Colstrip research summary

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MISSOULA--

Researchers from the University of Montana's School of Forestry have undertaken studies of stress physiology of conifer seedlings. The studies have three objectives:

--to measure plant stress and causes of mortality in conifer seedlings on reclaimed land,

--to evaluate ways of changing the seedlings' microclimate to alleviate temperature and water stress through shading, terrain grading, and other methods,

--to determine ways of "tinkering" with the seedlings' morphology and physiology so stress hardiness can be improved. Recent research indicates that while seedlings are being grown in nurseries or greenhouses prior to outplanting, adjustments can be made so the seedlings can better tolerate environmental stress.

The researchers at the School of Forestry are optimistic that conifer seedlings will be established and growing, although slowly, on the Colstrip mine sites.

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