley Powell's description of Paiute Indians in the southwest using fire to manage forests and brush, the opposition criticized light-burning advocates of proposing "Paiute forestry."<sup>21</sup> Greeley wrote in 1920 in an article for *The Timberman* entitled, "'Piute [sic] Forestry' or the Fallacy of Light Burning." He asserted that light burning supporters were advocating for the practices of the "noble redskin" who "fired the forests regularly, not so much to facilitate his hunting or protect his dwelling as because his nature lore taught him that this was the way to prevent 'big' forest fire [sic]."<sup>22</sup> Greeley was trying to disassociate light burning advocates from reasonable forestry, and frame fire and prescribed burning as the primitive opposite of "civilized," Euro-American forest science.

**[Figure 1]** Udo J. Keppler's 1909 depiction of a muscular Gifford Pinchot rushing in alone to fight the fire representing "greed" in the form of timber grabs, land grabs. The caption reads "Who'll stand by him? The Chief Forester and the consuming element." The image appeared in the 1909 *Puck Magazine*. Credit: Udo J. Keppler, *Who'll stand by him? / Keppler*. N.Y.: Published by Keppler & Schwarzmann, Puck Building, 1909. Image. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2011647504/>. (Accessed June 14, 2016.)

Importantly, the discourse perpetuated in Cowan's 1961 *The Enemy is Fire!* with the timber industry as the hero was not the only way people conceived of fires in the twentieth century. The above comic (Figure 1) uses fire for an entirely different metaphor. Pinchot nobly confronts both fire and the greed of profit-driven forestry alone. Indeed, Pinchot's second principle of conservation was the "prevention of waste" through fire exclusion as well as discouraging devastation of forests through greedy extraction practices.<sup>23</sup> The use of "waste" was equally critical of the forestry paradigm that "looked upon the forest as a mine rather than as a farm," in the words of Thornton Munger, director of the Pacific Northwest Forest Experiment Station, in 1934.<sup>24</sup>

Other fire-enemy narratives were emerging from other groups beyond the USFS in the pre-WW II era. The Western Forestry and Conservation Association (WFCA), one of the first fire prevention organizations gaining publicity in the aftermath of the 1910 "Big Burn" was a

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<sup>20</sup> Hudson, *Fire Management in the American West : Forest Politics and the Rise of Megafires.*, 105. For a detailed examination of this debate see Hudson, *Fire Management in the American West* more generally and Carle, *Burning Questions*.

<sup>21</sup> Pyne, *Fire in America. A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural Fire.*, 102.

<sup>22</sup> William Greeley, "'Piute Forestry' or the Fallacy of Light Burning," *The Timberman*, March 1920. Reprinted in *Forest History Today*, 1999.

<sup>23</sup> Pinchot, *The Fight for Conservation*.

<sup>24</sup> Thornton T. Munger, "The Lumber Code and Forestry," *The Annual Cruise*, 1934. Retrieved from Oregon Digital <https://oregondigital.org/catalog/oregondigital:fx71bc693#page/37/mode/1up>. (Accessed 15 March 2016).

made up of collection of private timber representatives. They began the slogan “Keep Them Green” in the Northwest, which the Keep Oregon Green and Keep Washington Green Associations then appropriated decades later.<sup>25</sup> The American Forestry Association also began to push for fire prevention public awareness in the late 1930s. They dedicated an issue of their magazine, *American Forests*, to fire in 1939 and published posters with slogans such as “Your forests, your fault, your loss.” The editor of *American Forests* wrote, “forest fires once started are fought like wars—on the firing line. And as with wars, forest fires are prevented by a vibrant public will to prevent them.”<sup>26</sup> The real war would provide the opportunity to engage the vibrant public will even more.

Discursively, fire suppression advocates in the USFS and the timber industry had the monumental task of proving that fire—a phenomenon that occurred even without human interference and that indigenous people had used for centuries prior to Euro-American forestry—was unnatural, while its exclusion was the natural state of the forest. They started achieving this by generating fire-enemy discourse that vilified blazes as external and foreign to forests. They thus constructed a definition of forests as inherently fireless environments. Fires were no longer naturally occurring in their view but rather became the culpability and responsibility of people.

### ***National Defense and Fire Prevention Campaigns***

World War II influenced fire-enemy discourse in several ways. First, the war stimulated development of large fire prevention public awareness campaigns that helped carry the discourse from the realm of political rhetoric into the public interface and cultural vernacular. Four organizations were particularly active and effective during WW II in producing far-reaching rhetoric and public relations campaigns to vilify forest fires: Keep Oregon Green (KOG), Keep Washington Green (KWG), the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Program (CFFP), and the American Forest Products Industries Inc. (AFPI).

Second, the war offered “national defense” as a powerful, legitimate, and compelling aspect of fire-suppression rhetoric and imagery. In 1942, a Japanese submarine shelled a California oil field near Los Padres National Forest. The proximity to the forest incited fear in the USFS and military as wood products were essential to the wartime economy. To protect lumber for the war, the USFS organized the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Campaign (CFFP). The already established Wartime Advertising Council took the CFFP under its wing to produce posters and advertisements warning the public against the risk of forest fires.<sup>27</sup> Linking national defense and forest fire prevention allowed advocates to construct forest fighting narratives under the banner of patriotism and national security. And at times, they quite overtly racialized forests and enemy fires. In the process, the new WW II fire discourse simultaneously maligned forest fires and supported the timber industry and private landowners.

Fire prevention campaigns emerged through publicity campaigns from various industries to discourage heavy regulation and promote free enterprise common in the mid-twentieth century. These campaigns, rather than selling specific products, sought to improve corporate

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<sup>25</sup> Pyne, *Fire in America. A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural Fire*, 167-2.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

<sup>27</sup> Pyne, *Fire in America. A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural Fire.*, 174-6.

images.<sup>28</sup> For the timber industry, this included the development of “tree farm” programs that demonstrated to the public that the industry cared about the regrowth of forests.<sup>29</sup> The National Lumber Manufacturers’ Association (NLMA) launched the AFPI in 1932 as a trade promotion subsidiary program, and in 1941, the AFPI began its propaganda campaign to promote private forestry over strong federal oversight and regulation. William Greeley headed the organization and it vehemently fought increased regulation from the USFS throughout the 1940s with the NLMA vowing a “full blast against any and all attempts to promote federal regulation.”<sup>30</sup> Fire propaganda became a key WW II mechanism for NMLA, AFPI, and other organizations to support their explicit goal of protecting timber capital.

