



My name is Jennifer Fielder. Thank you for inviting me to speak today on behalf of the American Lands Council – America’s advocates for better access, health, and productivity on public lands.



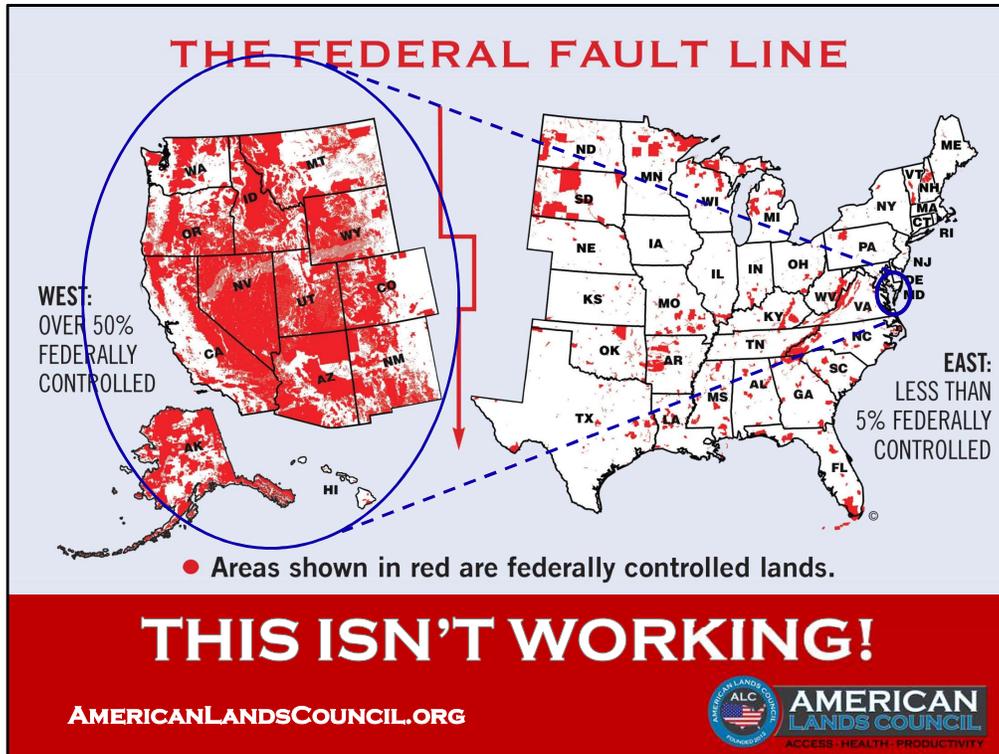
I live in beautiful Northwest Montana, where – like most Montanans – I enjoy the outdoors almost every day.

I also serve in the Montana State Senate, and Chair our Fish and Game Committee.

My senate district includes millions of acres of federally controlled lands.

Major federal land policies -- like the one you are considering today – affect the people who live near these lands, and our environment, in deeply profound

