

The following letter is an attempt to explain from a personal perspective the destructiveness of the Barry Point Fire. This fire is not uncommon from the rest of the wild fires throughout the U.S. and the damage that results from them. I'm going to pass this along to any political representatives who will read it, please excuse the grammar and such as this comes from the heart. I ask the day you read this, that at night as you go to sleep to think about what I've written and then the next morning while you drink your coffee read it again. We have endured this for 8 months a few extra moments of your time is not too much to ask. Feel free to contact me anytime.

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At this time I've come to realize that the financial burden and loss from this fire will come to bear on our operation as well as personally, our chance for a successful TORT claim is slim to none. Unless you have gone through this experience I'm afraid to say you have no idea what it is like and I can say this because my family and myself have been through 2 floods as well as 2 severe droughts not counting the current one during my lifetime in agriculture. This fire was our first and by far the most devastating, however not the most damaging financially. Our (all affected landowners) physical as well as emotional health has been severely taxed by this fire and not because of the fire itself but because of the total disregard for the lands involved whether it be private or public. We (my wife & son) spent 7 days in the fire trying to gather our cattle and anyone else's out of the fire, these days averaged 18+ hrs a day in the fire as well as keeping everything going at home on 2 different ranches. On 8/15, our day started at 4:00 a.m. or there about and at 8:00p.m., we moved the last of the cattle to a safe location and then received a call from our neighbors saying they needed help to cut fire lines, our day ended at 1:00 a.m. Keep in mind our story is no different than anyone of our neighbors, we all experienced the casual attitude taken by USFS as they took the lead on the fire and if there were any crews wanting to fight the fire the management was so poor that they received no directions or plans. As I've said from the beginning, if this would have been a fire that was truly out of control with no opportunities to control or put out you would not be reading this and I would be concentrating on our business, but that is not the case.

At this point I'm going to define a few of the comments made early in this letter, when I said there was total disregard for our lands (public and private) this was clear when USFS made their burnouts whenever and wherever they wanted even when we would offer better and less damaging options such as to avoid destroying timber and fences as well as natural resources, our estimates are

possibly that 60% of total acres burned were from direct burnouts or ones that went out of control, fire personal agreed that this was possible and yes, I've seen the printed estimate that came available the end of January that the Shepard report said was not to be found in the fire logs. Think about this, 93,000 acres burned and out of that at least 55,000 was man made or caused.

The night of 8/15 our neighbors called for help running their dozer to build catlines there were 2 dozers sitting on lowboys within ½ mile of their ranch. One was 400 yards away and not one would come help, one was an ODF dozer and ODF command was on site. We worked until 1:00 a.m. putting in dozer lines. Can you imagine our frustration at this point?

On 8/16 crews back burned property owned by Tom Griffith; I manage this property for Tom. This property is our exit point for our cattle from our USFS permit and there are two different routes we take, I offered USFS and ODF routes for their dozer lines that would be the least invasive and yet effective and we were ignored. During their burnout, 3/4 of a mile of fence was destroyed with a total property loss of about (\$ 16,000.00) as well as, natural resources losses with no regard for the land. Also no contact was made prior to the burnout so to insure our safety. This is USFS #1 concern for their operations and yet our safety was ignored. Due to the terrain and without notice my wife or my son could have been trapped between the burnout and the real fire had they been bringing cattle out of the forest as they had been doing for the previous 6 days. Where was the concern for our SAFETY ?

After the Shepard report came out we were very disappointed in the final version, most all landowners took part in the interviews and myself and the Evan's took ½ day to tour Ed Shepard and Roy Montgomery on the Oregon side of the fire. The report contained none of this tour and very little of any of the interviews, with this in mind I called Roy and Ed. Ed never returned or would take my calls, however Roy did and in our conversation I was told the report was sent an untold number of times to Kent Connaughton, he would then revise and edit then return for another draft. Roy stated that the transitions between management teams were extremely confusing and poorly organized; the record

keeping was so poor that following the fire using the Fire Log was extremely difficult because of large gaps in information. This is where I mentioned the numbers for fire suppression acres was not available to Ed and Roy however 4 months post fire they were able to find these numbers. I feel these acreage numbers were produced after our 1/28/13 meeting with Kent Connaughton when David Summers stated that a 60% or more acres could have been burned in suppression and everyone in the room was in awe of this statement. Roy concurred that USFS crews as well as contract crews were performing burnouts on their own without any plans or direction from fire management and both Ed and Roy felt they could see this when they took the tour of the fire.

This is enough on these issues because I could go on for many more pages and would be happy to discuss this at more length at any time. I will briefly bring you up to speed on our fence and grazing issues to date. We will have to take a non-use on our forest permit this year for 2 reasons; one being resource damage on 1 allotment and secondly the fence issues on the both allotments. First, I would like to commend our FSA office here in Lake County, Marti Hamilton has gone above and beyond the call of duty in helping all of us through this mess, and our hats are off to her. When you hear how the government agencies are helping, keep these few things in mind:

- The Barry Point Fire could have been kept to a very small acreage with proper fire management.
- Cost share money is exactly that, a percentage that is a moving target with no guarantees and we have all the upfront costs first as well as having to pay taxes on this money.
- Providing fence materials is a small portion of all the expenses.
- Damage from this fire will affect our livelihood financially for untold years to come.