Out of World War II emerged a network of quasi-government, state level Keep Green organizations. From the start, the timber industry and fire suppression advocates played a heavy role in the Keep Green movements in the Northwest. KWG was the first of these two associations beginning in the 1940 fire season and securing its renewal 1941. William Greeley, the notorious and influential fire suppression advocate, and Washington Governor Clarence Martin spearheaded the beginning of the program.<sup>31</sup> Owners of the large timber companies such as Phil Weyerhaeuser and Kris Kreienbaum; Cordyn Wagner, president of the West Coast Lumberman’s association; and fire suppression advocate Charles Cowan all assisted in cofounding KWG. Keep Oregon Green began a few months later in the summer of 1941 with the efforts of Governor Charles Sprague. In 1941, he called a meeting of more than 250 foresters, state leaders, and timber owners to solidify the association.<sup>32</sup> In addition to its origins, the administration of KOG reveals the institutional ties to the timber industry. KOG was supposedly a quasi-state organization with support and representatives from the USFS and state foresters, as well as private interests. While the association’s by-laws stated, “representatives shall be a balance of the major forestry and agricultural interests and the general public, all to be selected by a majority vote of the members of the corporation,”<sup>33</sup> neither the public nor agricultural interests ever matched the overwhelming majority of timber representatives. The Board of Trustees in 1948, for example, had twelve foresters and timber industry representatives, compared with two representatives from agriculture. Furthermore, various businesses in the

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<sup>28</sup> Elizabeth A. Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-60* (University of Illinois Press, 1994). Emily K. Brock, “Tree Farms on Display: Presenting Industrial Forests to the Public in the Pacific Northwest, 1941–1960,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 113, no. 4 (2012): 526–59, doi:10.5403/oregonhistq.113.4.0526.

<sup>29</sup> Brock, “Tree Farms on Display.”

<sup>30</sup> Hudson, *Fire Management in the American West : Forest Politics and the Rise of Megafires.*, 105-7.

<sup>31</sup> Arthur Priaulx, "The Story of Keep Oregon Green," in *Keep Oregon Green Association 1945-1957*, MSS KeepOrGreen, Oregon State University Archives. Hereafter, the Keep Oregon Green Association Records at Oregon State University will be referred to as *KOG Records* at OSU.

<sup>32</sup> No author, “Greeley Had a Dream,” in *Keep Oregon Green Association Records 1940-1963*, Bx 112, Box 1, University of Oregon Special Collections and University Archives. Hereafter, the Keep Oregon Green Association Records at the University of Oregon will be referred to as *KOG Records* at UO.

<sup>33</sup> “By-laws,” Folder: By-Laws, *KOG Records* at UO, Box 1.



forest products and timber industry were the largest contributors to the association.<sup>34</sup> Thus, KOG—which became one of the model fire prevention organizations—institutionally represented private foresters from the start.

**[Figure 2]** Caption reads: “Watch that campfire. Every forest fire is an Axis fire. Always build your campfire in a designated place where it will not spread and BE SURE it is completely out before leaving it—even for a short time.” Image is part of a series of similar ads associating fire with the Axis and encouraging the layman to prevent fire. Credit: Keep Oregon Green Association, “Watch That Campfire,” *Heppner Gazette Times*, 2 July 1942. Retrieved from Oregon Historical Newspapers. (Accessed 28 February 2016).

Soon after US involvement in WWII, foresters and politicians shifted fire-enemy discourse to themes of national defense. Figure 2, a KOG advertisement appearing in *Heppner Gazette Times*, articulates this with the slogan, “forest defense is national defense.”<sup>35</sup> The image goes on to proclaim that every fire is an Axis fire, thereby directly relating forest fires to WW II and the enemies in Germany and Japan. Further, the image creates a personal connection to viewers by focusing on campfires, thereby connecting to everyday people who use and visit forests, a family pastime and personal link for viewers. Also, the image puts the blame for forests and prevention firmly on people, not the USFS, not building practices or land development, and not timber industries who are conspicuously absent from the image. The image thus helps discursively label fires as WW II enemies created by careless campers.

In 1942, Governor Sprague wrote an article on KOG in the Oregon State University (OSU) Forestry School’s student journal, *The Annual Cruise*.<sup>36</sup> Here he explained the motive behind the continuation and expansion of KOG, “Every person in 1942 must resolve and remember to use care in the woods; he must keep his eyes and ears open for evidences of enemy action in his community; he must aid in organizing forces of forest protection; and if his physical condition permits, it is not unlikely that he may be called upon to help fight fire in field or forest. Certainly he must be ready.”<sup>37</sup> This call to arms reads more like a call to build tanks or join the army than a call to put out campfires. Fire prevention was not limited to only properly disposing of cigarettes; the men of Oregon also had to watch for signs of enemy sabotage. Eugene R. Manock, an associate of the Oregon State University School of Forestry articulated this fear in a 1942 article appearing in Oregon State University College of Forestry’s annual magazine publication. He stressed the threat of attack through firebombing forests, writing that “from the

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<sup>34</sup> “Associations, automobile companies, banks, county courts, equipment companies, individuals, insurance companies, logging operations, lumber industry, lumber wholesalers, miscellaneous receipts, pine operators, pulp manufacturers, railroads, timber owners, west side mills.” from “Keep Oregon Green: 1948 Annual Report,” (Salem, Oregon). *KOG Records* at OSU.

<sup>35</sup> Keep Oregon Green Association, “Watch That Campfire,” *Heppner Gazette Times*, 2 July 1942. Retrieved from Oregon Historical Newspapers. (Accessed 28 February 2016).

<sup>36</sup> *The Annual Cruise* was a journal compiled by the OSU Forestry School targeting the public. For this reason, it is an applicable source to this project.

<sup>37</sup> Charles A. Sprague, “Keep Oregon Green,” *The Annual Cruise*, 1942. Retrieved from Oregon Digital. (Accessed 15 March 2016).

enemy point of view it would be wise indeed for them to set fire to these enormous timberlands, thus transforming them into a vast economic desert waste.”<sup>38</sup> Manock’s paranoia that an attack would render forests an “economic desert waste” demonstrates the construction of fear around forest vulnerability as joint economic, political, and environmental devastation.

**[Figure 3]** Title reads: “Forest Defense is National Defense.” The bottom of the image provides examples of how civilians could help prevent fires. Credit: Unknown artist, “Forest Defense is National Defense,” *World War II Poster Collection*, (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Libraries Special Collections & Archives Research Center).

