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Forest Communiqué

The Voice of Forest Unlimited

Summer 2020

Logging Threatens River Area

Called Silver Estates, a 224-acre logging plan is under review and primarily located on slopes in the Scenic Highway Corridor of Guerneville. (THP 1-20-00084 SON). Creeks that are potentially impacted are Pocket Canyon, Hubert, and Dutch Bill which are tributaries to the Russian River.

"This plan contains multiple problems like 45-acres of group selection with 2.5 acre openings in the forest that can exacerbate fire danger, increase flooding, reduce wildlife habitat, and impact aesthetic viewing", explained Larry Hanson, president of Forest Unlimited.

Executive Director Rick Coates met with members of the public who are concerned and motivated to fight this logging proposal. "This proposal has fire and flooding concerns and is an attack on the local tourist economy," explained Coates. The communities in the middle of this plan are raising many serious issues to CalFire, the agency who ultimately will decide whether to approve the logging in these neighborhoods. They are forming a group and working diligently to learn about the logging review process to make effective public comments.

If you want to help protect these watersheds, send comments to santarosapubliccomment@fire.ca.gov and be sure to reference the logging plan number, THP 1-20-00084 SON, in the subject line.

Amazing Felta Creek -Scientists Weigh In

Despite many years of human development and major dam construction, Felta Creek still provides a secluded area in which young salmon can hatch and grow before they head down river to the big ocean.

Unlike Mill Creek in Healdsburg, an important tributary to the Russian River, Felta Creek is the refuge of "wild" coho salmon, an endangered fish protected by the Endangered Species Act. Coho once added nutrients to

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Gualala Watershed Logging

The saga of challenging the Dogwood logging plan continues with an Engangered Species Lawsuit.



Gualala River floodplain with 100-year old redwoods

Lawsuit Filed to Protect Gualala River and Salmon (from FoGR-Friends of the Gualala River)

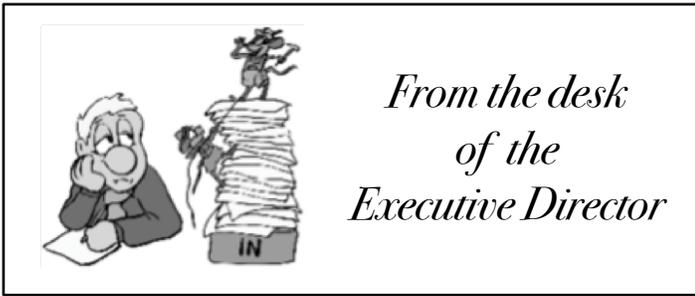
Conservation groups filed a formal notice of intent to sue the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and a timber company for failing to protect threatened and endangered fish, birds and frogs from a redwood logging project near northern California's Gualala River.

The notice from the **Center for Biological Diversity** and **Friends of The Gualala River** argues the state and the Gualala Redwood Timber Company have violated the **Endangered Species Act** by illegally harming Northern California steelhead, Central California Coast coho

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- ✓ Our redwood tree planting: Past and Present
- ✓ Executive Director's Desk-Logging Continues...
- ✓ Conservation or Extinction?
- ✓ Permits Over Policy: Woodlands on the Chopping Block



Logging Continues Despite Pandemic

Before I rant, let me express my deep sympathies to those families that have lost loved ones during the Covid-19 pandemic. Also, we understand the anxiety many feel fearing they might be infected or have lost their jobs.

The logging corporations are moving ahead full steam, taking advantage of the distractions caused by the pandemic. As usual, the California Department of Forestry (CDF AKA Cal Fire) is pushing through logging plans without proper review.

Forest Unlimited, however, has not let down its guard. We are helping Friends of the Gualala River, Friends of Felta Creek, and residents along the Russian River challenge outrageous logging plans. See stories in this issue.

The Board of Forestry and CDF have fought efforts to mitigate for climate change, attempting to redefine business-as-usual as mitigation. They still claim that cutting a tree and turning it into lumber sequesters more carbon than letting it live and continue turning carbon dioxide into cellulose!

The legislature could change this, but campaign cash from the timber industry seems to talk louder than the public's will. One of our projects is researching who receives money from the timber industry and their consultants. Also, we will be monitoring legislation and organizing a letter writing campaign to our legislators. If you are interested in giving some time to either of these tasks, please contact Rick Coates at contact@forestunlimited.org

Is the Board of Forestry Qualified?

The Board of Forestry is still dominated by the logging industry and those who service the industry. There is only one member of the Board with fire fighting experience. The rules the Board adopts that govern logging still serve the industry's interest rather than the public interest. The rules still allow even-aged management like clearcuts (like those inflicted on the Gualala River watershed) even though even-aged management increases the likelihood of future wildfires.

The rules still do not protect oak woodlands. The rules still do not protect endangered species like coho salmon that spawn in Felta Creek. There is no requirement that the Board of Forestry members have any expertise in ecology, biology, geology, hydrology, or fire science.

