

Woods Report

Slash as an energy source

Oregon Forest Industries report

Once a stand of timber is harvested, the land is left covered with a considerable amount of wood debris. Different people look at this debris in different ways.

The Oregon Department of Forestry, concerned about forest fires, looks at the wood debris as fuel for a potential forest fire which could rapidly spread to neighboring stands of timber.

The forester in charge of timber production views the debris, or slash as it is called, as an impediment to planting the next stand of trees.

The public sees this logging debris as a possible source of energy to provide heat and electricity, or as a raw material to meet the demand for wood products or at the very least, a source of firewood.

These different views all are important to timber production and the management of Oregon's forests. But before discussing them some details about slash are in order.

When a logging operation is completed, there is an average of 50 to 200 tons per acre of wood material left on the site. This material is called slash.

Slash includes debris left on the ground after logging such as limbs, tops and broken and rotten pieces of wood. It also includes debris which was already on the ground before logging such as fallen trees, rotten wood and limbs. Slash also includes non-commercial tree species and brush such as vine maple, red alder, ceanothus and bigleaf maple.

These slash materials create problems in forestry. As mentioned earlier, it is a fire hazard. The Oregon Department of Forestry in most cases requires the fire hazard to be reduced. Present practice is to burn the debris under controlled conditions.

Fire lines are constructed around the perimeter so the fire does not spread to adjacent bids. Large crews are on hand with fire fighting equipment.

The controlled fire cannot be ignited until the Department of Forestry checks atmospheric conditions to assure the smoke will not enter populated areas. That go ahead to burn from the state is radioed out to the State Forestry Inspector on the site and the fire is immediately set. This smoke management program has been very effective in avoiding smoke problems.

The controlled burn prepares the site for reforestation. The timber manager wants to burn the slash whether it is a fire hazard or not. The fire leaves a clean site with brush and debris removed and the thick layer of organic material called "duff" burned down to just inches. The layer of duff can be as thick as three feet.

Tree planters can easily move through the area after burning and plant the seedlings in organic soil. This post-burning environment gives the tree a great advantage and assures rapid growth. In many cases the controlled burn gives the seedling a big enough jump on brush to avoid the necessity of later using chemicals to control competing brush.

Even though slash burning is used as a step toward reforesting the logged-over land, the public is still concerned about burning wood fiber. In western Oregon alone about 7 to 10 million tons of slash are created each year. The question in the public's mind is, "Can't this wood be used for something?"

The technology for turning wood into energy is not the problem. Many lumber

and plywood mills are partially operated by their own sawdust and other wood waste. The Eugene Water and Electric Board has been using wood waste to produce steam and electricity since 1940.

Albany has a plant capable of converting any organic material into a crude oil. Brownsville has a plant which turns sawdust and bark into a compressed pellet which burns like coal.

But these plants are not economical when using slash collected from logging sites and trucked to the plant. Present plants are using wood wastes from nearby mills.

Present logging equipment is designed to harvest and transport long logs. We are not able to gather small pieces of wood from steep logging sites and bring them to a road for loading with our present equipment.

An entirely new set of logging equipment would be needed. The price for this would be tremendous. These odd shape pieces of slash, if brought to a road, would be difficult to load or stack on a truck. Slash would most likely have to be converted to chips at the logging site for hauling. Again transporting the material to processing or energy plants would be expensive.

The most optimistic future for slash is probably in wood products. Large pieces of slash can now be used for pulp and paper production when the market dictates.

When the housing market is up, there is a large demand for lumber. Lumber mills create additional sawdust and other wood residues which can be used to make pulp and paper. So when the housing market is up, pulp needs are supplied by mill waste, not slash.

However, when the housing market slows down, sawmill waste does not meet the demands from the pulp plants. When this occurs, logging operations start hauling wood material to the landing that is usable for pulp, but not lumber or plywood. This situation occurred in 1974.

It is important to understand that the material which was logged for pulp in 1974 was only the large pieces of slash which our present logging equipment can handle.

Besides energy and wood products, the other possible use for slash is firewood. Some people believe logging companies should haul slash up to roads so firewood cutters can utilize the wood. Logging is a very competitive industry and only the most efficient companies survive. Using \$200,000 worth of equipment and a crew of 8 to 10 well-paid loggers to gather a firewood for the public is presently a money-losing proposition.

There are many other problems with allowing firewood cutters to fell valuable timber trees or cut their firewood from stacks of logs worth hundreds of dollars each.

If someday economical uses are found for slash, it will not eliminate the need for controlled burns to prepare the site for reforestation. Studies have shown that if all the slash is removed down to pieces four feet long and four inches in diameter, there will still be tons of debris left on each acre. The brush and top layer of duff will still need to be removed.

A great deal of research is going on within industry, at universities, and elsewhere to find new uses for slash which are practical and economically sound. But the technology to harvest and transport slash from the forest must first be found before the material can be utilized. And no matter what uses are found, the need for slash burning will remain.

rules in meeting the standards as best management practices in a technical work study directed by Dr. George Brown of Oregon State University School of Forestry. In addition there was an assessment made of forest practices in meeting these standards on federal lands. Regional forest practices committees of the Oregon State Board of Forestry also reviewed current rules for specificity.

