



PO Box 506 • Forestville CA 95436 • 707.632.6070

# Forest Communiqué

The Voice of Forest Unlimited Summer 2013

## What Does Geology Have to Do with Tree Removal?

In Sonoma County, deforestation occurs for two main reasons, land clearing for forest to vineyard conversions and commercial tree cutting for lumber. Tree removal is of concern to people for a variety of reasons.

To professional geologists the concerns are the effects of timber harvesting on slope stability and increased erosion. It has long been known that in steep terrain both landslide potential and soil loss by erosion increase with removal of vegetative cover and the inevitable grading required for both agriculture and commercial timber harvesting. Public agencies have published procedures to review the slope stability and erosion effects of tree removal. In Sonoma County, the Cal Fire geologists are responsible for reviewing the geologic effects of commercial timber harvests and the office of Agricultural Commissioner is responsible for reviewing the geologic effects of forest to vineyard conversions.

Public agencies like the above mentioned Cal Fire and the office of Agricultural Commissioner are supposed to be independent, impartial reviewers whose sole function is to assure that applicable regulations are followed for tree removal under their jurisdiction. Sonoma County has a new Agricultural Commissioner, Tony Linegar, who seems to be quite interested in achieving a proper balance between respecting private property rights and protecting the environment, particularly streams, from the adverse effects of increased soil erosion. Unfortunately, the Cal Fire geologists seem to disregard the public health and safety and the environment in “reviewing” proposed timber harvests.

The geologic standards that govern timber harvests in Sonoma County, and indeed throughout California, are summarized in two important sets of documents:



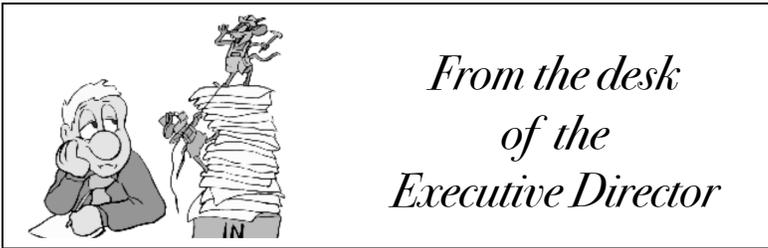
*Logging road eroding in rainstorm*

1. “Notes” to geologists prepared by the California Geological Survey (CGS). Examples are Note 45 Guidelines For Engineering Geologic Reports For Timber Harvesting Plans and Note 50 Factors Affecting Landslides In Forested Terrain.

2. California Geological Survey 2002 workshop manual for geologists Engineering Geology For Timber Harvesting, Wildland Management, and Watershed Protection used in a professional development workshop for geologists conducted in Santa Rosa on April 12-13, 2002. This thick manual enumerates the investigative procedures that consulting geologists are supposed to follow in investigating geologic aspects of proposed timber harvests.

Incredibly, instead of following the regulations created by its own agency to guide consulting geologic investigations of logging plans and Cal Fire reviews of the consultants’ reports, Cal Fire geologists act as advocates rather than reviewers of foresters’ geological conclusions.

*Continued on page 5*



*From the desk  
of the  
Executive Director*

## The Crimes of CalTrans

The other week marked two important events in my life. The first was a visit from my 10 month old grandson and my daughter from Crescent City. He is already crawling with all the force and determination of a small motorized bulldozer. He even stands and bounces on his own. Little Tatsu is emblematic of our new age, a citizen of the world with parents from opposite sides of the globe. As I gazed into his eyes, I could not help but think of the second event.

This week, scientists on Mauna Loa, Hawaii recorded carbon dioxide levels at 400 parts per million. As a chemist who worked on instruments that helped decode the chemistry causing the hole in the ozone layer, I have kept abreast of developments in the climate field. To me, 400 parts per million is a terrifying number. It is the point where most of the dire predictions about climate change are unavoidable. Even if we ceased to add any more greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, the effects will be with us for hundreds of years as CO2 lingers in the atmosphere.

Against this backdrop, CalTrans is cutting mature redwoods to build yet another overpass, killing birds supposedly protected by international treaty and widening the freeway between Petaluma and Novato. All this to provide more habitat for CO2-spewing cars and trucks. About one fifth of U.S. CO2 emissions come from cars and trucks. It is not just that this project squanders scarce resources on a non-solution "solution" diverting funds from real solutions like the SMART train. It is not just that it is an attack on the eventual rider-ship of SMART. No, this deeply disturbing antisocial act is, and I say this without the slightest trace of hyperbole, a crime against humanity.

