

New timber sales delayed by plant and animal surveys

Some species appear only every three to five years, making surveys difficult

EUGENE — Federal timber sales are being delayed until next year in Oregon and Washington because surveys of old growth

forests for 33 rare plants and animals have not been completed.

Most of the species are fungi, snails and obscure plants that often appear only once every three to five years because of their irregular reproductive cycles.

"The problem is, we have 33 species that we don't even know

how to identify, or they show up only sporadically," said Greg Cox, head of a joint federal agency effort to develop guidelines for how to survey forests for rare plants and animals.

The delay by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management is yet another blow to a

logging program that already has been slashed by 80 percent under President Clinton's Northwest forest plan.

A Forest Service official said Tuesday that timber sales should start getting approval again by February, but any further delays could have a dramatic impact on

sales in the 1999 federal fiscal year, which begins Thursday.

Under Clinton's forest plan, agencies were supposed to develop these so-called "survey and manage" guidelines by Oct. 1. But the agencies won't have guidelines for 33 species by Thursday's deadline.

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