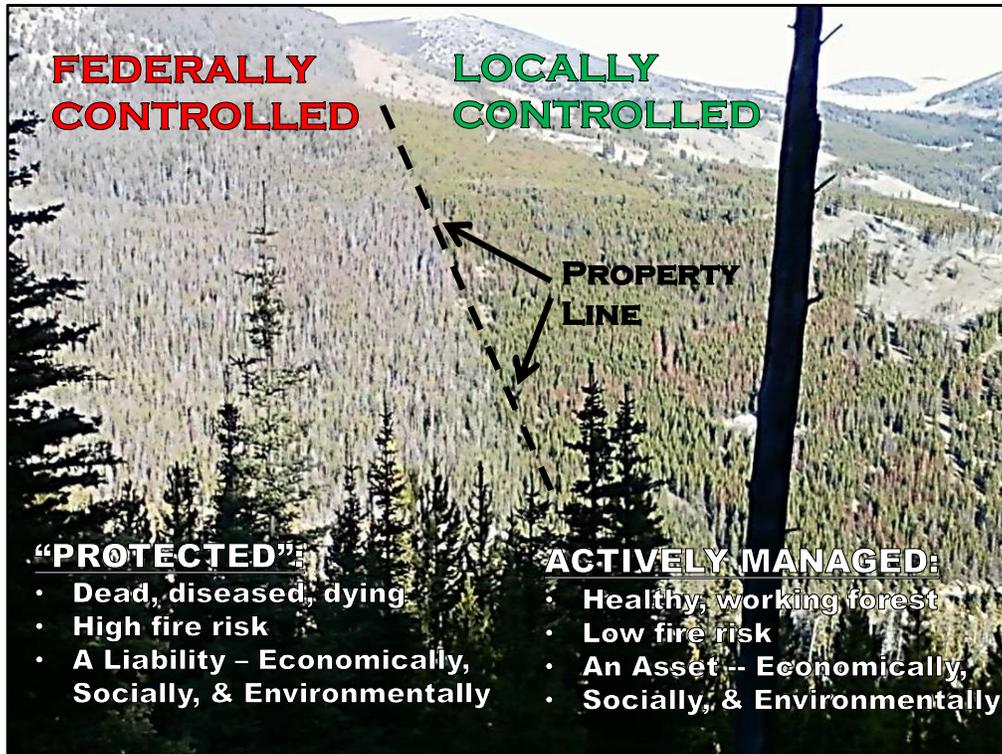
ways.



I would like to call your attention to this map which shows federally controlled lands in red. Half of ALL land in the western United States is controlled by Washington DC.

Most of the people who make the decisions for western lands don't even live there.

This great imbalance isn't fair, isn't constitutional, and isn't working!



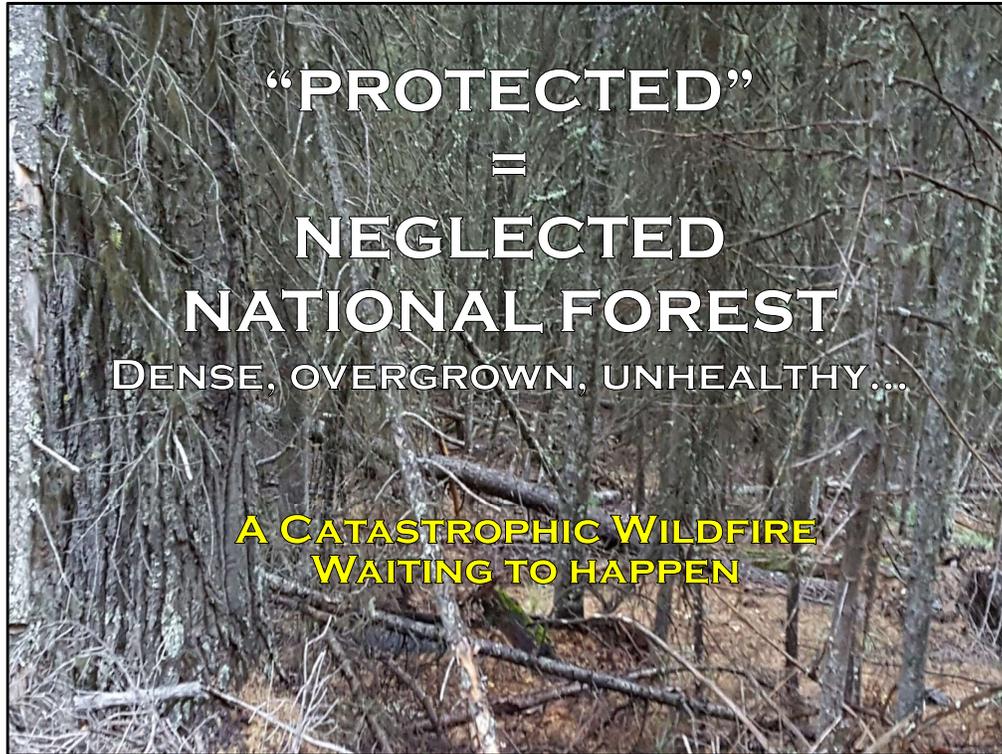
Here is just ONE example. See this forest? There’s a property line there in the middle. Guess which half of this forest is federally controlled?

