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Forest Communiqué

The Voice of Forest Unlimited

Fall 2009

Bohemian Club's Logging Plan Still in Limbo

The public comment period on the most recent rewrite of the Bohemian Club's controversial timber harvesting proposal (1-06NTMP-011SON) closed in early May and, four months later, comments are still being reviewed by the CA Department of Forestry (CALFIRE). The Department is required to complete an "Official Response" to all the comments raised during the public comment period and there were hundreds.

Most forestry pundits expect that the NTMP will ultimately be approved, in part because the Department of Forestry sees itself in the role of encouraging timber harvesting in California and rarely turns down a plan and also because the Bohemian Club exerts a lot of political influence. And yet, there are significant remaining problems that may give the Department of Forestry sufficient reason to turn down the plan:

1. Environmentalists submitted a detailed analysis of the timberland acreage on the property, complete with aerial photos, which shows clearly that the Bohemian Club tried to omit acreage which are growing conifers. Our analysis concludes that the property is too large to qualify for an NTMP.

2. Environmentalists question whether the donation of conservation easements to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation covering some 163 acres can be used to subtract timberland acreage from the NTMP. It appears the Bohemian Club only developed the conservation easement idea when it became clear that the property exceeds the 2500 acre limit for an NTMP.

Will Sebastopol Creeks See the Light of Day?

As part of our Urban Forestry Program, Forest Unlimited organized citizens interested in improving and "daylighting" Sebastopol's two urban creeks, Calder and Zempfer. Calder Creek is their first project.

Calder Creek runs through Ives Park. At the edge of the park Calder enters the dark confinement of two large underground pipes laid beneath three parking lots and Highway 116. It finally escapes four blocks later into the life-giving light near the Laguna de Santa Rosa and the Joe Redota Trail. A spring Southwest of Ives Park nourishes Calder's year round flow.

The Sebastopol group, which has yet to adopt a formal name, held its first organizing meeting on July 1. Citizens (including professionals in creek restoration, City Council Members, residents, artists and educators) pooled information and suggested some interesting ideas for improvement of the creek. Here are some of their ideas:

Reconfigure the intersection of Jewel Avenue and Willow Street which sits atop Calder Creek and is confusing and dangerous, daylighting a small portion of the creek in the process.

Daylight the portions of the creek beneath city-owned parking areas east of Ives Park by rezoning for housing and commercial development. Selling the lots for development would increase Sebastopol revenues, focus development in the downtown core, make it easier to walk to businesses, beautify the area and provide a source of funding for the daylighting. Reforest the daylighted section with a riparian zone



*From the desk
of the
Executive Director*

Jenner-Armstrong Public Access and Wildlife Corridor

Can you visualize a continuous public access and wildlife corridor extending from Jenner to Armstrong Redwoods? What if the corridor featured giant redwoods, pristine creeks, hiking and horseback riding opportunities with restaurant and overnight accommodations? With your help this vision can become a reality!

In December of 2007 Forest Unlimited made a formal proposal to the Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District that the District assemble a Jenner-to-Armstrong Public Access and Wildlife Corridor. We had researched and mapped the proposed corridor stretching from Jenner through the proposed Jenner Headlands across Cazadero Highway and Austin Creek at "Three Mile Bridge" and up East Austin Creek to the Austin Creek State Recreation Area which is adjacent to Armstrong Redwoods State Reserve. We had also researched the ownership of the effected properties and the historic Magnesite Railway that ran along the banks of East Austin Creek.

Then we had gathered endorsements from environmental groups; trail, bicycle, equestrian groups; chamber's of commerce and property owners along the proposed corridor willing to grant easements. We arranged meetings with the Open Space District and the Sonoma Land Trust, presented our findings and proposal and received a favorable hearing.

Some new and exciting developments have occurred since we last reported on this project's progress. Several additional organizations as well as County Supervisors Efrén Carrillo and Shirley Zane have endorsed the proposal. The 5000 acre Jenner Headlands, key to the proposal, has been acquired by the Open Space District. The Wildwood Retreat on Old Cazadero Road has offered a trail easement along East Austin Creek within their

large parcel and will host a meeting of representatives of organizations that have endorsed the idea.

But we could use your help. More research needs to be done, more organizations need to endorse the idea and we need to encourage the Open Space District to formally adopt a resolution to seek acquisitions within the corridor, both land and easements. If you would like a .jpg version of the mapped corridor or would like to help with this project, please email Rick Coates at rcoates@sonic.net.



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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Sebastopol Creeks *(cont'd from page 1)*

and connect Ives Park to the Joe Redota Trail with a bicycle route along the creek beneath the highway.

Naturalize the creek channel in Ives Park by restoring meanders and removing the concrete banks, sloping the sides so children could safely access the creek for environmental education.

Address pollution and runoff issues by encouraging the city to relocate the trash dumpster away from the creek, organizing creek cleanup events and instituting water quality monitoring. The group has already hosted a walk on the lower portion of the creek and will soon investigate the upper portion.

If you are interested in joining this group which meets the last Wednesday evening of each month, email seba-creeks@googlegroups.com or contact Forest Unlimited.

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Boho Logging *(cont'd from page 1)*

3. Even after more than three years of controversy, the Bohemian Club is still dragging its feet over identifying and protecting all the old growth Redwood and Douglas-fir on the property. Significant stands and patches identified by the Department of Fish and Game and others remain unmapped and unprotected.

4. The plan still remains an aggressive commercial logging plan, seeking to log between 900,000 board feet per year and 1.7 million board feet per year of redwood and Douglas-fir and targeting 40% of the largest Douglas-fir for removal in the first 20 year cycle of logging alone. As Professor Philip Rundel of UCLA wrote about the most recent revisions to the plan: "*This new NTMP clearly remains in my opinion a commercial logging project, not a management program to reduce fire hazard or restore original stand structures.*"

At this point, environmentalists are working to fund a lawsuit to stop this plan if it is approved in its present form. Details about the status of this controversy and how to donate may be found at <http://savebohemiangrove.org>

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 a quarterly newsletter, notification about special events, workshops and logging in their watersheds.

Please let me know when the next **Forest & Watershed Protection Workshop** will be in my area _____

YES! I would like to join Forest Unlimited to further your work! (Dues are tax-deductible as permitted)

___ \$200 ___ \$100 ___ \$50 ___ \$35 ___ \$15 Other \$ ___

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Your watershed _____



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