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Forest Communiqué

The Voice of Forest Unlimited

Summer 2019

How to Protect Trees Policy for the 21st Century



Unprotected woodland serving the community for decades

The County of Sonoma has long carried on its books a permissive policy that allows developers, in general, to cut down trees—in small and in large numbers.

With the support, however of the three female County Supervisors - Zane, Gorin, and Hopkins, Forest Unlimited and its supporters have just achieved an important step forward. The update of the old Tree Ordinance is now on the County's Two Year Work Plan.

The Problem

As reported earlier, locally between 2007-13 approximately 950–acres of Sonoma County were converted from woodlands to non-woodlands. And there is no end in site as new tree removal proposals are submitted virtually every week. Where cool breezes once emanated and where water was efficiently created, cleaned and stored, there are now hot exposed soils, recontoured hills that drive polluted water off the land into ditches and streams carrying dust, spray, fertilizers (sometimes called “nutrients”) into water bodies during the winter and feeding algae

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What to do about Wildfire?

Flying Embers

In gentle warmth or ardent fire
Attend them well, for they will never tire
For each fire will begin anew
Each will afford a different view

— L.A. Grabmiller

Fire is here to stay, but you can protect your home by creating defensible space. In fact, that is the best thing we can do to protect the forests. As has been pointed out previously, when we retain more mature (larger diameter) trees in the forest, that helps to keep wildfires from becoming high intensity fires, which are the ones that can be most devastating. So-called forest thinning programs are commercial enterprises and log the very trees that would keep wildfires at lower intensity. The vast sums of money spent on these programs could better be put to use in helping homeowners create the defensible space that affords more protection from wildfires.

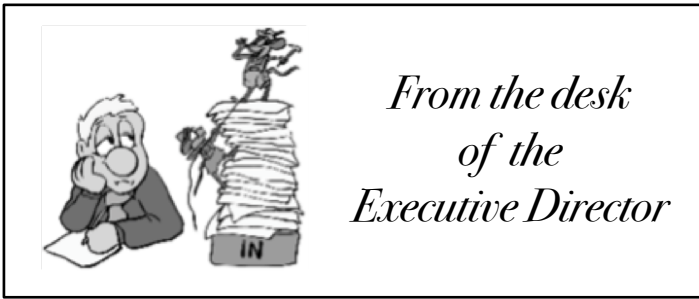
The good news, though, is if we spend a little time and energy making our houses ember resistant, the risks of the structure igniting go way down, and fires may spread far less.

Many fires are started from flying embers that find a few pine needles in the rain gutter, find a straw

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What is Inside

- ✓ Our annual redwood tree planting: Volunteers can now sign up for early January planting
- ✓ Forestry leaders honored at summer BBQ event
- ✓ Logging in Gualala River –Dogwood update
- ✓ Felta Creek logging update
- ✓ UN Report: Vital role of forests in climate solution



Yes, Forest Unlimited fights bad logging practices. Yes, Forest Unlimited plants trees. But, no less important, Forest Unlimited is also an educational organization.

Forest Communique'

In fact, the Forest Communique' that you are reading is part of our educational program. We hope that you learn something important from every issue. We try to keep you up to date on forestry law changes and current logging plans. We try to correct the misinformation spread by the corporate timber industry and developers. And we inform you of ways you can help protect your watershed.

Talks by experts at events

Those of you who attended our recent Dinner Under the Redwoods know that we always try to include a talk by an expert on important forestry topics.

This year's talk was on Forest Fire and Public Policy by Brian Nowicki, climate director at the Center for Biological Diversity. Brian presented evidence that fires were made catastrophic not by forests, but rather by flammable houses built closely together in the urban-wildland interface. He showed photos of whole groups of houses burned to the ground yet surrounded by still green or barely singed conifers some with no sign of crown or underbrush fire. He noted that chaparral, not timberland, is a greater danger, yet the legislature has no program for chaparral management and is instead spending large amounts of money on "thinning" areas that may never burn.

Although Brian did not say so, I could add that the timber industry and their handmaiden, the Department of Forestry, saw the recent catastrophic fire crisis as an opportunity to justify more logging and pressured the legislature into unwise legislation.

The fire problem can't be solved by unrestricted thinning of forests dubbed "fuel reduction" by CalFire. This is especially true when CalFire so rarely enforces its rules.

It is the homes, the real "fuel", that need to be fire-hardened. This is expensive and many homeowners cannot afford the expenditure. But the legislature that

claims to be concerned has provided no funds to help.

