



Forest Communiqué

The Voice of Forest Unlimited

Fall 2016

The Napa Blitz

Sonoma is not the only county known for its premium wines and bucolic landscapes. Napa County has a similar tension between its forests and its vineyards. Many groups in Napa are now sounding the alarm. Outside investors have invaded and plan to replace conifer forests and oak woodlands with vineyards. Organic vineyard owners are very concerned that encroachment of industrial vineyards could potentially contaminate their fields with pesticides and fungicides. Other residents already chafe at the traffic caused by tourists coming to taste wine. How much is too much? Finding the right balance between forest and vineyards is important to our collective future.



Walt Ranch's 24,000 Tree Conversion

Five separate groups in Napa County called Forest Unlimited for help dealing with local conversions of forest to vineyards. Forest Protection Workshops or consultation were provided to each of these groups and they have used that information to fight for the forest. Here are some of the projects:

Le Colline THP/Conversion off Cold Springs Rd. and Las Posadas Road near Pacific Union College in Angwin:

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Dogwood

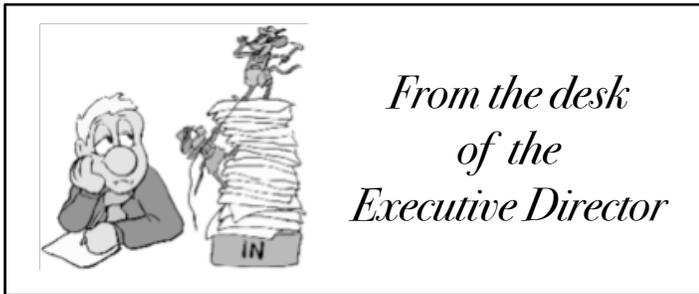
The Dogwood Timber Harvest (logging) Plan has been the most controversial logging plan in recent memory. The plan is about 400 acres and most of it is within the floodplain of the impaired and critical habitat of the Gualala River. Moreover, this logging plan runs over five miles in length. There are many issues of concern that threaten the Gualala Watershed.

Forest Unlimited, Friends of Gualala River, and now the Native Plant Society have joined in a lawsuit challenging the approval of the plan. Recently, the environmental groups were awarded a preliminary injunction to stop the logging until the case is decided. This required a bond of \$10,000 that was raised by our supporters in the community. Now there is a wait time before the case will be heard in court.

We want to thank everyone for their support. We have a ways to go! Please consider contributing and be sure to designate the donation for Dogwood. For more information about the logging, go to: www.gualalariver.org. Thank you for your support.



Rally for the River to Stop the Dogwood Logging Plan



*From the desk
of the
Executive Director*

Citizens of Napa Taking it Back

Napa Citizens are trying to take back their local government from the developers and corporate wine industry. But it isn't easy. In the early summer of 2015, a coalition of activists calling themselves the *Water, Forest and Oak Woodland Protection Initiative "Project"* began raising money in order to hire the highly respected environmental law firm Shute, Mihaley & Weinberger to write a ballot initiative that would protect creeks with mandated setbacks and limit the amount of forest and oak woodland cut for vineyards. By May of 2016 and after 5 major modifications, consultation with interest groups including the Farm Bureau, the careful legal work was complete. Forest Unlimited met with the attorneys along with members of the Project.

On June 1, 2016, the draft initiative was presented to Napa County Counsel for review. After slight revisions, the County Counsel added the official title and ballot summary.

For the next 10 weeks, the Project fielded 80 unpaid volunteers to gather voter signatures. Forest Unlimited's Executive Director was one of those volunteers. The amazing organizers gathered more than the required 3700 signatures: **6,300!** But soon after the signature gathering started, the panicked corporate winegrowers and developers together with their lapdogs in the local press began a well-financed disinformation campaign. They immediately raised \$500,000 to oppose the initiative. The *Napa Register* editorialized against the initiative. The Farm Bureau voted to oppose the initiative even after changes were made to address their concerns. The Solano-Napa Builders Exchange formally opposed it.

Once the signatures were certified by the County Clerk as valid, the initiative went to the Supervisors who had two legal choices: 1) adopt the initiative as an ordinance immediately or 2) place it on the ballot. They did neither. The Counsel refused to certify the initiative on the grounds that not all of the addenda briefly mentioned in the initiative were available to the petition signers. This they claimed despite the fact that this was not required for several previous initiatives including one placed upon the ballot by the Supervisors. The Project immediately filed suit with the Superior Court.

