

# Logger, USFS at odds about logs from Plumas County fire

By Jane Braxton Little, Sacramento Bee

GREENVILLE – Four years after the Moonlight fire roared through 65,000 acres of forest near this Plumas County town, the damage continues to sear the rural community.

A local logger is challenging the U.S. Forest Service about logs removed from the burned area.

How this dispute is resolved could affect the economic future of this timber-dependent town, and local leaders are waiting on the outcome of a meeting today between the logger and the agency's regional forester to try to resolve the issue.

Randy Pew, owner of the logging company that bought the charred timber, has criticized the Forest Service for "grossly erroneous estimates" of the quantity and quality of the material he harvested to sell to a local sawmill.

The agency overestimated the volume of marketable logs by as much as 90 percent, Pew said.

In August, he filed a claim with the Forest Service for partial damages totaling \$375,725. He plans to file another one claiming damages of an additional \$1 million or more, he said.

"Their estimates were off by thousands of truckloads of logs," said Pew. He was recognized by the Forest Resources Association as national outstanding logger of 2001.

Forest Service officials in California have rejected Pew's claim, citing loggers' responsibility to make their own estimates of the material available before submitting bids to buy it.

**Read the whole story**