

Court allows USFS to log in Angora burn area

Updated July 25 at 1:30pm:

The U.S. Forest Service today was given approval by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to begin logging the Angora burn when judges denied an emergency injunction sought by conservation groups.

U.S. Forest Service officials intend this week to begin removing dead trees from the Angora burn area on the South Shore.

In documents filed Friday with the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, the agency says it is not required to ensure black-backed woodpeckers have adequate habitat in Lake Tahoe.

Earth Island Institute's John Muir Project and the Center for Biological Diversity say otherwise.

They have sought an injunction to prevent the \$3 million, 1,398-acre project from continuing after losing in U.S. District Court.

The Forest Service owns most of the 3,000-plus acres that were burned in the June 2007 Angora Fire. The federal agency contends removing a bulk of the trees will help prevent a future catastrophic fire and is the next step in its restoration plans.

The conservation groups believe preserving the woodpeckers' habitat needs to be addressed before the logging can begin – if ever.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report