The very real danger of overhead power lines remains unaddressed by the legislature thanks to intense lobbying and campaign donations by PG&E. Since the Tubbs fire, PG&E lines have started two more (thankfully small) fires in Sonoma County.

Another factor making fires catastrophic is, of course, global warming and the terrific winds powered by the earth's increasing heat. Forests soak up the carbon dioxide, the major cause of global warming. Planting forests is one of the most cost-effective ways to deal with climate change. But the state has no serious program to plant trees or even protect existing forests.

Presentations for the general public

I have been making presentations at the Sonoma Public Library branches on "Protecting our Forests" that also dealt with the fire danger and the history of logging in the North Bay.

Did you know that logging in the Oakland hills in the 1840's and 1850's lead the way for hillside homes, narrow streets (former logging roads) and dry conditions that culminated in the 1991 Tunnel fire in Oakland?

That fire destroyed more than three thousand homes and killed 25 people! The lesson was not learned as we saw

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www.forestunlimited.org

Forest Unlimited is a 501 (c)(3) organization whose purpose is to protect, enhance, and restore forests and watersheds.

Forest Unlimited educates the public about logging plan review, forestry law, and regulation.

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UN IPCC Report Confirms Vital Role of Forests in Climate Change Solution

By Scot Quaranda, Dogwood Alliance 2018

A 2018 report from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) forwarded the need to protect and restore forests after over 200 organizations, scientists and elected officials released the [#Stand4Forests platform](#) in the United States. The released platform aligned with the IPCC report in demanding the protection of forests as a vital climate solution and warned against false techno-solutions like bio-energy carbon capture and storage.

“Climate science shows that we cannot stop a climate catastrophe without scaling up the protection of forests around the world, including in the United States. Therefore, the US must be a global leader in not only committing to phase out fossil fuel use but also in protecting our forests,” says the platform, which was released in between California’s Global Climate Action Summit and New York’s Climate Week. Signatories include 40 mayors from coast to coast; organizations such as Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, NRDC and Sierra Club; and leading climate scientists and advocates including Bill McKibben and Michael Mann.

“The IPCC report confirmed what we have been collectively saying for years, that forests are our best defense against climate change and that we need to join together to keep them standing,” said Danna Smith, Executive Director of Dogwood Alliance, a North Carolina-based forest protection organization and principal organizer of the Platform. “Living forests are our best hope for removing carbon from the atmosphere; and yet the rate of forest destruction from logging in this country is among the highest on Earth. To avoid climate catastrophe, we must take immediate steps to protect our forests.”

The new IPCC report found that a goal of keeping the Earth’s temperature rise 1.5 degrees is vital for protecting the planet, and the goal of 2 degrees set forth in Paris will not go far enough to prevent climate disaster. This year the recorded amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere reached 411 parts per million (ppm) – well beyond the 350 ppm that climate scientists deemed safe for humans.

Nevertheless, the U.S. forest industry is rapidly replacing most of our nation’s original forests with younger forests and commercial tree plantations. These degraded forests are not only far less effective at storing carbon than trees that are 100 years-old or older; but they are also more vulnerable to forest fires.

Editor's Desk *Cont'd from p. 2*

when fire incinerated Fountain Grove in Santa Rosa. Logging corporations (in reality, development corporations) follow the same practice as they did in the 1800’s: Buy forestland, log the hell out of it, then sell it for homes and ranchettes. This places housing directly in wildlands.

Forest Protection Workshops

Forest Unlimited also has a program of Forest Protection Workshops specifically designed for watershed groups and neighborhood associations that are confronted with a proposed logging plan. It is difficult for groups to know just how to effectively deal with nearby logging. By the time they figure out the system, CalFire has approved the logging plan and trees are beginning to fall. So we provide them with a head start by explaining forestry law and regulations, identifying the governmental agencies responsible for making and enforcing those regulations and suggesting ways to intervene in the review process to alter and sometimes stop logging plans. Without citizen oversight, CalFire will simply not follow the law as we have repeatedly proven in court.

Project Based Learning

Finally, we educate citizens about the importance of active participation in policy decisions made by our legislature, our Supervisors and public servants. For example, Forest Unlimited supporters recently attended a Supervisors meeting to ask them to place revision of the Tree Ordinance on their staff’s work plan which they did. In the process, those who attended learned more about the county legislative process. We will be asking for your participation again when it returns to the Board of Supervisors.

