

Up in smoke:

A
pr

By Bob Zybach
For the News-Times/
Lincoln County Leader

This is the first of a series of articles about logging slash and field burning smoke and its potential for health, environmental, and legal problems in western Oregon.

^{50%} Because of heavy seasonal rains and high quality ~~solids~~, this region contains some of the largest fuel concentrations per acre of managed land in the United States. The fuel is primarily living brush and crop residues that compete with commercial timber, agricultural, and recreational uses of the land. Unfortunately, the crops themselves are also potential fuels, and much effort is made to reduce their being damaged or

This week:

Public controversy and smoke toxicity

destroyed by fire. Effective methods of controlling the hazardous (and other negative) aspects of these fuels include the widespread uses of the ancient management tool of fire and the modern management tool of herbicides.

In the past 15 years my reforestation businesses have completed more than 25,000 acres of reforestation projects in Lincoln County. More than half of our operating areas have been treated with herbicides and fire. Crews work year around in these environments and usually comprise local residents, many of them native to the area. These crews have been directly involved in 12,000 to 15,000 acres of burning projects and have usually been the same individuals year after year; most of them dependent upon air and water systems potentially contaminated by commercial timber growing operations. It is their living and working environment that has been most affected by forest smoke. If

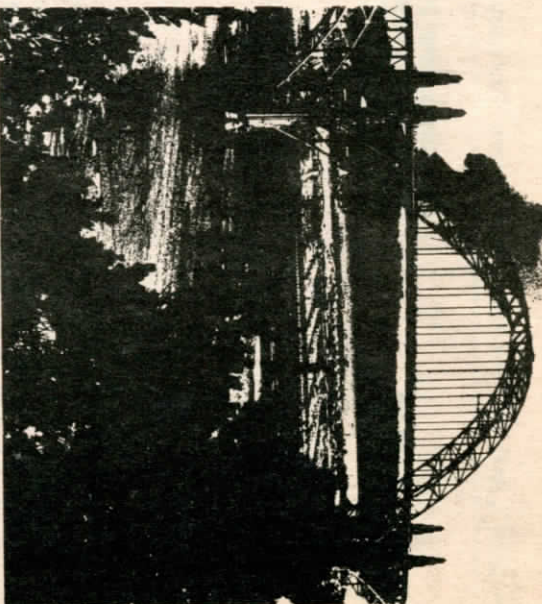


Photo by Dean Brickey

A PLUME OF SMOKE from a midsummer slash burn forms a huge cloud above the Yaquina Bay Bridge.