



Between Two Fires: A Fire History of Contemporary America

Stephen J. Pyne

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From a fire policy of prevention at all costs to today's restored burning, *Between Two Fires* is America's history channeled through the story of wildland fire management. Stephen J. Pyne tells of a fire revolution that began in the 1960s as a reaction to simple suppression and single-agency hegemony, and then matured into more enlightened programs of fire management. It describes the counterrevolution of the 1980s that stalled the movement, the revival of reform after 1994, and the fire scene that has evolved since then.

Pyne is uniquely qualified to tell America's fire story. The author of more than a score of books, he has told fire's history in the United States, Australia, Canada, Europe, and the Earth overall. In his earlier life, he spent fifteen seasons with the North Rim Longshots at Grand Canyon National Park.

In *Between Two Fires*, Pyne recounts how, after the Great Fires of 1910, a policy of fire suppression spread from America's founding corps of foresters into a national policy that manifested itself as a costly all-out war on fire. After fifty years of attempted fire suppression, a revolution in thinking led to a more pluralistic strategy for fire's restoration. The revolution succeeded in displacing suppression as a sole strategy, but it has failed to fully integrate fire and land management and has fallen short of its goals.

Today, the nation's backcountry and increasingly its exurban fringe are threatened by larger and more damaging burns, fire agencies are scrambling for funds, firefighters continue to die, and the country seems unable to come to grips with the fundamentals behind a rising tide of megafires. Pyne has once again constructed a history of record that will shape our next century of fire management. *Between Two Fires* is a story of ideas, institutions, and fires. It's America's story told through the nation's flames.

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