Convinced that the best education is hands on learning by doing, we use our tree planting as an opportunity to teach about redwood ecology, proper methods of planting and the importance of forests to combating climate change. Incidentally, if you want to be notified of our next tree planting, email our Reforestation Manager Harlie Rankin harlierankin@gmail.com.

If you have additional ideas for our educational outreach, please contact us at contact@forestunlimited.org.

Forestry Leaders Honored

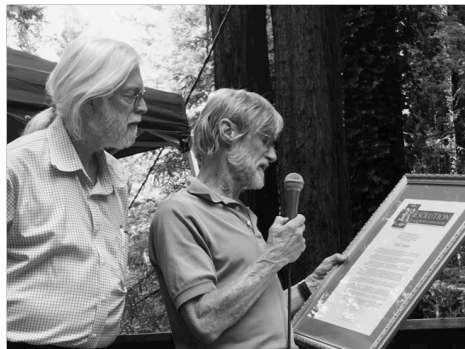
Our very own Executive Director and founder of Forest Unlimited Rick Coates received not one but two honors at the annual Summer Dinner Under the Redwoods in June.

State Senator Mike McGuire, a former Sonoma County Supervisor, and Congressman Jared Huffman, House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee, former lawyer with the Natural Resources Defense Council and former state Assemblyman, both sent beautiful proclamations in recognition of Rick's many years of leadership, protection

efforts, and commitment to biologically healthy watersheds, woodlands, and forests. Senator McGuire graciously gained the support of Assemblypersons Aguilar Curry and Wood and Senator Dodd.

RESOLVED BY
SENATOR MIKE
McGUIRE,

"...That Rick Coates be commended for the significant contributions he has made to the North Bay community through his steadfast environmental activism and leadership and extended sincere best wishes that his indomitable efforts will continue in the future."



President of the Board of Forest Unlimited, Larry Hanson, reads portions of the Resolution to Mr. Coates during the presentation.



Congressman Huffman's field representative Blake Hooper, presented Rick Coates with a Certificate of Congressional Recognition.

Dogwood Logging Update

Starting in 2015, Gualala Redwood Timber, LLC submitted three versions of its Dogwood logging plan. The first two were approved by Cal Fire over significant public objection and protest. The Sonoma County Superior Court rejected both plans in response to a lawsuit spearheaded by Friends of the Gualala River and joined by Forest Unlimited and the California Native Plant Society.

While Friends of Gualala River (FoGR) is legally challenging the logging of the Gualala River floodplain for the third time, an organization called the Gualala River Park Coalition, has collected more than 1,100 signatures from people who would rather turn the Gualala River floodplain into a public park. A separate petition that opposes the Dogwood timber harvest plan along the same stretch of river has collected 3,000 signatures. It is sponsored by naturalists Jeanne and Rick Jackson. This kind of support demonstrates strong public and political impetus for the creation of a river park, support that translate into conservancy acquisition once a willing seller steps in.

The legal victories were based on the plan's inadequate cumulative impacts analysis, inadequate plant surveys, and inadequate alternatives analysis. The third version of the Dogwood logging plan will surely be approved by the time of this reading. There are more legal challenges coming.

There are several factors that make the Gualala River special. One is that it runs north and south while all other rivers run mostly east-west or west-east. It is due to the opening created by the

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Young Environmental Leader Award

Eleanor Jaffe of Sebastopol was recognized as the Young Environmental Leader of the year for her efforts planting trees with Forest Unlimited and in Ecuador and for her climate actions in Youth v. the Apocalyspe - 350.org.



Save the Date! Redwood Tree Planting

Join us for our annual tree planting event. For years, we come together to plant redwood seedlings in the forests of Sonoma County. This year we will be planting in two locations: On Saturday, Jan. 4th, a site off Coleman Valley Road near Occidental; and on Sunday, Jan. 5th, Madeleine Sone Wildlife Preserve located on Grandview Road in Sebastopol .



Hearty planters gathering to place redwood seedlings in soils above Guerneville, Jan. 2019

Last year, we were able to plant 1,400 trees on Wildwood Conservation Foundation and Retreat Center in Guerneville. Thanks to the help of our wonderfully dedicated volunteers planting in the rain. If the weather does not cooperate sufficiently, the 2020 event is subject to change to the next weekend, Saturday, Jan. 11th and Sunday Jan. 12th.

