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Judge closes post-fire salvage on BLM tract

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) - A federal judge has blocked further logging on the Timber Basin timber sale near Prineville.

Three environmental groups claimed the Bureau of Land Management failed to consider scientific evidence documenting environmental damage from post-fire salvage logging. The groups claimed the BLM should have considered rehabilitating the area without salvage logging.

U.S. District Judge Ancer Haggerty blocked further logging earlier this week.

BLM spokesman Chris Strebbig said the agency was reviewing the decision.

An initial review by BLM forestry specialists indicates the usable felled or burned timber can be logged, he said.

The project involved 4.5 million board feet of timber burned last summer and cut 2.5 million board feet of green timber in a 1,200 -acre area.

DR Johnson timber company began work as soon as it got the sale on Jan. 10. In just over a month the company logged about 60 percent of the timber, the environmental groups said.

Haggerty apparently protects the remaining green trees, said **Chris Winter**, an attorney for the environmentalists. The judge had refused to intervene earlier, ruling that the plaintiffs "fell short of standards necessary" for the order.

The plaintiffs were the Cascade Resources Advocacy Group, the Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project and the Northwest Environmental Defense Center.

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