



PO Box 506 • Forestville CA 95436 • 707.632.6070

Forest Communiqué

The Voice of Forest Unlimited

Spring 2011

Clearcutting for Vineyards



It was an opportunity for the general public to see how destructive vineyard building is when Paul Hobbs took over eight acres along Scenic Highway 116 North and carried out scorched earth warfare on residents, wildlife, and mature trees. The romantic image of vineyards with which the wine industry is constantly attempting to re-brand the once renowned redwood empire has once again been shattered. To be sure, this type of destruction is common; it is just out of view.



investigations of this clearcut. Acting with impunity, this self-described prospector is determined to expand his empire at the expense of the environment and the good will of this community.

Hobbs was not only moving aggressively on Scenic Highway 116 but also clear-cutting 10 acres in Pocket Canyon by Mays Canyon Rd. Unlike in the first instance, three resource agencies noted several violations on initial

The EcoOdyssey 100

Because climate change is the biggest single threat to forests, Forest Unlimited cosponsored an event, known as the EcoOdyssey 100, with EcoRing and LandPaths. EcoRing is a North Bay nonprofit that advocates for ecotourism, low-carbon forms of travel, greening of visitor-serving businesses, protection of the region's environment, and trail construction. To see a list of EcoRing's programs visit www.ecoring.org. LandPaths connects people to the land. Visit them at www.landpaths.org.

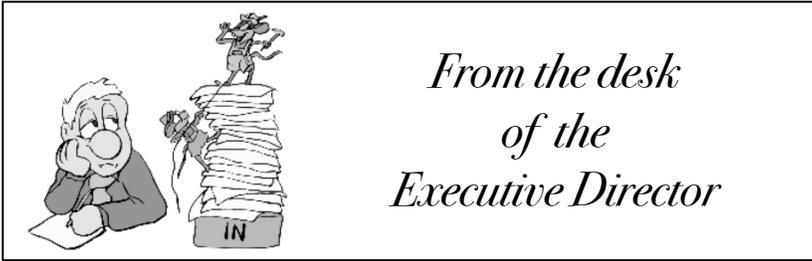
May 2 through May 7, 2011, Forest Unlimited, EcoRing, LandPaths, Getaway Adventures, Motorcar Operators West, and Friends of the Petaluma River hosted the EcoOdyssey 100. This was a six-day demonstration tour from Geyserville to Novato and back via various modes of low-carbon transportation.



The tour included three days of kayaking, one day of bicycling, and two days of rail motor car (on the SMART train rails), and a barge ride on the Petaluma River. One hundred miles all without need of an automobile! The tour was designed to prove the feasibility of vacation travel without carbon dioxide-spewing cars and to publicize the need for infrastructure to support low-carbon travel.

(cont. on p. 5)

This newsletter was printed on 100% recycled paper



Bohemian Grove Lawsuit: Why I am Disappointed with a Win

I suppose I should be happy that the Sierra Club and the Bohemian Redwood Rescue Club (BRRC) won their suit against the California Department of Forestry (CDF) and the Bohemian Club on March 10, 2011. After all, when Forest Unlimited organized, advised and helped finance the BRRC, we explained to them what they needed to do to stop this disastrous logging plan and they did it, and did it well. I am not disappointed in their work. Nor am I disappointed in the comments to the record and financial help provided by the Sierra Club. They were great and demonstrated once again how powerful cooperation can be.

No, I am disappointed in the legal system, the regulatory system, the political system, and the management of the Bohemian Club.

We were forced by the legal system to litigate arcane issues of law rather than the falsehoods perpetrated by the forester and endorsed by the Forestry Division of CDF.

Instead of proving that the Bohemian Club’s Nonindustrial Timber Management Plan (NTMP) would not reduce fire danger as the Club insisted, instead of challenging the false and misleading information in the plan, instead of exposing the damage the plan would do to endangered species, and instead of demonstrating that the plan would increase global warming and reduce carbon sequestration, we were forced to demonstrate that the forester and CDF failed to analyze feasible alternatives to the plan. None of the alternatives were feasible nor did they reduce the negative environmental effects. The courts always defer to CDF to determine the environmental effects. The court assumes that CDF is both competent and honest in doing so.

I am disappointed by the corrupt regulatory system that allows foresters to be selected and paid by the project proponent. This system forces honest foresters out of business and results in logging plans rife with false and misleading information.

I am disappointed in a political system that permits campaign contributors to manage the “regulators” and trade jobs with them. Or, viewed from another perspective, a system that allows governors to choose members of the Board of

Forestry who administer CDF, leading to large campaign contributions by the industry. The result is an agency that routinely illegally approves destructive logging plans.

