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*Challenging the Lorax: A Study of Forest Health After Biomass Harvesting*

In Pagosa Springs, a five megawatt biomass power plant is in the process of being built. The fuel for the power plant will be forest plant matter. The power plant project harvested fuel from the San Juan National Forest using a whole tree removal method. This method removes all of the fuel from the treated area. This project explored how various forest conditions changed after whole tree removal biomass harvesting. This project measured various conditions in treated and untreated forests to determine if forest restoration objectives were met. Measurements indicating forest health were completed. The forest data was analyzed and compared to pre Euro American settlement conditions. The results showed that though the forest has not returned to pre-settlement conditions, it is much closer in the treated areas than the untreated areas. Therefore, whole tree removal is an effective way to improve forest health by working to return it to pre-settlement conditions.