The left side. The right side is locally controlled.

Due to restrictive federal policies, the left half is dead, diseased, and dying. The fire risk is high, and it is a disaster – economically, socially, AND environmentally.

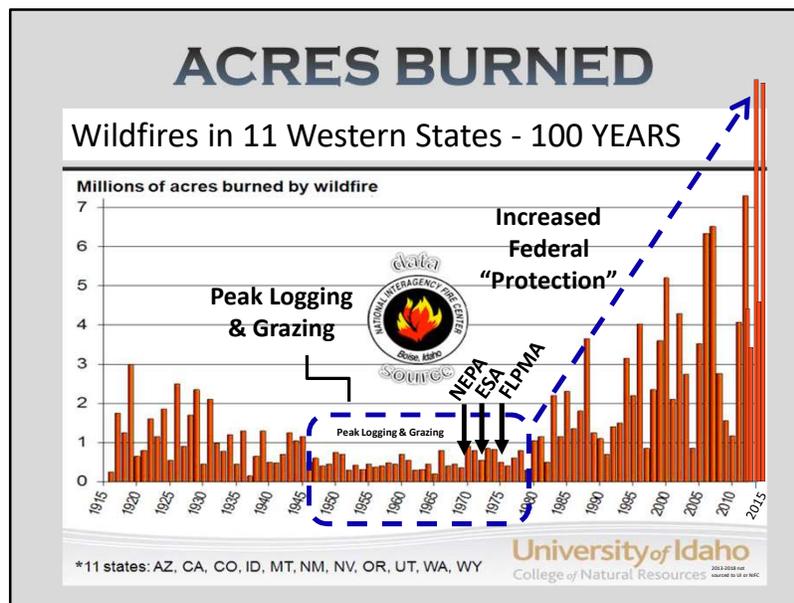
In contrast, the right half is an actively managed,

working forest. The fire risk is low, and it is a benefit -- economically, socially, and environmentally.



This is a close-up of a typical, “hands-off, don’t touch” federal forest.

The untended vegetation is so thick, the trees have literally choked each other to death, and become perfect timber for a catastrophic wildfire.



This chart shows the total acres burned over the last hundred years in the western “federal land states”.

From the 1950’s thru the 1970’s logging and grazing were prevalent, and fewer than a million acres burned per year.

But after major restrictive federal policies were enacted in the 1970’s, vegetative fuel loads have built up and it is now not unusual to see record setting years of 8, 9, 10 million acres burned.

This sad legacy of perhaps well-intentioned, but oft-misguided federal land policies is a leading factor in the destruction of our environment.

CONSEQUENCES OF FEDERAL CONTROL -- IN THEIR OWN WORDS --

“The selected alternative will limit our ability as resource managers to respond to fire, wind throw, insects and disease, and to provide timber or other commodities.”



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UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE

Kootenai & Idaho Panhandle National Forest Plans, 2013

Page 34, Record of Decision, USFS Forest Plan Amendments - Motorized Access Management
Within the Selkirk & Cabinet/Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone.



www.AmericanLandsCouncil.org

Here is the conclusion of a typical federal land management plan produced after a decade of navigating EXISTING restrictive federal policies.

Keep in mind, this plan will govern millions of acres of federal lands for the next 2 decades.

Of all the choices they could have made, the United States Forest Service selected the option that will, QUOTE: *“limit our ability as resource managers to respond to fire, wind throw, insects and disease, and to provide timber or other commodities.”*

And as a result of plans like this...

FEDERAL FIRES

In the last 30 years
the federal government has:

- 1) Reduced timber harvest by 70%
- 2) Eliminated 1,000's of miles of access roads and trails
- 3) Allowed forests and range lands to become overgrown and inaccessible, feeding the uncontrollable spread of catastrophic wildfires...