CDF changed their name without legislative authorization to “CalFire” to spruce up their bad image. There are actually two divisions of CalFire: the Forest Practices Division, which approves logging plans, and the Fire Protection Division, which risks the lives of brave firefighters to protect us all from forest fire. Bad logging plans approved by the Forest Practices Division can and many times do lead to forest fires, sometimes catastrophic ones. The Forest Practices Division could be looked at as an unholy full employment racket that is contributing to bankrupting the State.

(cont. on p. 5)



Forest Unlimited is a 501 (c)(3) organization whose purpose is to protect, enhance, and restore the forests and watersheds of Sonoma County. Forest Unlimited educates the public about logging plan review, forestry law, and regulation.

www.forestunlimited.org

Executive Director
Richard Coates

Board of Directors
Larry Hanson, President
Maria Potter, Vice President
Jim Newman, C.E.G., Treasurer
Tom Veader, Secretary
Don Frank
Jim Hurson
Heather Rawson
Jack Silver, Esq.

Advisory Board
Elaine Wellin, Ph.D.
Yvonne Hurson
Kathy Walden

Annual Tree Planting: What a Way To Begin the New Year

To begin the year, with the help of over sixty Forest Unlimited supporters and volunteers, we were able to plant 1600 redwood trees at the Wildwood Retreat conservation lands of Cazadero. This annual reforestation program has become a real collaboration with the SRJC Natural Resources program.

Thanks to Kasey Wade and her resilient students for their lively participation enhancing the forests of the upper Austin Creek watershed! Consider joining us the first weekend following the new year for this fine event.



Preservation Ranch: Clearcutting Forests for Vineyards

Preservation Ranch is a proposed vineyard development and management plan for nearly 20,000 acres in the northwestern portion of Sonoma County just north of Annapolis. The plan includes developing about 1,900 acres, mostly on ridge tops, into vineyard. In order to do this, about 1,700 acres of timber land would be rezoned from Timber Preserve District (TP) to Resources Rural Development (RRD). RRD allows agriculture which is an activity exempt from many rules meant to protect the environment. Presently, the dominant land uses in the area are related to forestry that is subject to public comment and environmental review.

The 20,000 acre project lies entirely within the Gualala River watershed, and encompasses nearly 10 percent of the entire watershed. It is steep and remote, and there is marginal availability of groundwater. The proposal states that 40 new reservoirs would be developed to provide all of the irrigation needs for the vineyards.

While the proposal promises to deed 220 acres for a park site, to dedicate 2,600 acres to a wildlife preserve, to provide "support" for ongoing stream restoration, and to provide 90 miles of road improvements, all of this is contingent on economically viable vineyard operations. None of the presumed public benefits will be realized unless and until the project is fully developed and then only if there is money being generated to fund them.

Indeed, it continues to look like a speculative proposal to develop vineyard estates for the wealthy, at the expense of the forest protections that are in place with the current zoning. Is this a precedent we want to support? If so, future requests to trade forests for vines will be virtually impossible to deny.

Sweeping Grading Ordinance Upheld

Local Judge Rene Chouteau sided with County officials (3/30/11) in the legal challenge brought by Forest Unlimited, Town Hall Coalition, Coast Action Group, NOWWE, Coffee Lane Alliance, and John Stuppin. The Farm Bureau filed a brief supporting the County's position.

Challengers filed the action largely for the reasons Superior Court Judge Chouteau perhaps ironically stated, "The Ordinance was designed to consolidate all grading, drainage, and vineyard and orchard site development related code provisions into one comprehensive and user friendly chapter."

When wine industry heavy weights Dennis Murphy and Bob Anderson congratulated themselves upon the Supervisors' vote to approve such a "user friendly" ordinance, environmentalists and others observing understandably shuddered.

The petitioners are considering the option of appealing the County judge's ruling. Special thanks to attorney Stephen Volker, NOWWE, and Coast Action Group for their on-going involvement and to the many who donated to challenge the flagrant wine industry grab of local development laws.

Top Ten Reasons to Donate to Forest Unlimited

1. Your gift can help protect living forests and watersheds of Sonoma County.
2. Our annual reforestation program enhances "protected" lands.
3. Forest Unlimited facilitates public education and empowerment of local citizens' groups.
4. Public engagement can improve conservation priorities set by our representatives.
5. Challenge inappropriate logging and forest-vineyard conversions.
6. Share in something extraordinary like challenging the Bohemian Grove THP
7. Forests sequester carbon and other pollutants.
8. Forests provide wildlife habitat.
9. Your gift invests for the good of future generations.
10. Your donation is tax deductible!

EcoOdyssey 100 *(from front page)*

The tour followed the Russian River and the historic routes of two railroads: the Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railroad (Forestville to Sebastopol to Railroad Square in Santa Rosa), and the Northwestern Pacific (Santa Rosa to Healdsburg and Novato). Innkeepers that provided lodging along the route agreed to seek green certification under the Sonoma Green Business Program.

