

LOGS: Towering slash piles will be burned in about 15 months

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log decks and slash piles lay alongside Highway 20 with a cleaned-up forest surrounding it. The log decks stacked high alongside the strategically placed slash piles are now for sale and on auction commission. On Tuesday, June 25 in Bend, sealed bids were to be opened for the sale of the timber after a 10-day advertisement was run. More information on the timber sale including maps and general information regarding the wood can be found on the Forest Service government website.

Reid told *The Nugget* that the use of the herbicide had no effect on the inner portion of the wood.

“The concentration of the herbicide is in the branches and it is not in the heartwood,” Reid said. “We are working with the Oregon Department of Agriculture in running analysis on the heartwood.”

The wood in the selling process was determined to be only used for lumber — no chipping or mulching of the wood as that could potentially spread trace amounts of the herbicide back into the ground.

“A warning did go out in the prospectus as to what this wood was cut down for, but given that it will mostly be used for lumber, there is no risk to humans from it,” said Reid.

The money from the timber sale returns back into the treasury, and some of it will

be allotted to the betterment of the area that was previously treated.

“The money we gain back is not a 1:1 ratio in paying for the project, it will return back into various trusts and treasury for other treatment projects and forest betterment,” Reid explained. “It does pay partially for the initial service contract on the project so it pays for parts of the project, but not directly.”

Some of the first treatments will be noxious weed treatment.

“I am really proud of the employees on their work and efficiency with this project ... — Ian Reid

As for the massive slash piles placed next to each log deck, the plan is to burn them on site.

There are around 10 piles, one at each set of log decks. The piles were strategically placed so they could be burned without causing too much harm to the surrounding forest. Forest Service crews plan to burn the piles once they have been cured, after they sit where they are for about 15 months. The plan is to let them dry out over the summer and then once winter hits with enough moisture in the air and snow on the ground, to light up the massive piles.

“It is likely that there is still trace amounts of the herbicide on the branches, and as they sit there, it may seep

into new seedlings but they are placed at disturbed areas anyways,” Reid said.

In regards to the effect of burning the piles, the herbicide has no effect on humans and breathing the air is no worse than breathing normal wood smoke from a prescribed burn or wildfire; there are no harmful effects, Reid noted.

“The label on the herbicide states that burning is an allowable disposal method,” he said.

The Forest Service plans to keep working with ODA, researchers at OSU and Purdue University on analyzing the effects on growth of the seedlings in the affected area. They are conducting bio-chemical analysis and are committed to finding the residual risk.

“Our belief is if we keep following the precautions of the ODA that we will be able to determine the effects and further our research,” Reid said. “I am really proud of the employees on their work and efficiency with this project, and we plan to continue working on cleaning up the forest and seeing the further effects the herbicide had on the forest.”

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