Finally, did you know that the legal name of CalFire is the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection? After research showed that citizens disliked the half of CDF that approved logging plans, but appreciated the half that fought wildfires, the name was changed without legal authorization to CalFire. However, their forestry practices continued unchanged.

Conservation or Extinction

A mass extinction on our watch demands a visionary response - one that includes getting the climate back on track as soon as possible and other bold and related actions. In that spirit, several years ago scientist E.O. Wilson wrote a book called Half Earth. It calls for humans to protect half the earth for the millions of plants and animals to share while people, as only one species, use up the other half. Dr. Wilson is a wise biologist, and he set an important marker post toward which to steer our ships on this epic journey.

Thirty by Thirty

Thankfully, many humans innately get what Dr. Wilson is
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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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Permits Over Policy: Woodlands on the Chopping Block

As you may recall, the County is being urged by many county voters to update the Tree Protection Ordinance currently on its books because, unfortunately, it is detrimentally full of large loopholes.

In the meantime, developers are having their way with important woodlands. This was entirely predictable and that is why the concerned public also urged the Board of Supervisors to pass a temporary "time out" for approvals of substantial tree removals (unless for fire protection) until the update is completed. The request for the "time out" and for a revised county tree protection ordinance have been before the Board since the end of last year. And in November of 2019, the local Democratic Central Committee representing thousands of voters, urged the adoption of a "time out"

broadly covers all land use designations and zoning in a consistent affirmative manner.



Mature Oaks Leveled. Fall/winter 2019 Laguna de Santa



Oak woodland destruction Fall/winter 2019. Laguna de Santa Rosa

to prevent the very predictable woodland and climate wreckage that is occurring.

By way of background, last year we alerted the County Supervisors of a large scale tree removal permit approved in the uplands of the Laguna de Santa Rosa—approximately 11-acres mostly native oaks (pictured above). And if that deplorable County-approved tragedy wasn't bad enough, over 200 acres of beautiful and important native oak woodlands (under one ownership) are also in the process of being bulldozed, and bulldozed soon under county approvals, unless the Supervisors do something to stop it! These are only two examples of what we are losing as the Supervisors allow Permit Sonoma to cater to the needs of developers over policy—protecting woodlands and climate.

Accountability

Laws are made by people and can be changed by people. The Supervisors are people. The Supervisors need time to figure out a sane way forward. They, therefore should institute a temporary "time out" and get to work on a 21st Century ordinance that protects trees in the first instance and that

Wherever they are or have historically grown, trees are providing needed services to humans and wildlife. Giving some sectors a pass when it comes to large scale tree removals is inherently unfair, irresponsible, and harmful. Bulldozing and then dragging and piling mature woodlands into burn piles disturbs vast amounts of sequestered carbon, adds carbon to our atmosphere, and greatly reduces our ability to fight climate change today and for hundreds of years to come.

The present policy is killing trees, and for over nine long months, predictable large scale-woodland destruction has occurred. County priorities must include real tree protection and the immediate cessation of approvals that permit substantial woodland destruction. Contact the Supervisors today (707) 565-2241 to support our call for an immediate "time out" for trees.

Felta Creek Logging *Cont'd from p. 1*

our redwood forest soils while supporting bears and native peoples, and provide an important food source for several ocean species.

According to NOAA, "[s]harks, sea lions, seals, and orcas feed on adult coho." <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/coho-salmon>

"While wild coho are occasionally found in Mill Creek, it is annually stocked with hatchery coho as part of recovery efforts. However, no hatchery coho have been stocked in Felta Creek." (NOAA Fisheries Comment Letter, May 2020).

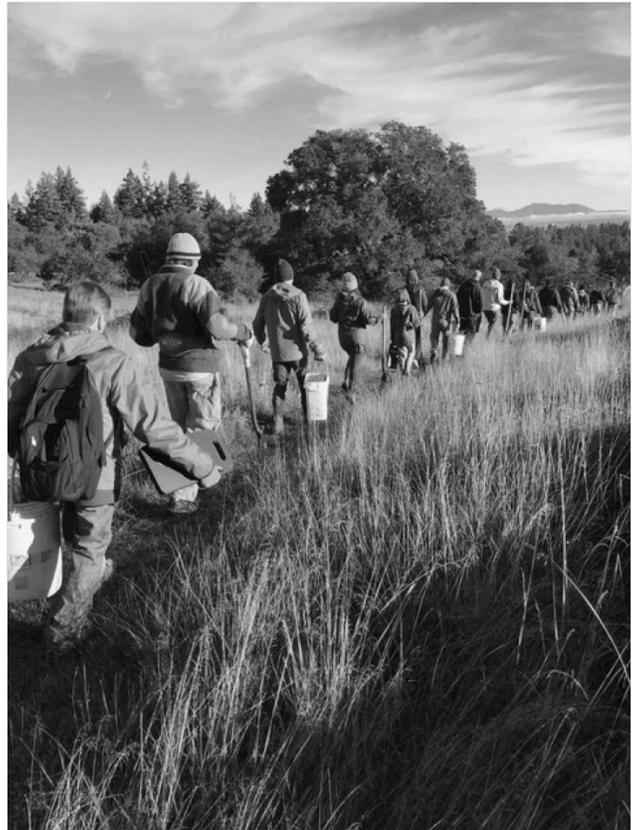
The many harsh impacts of logging proposed by a recent purchaser of acreage in the headwaters of Felta Creek will threaten this remnant habitat so

