

To the Editor:

RE: "On Fringe of Forests, Homes and Wildfires Meet" (New York Times front page, June 26):

The unrelenting sprawl of suburbia into wildfire-prone areas, known as the Wildland-Urban Interface, has morphed wildland firefighting into "*W.U.I.-land* firefighting."

Wildland firefighters are now severely constrained from using prescribed fires and backfires to safely prevent and suppress wildfires, and have been forced into the perilous position of standing between the *immovable objects* of flammable homes and the *unstoppable forces* of severe wildfires — a position that is increasingly becoming both *futile and fatal*.

Ultimately, firefighters' lives and rural homes will be better protected when homes are located, designed, built and maintained to be able to resist wildfire damage with *minimal or no need* for human intervention.

This is entirely technically feasible, and is necessary if communities located within fire-prone landscapes are to become sustainable.

Timothy Ingalsbee, Ph.D.
Eugene, Ore., June 27, 2007

The writer is executive director of Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics and Ecology.