**[Figure 4]** Caption reads: “Our Carelessness - Their Secret Weapon – Prevent Forest Fires.” “U.S. Forest Service” appears in the bottom left corner. This image is one of the most iconic fire prevention posters of the era. Credit: Unknown artist, “Our Carelessness - Their Secret Weapon,” *World War II Poster Collection*, (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Libraries Special Collections & Archives Research Center).

**[Figure 5]** Caption reads: “Careless Matches—Weapons of Sabotage...Prevent Forest Fires.” The figures from Figure 4 appear in the bottom right corner suggesting that the Figure 4 poster would be widely recognizable. Credit: Unknown artist, “Careless Matches—Weapons of Sabotage,” *World War II Poster Collection*, (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Libraries Special Collections & Archives Research Center).

The wartime propaganda identified fire as a weapon of the clearly defined and evil enemy: The Axis. Figure 2 contains one of KOG’s favorite slogans of the time, “every forest fire is an Axis fire.”<sup>39</sup> This suggested that the Axis were the perpetrators and the beneficiaries of forest fires in the US. If the Axis were the antithesis to American values, then forest fires in these kinds of depictions became the antithesis to forests—and also to the American public and US interests. Figure 3 is one of the most iconic fire prevention posters from WWII.<sup>40</sup> Hitler and the racist caricature of Emperor Hirohito, illuminated by the orange glow of the forest fire, taunt the audience with malicious glares. <sup>41</sup> Hirohito, in the forefront, glances to the side with a conniving expression. Here the imagery racializes forest fires, capitalizing on fears of treacherous Japanese invading the United States and causing harm. This was, after all, the time of Japanese internment camps. Figure 5 carries the same figures in the bottom right corner suggesting that the image would be familiar to the general audience. The slogans, “our carelessness: their secret weapon,” and “careless matches: weapons of sabotage,” reflect a new manner of explicitly identifying forest fires as weapons of warfare to be aimed by a racially distinct and caricatured Axis Powers leaders against US forests and the country’s security. Use of

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<sup>38</sup> Eugene R. Manock, “War and the Pacific Forests,” *The Annual Cruise*, 1942. Retrieved from Oregon Digital. (Accessed 15 March 2016).

<sup>39</sup> Keep Oregon Green Association, “Watch That Campfire.”

<sup>40</sup> As suggested by frequent reference in various texts. Pyne, *Fire in America. A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural Fire*, 176. Hudson, *Fire Management in the American West : Forest Politics and the Rise of Megafires*, 27.

<sup>41</sup> Unknown artist, “Our Carelessness—Their Secret Weapon,” *World War II Poster Collection*, Oregon State University Archives, folder 8, item 20.

the word "sabotage" also suggests an act of terrorism, criminal behavior, and an upsetting of standard practices.<sup>42</sup> The claim thus normalized the absence of fire in forests. Moreover, rather than a predator or agent in its own right, fire had become a weapon to a force that was inarguably the enemy. The move from agent to weapon strengthened fire exclusion by shifting from the realm of a metaphorical enemy to a (perceived) material threat.

**[Figure 6]** Caption reads: Careless matches aid the Axis – Prevent Forest Fires!" Appeared in newspaper ads without credit. Credit: "Careless Matches Aid the Axis," *Heppner Gazette Times*, 6 August 1942. Retrieved from *Oregon Historical Newspapers*. Accessed 28 February 2016.

**[Figure 7]** Caption reads: "Stop and get your free fag bag – careless matches aid the Axis." The USFS logo appears above the word "Axis." Credit: Louis Hirshman, *Stop and Get Your Free Fag Bag Careless Matches Aid the Axis.*, [Pennsylvania: wpa war services project, between 1941 and 1943]

Retrieved from Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b49005/>. (Accessed 15 March 2016).

Importantly, the racist cartoon of an ambiguous Japanese figure—possibly intended to be Hirohito in some cases—seems to have appeared more frequently than Hitler, whom I only found on the one poster. In this way, the propaganda depicted the fires as racial enemies. In Figure 6, the man's face glows from the match, revealing his malicious grin before he undoubtedly uses it to set the forests aflame.<sup>43</sup> Figure 7 depicts another man with predatory features concealed behind a tree preparing his sadistic arson as the rising sun looms behind.<sup>44</sup> These images play on the racism perpetrated against Japanese and Japanese-Americans in the US during the war. The ideological exclusion of Japanese Americans from America necessitated, it was believed, the actual exclusion into internment camps to prevent sabotage. Similarly, the ideological exclusion of fire from forests necessitated fire suppression. Further, the posters suggest the unintentional arsonist, who left a campfire or threw a cigarette out the window, was using the enemy's weapon and colluding with the Axis power, a threat to national security, American values, and the supposed whiteness of the United States. Anyone starting a forest fire, according to these posters, was not loyal to the American war effort.

Fire enemy discourse declined towards the end of the war. Released in 1942, the movie *Bambi* provided a new anthropomorphism to the forests with cute animals as the protagonists and a climax that involved the characters fleeing from a fire. The CFFP, in 1944, replaced the Axis figures with Bambi, most likely because of the war propaganda about fires was dark and inaccessible to children.<sup>45</sup> The lovable fawn, with Disney donating the rights in 1944, pranced

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<sup>42</sup> Unknown artist, "Careless Matches—Weapons of Sabotage," *World War II Poster Collection*, Oregon State University Archives, folder 13, item 8.

<sup>43</sup> "Careless Matches Aid the Axis," *Heppner Gazette Times*, 6 August 1942. Retrieved from *Oregon Historical Newspapers*. Accessed 28 February 2016.

<sup>44</sup> Louis Hirshman, *Stop and Get Your Free Fag Bag Careless Matches Aid the Axis.*, [Pennsylvania: WPA war services project, between 1941 and 1943]

Retrieved from Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b49005/>. (Accessed 15 March 2016).

<sup>45</sup> Pyne, *Fire in America. A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural Fire*, 176.

across the country asking “please mister, don’t be careless.”<sup>46</sup> Because Bambi was only loaned for a year in 1944, the CFFP and Wartime Advertising Council commissioned Albert Staehle to design a character to embody the message of fire prevention. In 1945, just before the end of the war, Smokey Bear made his first appearance and has since become one of the most recognizable icons in the American cultural vernacular. In sum, the war provided a catalyst to fire prevention efforts that sparked highly organized national and regional propaganda campaigns. KOG and CFFP frequently associated fire with the war effort and often racialized their imagery and discourse. These awareness campaigns established fire indisputably as the enemy and placed immense responsibility on the public to watch for “sabotage” against the forests. Importantly, the timber and wood products industries backed these organizations, and the war came at a crucial point in the debate over regulation. Where before waste from fire and cutting were conflated—as demonstrated in figure 1—the institutions that controlled the public discourse on fire had a stake in separating these factors and emphasizing fire alone.

