

Logging companies must report water use

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

Logging companies in the Sierra Nevada and elsewhere in California will now be required to report how much water they extract from streams for dust control.

The California Board of Forestry adopted the emergency regulations in response to the drought. The action arose from concerns that very low water flows in many mountain streams could be further depleted by water extractions related to logging.

Logging companies commonly draw water from streams to fill tanker trucks, which then spray the water on dirt roads to control dust. Known as water drafting, the procedure is intended to protect animals, vegetation and people from the dust generated by heavy logging trucks.

Existing regulations require logging companies to report their water use only in streams where salmon or steelhead fish are present. They are also required to obtain stream alteration permits from the state Department of Fish and Wildlife. The new regulations, which became effective June 19, extend those requirements to all other streams in California.

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