



PO Box 506 • Forestville CA 95436 • 707.632.6070

# Forest Communiqué

The Voice of Forest Unlimited

Fall 2012

## Protection for Trees in Vineyards

In partnership with several organizations and led primarily by an elder named Maurine Caplinger of Santa Rosa, many acres of real trees will continue to stand on our County's hillsides providing shade, slope stability, habitat, and beauty.

Despite the immediate pressure to convert forests and woodlands to vineyards, County officials were convinced to take a time-out and review the policy that allows trees to be ripped from the ground for intensive vineyard operations. A narrow and brief moratorium on the processing of such vineyard proposals was instituted and a new rule emerged.

As a result, projects that were in the pipeline and that proposed tree removal on slopes (over 10 percent on highly erodible soils or over 15 percent slopes with moderately erodible soils) were withdrawn. Some were resubmitted but those were modified to save the trees instead of clearcutting the landscape. This is a concrete result for our watersheds and a foundation upon which to build.

Everyone that has ever written a letter to the Department of Forestry or given a dollar to support Forest Unlimited shares in this achievement. Thanks also goes to county personnel that looked at the science in a fair manner. Still, too many trees remain unprotected from the ripping, chipping, and burning utilized in making many vineyards.

But trees also face threats from other quarters. Forest Unlimited is eager, in partnership with agencies and organizations, to move ahead with additional concrete proposals to protect trees in these fast changing times that incorporate the latest watershed science.

As Forest Unlimited members have likely noticed, wine hype is growing more intense. Newspapers announce the coming grape-supply shortage.

*Continued on Page 3*

## Russian River Redwoods

There has been a rash of logging in the Russian River area. These operations ostensibly are permitted under a home safety exemption. However, some tree services are taking out more trees than necessary due to the value of redwoods in the market.



*Stripped trees by Hacienda Bridge*



*7 redwoods out of 14 cut and stacked*

The exemption permit is one given by Cal Fire for removing trees 150 feet around one's home for safety. But it does not allow more than 50% removal, and if the trees are in a riparian zone, they are protected. There are several areas where this is being done. One area by the Hacienda Bridge, 14 redwood trees were stripped and ready to cut.

David Herr, a neighbor and Forest Unlimited member, and others made calls to Cal Fire and other agencies which resulted in Cal Fire restricting the cut to half and saved the trees from being cut in the riparian corridor. The exemption allows the logs to be sold which explains the incentive for a company to try to take more trees than needed.

Contact Cal Fire and Forest Unlimited if you see more than a couple of trees being cut under the safety exemption permit.



*From the desk  
of the  
Executive Director*

## **A Walk in the Woods**

Late in July, I became a grandpa for the first time. So I went to visit my daughter and her newly minted grandson in Crescent City. The tiny tike is named Tatsu, Japanese for “dragon” (his father is Japanese).

While mother and child were finally asleep simultaneously, I took a morning walk through the woods. My daughter lives in a complex of duplexes among the firs and surrounded by forest just a morning walk from the seashore via a two lane road. You can actually hear the seals barking from her apartment.

There is nothing like a newborn son to put one in a philosophical mood. So, while I walked, I pondered the fate of the forest on either side of the road. I began to look more closely. There was an amazing amount of litter desecrating the edge of the forest, some apparently from walkers like myself, some thrown from speeding cars. I began to note the composition of the human detritus, looking for patterns that might reveal the societal dysfunction that leads to such sacrilege. I think I found it.

Each piece of litter seemed to be related to addiction. There were, of course the standard beer cans, wine bottles and wine boxes, a possible link with alcohol addiction. There were cigarette boxes and butts and cigar tubes. Possible tobacco addiction. Then there were the large 18 oz fast food soft drink cups, plastic burger “clam shells”, and various fried food wrappers. Junk food addiction. There was even a syringe!

But there was an even more sinister threat to the forest from a not so obvious addiction. I was shocked into recognition when a SUV sped by only inches from me. I looked beneath my feet at the asphalt where there was once forest and thought about the carbon dioxide polluting the atmosphere and causing global climate change, climate change that threatens entire forest ecosystems. Oil addiction.

When I reached the shoreline my spirits brightened. The seal rookery was noisy with new life. Yes, I thought, the environment is resilient and new life is everywhere. I have a new grandson who will be eager, I imagine, to solve our societal addictions, with our help.

Later, with tiny Tatsu asleep in my arms, I gaze down into his beautiful face, and I know with renewed conviction why we fight to preserve the environment.

## **Coalition Building with SCWC**

As reported in prior issues, Forest Unlimited is a representative and participant in the policies and activities of the Sonoma County Water Coalition with 31 member organizations. The coalition, along with Forest Unlimited, have taken an active role in the recent protection of trees on vineyard slopes. More recently, a coalition letter was sent to key legislators on the problem of converting forests to vineyards. Working with coalitions is an effective way to increase mutual support and provides access to more experts on various issues of concern.