...in the last 30 years, the federal government has reduced timber harvest by 70%; eliminated thousands of miles of access roads and trails; and allowed federal lands to become overgrown and inaccessible -- feeding the uncontrollable spread of catastrophic wildfires.



This so-called Wildlife Corridors Act may be the most devastating legislation ever, as it will tie up federal lands AND waters like we have never seen before -- further compounding the federal regulatory nightmare that for decades has produced dirty air...



...polluted water...



...decimated wildlife...

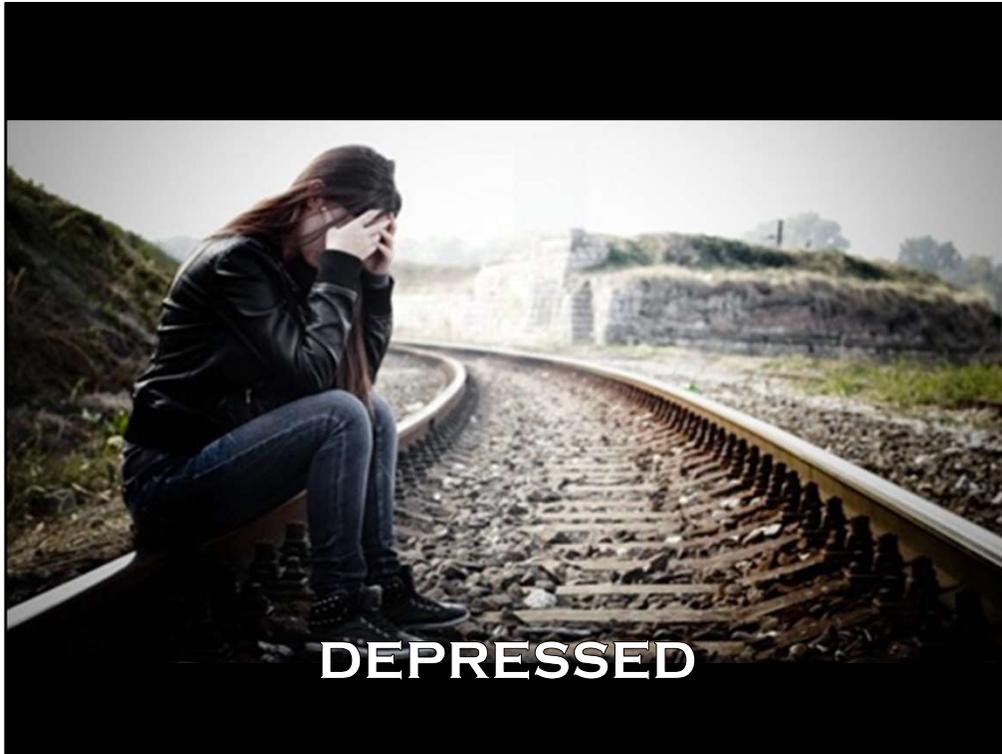


BLOCKED ACCESS

...blocked-off access...



....and economically devastated,



...depressed...



...unsafe communities.



But, instead of catastrophic wildfires, polluted water, and decimated wildlife... there is a better path!



If you really want to protect the environment, work with us to free the lands from federal bureaucracy, and commence thoughtful, incremental transfer of federal lands to willing states.



The Transfer of Federal Lands to willing states is the only solution big enough to secure better access, health, and productivity on our lands in the decades to come.

-- and with your help, it can be done!

Supplemental Slides



Canada transferred regulatory and management authority to their provincial and territorial governments, and found, “You tend to get better decisions when they are made by people closer to the subject matter.” – Martin Goldney, Representative of the Government of the North West Territories.

HAS IT BEEN DONE BEFORE? YES!



Has It Been Done Before? YES! Many times!

TODAY, western states manage 40 million acres of state-owned public lands -- most of which were transferred from the federal government the states -- as a condition of our statehood enabling acts.

