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Pesticides

12:01 AM FRI DECEMBER 20, 2013

Analysis Finds Increased Timber Company Herbicide Spray In Triangle Lake Area

By [JES BURNS](#) (@PEOPLE/JES-BURNS)

The timber industry practice of spraying herbicides on clear cuts to ensure replanted saplings can take hold has been cause for controversy in Oregon. Now the Eugene-based anti-pesticide group Beyond Toxics has released an analysis finding industry spraying in one rural community increased over a three year period.

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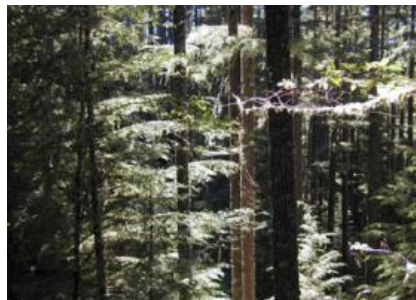
Executive Director Lisa Arkin:

Arkin: "These records became available as a result of what they call the Highway 36 Exposure Investigation. And this investigation was carried out by state and federal agencies in response to numerous complaints from residents in Western Lane County living around the Triangle Lake area about illnesses they were experiencing from what they felt was pesticide exposure from aerial herbicide spray."

The Department of Forestry says the spray records - both when sprays are going to happen and what is being sprayed - are a matter of public record. The department concedes that complaints have arisen because of the amount of time it takes to process requests.

The Beyond Toxics analysis covers spraying by several timber companies including Weyerhaeuser, Seneca Jones, and Roseburg between 2009 and 2011. It does not accuse timber companies of breaking the law. But it finds the amount of land sprayed in the Triangle Lake area increased 56% around the time people there began getting sick. The amount of the herbicides atrazine and 2,4-D used increased by 73 and 80 percent respectively. These are the same chemicals found in local resident's systems. Arkin says she was surprised to find the industry mixes these and other chemicals.

Arkin: "Which then creates mixes of chemicals in the environment and in these streams that serve our salmon habitat. And no one really knows what the synergistic effects of these chemicals are. Sometimes we found records that indicated that four or five chemicals were mixed in a single tank and sprayed over many acres of land."



http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/kfcc/files/201312/elliott_sunlight2.jpg

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Credit Oregon Department of Forestry

The law governing the timber industry called the Oregon Forest Practices Act.

Arkin: "This would include logging, spraying of herbicides, how trees are replanted – the whole shebang."

The law requires timber companies to ensure clear cuts are replanted and that those young trees succeed. That is accomplished through herbicide spraying in the first few years after replanting. The more land logged, the more land that is sprayed.

Beyond Toxics hopes their analysis will lead to reform several aspects of the law.

Arkin: "We will be talking with our state legislators, our governor and his staff, as well as our state agencies about why is it that Oregon's laws fall so far behind Washington. And our goal is to have Oregon meet or exceed Washington's Forest Practices Act."

She also says the analysis provides a sense of urgency to an emerging situation in the Gold Beach area.

Arkin: "Where over two dozen people have file health illness complaints to the Oregon Health Authority from a forestry pesticide spray. And our state agencies are not acting quick enough to help these people. It's been over 50 days and they've still no found out what was being sprayed."

Beyond Toxics is currently requesting those records in the hopes of conducting another herbicide analysis.

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Atrazine, oh brother. People need to record cancer and birth defects. Federal law makes it difficult to find these statistics.

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