

Two years prior to Lake Tahoe's 'Angorra' fire I posted the following article on www.tahoelakefront.com; which was picked up by KCRA in Sacramento and resulted in an interview after the event

**New Orleans, Katrina and the
Lake Tahoe Basin:
What is the Lesson ... and Are *We* Paying Attention ?**

In my youth I worked my way through college and law school as a merchant seaman. My usual run was from Philadelphia to the Mississippi River delta ports. I experienced Hurricane Camille, the last devastating storm to strike the Louisiana and Mississippi Gulf Coast. I lived and worked with the coastal natives of the area. The 'inevitability' of this kind of catastrophe in New Orleans was well-accepted among people who knew the Gulf weather and water. Below-sea-level New Orleans has always "been aware" that a devastating hurricane was bound to happen. Now the lack of preparation and foresight is being roundly criticized.

The Lake Tahoe Basin has been identified as one of the most endangered fire areas in California. Some facts:

Wildfires in California are becoming larger and more destructive than anything we have ever seen before... the average California fire today is twice the size of the average fire in 1980

"Monster fires", like the San Bernardino and San Diego fires in 2003, are something very different than the smaller, beneficial fires that occur in 'healthy' forests.

The overcrowding of Tahoe's forests have been greatly accelerated and worsened by bark beetle infestation.

A healthy forest has approx. 66 trees per acre ... our forests are clogged with 450 to 500 per acre.

John Muir wrote that in a Sierra forest "you can gallop a horse without hitting a tree" ... it is now difficult to even walk through a Tahoe forest.

A crown fire on a scale very likely in the Tahoe Basin would create an erosion catastrophe. These 'monster' fires sterilize soil and leave behind water-resistant hard pack clay that could undo years of clarity projects in a few days ... brush land, not forest, grows back in such a devastated environment.

Dr Thomas Bonnicksen, a renown forest management consultant and a team of 21 experts were commissioned to make recommendations to San Bernardino and San Diego Counties. They were ignored. Wildfires are predictable and preventable Dr. Bonnicksen is offering solutions that could protect Lake Tahoe.

This story is continued in a fascinating DVD that is offered as a free rental in the Video Stop (Tahoe City) and Video Maniacs (Incline Village) ... it is called "Solving the Wildfire Crisis" or ask me in the reply card and I'll get you a loaner.