SCWC’s website:

<http://www.scwatercoalition.org/>



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](http://www.forestunlimited.org)

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## Forest Conservation Conference

This summer, Forest Unlimited attended the North Coast Forest Conservation Conference hosted at Shone Farm in Forestville by Sonoma Land Trust and several other organizations. The conference focused on introducing “sustainable forestry” practices to the North Coast environs as opposed to the unsustainable and wildly unpopular clear-cutting practices that have left an undesirable legacy on North Coast woodlands. Thinning woodlands is hardly a new concept. It is logical to selectively harvest and strive to achieve old growth characteristics in forests. However even this type of forestry deserves to be monitored because the devil is in the details.

Just a few days prior to the conference, Forest Unlimited board members, Larry Hanson and Maria Potter along with Executive Director, Rick Coates, were given a tour of the Jenner Headlands to learn about Sonoma Land Trust’s multi-species restoration forestry efforts on the stunning coastal forest woodlands. Rick Coates and others present had some tough questions for the scientists and foresters in attendance at the tour knowing well that sometimes there are vast differences between forest practices on paper and consequences (i.e. erosion, and loss of topsoil) that occur on lands.

Similarly, tough questions were asked at the conservation conference. Although there was much to introduce and discuss, clearly there was an elephant in the room full of well-meaning conservationists. Few panelists were prepared to answer questions about the so-called Preservation Ranch project- also known as the largest proposed clear-cut forest conversion in California’s history. Representatives from Cal-Fire and Sonoma County PRMD fielded questions about their permit process, which has been shown to be ineffective at adequately protecting natural resources and living forest communities. They were confronted both by the audience and by their co-presenter UC Berkeley Professor, Dr. Adina Merenlender whose research into environmental consequences of forest-vineyard conversions brought substance to the discussion. Forest Unlimited will continue to challenge unsound logging practices and those who enable them!

On a lighter note, Kasey Wade SRJC Natural Resources Educator provided a tour of the woodlands at Shone Farm during the conference, which included highlights of Forest Unlimited reforestation projects from years past. We are pleased to report that the redwoods planted in early 2010 are thriving and emerging to eventually replace the pines at the woodland site. Another Forest Unlimited/Shone Farm collaborative tree planting event is being planned for January of 2013, which will include an educational field class facilitated by SRJC.

## Tree Protection *(from page 1)*

This hype will make grapes planted, grown, and processed with care a thing of the past. Maximum volume, with its attendant industrialization of the countryside, will be all the result as large countries buy up any bottle sporting a California wine label.

In the context of history, destruction of natural systems is a choice of fools. Our county is well positioned to embrace the important lessons of history and to be guided by principles of sustainability, science, and moderation.

Forest Unlimited understands how watersheds and forests contribute to rain and water retention in a Mediterranean climate like we have. Forest Unlimited will be seeking to protect and expand the buffers that we have against a changing climate. In coalition, we are bringing these issues to the policy makers and are persistently seeking sensible solutions.

## Things You Should Know

- 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: CalFire (707-576-2275); PRMD (707-565-1900); DFG (707- 944-5588); NCRWQCB (707- 576-2220); NMFS (707- 575-6050); Forest Unlimited (707-632-6070)

# Tree Chronicles

Public policy, it is no surprise, is a key driver when it comes to protection of trees and the many benefits "trees" provide. The good news is that the loss of trees in the County is subject to policies that can be changed (see article on Protection for Trees).

## Ecosystem Services and Job Creation

There are billions in local revenues to be generated by public policies that favor environmental protection, stable and secure jobs, food, and energy. If there were instituted a national policy, for example, that utilities obtain 25 percent of their energy from renewable sources, this would spur increases in jobs and revenues (\$15.3 billion local tax revenues and approximately 300,000 jobs nationally – Union of Concerned Scientists Oct. 2012).

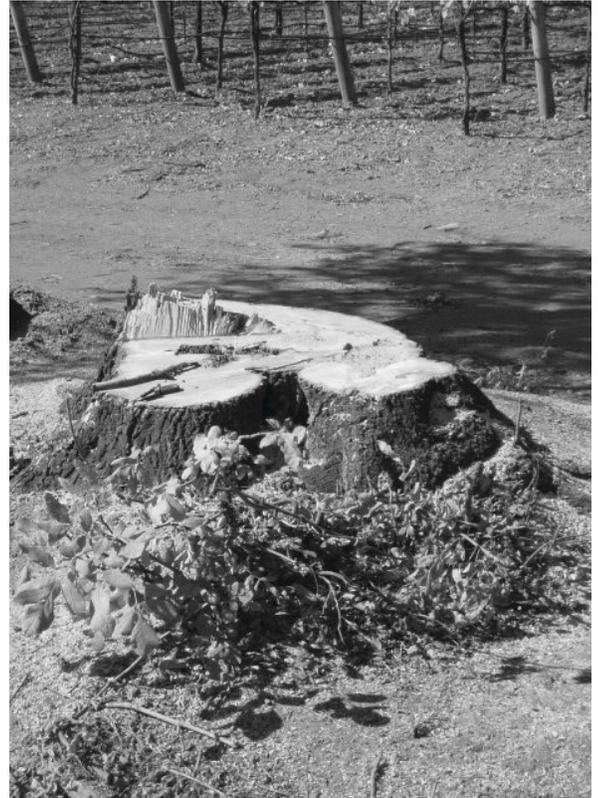
In addition, the ecosystem services that nature provides have been quantified and easily match the monetary prowess other industries claim for themselves. Bats alone, for example, provide ecosystem services that range from \$3.7 to \$53 billion nationally (Center for Biological Diversity 2012). Taking care of ecosystems makes sense on so many levels, but ecosystems are not always thought of as providing economic benefits. This is where informed leadership becomes essential.