We wanted this trip to be more than just a fun adventure. We wanted it to be educational, not just for the travelers, but for the general public and public officials. Here are our goals for this and future EcoOdysseys:

1. Prove the economic and physical feasibility of touring without standard autos.
2. Promote the use of public transit.
3. Demonstrate the need for additional infrastructure to support EcoTravel.
4. Create public support for funding of non-auto transportation infrastructure (trains, trails, electric car charging stations, bike paths, equestrian trails, and appropriately placed lodging).
5. Encourage decision-makers to support low-carbon transportation.
6. Raise awareness of the important work done by local nonprofit groups.
7. Forge a cooperative alliance among environmental, cultural, health, history, business, farm, trail, bicycle, equestrian, and rail organizations.
8. Support locally owned businesses and motivate them to seek green certification.
9. Create additional EcoAdventures.
10. Provide fundraising opportunities for community organizations.
11. Educate tourists and the general public about local history; bay, ocean, river and forest ecology; transit-centered development, and local organic farming.
12. Promote local authors, artists and musicians.

Travel writers, press, and public officials took part in the EcoOdyssey, including State Senator Noreen Evans. A reporter from KRCB embedded with the EcoOdyssey. The number of travelers started small and swelled to over 50 by the last day. Various other organizations gave presentations along the way. These included LandPaths, the Dry Creek Band of Pomo Indians, Warnecke Ranch Architectural Museum, Russian Riverkeepers, the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, the Western Sonoma County Historical Society, Sonoma County Water Agency, the North Bay Electric Auto Association, Petaluma Bounty, Community Alliance for Family Farms, Windsor Town Green, and Sonoma Mountain Village. We also visited the Cinco de Mayo Festival in Roseland and gave away a rail motorcar ride there.

Author Sarah Andrews spoke about her environmentally-based mystery novels at the site that inspired one of her novels, guitarist Kai Divett-Lee played flamenco at the Firefly Inn on the Russian River and TRAD JASS performed Dixieland at the rail motorcar sendoff. Thanks to Warnecke Ranch, Wine Country Lodges, the Rford Inn, Chase Ranch Inn, and the Hotel La Rose - all locally owned - for providing lodging.

This is the first of three EcoOysey tours, each one longer than the previous one. Visit the EcoRing website for more information on future tours.

Disappointment with Bohemian Grove Win *(from p. 2)*

CalFire: "We make 'em and we fight 'em." And we, the taxpayers, pay for them.

Finally, I am disappointed that the Bohemian Club, a public non-profit organization, which by law is required to serve the public interest, can so mislead the public, its members, and regulators. Their members should be asking their management and Board of Directors some serious questions.

If there is anything I have learned about men & women, it is that there is a deeper spirit of altruism than is ever evident. Just as the rivers we see are minor compared to the underground streams, so, too, the idealism that is visible is minor compared to what people carry in their hearts unreleased or scarcely released. (Hu)mankind is waiting and longing for those who can accomplish the task of untying what is knotted, and bringing these underground waters to the surface.
– Albert Schweitzer

Forest Unlimited is Coalition Building

Forest Unlimited has been coalition building by having memberships in the Sonoma County Water Coalition (SCWC) and in the North Coast Stream Flow Coalition (NCSFC). These coalitions consist of dozens of organizations like FU that represent thousands of members with the focus on protecting our public trust water in our forests, watersheds, and streams. Go to their websites for more information on what these coalitions are doing and for a list of membership organizations. For SCWC: <http://www.scwatercoalition.org/> For NCSFC: <http://www.ourstreamsflow.org/>

Clip and mail back with your check in the envelope provided. Thank you!

Become a Member of Forest Unlimited

Your tax-deductible contribution will help fund forestry education programs and forest preservation, protection, and enhancement projects. Members receive newsletters and notification about special events, workshops and logging in their watersheds.

YES! I would like to join Forest Unlimited to further your work! (Dues are tax-deductible as permitted)

___ \$200 ___ \$100 ___ \$50 ___ \$35 Other \$ ___

Name _____

Email (for alerts & treeless newsletters) _____

Your watershed _____

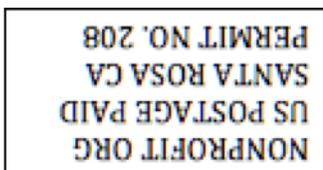
Your address _____

City, State, Zip _____



PO Box 506 Forestville CA 95436

Return Service Requested



FOREST UNLIMITED
PO BOX 506
FORESTVILLE CA 95436

This newsletter was printed on 100% recycled paper