



Forest Communiqué

The Voice of Forest Unlimited

Spring 2014

Tribute a Fantastic Success!

On December 14, Forest Unlimited hosted a dinner party in Camp Meeker to honor some of our local heroes at Friends of the Gualala River (FoGR) who have valiantly struggled to protect coastal redwood and mixed hardwood forests in the northwest reaches of Sonoma County. Friends came from far and wide to pay tribute to FoGR whose recent notable victories include raising awareness and spearheading a campaign to protect the so-called Preservation Ranch wild woodlands from checkerboard clear-cut vineyard estate development.

The efforts of FoGR took many forms. They spoke eloquently at the Board of Supervisors' meetings to oppose the proposed Preservation Ranch's Environmental Impact Report. Sometimes the protests were more colorful, as friends and supporters dressed as trees and an eight-foot bottle of chainsaw wine (Pinot Egrigio). The County was presented with a large as life petition holding 90 thousand signatures voicing opposition to cutting redwoods for wine along our north coast.

In the end, FoGR prevailed with the support of the Sierra Club and many others to convince CalPers investors to sell the forest property to the Conservation Fund (20,000 acres), effectively keeping the lands as a contiguous forest in perpetuity. Forest Unlimited is inspired by the tenacity and creativity of FoGR, and we thank them for this important contribution to our mission: to protect and enhance forests and watersheds in the county.

A big thank you to volunteers and businesses for making the Tribute a success.

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Closing the County Loophole

Should the environmental impacts of a proposal to build a 92-acre foot reservoir in an area that supplies fresh water to critical salmonid habitat be evaluated?

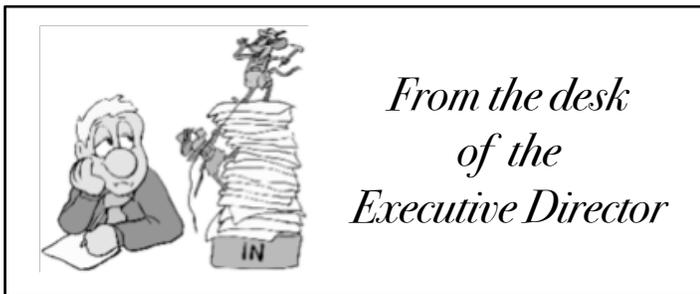
Surprisingly, such projects in Sonoma County are not looked at for impacts to air, water, fish, people, or other wildlife. There is no consideration for off-site impacts (in other words, other peoples' properties, private or public) and no assessment of the cumulative impact the project would have when you consider all the other past and current impacts in the area. Should hundreds of acres of new vineyards, fencing, wires, pesticide use, habitat fragmentation, soil ripping, and carbon releases be analyzed? Should the impacts of these activities be mitigated in any way? These questions are not new ones to watershed activists.



Photo by Lighthawk and Chris Poehlmann

The general consensus is, yes, that these types of activities may pose adverse environmental impacts and should be reviewed by agencies entrusted to manage the fisheries, habitat, water quality, air quality, and minimize cumulative impacts on neighbors and the community. Counties like Napa, closed its CEQA (California Environmental

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From Logging to Salmon in Willow Creek

For years, Forest Unlimited opposed logging in the Willow Creek watershed by Louisiana Pacific. After Harry Merlo drove LP into the ground and pulled out of California, LP sold it's Willow Creek Valley holdings to Mendocino Redwoods Company. We began opposing MRC logging plans.

While working on saving the Grove of the Old Trees on Fitzpatrick Lane, west of Occidental, we convinced the Open Space District to declare the area from Bodega to Jenner west of Occidental to the ocean as an "Area of Interest" for acquisitions. That area included Willow Creek Valley.

Forest Unlimited sent a letter to MCR suggesting that it would be more profitable for them to sell their holdings to the State Park than fight us on every logging plan. With the help of Carol Hart, serving at the time on the State Parks Advisory Board, we were able to get the State Parks talking with Mendocino Redwood Company and the Open Space District.

MCR agreed to sell and Land Paths agreed to manage Willow Creek for the State Parks. Restoration work began on the creek even before the sale, but workers confided to me that logging was hampering recovery. So, restoration plus an end to logging in the Valley has resulted in coho salmon!