In all there were 15 public meetings giving concerned citizens and organizations an opportunity to comment on the rules.

The review led to a number of substantive changes in forest practices rules including the rules governing the application of 2,4,5-T and Silvex, approved by the Board of Forestry last September. These rules remain as part of the Forest Practices Act even though there has been a suspension of the use of 2,4,5-T and Silvex by EPA.

Chamber report

The first item of business at the March meeting of the Vernonia Chamber of Commerce was preparations for the annual Easter Egg Hunt. This will take place on Saturday, April 14th, at Anderson Park. The Hunt will start at 10:00 a.m. It was decided to split the park into four areas by age group: 0 to 3-year olds, 4 to 6-year olds, 7 to 10-year olds and 11 and up. Directors Marge Dunay and Agnes Wuest will chair the project. Mrs. Cris Krieger has agreed to be the Easter Bunny.

Next was a discussion of the souvenir mugs the Chamber has received. They are selling slowly, but sales should pick up with the coming of the better weather. Some local people have purchased the mugs, especially as gifts.

The petition allowing bingo for non-profit organizations which the Chamber sponsored will be placed on the April 3rd ballot.

The Jamboree Parade was discussed,

and it was reported that the replacement parts for the hobby horses in Anderson Park had been received. The toys had been heavily vandalized, and it will take much work to repair them. A work party was organized.

Under New Business, the members at the meeting voted to conduct a telephone campaign on Monday, April 2nd, to encourage people to vote the next day.

The parking problem in downtown Vernonia was discussed. It was moved, seconded and passed to ask the City to make a parking survey with the Chamber's help.

Finally, the Secretary was instructed to send a letter of encouragement to the electronics firm that had advertised its consideration of Vernonia as a possible plant site.

The next meeting of the Vernonia Chamber of Commerce will be Tuesday, April 10, 8:00 p.m. in the West Oregon Electric meeting room. The public is cordially invited to attend.

Residents warned of herbicide use

Pacific Northwest residents have been warned to neither use nor dispose of any lawn and garden Silvex herbicides they may have on hand.

They should be stored in safe places until further notice, agricultural chemicals specialists have cautioned.

Use of herbicides containing either Silvex or 2,4,5-T, except on rangelands and rice fields, was suspended March 1 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency after a study linked them with miscarriages in Oregon women.

Disposal of the herbicides will contribute to the very problem the EPA is trying to avoid by suspending their use, Washington State University's Richard Maxwell warned.

"It is illegal to use these herbicides," Maxwell said "And it would be very irresponsible for someone who doesn't agree with the EPA suspension to use up any of the suspended herbicides that they may have on hand."

At the moment, Maxwell said, there is no safe method of disposing of them. "For heaven's sake, don't flush them down the toilets or drains into sewer systems or septic tanks," Maxwell said. "That would contaminate river, lakes or ground water."

Maxwell said the only safe procedure at the moment is to inspect supplies of garden and yard chemicals containing Silvex and "set them aside, in a safe place, and wait until the EPA develops disposal methods."

Oregon residents were alerted that the following herbicides are banned and should be stored in safe places:

Ortho Weed and Feed 25-3-7
Webfoot Brand Weed and Feed 8-4-4
Fred Meyer Turf King Organic Based Weed and Feed
Amchem Weedone Granular Lawn Weed Control
K-Mart Broadleaf Weed Killer
Ortho Weed-B-Gon Lawn Weed Killer
Amchem Weedone Chickweed Control.

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'78 Cilica GT Liftback 5 Speed.....	\$6495
'76 Toyota SR5 5 Speed.....	\$3495
'75 Torino Squire Wagon Well Equipped, Low Miles.....	\$3295

Trucks:

'78 Chev ½ Ton 4x4 Auto, P.S., Stereo, very few miles.....	\$7695
'78 Chev ½ Ton P.U. Short Wide Box, 6 Cylinder, 3 Speed.....	\$4995
'77 GMC ½ Ton 4x4 8 Cylinder, Automatic, Power Steering & Air.....	\$6495
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'76 Chev ½ Ton P.U. Many Extras, Automatic Trans, Power Steering.....	\$4995
'75 Chev ½ Ton 4x4 One of the sharpest anywhere - Less than 40,000 miles, Automatic Transmission, Power Steering, Deluxe Canopy, Special Wheels & Tires.....	\$5495
'75 Ford ½ Ton Long Wide Box, Automatic Trans, Power Steering, Specially Priced.....	\$3495
'73 GMC ½ Ton P.U. Well Equipped.....	\$2895
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Forestry rules approved

Oregon's forest practices rules have been approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as the forestry element for the water quality management plan for state and private forest lands in Oregon.

This means the forest practices rules are the first in the nation to meet federal standards in controlling sources of water pollution from forest management activities under the federal Clean Water Act. The rules were developed by the Oregon State Board of Forestry in cooperation with the State Department of Environmental Quality, State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the forest industry, and other cooperating organizations.

This approval completes a process that began in mid-1976. This effort includes an assessment of the current forest practices