Come plant with us and help grow the forest for our community and the planet. Please email our Reforestation Coordinator, Harlie, at harlierankin@gmail.com.

We look forward to planting with you!

Felta Creek Logging Update

Friends of Felta Creek held its first official community gathering in March at the historic Felta School in Healdsburg. Neighbors and community members packed the one room schoolhouse for the event, eager to learn more about the ecology of Felta Creek as well as the status of the Timber Harvest Plan that was struck down by a judicial determination in the fall of 2018 which included a restitution of legal fees.

A scientist from Sea Grant California, Nick Bauer, gave a report on fish monitoring efforts in Felta Creek, which continues to provide critical spawning habitat for endangered wild coho salmon and steelhead. The above average rainfall this year has been a blessing and it has been many years since there has been so much water this late in the season in the creek.

It is still possible that a revised logging plan could be submitted this year. Friends of Felta Creek is on alert for the submission of any future plan to CalFire that could affect the watershed and will engage vigorously in the Public Review process and pursue legal action if necessary. Meantime, much work is being done to achieve a conservation solution in order to protect an invaluable stretch of the creek's headwaters where shady pools provide unique spawning and rearing habitat for the Russian River's decimated salmonid populations.

Stay tuned for ongoing developments. Friends of Felta Creek would like to thank all those who contributed comments and donations to the case against the logging plan and say that all recovered funds are going directly to future litigation or conservation efforts.

Dogwood *Cont'd from p. 4*

San Andreas Fault that runs north to south. Gualala River is a Wild and Scenic River. It has two campgrounds with recreation sites along the river. It has listed endangered species, salmon, trying to survive in its waters. Its waters have been declared impaired by sediment as documented by the Environmental Protection Agency. There are also rare plants within the floodplain and other endangered species.

If you would like to add your name to the petition to turn this special river's floodplain into a park rather than see it damaged further by logging, you can find it at <http://gualalariverpark.org>. Also find a petition that directly opposes the Dogwood timber harvest plan along the same stretch of river and can be accessed at tinyurl.com/ico6-03-19.

Trees *Cont'd from page 1*

in the summer. As to whether there are more trees now that the climate has warmed up, the trees in question are the mature trees that have decades of growth—decades of time that we cannot get back. The facts in Sonoma County are that mature trees are still being removed at alarming rates.

Good rules on canopy cover are needed now to protect and enhance—as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recommends for trees and woodlands. (9.5 million km² increase in forests by 2050 relative to canopy coverage in 2010—IPCC Summary for Policy Makers). Reforestation and afforestation are needed to take carbon out of the atmosphere quickly.

True Measure of a Sustainable County

Sustaining natural systems through clear policy is the true measure of a sustainable county. We know from history that societies have, as a whole, sometimes failed to recognize and to implement changes when environmental destruction was occurring. Many societies over-extended and exhausted their resources, and starved to death. We know this challenge. It is not new.

Today, however, science and reason empower good policy even in the face of entrenched interests. Hopefully those that benefit from tree removals will not stand in the way of rational measures needed to minimize our highly destructive development patterns especially relative to our trees and watersheds. Better yet, perhaps the industries will lead and drive positive change in the expedited manner that is necessary. Who will it be?

The informed public has the most vital position to play on the team and must not abandon the field. In order to prevent more damage to important canopy cover, we must demand timely action for effective positive protections.

As science tells us, the momentum now is toward rapid extinction. We have very little time to improve our practices and prevent even more tragic fires, droughts, biological declines, and disasters. We all must do as much as we can each day to turn the tide. Some folks are in a position to do more than others, namely politicians and industry leaders. We are confident that the vast majority of people see the good sense in protecting mature trees in the 21st Century.

We know Sonoma County business leaders, agriculture, and people are capable of mounting advertising campaigns, and we urge them to put at least that much time and talent towards educating the public and our representatives about

the immediate challenges with which are faced like preserving the County's tree canopy. It not only absorbs the green house gas carbon dioxide but protects us from direct solar heat.

How Do We Achieve Success?

We will only get one chance at this. We need to re-evaluate the true costs of tree removal to the community. We must ask the question of ourselves, can we fulfill our dreams of success, richness, security, and happiness without large scale destruction of woodlands, forests, and mature trees?