Smokey’s domination of the contemporary discourse on fire overshadows the manner in which KOG and AFPI, in addition to CFFP, perpetuated the fire-enemy narrative and developed an understanding of forests and fires that served private interests. For one, the presence of Smokey Bear in Oregon, Washington and elsewhere was largely because of sponsorship from respective Keep Green organizations.<sup>47</sup> The Keep Green which began in Oregon and Washington at the beginning of the war, had reached 23 forested states by 1948.<sup>48</sup> A major piece of Keep Oregon Green was their youth branch, the Green Guards. The Green Guards ran parallel to boy scouts and girl scouts, but unlike other youth organizations, there was no hierarchical system. Upon joining, the children would receive a tool kit for spreading the message of fire prevention including a handbook, stickers, and posters. Upon first advertising the program in 1942, KOG immediately received 20,000 applications. By 1949, they had 50,000 children registered. Leaders took pride in the number of the Green Guards who went on to fight fires in suppression crews or attend forestry school.<sup>49</sup> They rarely had to budget for radio or television advertisement slots, as these channels would often grant them time free of cost.<sup>50</sup> In 1949, thirty-seven radio stations were broadcasting KOG ads.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, AFPI managed to disseminate its message by reaching to the network of wood products and timber companies that supported it. The organization would simply produce ad mats, and companies would pay for the spot in newspapers, plastering their name across the bottom. The 1956 version proudly declared that the ads would be distributed to

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<sup>46</sup> Ellen Earnhardt Morrison, *Guardian of the Forest: A History of the Smokey Bear Program* (Morielle Press, 1989), 6–7.

<sup>47</sup> Unknown author, “Fair Exhibit Attracts Record Breaking Crowd,” *Forest Log*, (Salem, Oregon), 1954. Retrieved from *foresthistor.org*. (Accessed 12 June 2016); Unknown author, “Two Governors and Smokey Bear Urge Continuing Care with Fire,” *Western Forest Industries Review*, 1953.

<sup>48</sup> “History of Keep America Green,” in *KOG Records* at UO, Box 1.

<sup>49</sup> Arthur Priaulx, “The Story of Keep Oregon Green,” presented to Society of American Foresters, Seattle Washington, 12 October 1949. *KOG Records* at OSU, p. 12.

<sup>50</sup> There are various letters thanking radio and television stations in *KOG Records* at UO and *KOG Records* at OSU. For example: Albert Weisendanger, “Albert Weisendanger to All Oregon Radio Stations,” 22 May 1951, *KOG Records* at OSU.

<sup>51</sup> Arthur Priaulx, “The Story of Keep Oregon Green,” *KOG Records* at UO, Box 1.

11,000 newspapers across the county.<sup>52</sup> Thus, both KOG and AFPI maintained immense success in disseminating their discourse despite the overshadowing attention given to Smokey Bear.

### *Post-war Narratives*

Soon after the war, AFPI newspaper advertisements declared that “fighting fire is a war that never ends!” Such a claim—and many others like it—became cemented after WW II. But while these fire-prevention campaigns galvanized a fire-enemy discourse, they also advocated for timber capital as much as they demonized fire. They thus built an understanding of forests as a place for timber capital.

**[Figure 8]** Caption reads: “One Red Menace *You Can Control*.” Credit: American Forest Products Industries Inc., “One Red Menace *You Can Control*,” *Heppner Gazette Times*, 13 August 1950. Retrieved from Oregon Digital. (Accessed 15 March 2016). The draft of the ad appears in: *These Free Ad Mats Can Help Keep Your State Green*, booklet, *KOG Records* at UO, Box 1.

In the post-war period, fire morphed from a weapon aimed at the country by Axis enemies to a different kind of threat. As Ben Lampman from the *Oregonian* put it in a KOG-commissioned piece about the danger of forest fires: “For flame, though a good servant, is a cruel master—and were the flame to possess their forests, little would be left of the past or present, alike dear to the Green Land, and little would remain for the future.”<sup>53</sup> Fire was now a “cruel master” and an agent in its own right, rather than just a weapon. Fire suppression discourse was also by the late 1940s portraying fire as a communist, foreign threat to the United States. During the McCarthy Era, bold articles like “Red Destroyer,” and “300 Fires Roar Redly,” stood out boldly in newspapers such as the *Oregonian*, while other headlines using “reds” usually referred to the Soviet Union.<sup>54</sup> Figure 8 draws the link more explicitly with the slogan, “One red menace *you can control*,” which perpetuated the racialized forest fire threat. That same ad also continued to link national defense and American success to forests without fire. Moreover, the explanation in Figure 8 outlined the many ways forests contributed not only to the US military through aircraft carriers and weapons, but also to national economic development given the capacity of forests to generate a tremendous range of products. American Forest Products Industries Inc. and Keep Oregon Green cosponsored this ad in the 1950s.<sup>55</sup> One reader wrote a letter to the editor claiming, “while we are spending billions of dollars to contain a red menace abroad, we are neglecting a red menace at home that is devastating our country like a sadistic invading army—namely, forest fires.”<sup>56</sup> To a reader of Oregon newspapers at this time, it would appear that communism spread like wildfire and wildfire spread like communism. Like

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<sup>52</sup> American Forest Products Industries Inc., *1956 Proof Book of Forestry Ad Maps*, *KOG Records* at UO, Box 1.

<sup>53</sup> Ben Lampan, “The Wardens of the Green Land,” *KOG Records* at UO, Box 1.

<sup>54</sup> The *Oregonian*, “Red Destroyer,” *The Oregonian*, June 29, 1952. The *Oregonian*, “300 Fires Foar Redly in Oregon,” *The Oregonian*, September 7, 1955, sec. 1.

<sup>55</sup> American Forest Products Industries Inc., “One Red Menace *You Can Control*,” *Heppner Gazette Times*, 13 August 1950.

<sup>56</sup> H. P. Lee, “Dowsing Fires,” *Oregonian*, 14 August 1949.

with the allusions to the Axis during WWII, fire was again a foreign, invasive threat, but this time a threat that acted upon its own will.