The natural resources on State lands fund local schools, roads, and other public facilities. And for over 100 years, the states have been very successful at producing revenues from state lands while protecting the environment.

But in 1976 the U.S. Congress passed the Federal Land

Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) – which said they would start keeping the land in federal ownership -- but promised they would be good stewards of it.

Since then, conditions on federal lands have worsened.

CAN STATES AFFORD IT?

YES!

REVENUE PER DOLLAR SPENT

Entity	Revenue per Dollar Spent
U.S. Government	\$0.73
Idaho	\$2.80
Montana	\$8.65
Arizona	\$13.94

ON AVERAGE, STATES OUT-PERFORM THE FEDS BY 10:1

ALC AMERICAN LANDS COUNCIL
ACCRE - HEALTH - PRODUCTIVITY

For every \$1 spent on active vegetation management: \$15 can be saved on wildfire fighting, and \$500 can be saved in total losses.

Data Source: Mowery & Grey, "The Total Cost of Wildfire." 2013.

Can states afford to keep public lands public? YES!

When it comes to public land management, on average, western states out-perform the federal government by 10:1 or better. In fact for every \$1 the federal government spends “managing” land, they LOSE about 25 cents.

Efficient management of multiple uses -- like logging, grazing, mining, energy, and recreation -- allow state-owned public lands to generate positive cash flow, be better cared-for, and provide social AND environmental benefits.



Who knows and cares about our western lands more than the people who live right here in the west?



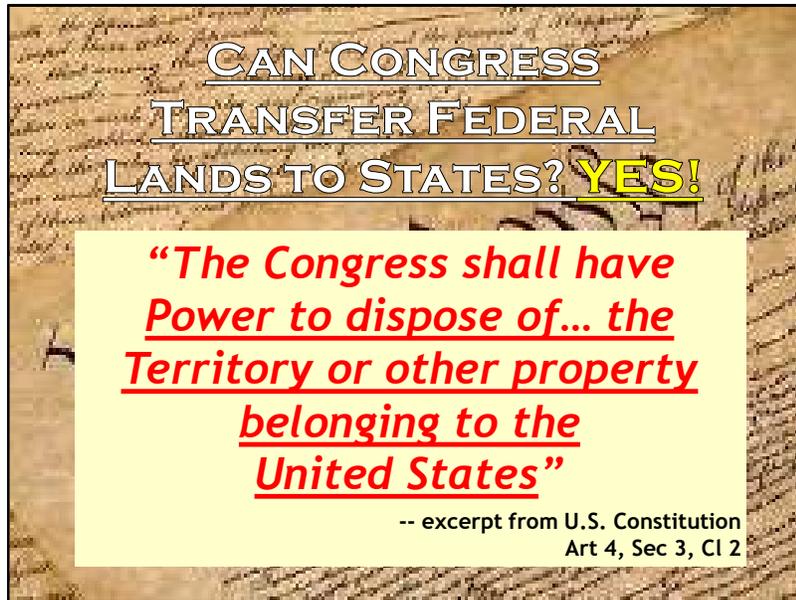
American Lands Council proposes a National State Lands Act to allow for thoughtful, orderly incremental transfer of federal lands to States.

NATIONAL STATE LANDS ACT
PROPOSED SAFEGUARDS FOR SUCCESS



The proposed act includes important safeguards to ensure the program is successful.

