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Forest Communique

The Voice of Forest Unlimited

Spring 2015

County Tree Protection

Forest Unlimited is happy to report that last fall, a majority of the Supervisors (Zane, Gorin, and McGuire) voted to commit resources to work on the update of the County Tree Protection policies.

Supervisor Rabbitt said he does not like to wait to make public policy in a crisis situation. With that said, it is on the supervisors to get something in place before another horrendous project is proposed.

As explained in the last issue of this newsletter, the County's current Tree Protection Ordinance is



No permits needed to bulldoze trees for growing hay

not sustainable (Chapter 26-88-01(m)) insofar as it allows trees including oak woodlands to be cleared for hay, wine grapes, and more. The County intentionally tied its own hands, back in the 1980's, when it created a Tree Ordinance that exempted agriculture and wineries and many other activities. This situation exists because the County leaders allow it to exist, and even large scale tree removal activities are called "ministerial". They get no environmental review, no biological or climate change analysis, no mitigation, and no public input. The Code also outlines numerous ways in which protected trees can be cut down for in lieu fees and at the developers' discretion.



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Scientists Harassed

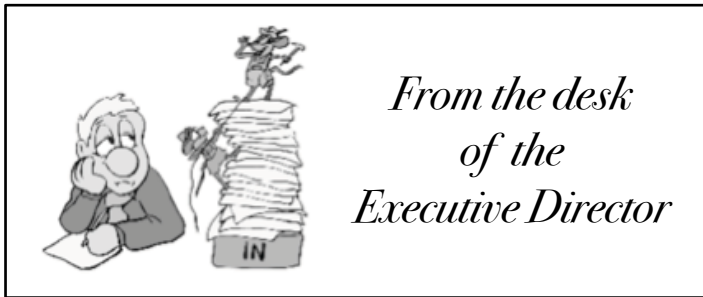
As Forest Unlimited members know, logging and other development in our watersheds is sometimes reviewed for their potential impacts on creeks, climate, and neighbors in order that the impacts of the proposed activities are understood prior to the commencement of the activity. This is good commonsense written into state law. A big part of the review process is understanding the science. Lay people depend on professionals for that. When those professionals are attacked for simply assisting the concerned public, the public interest is no longer represented.

One example of this occurred recently in Sonoma County when certain winery/vineyard developers did not want independent geologic assessments on behalf of the public that questioned their projects' impacts. They made complaints to the state geology board causing the geologist to have to defend his record and reputation in court.

Cont'd to P. 5

**Save the Date! 2nd Annual
Summer Solstice Barbeque**
Saturday, **June 27**, 3-6 pm
Anderson Hall, Camp Meeker
Speaker: Cameron Williams, expert
on **giant trees**, from UC Berkeley

(Cont'd to P. 7)



Biophilia

Biophilia: A deep love of nature and the natural world

In 1984 Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson proposed the “Biophilia Hypothesis” which states there exists “a human need, fired in the crucible of evolutionary development, for a deep intimate associations with the natural environment, particularly its living biota.” I doubt this. Rather I believe that evolution has equipped us with adaptability. We learn to cope with our environment whether it be forest, desert, farm or city. I see love of nature as a learned attitude. Some have even learned to fear nature.

That is why Forest Unlimited seeks not merely to protect forests and watersheds and the wildlife that depend upon them but also seeks to develop biophilia in our children and our citizens. Forest Unlimited is, by intent and by law, an educational nonprofit.

So does one “teach” biophilia? Humans cannot learn to love what they do not know. Book learning can only go so far. Preaching rarely changes either minds or hearts. Experience changes attitudes. That is why Forest Unlimited provides an opportunity for volunteers to plant redwood seedlings each year. It not only gives folks a stake in the future forest, it gives them an opportunity to spend an enjoyable day or two tramping about a beautiful forest with new friends. The free lunch doesn’t hurt either. We know that this approach works, because folks come back year after year. It is heartening that many are young and some parents bring their children.

Most people now live in cities. Some cities are nearly biological deserts, with little greenery, small stunted trees and uniform athletic fields. Many children grow up never traveling much beyond their neighborhood in an environment of concrete, asphalt, strip malls, traffic and starless skies. They never see the source of their food or water. Their garbage and waste just “go away”.

That is why Forest Unlimited started an Urban Forestry Program to bring nature back to the city. Creeks are the

obvious places to start. We advocate bringing creeks, long ago imprisoned in underground pipes, back to the surface where light will give them new life. Our Calder Creek Project initiated a campaign to “daylight” Calder creek between Ives Park in Sebastopol and the Laguna de Santa Rosa. We have participated in creek cleanups along Calder Creek and reported fish sightings to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. If you live in Sebastopol and would like to get involved, please contact us.