It is a premeditated attack on agriculture which will have to contend with years of unstable climate, floods and droughts. It is an attack on our forests which will increasingly burn in forest fires. It is an attack on our oceans which will acidify, decimating fisheries. In other words, the policies of CalTrans are destroying what we hold dear about Sonoma and Marin Counties. In the last analysis, it is an attack on our grandchildren.

So please, I beg you to contact our elected State officials. Ask the Governor and our legislators to reform CalTrans. Ask them to turn CalTrans from its focus on death-ways and instead place railways as the backbone of our transportation policy. I see our grandchildren's future in your hands.



*Hwy 101 Stumps and Downed Large Tree*



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](http://www.forestunlimited.org)

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# Sonoma County Logging Plans

There are two active logging plans (THPs) for Sonoma County that everyone interested in protecting our redwood forests should be aware of. Forest Unlimited has commented on both of them.

As of this writing, the comment period is still open. After this period closes, a copy of the Official Response to comments by the Cal Fire will be sent to all those commenting on the plans along with the decision whether or not to approve the plans.

[Note: It is extremely rare for Cal Fire (or previously California Department of Forestry) to **not** approve a logging plan no matter how adverse the impact to the environment. However, their record for surviving a legal challenge is poor.]

The first plan 1-12-040SON ("Zigadene") is a selective cut on 90 acres of Berry property near Sheephouse Creek which is part of the Russian River watershed. Comments have been submitted concerning this plan. However, as of this writing there has not been an updated plan or response. Although no new roads are to be built according to this plan, the impact of sediment on Sheephouse Creek is a major concern since some of the logging operations take place on steep slopes.

The second plan 1-13-023SON ("Oak") is a total of 170 acres of which 145 acres calls for clearcutting. This operation by Gualala Redwood Incorporated on their property borders Lower Rockpile Creek (Class I) and Little Creek and also has Class I stream crossings. Many features of this logging operation are of great concern, such as the extensive area of clearcutting, the presence of salmonids in Lower Rockpile Creek, new road construction and the high erosion hazard due to steep terrain.

# Annual Tree Planting 2013

Forest Unlimited's annual tree planting this January took place at Shone Farm in Forestville. We ordered a total of 1500 redwood seedlings. A majority were planted at the Farm and some were planted at other protected sites.

There were many new volunteers and students as well as those that returned for their second and third time. A delicious hot lunch was provided. This again has turned out to be both a productive, positive, and worthwhile event.

A big thank you to the project coordinators, Carl Wahl and Bob Nelson, for their wonderful leadership each year to make this a tremendous success.



*Returning volunteers Jean Redus and Jo Benz*



*Forest Unlimited sponsoring a STOP CLEARCUTTING float at the Mermaid Parade in Guerneville*



*Ricky, Sakura, & Brett Kellar returned*

## Urban Forestry—Roseland Creek

By Duane DeWitt

On Sunday April 28 this year, some intrepid volunteers stepped up again to help out with restoration and cleanup on Roseland Creek in Santa Rosa between Burbank Ave. and Stony Point Rd. Tonino Peluso organized the event on a BEAUTIFUL spring day.

On the morning before, Mary Balcerak had done her own solo clean-up in the areas of the Roseland Neighbor Wood and the Roseland Creek on the West Side of Burbank Ave. A BIG, BIG thanks to her and for her tireless work for the creek, the woods, and the whole Roseland neighborhood. She has kindly painted the Roseland Creek sign on the Bridge. It is lovely as you can see in the attached pictures.

During the day we had hoped to clean out two massive camp site dumps among trees close to the Stony Point Road. After I started work at 10 am on the bigger site, I walked back to meet the arriving volunteers. Together we scouted out places to plant trees. We test planted a small



*Tonino Peluso and Madelaine Bixter planting trees*

Tonino and I then went back and loaded up some wheel barrows of debris and brought them out to Burbank Ave. Because I was not able to get a dumpster from the city as we had on a previous cleanup, we will work with the Sonoma County Water Agency and the city to remove this trash.

We still have two large dump sites near the creek at Stony Point Road.

Santa Rosa has already acquired two parcels along Roseland Creek east of Burbank Avenue. We are encouraging the county to acquire an adjacent parcel west of Burbank Avenue.