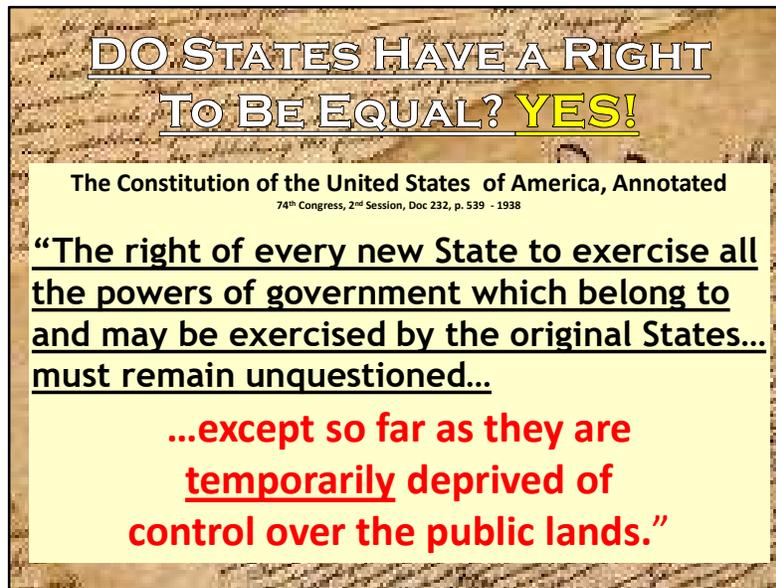
1. ALLOW STATES TO GO AT THEIR OWN PACE
2. REQUIRE KEEP IT PUBLIC PROMISES TO BE KEPT
3. REQUIRE STATE COORDINATION WITH COUNTY
4. PRESERVE MINERAL, GRAZING & WATER RIGHTS
5. RESOURCE REVENUES PAY FOR MANAGEMENT
6. STATE & LOCAL BUDGETS GET A BOOST



Can Congress Transfer federal lands to States?

Yes! -- The answer is in 4-3-2, also known as the Property Clause, of the United States Constitution which says, “The Congress shall have the Power to dispose of the territory or property belonging to the United States.”

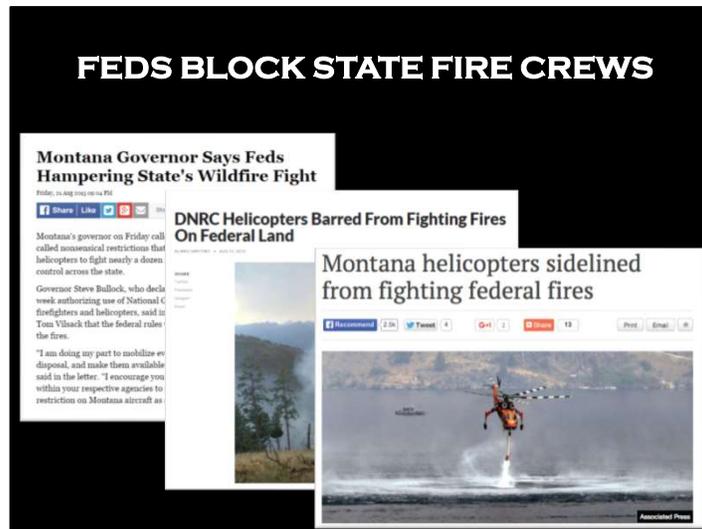
NOTE: Nowhere in the Constitution does it say the federal government can keep the lands forever and ever.



Do States have a right to be treated equal? YES!

And on the question of public lands, the U.S. Constitution Annotated of 1924 and 1938 (official congressional publications) said,

“The right of every new State to exercise all the powers of government which belong to and may be exercised by the original States... must remain unquestioned ...except so far as they are **temporarily** deprived of control over the public lands.”



Did you know the feds have actually blocked state fire crews from putting fires out?

For example, in Montana, our state helicopters travel faster and carry more water than the federal ones do, and we have a perfect safety record.

But when fires broke out in the forests in Montana, our State crews were ordered to stand down. Why? Our state helicopters are not on the federal government's list of approved equipment!

This is yet another example of what we call bureau-CRAZY!

DESTROYING HOMES, HABITAT & COMMUNITIES



Federal policies are too often destroying homes, habitat, watersheds, and communities



Filling our air with deadly toxins...



And burning millions of animals alive every single year.

This little bear cub was one of the lucky ones. She was rescued.



But this beautiful buck couldn't out run wildfire...



...neither could this mountain lion.



If big game animals are getting caught up in these wildfires, what do you think is happening to all the little ones?