In the post-war period, fire prevention campaigns revealed that the perceived need to exclude fire and protect forests was equally a need to protect timber capital. This is best articulated in a KOG document on the history of the movement: “The basic idea of Keep America Green is nothing new in the annals of forest fire prevention. It’s an old idea in a new container. Ever since man has been trying to extract timber for profit, he has waged an incessant war against fire in his woodlands.”<sup>57</sup> Fires did not belong in forests, but timber extraction for profit did. A radio fill declared, “The expression ‘mighty forests’ is very fitting for our irrigation, navigation, and many vital industries depend wholly or in part on our forested hills. ‘Keep Oregon Green’ is more than a slogan—it’s an economic law!”<sup>58</sup> In Spring of 1949, Dean of the OSU Forestry School Paul Dunn wrote to Oregon Secretary of State, Earl Newbry on behalf of the KOG Executive Committee explaining the importance of the organization. He wrote, “Oregon has many unique attributes as a state: her rich farm and ranches, her mountains and lakes and valleys. But, all those natural and man-made attractions, as great as they are, still pale into the background when compared to our endless expanses of virgin forests and millions of acres of growing tree farms.”<sup>59</sup> Dunn explained that the timber and wood products industries accounted for more than the farming, fishing, tourist, and manufacturing interests combined. Clearly, for Dunn, KOG’s primary purpose was to prevent forest fires for the sake of private industry.

These campaigns sought to engender sympathy towards the loss that came with forest fires. Radio advertisements declared: “forests mean wealth to Oregon. Nearly 76,000 persons are employed in lumbering, paper-making, and other forest industries in our state. Forest fires can destroy those payrolls. Keep Oregon Green and you can keep Oregon prosperous,”<sup>60</sup> and “somewhere tonight, there are men without jobs because someone burned a forest.”<sup>61</sup> These examples show that forests were intimately tied to economic growth and development and that fires only served to impede that growth. *The Story of Forests*, a booklet sponsored by Keep America Green and American Forest Products Industries Inc., contained an image of a scorched sapling with the caption, “fire killed this little tree...Had this tree lived, it might have provided the wood for lumber, paper, or other useful forest products.”<sup>62</sup> This quote uses both an appeal to pristine and vulnerable wilderness with the image of the sapling and an appeal to utilitarianism to convince the public of the danger of fire.

The post-war discourse, while protecting the interests of private capital, created an impression of egalitarianism, reminiscent of Pinchot’s ideology. It emphasized the fact that forests were “ours,” and publicly owned. Arthur Priaulx, who represented the West Coast Lumberman’s Association on the KOG board of trustees, explained the reasoning behind this and

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<sup>57</sup> Unknown author, “History of Keep America Green,” Folder: History of Keep Green. *KOG* at UO, Box 1. Because the author wrote, “Keep America Green,” it is more likely they were associated with AFPI than KOG or KWG.

<sup>58</sup> Keep Oregon Green Association, “Shorts, fills, and Spot Announcements,” n.d. *KOG Records* at UO, Box 1.

<sup>59</sup> Paul Dunn, “Letter from Paul Dunn to Earl Newbry,” 16 March 1949. *KOG Records* at OSU.

<sup>60</sup> Albert Wiesendanger, “Radio Spot Announcement,” 22 May 1951. *KOG Records* at OSU.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> American Forest Products Industries Inc., *Story of Forests*, *KOG Records* at UO, Box 1.

the semantic importance of “‘our’ forests”: “people only protect things they love or have value to them. Our forest must be protected. Our forests are something to cherish, to admire as things of beauty, to maintain as sources of employment, to keep growing to supply timber, pulp, plywood and other needs of man.”<sup>63</sup> Priaulx’s appeal to common ownership juxtaposes the last statement that places private industry as the primary benefit of forests. Smokey Bear, appearing in CFFP posters, embraced a religious tone to emphasize the communal nature of forests. One poster exclaimed, “God gave us this,” depicting a pristine forest with a fawn in the foreground, “don’t give us this,” with burnt snags.<sup>64</sup> Another commanded, “thou shalt not burn thy trees.”<sup>65</sup> Both of these indicate how fire suppression advocates were framing forests as a common good. A 1963 article appearing in the *Oregon Journal* posed the question, “who owns our timber?” answering, “in a very real sense, the people do” because the Bureau of Land Management and the USFS owned most of the Northwest’s timberland. The author went on to write, “this responsibility [to protect forests from fires] goes beyond the publicly owned lands. The public has a stake in the protection of those millions of acres in private ownership.”<sup>66</sup> This communitarianism purported that the public were the primary beneficiaries of forests and fire prevention. The blurred lines between public ownership and private utility sought to convince the public that forest fires victimized them and the timber industry equally.

With fires as the enemy and the antithesis of American values, the timber and wood products industries became the heroes. Borrowing from the discourse developed during WWII that conflated forests with national security and values, the fire prevention campaigns developed this rhetoric into one that equally protected private industry. During the Korean War, fire prevention again became a matter of national defense. One ad began with a description of a US Fleet arriving for battle at a Korean beach. Then, “the boat that made this possible...was strengthened by its structural parts. Once again – in a national emergency – wood is proving itself our most valuable renewable resource. We must protect our forests, source of our timber supply. Keep Oregon Green, and you keep America strong.”<sup>67</sup> The AFPI produced a series of advertisements in the mid-1950s with the intention of “teaching the public that fire prevention is everyone’s job,” while “promoting the sale and use of forest products.”<sup>68</sup> One such advertisement celebrates the role of timber in the printing industry: “America’s great printing industry is one of the bulwarks of our democracy. Because trees grow, there will always be plenty of paper to feed the free presses,” coupled with the slogan, “prevent forest fires; keep our state green.”<sup>69</sup> In conjunction with fires as the other “red menace,” these advertisements would

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<sup>63</sup> Arthur Priaulx, “The Story of Keep Oregon Green,” presented to Society of American Foresters, Seattle Washington, 12 October 1949. *KOG Records* at OSU, pp. 9.

<sup>64</sup> Advertising Council, and Foote, Cone and Belding, “Preview of the 1955 CFFP Campaign,” Los Angeles. 1955. Retrieved from *foresthistor.org*. (Accessed 18 June 2016).

<sup>65</sup> Advertising Council, “1958 CFFP Campaign,” 1958. Retrieved from *foresthistor.org*. (Accessed 18 June 2016).

