

# **No salvage logging planned for Park Creek, Alice Creek Fire areas**

Roger Dey  
BVD Editor

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Despite the fires that swept through the hills near Lincoln last summer, there isn't expected to be any salvage logging in the burned areas near here.

Lincoln District Ranger Michael Stansberry said they found that a total of only about 200 acres in the Park and Alice Creek fire areas were available for possible salvage after excluding areas such as Inventoried Roadless Areas, regions with soil conditions that aren't conducive to logging operations and so forth. By comparison, a pair of salvage logging operations being considered on the Ninemile Ranger District are more than 2,000 acres.

Stansberry pointed out that, even within the areas that could be logged, it's not clear how many of the trees there are burned beyond salvage value. Additionally, since most of those 200 acres were within the Park Creek Fire area, some of them were in areas in which the timber had already been sold as part of the Stonewall Vegetation Project.

Stansberry said salvage logging and the related requirements of the Environmental Protection Act are being looked at regionally, and with the Rice Ridge and Lolo Creek fires burning such large areas, most of the potential for salvage is in the Lolo National Forest.

"Helena-Lewis & Clark didn't really fit into having enough available to fit into the salvage," he said.

Rather than go to the effort of developing small-scale salvage projects, Stansberry said they opted instead to concentrate their efforts on something expected to have more impact in the long run.

"It just made sense to put our efforts, our time and energy toward continuing to speak to the court about the Stonewall Project, so we can get that going," he said.

At last Friday's Government Day meeting, Stansberry said they are also moving forward with the Willow Creek Farm Bill Project in the Dalton Mountain area and expect to have a signed decision around the end of March.

However, with the threat of another federal government shutdown looming Feb. 8, Stansberry told the BVD the time frames for both the Stonewall and Willow Creek projects could be impacted if that comes to fruition.

"Currently, I have folks working hard on finalizing their reports for Willow Creek in February. Once they are done with those assessments, we will move on to Stonewall," he said. "Any delays will just put us back that amount of time in both projects. Our Office of General Council have excepted employees, so likely court cases will continue to proceed."

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