With this in mind here are some of the challenges we have faced and have to face in the future, we have struggled with the USFS to be more up to- speed (for a lack of better words) and aggressively getting things accomplished on their part in order for us to be able to get our work done in a timely manner. Some of these

tasks are removing the hazard trees from the fence lines for our SAFETY while rebuilding the fences as well as protecting the fences themselves from the dead trees falling and damaging the fences in the future, fixing roads so we have access to the fences we have to rebuild, getting the materials secured in a timely manner. This is something I've been working on since December and they have yet to get this completed. As for the natural resource problems by not actively salvaging all the merchantable timber and replanting our forest this in itself is a tragedy and I'll not accept any reason this should not be done whether it be due to special interest groups or funding issues. By not reforesting, this is gross mismanagement. When we the people decided to start suppressing these wild fires years ago we automatically took the role as land managers and started out doing a good job, but now in the last 25 years or so we have been failing miserably and refuse to correct the problems. I'm getting off track, in our operation we will stand to lose +/- \$30,000.00 by not having our forest allotment and will still incur all the expenses in rebuilding fences and managing our permit with no source of income to offset these expenses (talk about funding issues) not to mention the resource damage (invasive weeds and brush that choke out the grasses for cattle as well as wildlife) we will have to deal with for many years to come. Since the fire started, I have tried to keep track of our time spent on these fire issues, I'll probably stop soon just because I'm tired of preaching to the choir. From the day we started gathering cattle out of the fire on 8/10 until 1/31/13, that is 175, days myself and my family have spent over 837 hours dealing directly with USFS, ODF and fire issues, that's almost 5 hours a day 7 days a week. This does not account for any equipment time or expenses (pickups and trailers, atv's, etc.) starting on 1/21/13 we began fabricating parts in our shop to rebuild fences this spring, 252 man hours have been spent so far. This does not account for the electric to run all the shop equipment and all the welding supplies for those 252 hours. Remember when I said earlier that providing materials is just a small portion of the equation?

And now I'll get on my soap box, our (my family) losses are quite a ways down the devastation scale compared to our neighbors, sometimes when we

start mentioning names we forget someone, that is not my intention but a name helps to realize or see things more clearly.

- Tracy's, Bill and Ann have been good stewards to their land in the Drews Reservoir and Dog Mountain area. I know in past few years they have been thinning timber and removing juniper trees, which in turn has improved their natural resources a great deal as well as wildlife habitat. This is what ranchers (conservationists) do. I believe they lost most all of their timber and miles of fences, their grazing will also be affected. There will not be any merchantable timber on this property in their children's lifetime and maybe not even their grandchildren's
- Albertson's, the Albertson family has been in the Yocum Valley for over 100 years (think about this 100 YEARS) their land management speaks for itself, they have watched over that Valley like it was a member of the family. The management is all inclusive from timber, livestock, grazing, wildlife, fisheries, just to mention a few. When the fire crews wanted to burn them out they were ready to defend their land regardless and even if this meant putting their lives in harms way if need be (and they did). Their accounting of events needs to be heard and it is truly a crime the way they were treated.
- Morris Family, even having only been in the Dry Creek basin a short time it's evident that they truly care about what they have; their plans for the future will have a drastic turn following the fire damage.
- Harvey's, Virgil and Sharon are from the old school and just do things right and that's all there is to it. Since purchasing their property in Dry Creek they have been removing juniper trees, thinning timber, developing water sources, building a cabin and that's just for starters. This was to be their retirement place and well deserved. This will never happen now. The resource and financial loss will NEVER be recovered in their lifetime. I am sure that their loss was the result of a back burn that went out of control after the fire had already pass through 2 days prior.
- Evans Family, these folks have lost some of everything that goes with our business, cattle somewhere around 40 to 50 head, timber that can never be

replaced, natural resources that will take years to recover and some that never will. They will bear the expenses to rebuild fences, reforest their lands, repair and nurture natural resources back to good health as they were pre-fire. They have lost grazing for at least a couple of years and this will come to be a large financial burden to them without a doubt. Most of the cattle they lost were due to fire suppression when these cattle got trapped between a back burn and real fire. This we are sure of and again this shows that USFS has no regard for our private or public interests.

- The Collins Company, I wouldn't know how to describe their loss or where to begin, the acreage is 25,000 acres plus with damage in the millions of dollars. We can only hope as neighbors and as a community that they will survive, they are a true asset to us all.

This is not everyone by any means, my hope is that in leading up to what I have to say now is that what you have already read will somehow have more meaning. At the beginning of all the fire issues we have been told that any change must and can only come from the top. Well they tell me you are the top, the buck stops with you, you and only you can make the changes to ensure this will not happen to anyone else. I understand there will be hurdles to jump but don't mistake a hurdle with an excuse, hurdles can be overcome but an excuse is just a reason not to even try. All of the reports, reviews, analyses that have been done on the fire have only produced excuses, USFS is broken badly and without your efforts and involvement changes are not going to happen and all of us suffer. I can't understand how we out here on the ground can see the problem and yet it seems like our political representatives either down size the issues or passes the buck. I am so tired of hearing about lack of funding and resources being the excuse. I to have funding and resource problems also, but listen, I fix the problem or I go out of business and I expect no less from you. I have a high school diploma and a degree from the school of hard knocks and a certificate from the academy of common sense, I use these each and every day. I challenge you to start using your degrees and certificates as well. Stop making excuses and start jumping hurdles. Show me changes I can sink

my teeth in. Start making people accountable for what they do and hold their feet to fire and get rid of them, when necessary. Private industry is holding on by a thread. Tomorrow is too late to change, it has to happen today. Right now, in one hand I hold caution and the other, a towel. I want to throw caution to the wind and charge, ahead so please show me that it's the right thing to do.

Ace Felder & Family