## Marshalling Leadership, Science, and Vision

Tree removal has been on the front burner in Sonoma County for at least the last year. Interest in new policies is mounting and will hopefully continue to grow through November. Trees are where the rubber meets the road so to speak and are the cornerstones of watersheds, precipitation, erosion prevention, habitat connectivity, beauty, cooling, wildlife refugia, and microclimates. Sonoma County has received recognition for some of its climate conscious initiatives and many recognize it is past time to get our tree protection policies in line.

Despite the intense effort by the worst elements of the extractive industries, Sonoma County can, with leadership and vision, retain its quaint and desirable attributes. As has come to be expected in this day and age, few industries have loyalties to any geographic or political boundaries and therefore have no qualms converting our natural areas into dollars, deserts, and dead rivers. Because making a comfortable living is not enough for the worst of the worst, policies are needed.

It is exciting to note that Sonoma County is, at this moment in the big scheme of things, a biological stronghold. Local public policy can ensure that the balance of business and healthy watersheds is maintained and that the buffers against climate change, an important component of economic and biological stability, are increased in a timely manner.



*One of several mature oak trees along Wohler Rd. in Forestville*



*Redwoods to be cut under the "safety exemption permit"*

## Redwood Seedling Reforestation Project

There is a volunteer opportunity in the coming year for planting redwood seedlings.

This January, Forest Unlimited will be planting approximately 1,500 one-year old redwood seedlings for reforestation and erosion control at Shone Farm—the agricultural extension of Santa Rosa Junior College.

This event is very popular and provides opportunities for individuals and families to work together for a healthy future.

The planting dates are Friday, January 4th and Saturday, January 5th. On each day, we will rendezvous at 9 am at Shone Farm (north of Forestville, just west of the intersection of Eastside Road and the Trenton-Healdsburg Road).

The morning session will end at around 12:30 and the afternoon session will end around 4:30 p.m. All equipment and a free indoor lunch, including drinks and snacks, will be provided. Vegetarian food will also be available. Lunch will be served at the Shone Farm Warren Dutton Pavilion.

The seedlings average about 20-inches in height (root ball included) and are not difficult to plant. These trees will be planted on land “forever protected.”

To properly plan for this event, it is essential that you contact us and sign up for a date(s) of your choice. To sign up and/or to ask any questions, please contact us: Carl Wahl, Project Manager, at 874-9268 or [carlwahl3@gmail.com](mailto:carlwahl3@gmail.com) or Bob Nelson, Project Manager, at 874-1740. Further information on the rendezvous location, appropriate attire, etc. will be sent to all volunteers by mid December. Please tell your friends.

Would you like some redwood seedlings to plant on your own property? There is a 10-seedling minimum, and one must pick them up in Occidental. Contact Carl for details.

## Clearcutting Petition

The petition against clearcutting forests is still alive and the Sierra Club is still gathering signatures for a later presentation to Governor Brown. The governor is in a leadership role to directly make changes at the Board of Forestry, the regulatory level, or to influence the legislature.

Forest Unlimited is supporting the Sierra Club’s effort to gather signatures on petitions to keep watersheds intact, protection for wildlife and fish, fire retention and the important climate change considerations.

Forest Unlimited recently gathered signatures at the Bioneers’ Conference in San Rafael where hundreds of new signatures were put on the petition. To sign the petition, go to:

<http://sierraclub.org/clearcutting/>

*Outreach to public at Mermaid Festival*



## 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

## Coalition Building with the North Coast Stream Flow Coalition

Forest Unlimited is a member of the **North Coast Stream Flow Coalition (NCSFC)**. Here are some activities the coalition may pursue in 2013: hold more workshops, form a California lobby delegation, track legislation, support flow impaired listings, work with State agencies, communicate via our website and publications, attend and speak at all regional water board hearings, coordinate TMDL involvement, and continue protests and complaints.

For more information on this exciting coalition working to keep water in our creeks and rivers, go to the NCSFC website: <http://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 \_\_\_\_\_

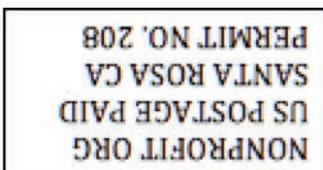
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