Thank you Forest Unlimited members who supported our efforts during those many years!

Armstrong Woods Under Attack!

Action letter by Darrell Sukovitzin:

Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve is once again under attack!

A court-mandated requirement in 2012 forced the California Department of Parks and Recreation to comply with ADA regulations. The way they chose to accomplish this in Armstrong was by placing compacted Type 2 aggregate on top of every walking trail in the grove. Redwood trees have shallow feeder roots which supply the trees with oxygen, a primary life requirement.

Now a new threat to the trees has surfaced. Because of lack of proper maintenance, Parks was faced with

replacing the antiquated asbestos-lined water pipes with a 6-foot deep 8-inch water pipe running the entire length of the grove. A 6-foot deep trench would irreparably harm the trees, severing their shallow roots. Many of the trees are over 1000 years old. It was discovered that Parks had not even planned to do a U.S. Endangered Species Act-mandated Northern Spotted Owl and Marbled Murrelet studies! The contract for the project had already been awarded so had to be rescinded.

Wait, there's more. A new proposal calls for tunneling 30 feet under the grove the entire length of the grove. Several wells have been dug and there is not enough water to supply the upper park. This is with no alternate toilet technology having been explored.

State Parks is not taking care of the trees of Armstrong properly. They have put compacted material on the trails, possibly suffocating the trees' roots. Now they propose to dig 30 feet below the forest, not knowing what they will find.

Please voice your opposition to this treatment of our majestic and beloved Armstrong Redwoods below. Thank you.

www.parks.gov/pages/980/files/armstrong_rsnr_mnd_rev_draft.pdf



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

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HERE WE GROW AGAIN! Forest Unlimited's 2014 Tree Planting

On January 3 & 4, 2014, Forest Unlimited had its annual tree planting event. 1,460 redwood seedlings were planted in partnership with St. Dorothy's Rest. The plantings were done by over 90 volunteers over 2 days and headed up by our project managers, Carl Wahl and Bob Nelson.

St. Dorothy's Rest is a retreat center and the redwoods of west Sonoma County in Camp Meeker, a place of rest and renewal to over 400 campers and 2500 retreat guests annually. It was originally built in the 1930's as a retreat for terminally ill children. The property extends from the west side of Camp Meeker all the way to Willow Creek Road.

On St. Dorothy's website, our event is described as **HERE WE GROW AGAIN!** www.stdorothysrest.org,



camp in located

Good friends plant together



In the beginning there were seedlings...

Forest Unlimited wants to thank all the volunteers for this and the many other successful plantings over the years to help complete our mission to protect, enhance, and restore the forests and watersheds of Sonoma County. Forest Unlimited has been organizing volunteers to plant redwood and oak seedlings on protected properties throughout Sonoma County for well more than a decade and has been responsible for over ten thousand trees planted.



Planting trees is just doggone good!



Some of 2014's tree planting volunteers

"The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is now."
-Chinese proverb.

Thanks Mark Hoshor, for sharing this comment on our Forest Unlimited Facebook page! Join the conversation at <https://www.facebook.com/ForestUnlimited>.

Logging Plans in 2013

Forest Unlimited was involved in extensive review and comment on three logging plans proposed in Sonoma County in 2013. Most of this logging is directed at redwood forest none of which was old growth in these plans. All have been logged previously and in some cases, numerous times. That is not to say there may not be some very large very old trees, especially streamside, where they may be offered some protection by the logging exclusion zone that applies to trees near streams. A fifty year old redwood forest can include very large trees in an ecosystem in the process of restoring itself.

In some cases, the comments submitted to Cal Fire, the state Water Board, and Fish and Wildlife resulted in changes to the plans making them less harmful to the environment.

The first plan, 1-13-023SON known as "Oak" is for a total 158 acres of which 145 are to be clearcut, 1 acre is selective harvest and 12 acres are slated for rehabilitation. The logging company is GRI (Gualala Redwoods Inc.). The area is in Little Creek and Lower Rockpile Creek watersheds. Of concern in this plan is the steepness of some sections. It is near a Class I stream (Rockpile Creek) that likely has protected salmon. This plan was approved September 24 without significant revision despite the many comments submitted.

