

Feds allows logging after huge California wildfire

August 28 2014, by Scott Smith



In this Sept. 25, 2013 file photo, Scott Small, and other National Forest Service crew members work to restore terrain that was bulldozed for a firebreak in the battle against Rim Fire on a nordic ski trail along Dodge Ridge in the Stanislaus National Forest, near Tuolumne City, Calif. The Forest Service says it will release a final decision Wednesday, Aug. 27, 2014, on how much timber to log from the Sierra Nevada's largest wildfire in recorded history. Last year's Rim Fire burned 400 square miles including parts of Yosemite. A debate has since raged about sending burned and dead trees to lumber mills or leave them and let nature take its course. (AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli, File)

The U.S. Forest Service has decided to allow logging on nearly 52 square miles of the Sierra Nevada burned last year in a massive California wildfire, a move contested by environmentalists.

The decision released Wednesday comes one year after the Rim Fire scorched more than 400 square miles, including parts of Yosemite National Park. The blaze was the largest on record for the Sierra and the state's third largest wildfire.

Environmentalists had argued against logging the land, saying the blackened trees and new growth beneath them create vital habitat for dwindling birds such as [spotted owls](#) and black-backed woodpeckers. Supporters of the timber industry said logging would pay for replanting and restoring the forest and allow the public to use the land.

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Citation: Feds allows logging after huge California wildfire (2014, August 28) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-08-feds-huge-california-wildfire.html>

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