



la, a forest ecologist with the World Wildlife Fund, explains how  
nders natural recovery after a forest fire. AP WIDE WORLD PHOTO

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Fertig, a forester in  
r-Siskiyou National  
rucial, he says,  
cuit burned  
f forest in "late suc-  
es," set aside to

protect species like the northern  
spotted owl that depend on big old-  
growth trees. According to Fertig,  
natural regeneration is unpre-  
dictable and could take up to 200  
years. Active salvage, replanting  
and thinning can speed up the  
process to 150 years.

Without salvage logging,  
argues Tom Lavagnino, a retired  
public affairs officer for the Biscuit  
Fire recovery effort, there would be  
no funding for forest restoration.  
About half of the money the Rogue  
River-Siskiyou National Forest  
brought in from Biscuit timber  
sales, \$4.4 million, is slated for  
local reforestation.

At the federal level, though, sal-  
vage logging might be a shaky eco-  
nomic proposition. A new World  
Wildlife Fund study puts the Forest  
Service's net loss from the Biscuit  
salvage project at \$9.3 million.

The debate over post-fire log-  
ging has come to a head as Rep.  
Greg Walden, R-Ore., and Rep.  
Brian Baird, D-Wash., are finaliz-  
ing the Forest Emergency  
Recovery and Research Act, a new  
bill that aims to speed forest recov-  
ery practices, such as salvage log-  
ging, in the wake of natural disas-  
ters. Regarding the bill, Randi  
Spivak, executive director of the  
American Lands Alliance, says, "I  
just hope that when members of  
Congress are voting, they pay close  
attention to (the scientific) facts."

BY SARAH GILMAN  
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Osama bin Laden may still roam  
free, but, by golly, **the U.S. is win-  
ning the war on eco-terrorism.** In  
Eugene, Ore., a federal grand  
jury indicted 11 alleged members  
of the Earth and Animal  
Liberation Fronts on terrorism  
charges. Attorney General  
Alberto Gonzales said that the  
indictments were for a "trail of  
destruction left by these defen-  
dants across the Western United  
States," including arson that  
destroyed a ski lodge in Vail,  
Colo., in 1998 (*HCN*, 11/9/98) and  
another fire, which destroyed the  
headquarters of an Oregon tim-  
ber company in 1999 (*HCN*,  
2/1/99).

The federal Bureau of Land  
Management has given six com-  
panies the **green light to investi-  
gate whether oil shale production  
is commercially feasible** (*HCN*,  
12/12/05). Under the pilot pro-  
gram, each company will receive  
160 acres of public land and  
options on an additional 4,960  
acres. Oil Shale Exploration and  
Oil-Tech will receive land near  
Vernal, Utah; Chevron,  
ExxonMobil, Shell and EGL  
Resources will receive land in  
northwest Colorado's Rio Blanco  
County. The BLM hopes to com-  
plete an environmental review of  
the projects by late spring.

**Wanna buy some raw Arizona  
desert?** It'll cost you more than a  
**million bucks an acre.** The Arizona  
State Land Department, which  
oversees more than 9 million  
acres, helps keep the state's  
school coffers full by auctioning  
off land for development (*HCN*,  
7/30/01). On Jan. 19, luxury-  
apartment builder Gray  
Development paid \$33.45 million  
for 32 acres of state land in north  
Phoenix.

—Matt Jenkins

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