The Napa County Superior Court sided with the County. The Project's attorneys were stunned. This issue had already been litigated and found not to be a problem. The Project attorneys immediately filed an emergency writ of appeal with both the Appellate Court and the California Supreme Court attempting to get a decision before the upcoming election. Forest Unlimited, Forest Forever, the California Wildlife Foundation, Corporate Ethics International, and the California Native Plant Society jointly filed a separate amicus brief with the Appellate Court in support of the Project. On August 10, 2016, the court denied the emergency appeal, thus preventing the initiative from reaching the November Presidential ballot when turnout would be high. Apparently the court did not consider it an emergency.

This, however, did not end the battle. The Project filed suit in Appellate Court. Hence, the Appellate Court will still hear the appeal on the merits but not as an emergency. If the Project wins the suit, the voters will finally get to express their say. If the court rules against the Project, it intends to place the initiative on the June 2018 ballot, even though it will require re-gathering signatures. In the meantime, the Project has commissioned a film to promote the initiative.

If you would like to donate to this effort, send a check to Forest Unlimited with WFPIP in the memo line.



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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Blitz *Cont'd from p. 1*

This plan is to plant 68 acres of grapes clearing 32 acres of forestland. *Friends of Cold Springs/Conn Creek* have been commenting on the three California Environmental Quality Act.

Ciminelli THP/Conversion on Summit Lake Road in Angwin:

This plan will sacrifice 16 acres of conifer forest to vineyard. The land is adjacent to Burton Creek and Conn Creek which flow into Lake Hennessey, the domestic water supply for the City of Napa. Cal Fire returned this plan to the forester Scott Butler before officially filing it noting 44 separate errors.

Friends of Howell Mountain are fighting this plan. Thanks to their effort, 18 agency people and consultants attended the Preharvest Inspection (PHI) of this plan. I think that this is a record number of attending bodies on a PHI. A clearly worried Cal Fire sent three people, California Geologic Survey sent two, the Regional water Quality Control Board sent a single representative and the County of Napa sent an additional two. The group was rounded out with consultants hired by the landowner including two foresters. In spite of being outnumbered, the agencies reports indicated multiple problems, errors and misinformation in the plan even after Cal Fire accepted it for filing.

Walt Ranch Conversion in Soda Canyon between the City of Napa and Lake Berryessa:

The Defenders of East Napa Watersheds are leading the charge against this 350 acre vineyard on a 2300 acre ranch with "room to grow". The owners are Hall Wines and Hall Brambletree Associates of Texas. The entire ranch is Oak woodland (see photo above). Nearly 24,000 trees will be cut for the conversion! The vineyard will use about 69 million gallons of water per year, more than twice the amount used by the present residents of Soda Canyon! The Circle Oaks Community located nearby are concerned that the Milliken Creek Watershed and Milliken Reservoir will be severely impacted.

Davis/Friesen Lakes THP Conversion adjacent to the Dunn-Wildlake and Duff Ranch Preserve in Bell Canyon near Angwin:

Land Trust of Napa County recently acquired the Preserve to provide recreation and to protect the Bell Creek watershed that provides clean water to the city of St. Helena. The Bell Canyon Watershed Alliance has been holding off this damaging 40 acre plan. Forest Unlimited helped the Alliance comment to the record. The Alliance has hired an attorney.

Forest Unlimited is also assisting by managing funds for each of the projects opposing conversion of forests. If you wish to help one of these groups, send a check made payable to Forest Unlimited with group name designated on the memo line. Remember forests anywhere protect the climate everywhere.



One of the many protests against the Walt project

New Law Recognizes Forests Watersheds as Part of State's Water System

"This law will make sure that the source of our water is treated just like other basic infrastructure that Californians depend on, such as roads, dams and power supplies," said Laurie Wayburn, president of Pacific Forest Trust, the organization that sponsored the bill. "We can now move forward on putting a comprehensive system in place to restore and conserve these landscapes that are so critical to a safe and secure water supply." Governor Brown Signs Law Recognizing Forest Watersheds as Part of State's Water System.

This is hopeful and we will provide an analysis of how effective this will be in a later publication.

2016 Tree Planting Project–Success!

In January, Forest Unlimited volunteers planted over 1,300 one-year old redwood seedlings for reforestation and erosion control in selected areas of the Cazadero Hills Community Forest. A survey of surviving seedlings, conducted by a great volunteer crew on July 15, showed the work to have been a success. Due to increased rains and clearly fine work by knowledgeable volunteers, the best survival rates in memory were achieved. A survey was conducted on over 75% of all seedlings planted and found a 97% survival rate. Bright green, vigorous plants found on each of the three private parcels attested to planters' care and skills, the soils softened by recent rains, and subsequent rain in a relatively long, wetter spring than in recent years.

Of the 1,350 seedlings planted in 2014 on steep slopes above Guerneville, Forest Unlimited surveyors found a 73% survival rate in late summer, 2015. The relatively high rate, even with little subsequent rain last year, is a testament to the training and care of volunteers.