<sup>66</sup> No author, “A Treasure People Must Hold,” *Oregon Journal*, 1963, folder: press clippings, *KOG* at UO, Box 1.

<sup>67</sup> Albert Weisendanger, “Radio Spot Announcement,” 22 May 1951, *KOG Records* at OSU.

<sup>68</sup> American Forest Products Industries Inc., *1956 Proof Book of Forestry Ad Maps*, *KOG Records* at UO, Box 1.

<sup>69</sup> American Forest Products Industries Inc., “Fiber of America,” *1956 Proof Book of Forestry Ad Maps*, *KOG Records* at UO, Box 1.

suggest that the battle between forest fires and the timber industry was a battle between communism and democracy.

Additionally, the press would celebrate private foresters' timber salvaging efforts as an act of heroism. In this period, it was common for private foresters to "salvage" for commercial purposes timber damaged, or "killed" by fires. In a 1961 press release from the USFS, Walter Lund, the USFS official in charge of timber management in the Northwest declared, "the cooperation of the forest products industry to help accomplish the early removal of damaged material has been excellent."<sup>70</sup> They harvested 97 million board feet of timber from the burnt area, and the USFS constructed roads to aid the salvaging process and replanting of trees—roads that could later be used again later for harvesting timber. Thus, the portrayal of the timber industry as the hero produced real economic benefits for private foresters. Further, there is no mention of how the salvaging process benefited forests or the USFS. With timber as the victim of the vilified forest fires, an act that aided timber was intrinsically good.<sup>71</sup>

These salvage operations became so popular that they occurred in preparation for a fire. In fall of 1962, Hurricane Freida, also known as the Columbus Day Storm, swept through the Northwest with winds at 170 miles per hour, eventually killing forty individuals. The hurricane affected 4.9 million acres of forest in Washington State alone. In some areas, trees piled up to thirty feet high blocking access roads and trails. Foresters in Oregon and Washington were concerned the potential hazard this posed for the fire season of 1963. By then, most of the trees and logs would dry out, creating large amounts of fuel throughout the Northwest. They called this fuel "red slash," after the red pine needles from the dried out fallen trees. KWG described the suppression tactics as militaristic: "Fire fighting ground forces are being mobilized by the State of Washington Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Forest Service, and the Washington Forest Protection Association through its industrial sponsors."<sup>72</sup> KOG and KWG sponsored a conference in July 1963 to plan how they would prevent an uncontrollable fire season. They used every tactic in their means to warn of the coming peril including television slots, posters, and press releases. The press release on the July conference had the headline, "Potential Forest Holocaust Cited at 2-State Forestry Conference."<sup>73</sup> In addition to the adoption of the fire villain discourse with the sensational headline, the article described the amount of timber in the red slash as 9 to 10 billion board feet in Oregon. In Washington, the figure reported was "\$130 million in stumpage and \$800 million as lumber and manufactured by-products."<sup>74</sup> Once again, the timber industry was the hero against the peril of fire, "salvaging" the "commercial-sized logs," throughout the states' forests.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> USFS, Untitled Press Release, 2 February 1961, "News Releases," *KOG Records* at UO, Box 1.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Keep Washington Green Association, "Keep Washington Green Blowdown Fact Sheet," *KOG Records* at UO, Box 1.

<sup>73</sup> Edward Reid, "Potential Forest Holocaust Cited at 2-State Conference," *Oregon Journal*, July 10, 1963.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Charles Ross, "Why 1963 Forest Fire Potential Could Be Most Critical in Recorded History," *KOG Records* at UO, Box 1. This document was contained as an attachment along with a fact sheet that Ross sent to forestry extension agents across Oregon.



Two years before Hurricane Freida in 1961, Cowan had published his book, *The Enemy is Fire!* The history of the fire-enemy narrative—embedded in a broader context of fire suppression, forest regulation, and timber capitalism—explains the historical situation that prompted Cowan to recall the development of fire policy in the Northwest. The exclamatory punctuation reads not only as an enthusiastic assertion, but also as a desperate insistence that *fire* is the enemy rather than the timber industry. Instead, as Cowan and the fire enemy narrative insist, private foresters were the heroes and saviors of the pristine and economic forests. Fire was the “other” not only to forests, but to American values. Likewise, the discourse emerging after the war asserted the importance of the timber and wood products industries claiming a natural right to exist within the forests. Thus, in the postwar discourse, the timber industry emerged as the hero in the fight against fire. This hero-victim complex sought to absolve private industry of any culpability in causing fires or destroying forests. In conjunction with the environmental othering that represented forests as ultimately fire-exclusive environments, this discourse established that the extraction of timber and utilitarian view of forests served to maintain the natural state of forests.

Given the history of fire prevention propaganda that produced a narrative that protected, above all else, the capitalist interests of the timber industry, the insufficiency in the contemporary Smokey Bear discourse is abundantly evident. I return to the initial claim of this paper of the importance for environmental historians to consider the historical and environmental narratives embedded in contemporary discourse. The environmental narrative suggests that the state, and in particular the USFS acted autonomously, and only out of a lack of a better idea of what to do. However, the timber industry heavily influenced the regulation and goals of the Forest Service often to protect their interests.<sup>76</sup>

Secondly, the contemporary discourse presents a history of discourse itself whereby Smokey, representing the USFS, was the only piece in the history of fire prevention campaigns. This view overshadows other processes as fire prevention campaigns often coupled the fire with a racial other such as the Paiute or Japanese. Further, the discourse established that the timber industry, rather than an additional other, was naturally part of the forests in a hero-victim complex that saw it both as the victim to fires and the savior of forests. Instead, an account of the history of fire and forest management in America should include the intimate role of the timber and wood products industries and the discourse that contributes to policy.

The history of the development of fire-enemy discourse that equally portrayed private industry as both the hero and victim demonstrates the importance of the characters in understanding the agenda and impact of environmental narratives. Already, works on environmental narratives highlight the characters that the narratives create. Diana Davis in *Resurrecting the Granaries of Rome* uncovers the vilification of indigenous herders in the nineteenth and twentieth-century French colonizers’ environmental narrative of desertification and deforestation.<sup>77</sup> Carey, in “The History of Ice: How Glaciers Became an Endangered Species,” examines the environmental narrative around retreating glaciers and global financial institutions have created victims of the indigenous peoples affected by deglaciation.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Hudson, *Fire Management in the American West : Forest Politics and the Rise of Megafires*.