The plan designated 1-13-077SON was for a total of 104 acres of selective harvest adjacent to East Austin Creek. The land owner and timber operator is Parmeter. This is immediately adjacent to East Austin Creek Road where there are some very fine deep pools visible in the creek. Extensive comments were submitted which resulted in some changes to the plan lessening it's impact on the creek. This plan was approved December 17.

Finally, the plan designated as 1-13-087SON and known as "Super Chicken II" proposes to log 89 acres selectively on Palmer Creek. This is of concern because Palmer Creek is ultimately a tributary of Dry Creek which is undergoing extensive rehabilitation for fish habitat by the Sonoma County Water Agency. The logger is Proctor. It is a selective cut. Extensive comments from Forest Unlimited again and other organizations were submitted, and as of this writing, CALFIRE approval of this plan is still in process.

Loopholes (Cont. from Page 1)

Quality Act) loophole many years ago, and that county's wine business has not gone belly up. Quite the contrary. Review of projects under CEQA is good for job creation, helps communities account for environmental damage, and helps avoid environmental harms in the first place.

The industry in Sonoma County led by the Farm Bureau and others, but not all grape growers, has effectively achieved delay after delay and worked exemptions and obstacles into the County process so it can expand virtually unrestrained into oak woodlands, coastal grasslands, upper watersheds, and salamander habitat. This is occurring even as we face important decisions on how we allocate water for food, families, communities or wildlife. Especially in the absence of public notice, should our limited water resource be used to expand a high impact, non-food industry that uses and exports fresh water in large amounts and that is not held accountable for pumping ground water that may result in impacts to neighbors, wildlife, and salmon?

Join Forest Unlimited in urging the County to close the CEQA loophole that currently exists for large agri-business, so that potentially high impact projects receive a reasonable level of environmental review that identifies mitigations, looks at alternatives, benefits from public input, and avoids harms where feasible.

Sudden Oak Death?

Forest Unlimited has the latest information on Sudden Oak Death. Go to our recently updated website at www.forestunlimited.org. The information on S.O.D. is in the Resources section along with recent studies on forest fire impacts with surprising conclusions.

Shop at Oliver's?

If you shop at Oliver's or Fircrest Markets, you can have them make donations directly to Forest Unlimited. Sign up for eScrip and CHOOSE Forest Unlimited as the preferred non-profit. See our website for details and for list of additional participating merchants!

Tree Rings, Dry Spells and Accountability

In general, our Mediterranean climate supports rain in the winter months. Usually between October and May we can expect to receive some precipitation, but the past few years have been extremely dry. In fact, 2013 has been noted to be the driest year on record since human records have been kept. Trees have their own way of keeping track of rainfall. Recent examination of tree ring evidence reveals that California has had multiple 10 or 20 year long dry spells in the last thousand years.

Although voluntary conservation efforts are timely and important, policy makers need to realize the imperative of longer planning so our communities will meet the present and future challenges this crisis presents.

Forest Unlimited members have been meeting with officials on the state and local level to encourage stronger efforts in this regard. Although we all need to do our part to conserve, the county and state are also called to task to prevent over-appropriation of water and to carry out measures to prevent abuses that leave our streams and tributaries dry.

Tips for More Effective Monitoring of Logging in Your Area

- Notice any signage or public notices in the neighborhood and read them for information with respect to proposed development.
- 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 press, 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, and put in the Natural Diversity Database (<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb/>)
- Keep the following numbers in easy reach:

Cal Fire (707-576-2275) and Cal Fire Ranger Unit (707-576-2285)

Sonoma County Permit and Resource Department (PRMD 707-565-1900);

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW 707- 944-5588);

Nothern California Regional Water Quality Control Board (NCRWQCB 707- 576-2220);

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS 707- 575-6050);

Forest Unlimited (707-632-6070)

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

SAVE THE DATE JUNE 21: Forest Unlimited Summer Solstice Barbeque

First Annual Barbeque, Anderson Hall in Camp Meeker--there will be many grilled vegetable options

Coalition Building: Forest Unlimited is represented in two exciting coalitions protecting and enhancing water quality and water flow. To learn more, visit the websites of the Sonoma County Water Coalition (www.scatercoalition.org) and the North Coast Stream Flow Coalition (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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