

# Timber salvaged from Four Corners Fire

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Photo courtesy of the Idaho Department of Lands.

**A logging truck hauls** *salvage timber from the Four Corners Fire area.*

**BY MAX SILVERSON**  
THE STAR-NEWS

About 4.5 million board feet of timber will be salvaged in the aftermath of the Four Corners Fire, which burned about 14,000 acres and threatened hundreds of homes last year near Cascade.

If dead and dying trees are not harvested, they deteriorate in place, potentially adding to future fire risks.

The project was authorized under the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA), a cooperative agreement that allows the U.S. Forest Service and Idaho Department of Lands to work together. In this case, the fire was on federal land including the Boise and Payette National Forests. The GNA allowed the forests to conduct the timber sale through processes usually only accessible by the Department of Lands.

“Given that the incident occurred in a fire area that presented great risks to nearby communities, leaving the dead and dying trees in the wildland urban interface would create untold future wildfire risks for those living in the area,” said Idaho Department of Lands GNA Bureau Chief Jon Songster.

Salvage sales are conducted soon after forest fires so that trees killed by fire can be sold. There is a short window after a fire when timber can still be used commercially.

“Fast tracking salvage operations ensures commercially valuable timber doesn’t rot and become worthless,” said George Nuesse, a GNA Program Specialist and forester with IDL.

The Four Corners Fire burned within feet of buildings along West Mountain Road and triggered evacuation orders for about 450 homes. No structures were lost thanks to round the clock efforts by over 800 firefighters supported by airplanes, helicopters and heavy machinery.

About 40% of the 390-acre Hazard Salvage timber sale has been harvested, with the project expected to finish in early 2024.

Income from the salvage sale totaled about \$165,000, which will be spent on restoration work within the Payette National Forest

Idaho Forest Group, based in Grangeville, was the highest bidder for the project. The lumber mill contracted Council-based High Country Logging to harvest the dead and dying trees.

Since the GNA was first authorized by Congress in 2015 the program has helped treat more than 14,000 acres of national forest land across Idaho and awarded \$10 million in service contracts. GNA has brought nearly 150 million board feet of timber to market in Idaho and helped employ an estimated 1,300 Idahoans, Songster said.