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REPLANTING PONDEROSA PINE AT COLSTRIP

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MISSOULA--

Although native ponderosa pine stands are common in the Colstrip area, re-establishing pine stands on mine spoils is difficult. Before replanting is undertaken, researchers at the University of Montana School of Forestry are determining how ponderosa pine regenerate under natural conditions.

Several undisturbed pine stands on Western Energy properties were studied. The pine regeneration was located on north-facing aspects or in protective shade; there was no competition from other plants, such as grasses or forges. The stands were usually associated with rocky soils, and surviving seedlings had extremely long roots.

In October 1980, pine seed collected to represent local stands was test-planted on a mine spoil. Additional outplantings of local seed will be made in fall 1981 and spring 1982. Results of these studies, along with results of studies to find races of ponderosa pine with a high degree of drought resistance, will be pooled with the work of Drs. S. W. Running and Nellie Stark of the School of Forestry. Hopefully, these data will provide a practical basis for re-establishing ponderosa pine on Colstrip mine spoils.

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