Planting seedlings where they are most likely to grow is another important factor in this year's great numbers. Dappled light from a light forest canopy protects them from the hot sun until they are better established and can grow to seek their own light.

A big thank you goes out to all the volunteers, some who have volunteered multiple times! We look forward to seeing you at our 2017 planting.



Cheerful Volunteers with seedlings on their way to planting sites



Volunteers planting a redwood seedling. They work in pairs to make the planting more efficient and to share the task of digging.

2017 Tree Planting– A Call for Volunteers

Here's your yearly call to fight climate disruption and deforestation in a most direct way: planting redwood seedlings where they will grow in Sonoma County.

For our 20th anniversary planting redwoods on sites county-wide, we're inviting volunteers for our Friday, January 6 and Saturday, January 7 Tree Planting, at St. Dorothy's Rest in Camp Meeker.

We'll plant some 1200 redwood seedlings and enjoy the hospitality of this wooded retreat in the hills off Bohemian Hwy between Occidental and Monte Rio. Once again, training and lunch will be provided.

Volunteers will be accepted on a first come basis so sign up early.

To sign up on either or both days, contact Elaine Wellin, wellin@sooma.edu and/or 707-523-1415

We're also accepting applications for future planting sites.

- Sites need to be accessible
- Have conservation easements or be protected sites in suitable woodlands
- Owners or stewards should expect 50-200 volunteers trained and working for two days in early January
- Work with Forest Unlimited reforestation staff to help prepare the site and support volunteer efforts.

We need to know that the redwood trees won't be cut for timber but will remain to grow into the wonderful carbon sinks they can become. Sonoma County protected lands burnt or logged and needing remediation are good prospects.

To suggest future planting sites, contact Elaine Wellin, elaine.wellin@sonoma.edu and/or 707 523-1415.

Thank you and hope to see you in January!

Eating Carbon by Doing Nothing?

In Latin America, according to Science Advances, second growth forests are largely volunteering themselves in abandoned pastures and other open areas can absorb the equivalent of all the carbon emitted by these countries between 1993-2014. ("Carbon sequestration potential of Second-growth Forest Regeneration in the Latin American Tropics," Science Advances May 13, 2016).

This is a finding that should blow planners' minds. Basically, by doing nothing, these countries can eat up a significant amount of carbon.

Northern California is a temperate rainforest, therefore, a parallel can be drawn here.

For example, where pastures were created out of forestlands, these lands can be dedicated to carbon sequestration right here with huge climate benefits.

Back to doing nothing. In some areas, trees will naturally attempt to re-establish themselves because they evolved in that place. These areas must be valued as important carbon sinks.

California requires polluters to buy carbon credits, therefore there is money for carbon mitigation. Many acres of California's forests were cleared historically, but these are not traditionally thought of as proper targets for sequestering carbon.

They can now rightfully be valued. Farmers and ranchers could have alternative or supplemental incomes while reducing impacts to the land. The Latin American example offers a low cost and important approach that many have not heard of before.

In short, as the cap on carbon pollution is ratcheted down in California, polluters will need new sources of carbon credits to purchase and can look to logged over lands from California's past and jump start with the natural regeneration of California's redwood forests, oak woodlands, and mixed conifer forests.

As the scientists in the Latin America study discovered, "[c]oupled with avoided deforestation and sustainable forest management, natural regeneration of second-growth forests provides a low-cost mechanism that yields a high carbon sequestration potential with multiple benefits for biodiversity and ecosystem services."

Our Third Annual Summer Dinner under the Redwoods



2016 Summer Dinner Under the Redwoods

For our third Annual Summer fundraiser, Forest Umlimited invited longtime EPIC attorney, Sharon Duggan, who gave a very informative talk and showed a short movie about the precedent setting climate litigation by Our Children's Trust—a non-profit organization of children fighting for their future.

The children call for the courts to order the government to stop the "permitting, authorizing and subsidizing of fossil fuels" by, for example, canceling plans for projects like a liquefied natural gas export terminal in Oregon and "to develop a national plan to restore Earth's energy balance, and implement that national plan so as to stabilize the climate system."

As Ms. Duggan has stated, "Climate Change is really the defining issue of our time; there is no lawsuit of greater importance happening anywhere in the country".

We were privileged and honored to be able to host this event. Please join us next year for our 4th Annual Summer Dinner.



Executive Director, Rick Coates, at the microphone

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

Or go to this link and sign up: <http://www.escrip.com/merchants/identity/olivers/index.jsp>

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

Become a Member of Forest Unlimited

Your tax-deductable 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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