<sup>77</sup> Diana K. Davis, *Resurrecting the Granary of Rome: Environmental History and French Colonial Expansion in North Africa* (Ohio University Press, 2007).

<sup>78</sup> Mark Carey, “The History of Ice: How Glaciers Became an Endangered Species,” *Environmental History* 12, no. 3 (2007): 497–527.

Environmental historians should continue to examine the ways in which narrative and discourse develop and perpetuate relations of power, oppression, and marginalization. Upon observing sources of propaganda and rhetoric, one should ask, who are the victims, the heroes, and the villains here, and to what purpose? Such framings and depictions ultimately structure who gets to speak for nature, to manage natural resources, and to construct human-environmental dynamics more broadly. Moreover, it is vital to uncover the historical narratives—the stories about stories about nature—concealed in contemporary discourses. Remember, only *you* can expose the role of discourse in environmental history.

## Appendix: Images

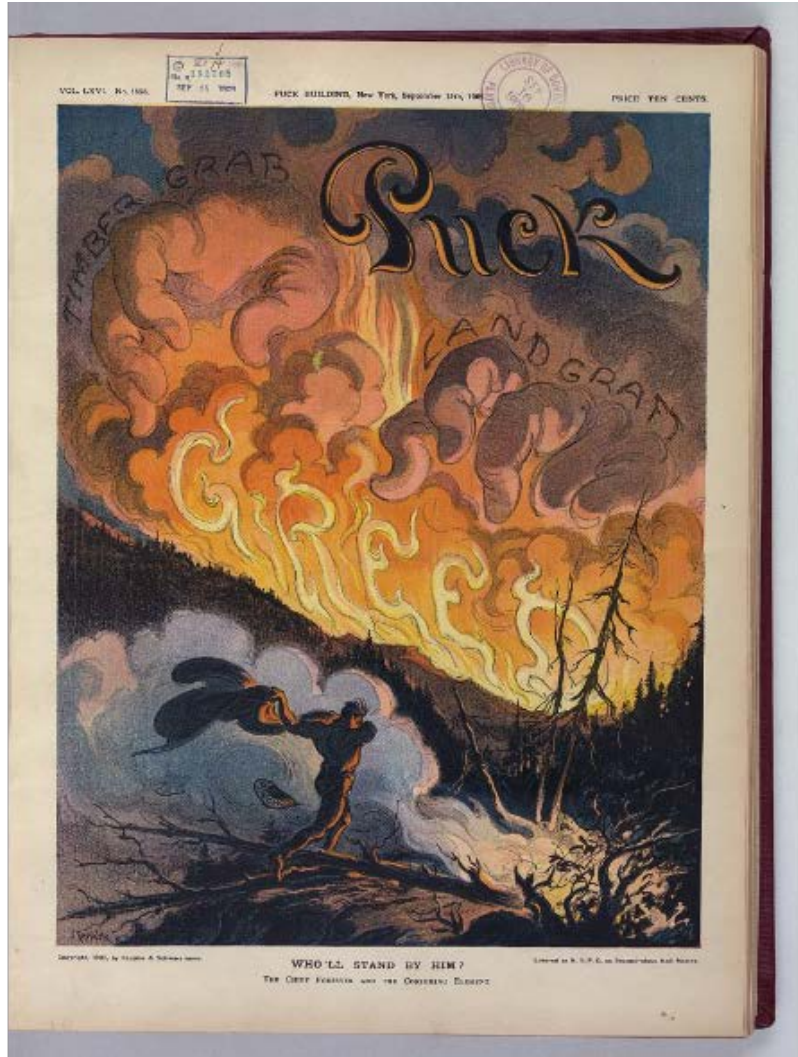


Figure 1. Udo J. Keppler's 1909 depiction of a muscular Gifford Pinchot rushing in alone to fight the fire representing “greed” in the form of timber grabs, land grafts. The caption reads “Who’ll stand by him? The Chief Forester and the consuming element.” The image appeared in the 1909 *Puck Magazine*. Credit: Udo J. Keppler, *Who'll stand by him?* / Keppler. N.Y.: Published by Keppler & Schwarzmann, Puck Building, 1909. Image. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2011647504/>. (Accessed June 14, 2016.)



Figure 2 – Caption reads: “Watch that campfire.

Every forest fire is an Axis fire. Always build your campfire in a designated place where it will not spread and BE SURE it is completely out before leaving it—even for a short time.” Image is part of a series of similar ads associating fire with the Axis and encouraging the layman to prevent fire. Credit: Keep Oregon Green Association, "Watch That Campfire," *Heppner Gazette Times*, 2 July 1942. Retrieved from Oregon Historical Newspapers. (Accessed 28 February 2016).<sup>79</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Keep Oregon Green Association, "Watch That Campfire," *Heppner Gazette Times*, 2 July 1942. Retrieved from Oregon Historical Newspapers. (Accessed 28 February 2016).