Tree Plantings–Past and Future

With 2020 over already halfway over, Forest Unlimited is gearing up for our annual redwood tree planting in January 2021. This tree planting event will be taking place at the Jenner Headlands Preserve which is a combination of redwood, oak, and Douglas fir forests that overlooks the Pacific Ocean and is maintained by the Wildlands Conservancy. This planting will be our biggest yet. We will have more details closer to the date!

This year's 2020 tree planting took place on a private property in Occidental where we planted about 900 redwood seedlings and the Madeleine Sone Wildlife Preserve in Sebastopol where we planted another 500 trees.

We are so thankful for the 90 volunteers that helped us to plant redwoods and help restore our Sonoma County forests. We are looking forward to another planting in 2021.



Headwaters of Dutch Bill Creek–Coleman Valley



Madeline Sone's Nature Preserve, West Sebastopol



Felta Creek *Cont'd from p. 3*

vital to keeping a wild healthy population of Coho.

NOAA also explained, "returning Felta Creek adults are likely largely returning naturally spawned produced wild coho salmon, or the offspring of wild spawning coho salmon."

The logging proposed is on hilly terrain and will necessitate dragging trees across the hillsides, hauling logs out on large logging trucks, and disturbing the soils, air temperature, and shade canopy vital to the health of the coho salmon who need the headwaters to survive.

Referring to roads, NOAA explained, "the techniques, protocols, and applications proposed are inadequate for the narrow canyon in which these roads exist, and will only exasperate existing sediment potential."

The effort to prevent harm to the vital forests in the headwaters of Felta Creek continues. Please visit Friends of Felta Creek for more information: www.friendsoffeltacreek.org for updates and actions.

Gualala Logging *Cont'd from p. 1*

salmon, California red-legged frogs, marbled murrelets and northern spotted owls.

"The state is abdicating its responsibility to save these imperiled animals and some of California's most spectacular redwoods," said Peter Galvin, cofounder of the Center. "Logging has devastated this region and too many species are hanging on by a thread. We're in an extinction crisis and we need to protect our wildlife now more than ever."

The Gualala River ecosystem suffers from decades of abuse, including previous logging projects by the timber company. The proposed logging site, on 300 acres in Sonoma County, contains some of the last remaining mature floodplain redwood forest in the area.

"Friends of Gualala River is proud to partner with the acclaimed Center for Biological Diversity in this important action to stem the losses of our most endangered species and turn the path of our river towards recovery," said Charles Ivor, president of Friends of Gualala River.

See FoGR's website for more information: www.gualalariver.org

Conservation or Extinction? *Cont'd from p. 2*

saying and are bringing their energy, massive knowledge, time, and training toward implementing this important global effort. Forest Unlimited and its supporters are a part of that effort. In our small way, we are helping establish permanent conservation easements and protecting and enhancing watersheds vital to not only our future but to the survival of species fighting mass extinction.

Since Dr. Wilson's book, the United Nations has set the goal of preserving 30 percent of the earth's land and oceans by 2030. This was a first step. The corollary to that is to get to 50 percent by 2050.

It is in this context that in October of 2019, Senator Udall introduced a resolution to express the "sense of the Senate" that the federal government should establish the 30/30 goal by "measures including making science the foundation of conservation decisions, sequestering carbon, and greenhouse gases in the U.S. lands and oceans, and addressing environmental justice issues..." At that time, the Democratic candidates for President had or were planning on supporting the resolution. (EOS - Biological Conservation 4/20).

Many brilliant and generous people are pitching in all around the globe, the United States, and California. Vermont is one third of the way there.

Race Against Time, especially in Sonoma County

It is clear, we are in a race against time. For example, in Sonoma County, hundreds of acres are still being purchased and according to current County Code legally developed by bulldozing oak woodlands and ripping up stable soils, releasing tons of previously stored carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Trees are piled up and burned. These insatiable actors will keep on taking. However, our watersheds are not just for the taking. They support forests, woodlands, and creeks. Many acres are being held by public agencies, long-standing families, and people of good will, and need to be preserved in as natural a state as possible to undue past harms and prepare for a healthy future.

Conservation Works

Several organizations exist to assist people who want to contribute to the 30/30 effort, to re-connect areas in order that wildlife can survive, and who know that everything we do today can alleviate the suffering and reduce the time it will take to save life on this extraordinary planet. A few organizations with good track records in preservation include: **Bodega Land Trust, Open Space District, Sonoma Land Trust, and Wildlands Conservancy.**

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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)

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