

SLASH MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

Chipping, hauling, burning, habitat piles, and erosion control.

Slash treatment is part of the forestry prescription—not an afterthought. The best method depends on wildfire exposure, access, slope, material size, season, local rules, cost, and the ecological role of woody debris.



Plan how branches and tops will be handled before cutting begins so fuels, access, and soil protection remain under control.

● REMOVE OR PROCESS

CHIP, HAUL, OR UTILIZE

Moving or reducing material can simplify the site.

- ✓ Chip for transport, approved placement, or carefully managed on-site use.
- ✓ Haul to an accepted facility or use suitable wood for products or firewood.
- ✓ Keep accumulations away from structures and avoid deep chip layers around tree trunks.

● PILE WITH A PURPOSE

BURN OR HABITAT

Pile design should match the intended outcome.

- ✓ Build burn piles to local specifications and obtain required permits before ignition.
- ✓ Place piles away from crowns, structures, utilities, roads, and sensitive features.
- ✓ Use habitat piles only where added fuel and long-term settlement are acceptable.

● TREAT ON THE GROUND

LOP, SCATTER, OR STABILIZE

Distributed slash can protect soil when kept light and intentional.

- ✓ Cut branches and tops low so material contacts the ground and breaks down faster.
- ✓ Avoid continuous heavy mats that impede access, regeneration, or future fire response.
- ✓ Use contour-aligned material for erosion control only where properly designed and anchored.

✓ START HERE

- ✓ Estimate slash volume and identify usable wood before work begins.
- ✓ Check county, fire district, air-quality, HOA, and disposal requirements.
- ✓ Choose primary and backup methods for weather and access constraints.
- ✓ Budget for cleanup, transport, monitoring, and future maintenance.

▲ THE RAVEN WORKS PERSPECTIVE

A finished treatment should look and function finished. Thoughtful slash management reduces avoidable fuel, protects soil, supports safe access, and keeps useful material in the system where it belongs.

Plan before cutting. Match the method. Finish the treatment.

Sources: Colorado State Forest Service home-ignition-zone, pile-burning, and forestry BMP guidance.

◎ IN THE FIELD

Three questions help select a slash method:

WHERE WILL IT GO?

Resolve hauling routes, pile sites, chip placement, or reuse before material accumulates.

WHAT WILL IT CHANGE?

Every method affects fuel, soil, wildlife, access, appearance, and future work differently.

WHO APPROVES IT?

Burning and disposal requirements vary; confirm current local rules before acting.