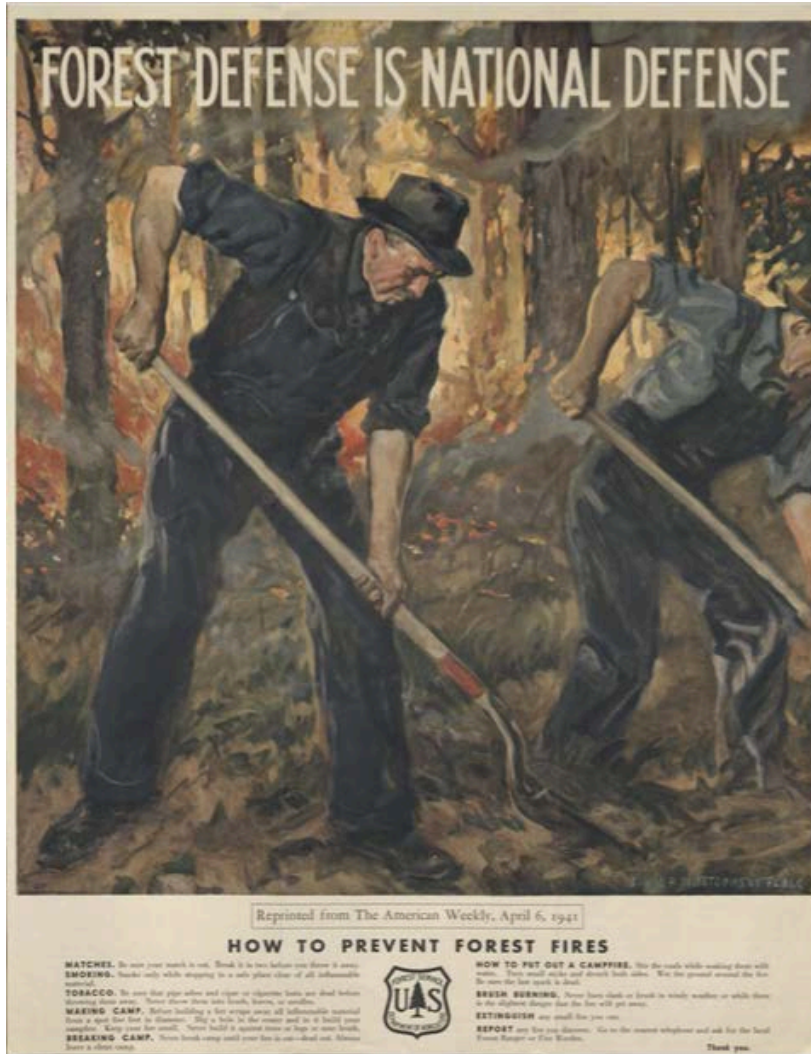


Figure 3 – Title reads: “Forest Defense is National Defense.” The bottom of the image provides examples of how civilians could help prevent fires. Credit: Unknown artist, "Forest Defense is National Defense," *World War II Poster Collection*, (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Libraries Special Collections & Archives Research Center).



Figure 4 Caption reads: “Our Carelessness - Their Secret Weapon – Prevent Forest Fires.” “U.S. Forest Service” appears in the bottom left corner. This image is one of the most iconic fire prevention posters of the era. Credit: Unknown artist, "Our Carelessness - Their Secret Weapon," *World War II Poster Collection*, (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Libraries Special Collections & Archives Research Center). 80

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80 Unknown artist, "Our Carelessness - Their Secret Weapon," *World War II Poster Collection*, (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Libraries Special Collections & Archives Research Center).



## CARELESS MATCHES— WEAPONS OF SABOTAGE!

**YOUR CIGARETTES, pipe lighted matches, your neglected campfires can cause more damage to America's war effort than the biggest bomb. What's more, they DO.**

Last year, more forest and range fires were started by the carelessness of patriotic, law-abiding citizens like yourself than by arsonists, lightning, or any other cause.

These forest and range fires sabotaged the war effort by destroying critical materials and draining manpower.

This year we mustn't let *Our Carelessness* be the *Enemy's Secret Weapon*.

So, when we go into the woods, let's be careful—more careful than we've ever been before. Let's obey the rules illustrated here, and ask others to do so. Let's solemnly

resolve that no thoughtless act of ours shall give "aid and comfort" to the Axis.

### ATTENTION, BRUSH BURNERS!

More than 6 million acres are burned yearly, because of **YOUR** careless use of fire in clearing plow land and burning logging and other slash and debris. *Do your part this year.*

*Remember:*

1. Don't burn without a permit from a ranger or fire warden.
2. Don't burn during unusually hot, dry, or windy weather.
3. Scrape a trail or "plow around" areas to be burned.
4. Have help handy till the last spark is dead.

**REMEMBER THESE RULES:**

 Crush out your smoke

 Drown your campfire—then bury it

 Break your burned match

**IF YOU BURN SLASH**  
First—get a permit  
Last—kill every spark

**OUR CARELESSNESS**  
Their Secret Weapon



## PREVENT FOREST FIRES

NAMES OF SPONSORS

Figure 5 Caption reads:

“Careless Matches—Weapons of Sabotage... Prevent Forest Fires.” The figures from Figure 4 appear in the bottom right corner suggesting that the Figure 4 poster would be widely recognizable. Credit: Unknown artist, "Careless Matches—Weapons of Sabotage," *World War II Poster Collection*, (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Libraries Special Collections & Archives Research Center).<sup>81</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Unknown artist, "Careless Matches—Weapons of Sabotage," *World War II Poster Collection*, (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Libraries Special Collections & Archives Research Center).



Figure 6 Caption reads:

Careless matches aid the Axis – Prevent Forest Fires!” Appeared in newspaper ads without credit. Credit: “Careless Matches Aid the Axis,” *Heppner Gazette Times*, 6 August 1942. Retrieved from *Oregon Historical Newspapers*. Accessed 28 February 2016.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> “Careless Matches Aid the Axis,” *Heppner Gazette Times*, 6 August 1942. Retrieved from *Oregon Historical Newspapers*. Accessed 28 February 2016.





Figure 7 Caption reads: “Stop and get your free fag bag – careless matches aid the Axis.” The USFS logo appears above the word “Axis.” Credit: Louis Hirshman, *Stop and Get Your Free Fag Bag Careless Matches Aid the Axis.*, [Pennsylvania: wpa war services project, between 1941 and 1943]

Retrieved from Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b49005/>. (Accessed 15 March 2016). <sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Louis Hirshman, *Stop and Get Your Free Fag Bag Careless Matches Aid the Axis.*, [Pennsylvania: wpa war services project, between 1941 and 1943]

Retrieved from Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b49005/>. (Accessed 15 March 2016).

**one RED-MENACE**  
**You can control!**

Fire in the forest is a saboteur. Every time it strikes America loses wood that's needed to keep defenses strong. More than 6,000 products, many vital to national security, are made from wood—aircraft carrier flight decks and railway crossties; plywood for planes, barracks and torpedo boats; paper, paperboard, box shoo and veneers to package food, military and medical supplies; woodpulp to make paper, rayon, plastics, explosives and chemicals. These are products America loses when fire burns a forest. **YOU** can help stop this saboteur by being careful with fire in the woods. Fire is one red menace **YOU** can control!

**What You can do**

**CRUSH OUT-YOUR CIGARETTE**

**DOUSE YOUR CAMPFIRE**

**CONTROL YOUR TRASH BURNING**

**Heppner Pine Mills, Inc.**

Figure 8. Caption reads: “One Red Menace *You Can Control*.” Credit: American Forest Products Industries Inc., “One Red Menace *You Can Control*,” *Heppner Gazette Times*, 13 August 1950. Retrieved from Oregon Digital. (Accessed 15 March 2016). The draft of the ad appears in: *These Free Ad Mats Can Help Keep Your State Green*, booklet, *KOG Records* at UO, Box 1.84

84 American Forest Products Industries Inc., “One Red Menace *You Can Control*,” *These Free Ad Mats Can Help Keep Your State Green*, booklet, *KOG Records* at UO, Box 1.