There are future plans for a multi-use trail along the creek from Roseland Creek School on Burbank Avenue to the Laguna de Santa Rosa. Tonino and I have volunteered to adopt the creek this summer to the west of Burbank Avenue.

If you would like to help with future projects or water planted trees, please contact Duane DeWitt at dewittplanner@yahoo.com. Also, mark your calendar for Let's Make a Difference Day on Saturday October 26, 2013 at 10:00 AM.



*Roseland Neighborhood Group adopts a creek*

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### Who Saved Preservation Ranch?

As you all know by now, the Preservation Ranch forest conversion project was defeated. In our article in the Sonoma County Gazette, "Who Saved Preservation Ranch?", we give the real credit to the defeat of PR to the persevering people in Friends of the Gualala River ( FoGR), Chris Pohlmann, Dave Jordan, and Peter Baye, and the Sierra Club with the late Jay Halcomb most notable. Others as well. We at Forest Unlimited want to give our deepest thanks and appreciation to them.

## **Geology** *continued from page 1*

Instead of requiring the actual investigations required in the above mentioned CGS documents, the State geologists simply perform a cursory review of published very small scale geologic maps and then perform a cursory “walk over” of the sites with no detailed investigation by geologic consultants hired by the timber harvester. Not surprisingly, this “once over lightly” approach often fails to identify the actual geologic hazards because geologic hazards exist independently of our ability to recognize them. Then having “investigated” the sites, the CDF geologists “review” and approve their own work.

This perversion of the regulatory process could not exist if concerned members of the public were to demand an actual unbiased review by professional geologists in public agencies of the foresters’ geologists’ investigative work.

Members of Forest Unlimited and others are encouraged to write to the Natural Resources Committee of the State Legislature to request actual unbiased review by public agencies to assure compliance with published professional geologic standards.

If there are any questions about the issues raised here or if additional information about professional geologists’ standards is desired, please do not hesitate to contact me at 707-539-2577.

Ray Waldbaum, Certified Engineering Geologist, PG 3142, CEG 923

Contact for the California State Committee on Natural Resources and Water: [william.craven@sen.ca.gov](mailto:william.craven@sen.ca.gov) (916) 651-4116

## **Tips for More Effective Monitoring of Logging in Your Area**

- Notice any signage or public notices in the area and read them for information with respect to the proposed development. Generally trees near creeks and slopes are subject to some protections. Take digital photos!
- Know your tree types - take “before” pictures of healthy trees that might one day be the subject of a logging proposal.
- Know the zoning and allowable land use in your neighborhood.
- Keep a digital camera handy and know how to download to your computer or device for quick transmission, if need be, to the media, regulatory agencies, and local groups.
- Know how far the nearest water course is in the number of “feet” from trees.
- If you think you hear owls or other potential wildlife, learn about it, get it documented (CDFW) and put in the Natural Diversity Database (<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb/>)
- Keep the following numbers and emails in easy reach:

Cal Fire (707-576-2275); Ranger Unit (576-2285), [calfire.ca.gov/resource\\_mgt/resource\\_mgt\\_forestpractice.php](http://calfire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_forestpractice.php)  
Sonoma County Permit and Resource Department (PRMD 707-565-1900); [www.co.sonoma.ca.us/prmd/](http://www.co.sonoma.ca.us/prmd/)  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW 707- 944-5588); [www.dfg.ca.gov/](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/)  
No. Cal. Regional Water Quality Control Board (NCRWQCB 707-576-2220); [www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/)  
National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS (707- 575-6050); [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/)  
Forest Unlimited (707-632-6070), [rcoates@sonic.net](mailto:rcoates@sonic.net)

Be Ready, Be Practical, Use Common Sense and Have fun  
Become a local expert, and stop inappropriate logging in your neighborhood

## **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!

**Please** send your tax-deductible contributions to Forest Unlimited, POB 506, Forestville 95436

## Coalition Building with the Sonoma County Water Coalition

Forest Unlimited is a member of the **Sonoma County Water Coalition (SCWC)** and is building the movement toward protecting Sonoma County's forests and watersheds that includes surface water and groundwater. Both SCWC and Forest Unlimited are members of the **North Coast Stream Flow Coalition (NCSFC)** to coordinate our efforts on protecting and enhancing flow in north coast streams and rivers. For more information on their excellent work, go to: [www.scwatercoalition.org](http://www.scwatercoalition.org) and [www.ourstreamsflow.org](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 \_\_\_\_\_

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