

New Logging Style Boosts Eco-Scape

A small Missoula-based logging operation called Woodland Restoration Inc. is working on a project to thin about 50 acres of both private land and property owned by the National Wildlife Federation. The Arno brothers, who own the outfit, **practice a kind of thinning that is conservation-minded**, the Missoula, MT newspaper reports. "This isn't old-time traditional logging, and it's not about getting the cut out," they say. Today, about 98 percent of the work they do is on private land, said Matt Arno.

"People want to live by a safer forest that looks nice, too," Arno said, of this forest, which he described as overly dense. "If we waited another 10 years with the kind of beetle kill that we're seeing here right now, I don't think there would be much to work with," he said. The last time the forest in the Grant Creek area burned was about 1916. Since then, the widely spaced ponderosa pine forest has filled in with Douglas fir upstarts. In some places, open grasslands have slowly been overtaken by conifers, the newspaper says.

Private landowners in the Grant Creek area have been working to thin their forestlands to help prevent uncontrollable wildfire and to increase vigor in the trees that remain. **The cost of thinning forestlands can be very high**, Arno said, going for as much as \$2,000 an acre, but often close to \$200. Logs go to five different mills to obtain the best value for the landowners.