What is an adequate mitigation for the destruction of a 200 year old oak or oak woodland? Do a few baby ornamental trees installed to take the place of the mature trees that once touched the sky, recharged the ground water, cooled the air, and absorbed vast amounts of green house gases do the best job in the short time we have left? Or do we protect the vast majority of the trees we have and plant even more? Do we continue to give free passes to large landowners to do whatever they think is best for them at the expense of the watersheds and climate we all rely upon? What timeline is relevant today? What trade-offs do climate scientists say make the most sense? What values should be attributed to trees and woodlands?

We need practical minds that will contribute practical and effective measures. Economic arguments are powerful and innately trigger certain responses, however, unless economies work with nature, as we now know, we will fall far short of the actions needed. We need to grapple with whether all development is good development and if some development is exempted from common sense rules what effect does that have on our goals to restore, protect, and enhance our tree canopy?

We recognize, like many civilizations before us could not, that our area is rich in more ways than one. The question remains if whether our big brains and our collective will to survive is up to the task of using reason, cooperation, and problem solving, to stop the tragic destruction of our County's important forests and woodlands.

"Today, science and reason empower good policy even in the face of entrenched interests."

Fires *Cont'd from p. 1*

broom leaning against the house, dead leaves or dry rags by the foundation of the house, open vents in the attic and other places, leaves in crevices on the roof, old dead potted plants on the wooden deck, or webs and sticks between boards close to the house, lawn furniture cushions –these and other highly flammable stuff will make the embers “begin anew”.

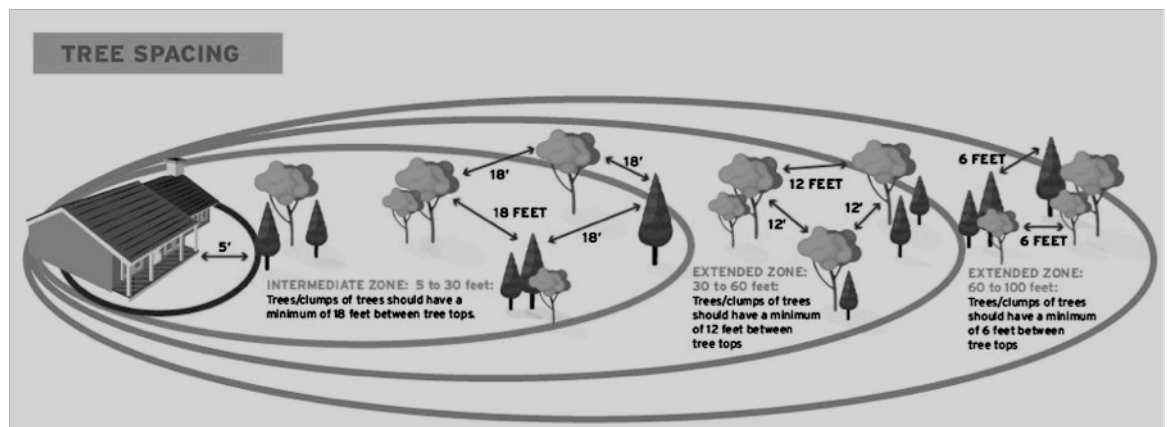
If you haven't already done so, now is the time to go around your home with new eyes and clean it up. Go around your home again in a week and you will likely see more things that you can do to deprive embers of easy fuel and thereby greatly prevent ignition of your house.

If we think of fire danger in these terms, as the fire scientists explain, we can prevent vast damage and property losses

while saving more forests. If government hears that people want assistance with “hardening” of their actual homes while, or instead of the government funding so-called thinning of natural areas, we may be able to keep the forest healthy, rich, cool, and shading the planet for many years to come.



Maintaining defensible space around homes involves three zones: 0 to 5 feet, 5 to 30 feet, and 30 to 100 feet.



The three zones to maintain around your home include clearing burnables in zone 1, brush removal and fire ladder thinning in zone 2, and mature tree spacing with both understory and overstory thinning in zone 3. For more details on this, go to the National Fire Protection Association website called "Preparing Homes for Wildfire" (www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Preparing-homes-for-wildfire). There is also a good checklist to use and print out that will be useful for keeping track of all the maintenance tasks.

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Save the Date: Redwood Tree Planting on Jan. 5 & 6, Sat. & Sun.

Sign up for eScripts! at Olivers Market in Santa Rosa and Cotati, Fircrest Market in Sebastopol, and Lucky markets. Ask them to direct donations to Forest Unlimited.

Or go to this link and sign up: <http://www.escrip.com/wheretoearn/merchantsearch.jsp>

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 \$

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