Our Urban Forestry Program encourages the protection and the restoration of the riparian zones along creeks by planting native trees near creeks. The Roseland Neighborwood Project cleans up trash along Roseland Creek, plants oaks and encourages the creation of a wild park along the creek. If you live in Santa Rosa, come join us on April 18 for another “Let’s Make a Difference Day”.

Both the Calder Creek and Roseland Creek Projects advocate that a trail be constructed along the creek. Trails introduce city dwellers to nature which can develop biophilia. We hope you will join our efforts to instill a love of nature in our citizenry.



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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Armstrong Woods Reserve Pipeline Project Will Be Back!

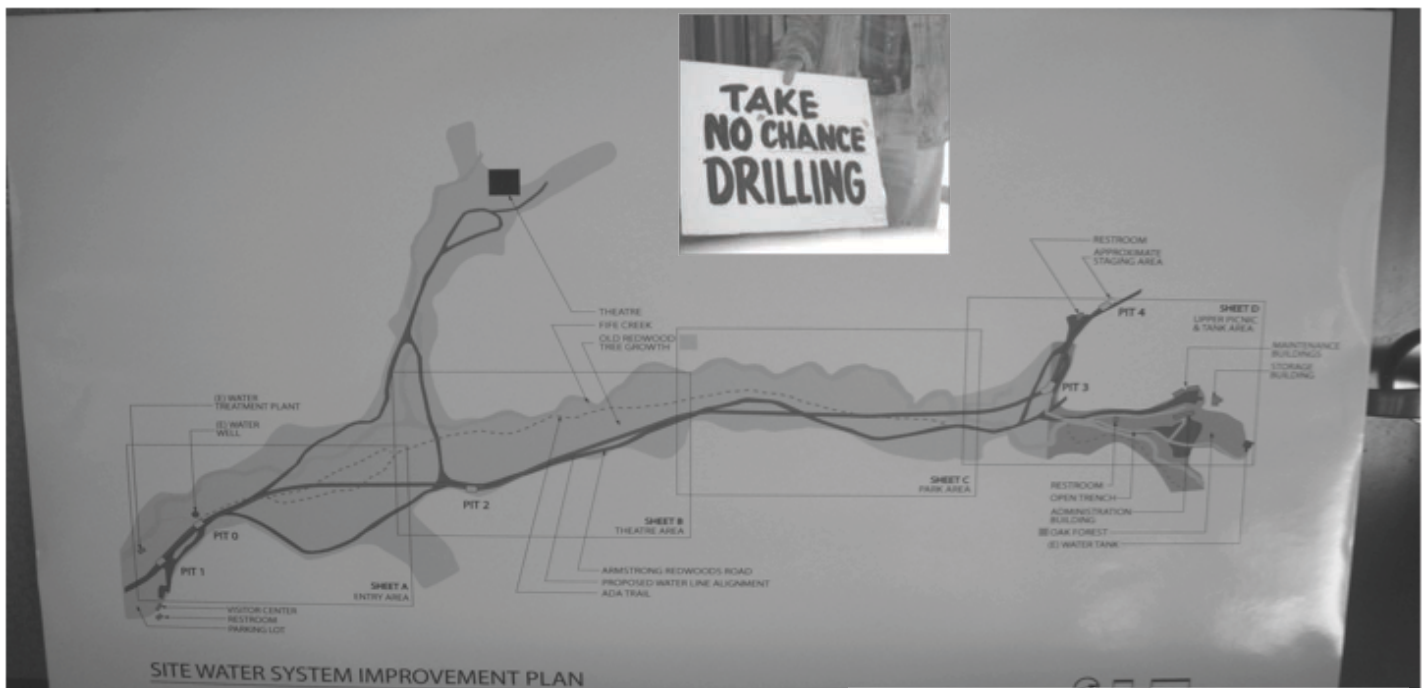
The maintenance of water pipes in Armstrong Woods Reserve has turned into a million dollar project promoted by the State Park administration in Sacramento. This is the California Park system that had no funding for many of our parks and that has a volunteer organization doing support tasks due to purported funding shortfalls for personnel. This project makes it appear as if there is plenty of money for elaborate engineering and construction.

The expense of this project's engineering and construction is not the only concern. It can endanger the trees! A mile of pipeline will be shoved underground to an indeterminate depth in order to get

beneath redwood roots. A number of pits will need to be excavated to get the depths needed for horizontally drilling. Very large equipment will be utilized. The above ground construction will itself do damage to some areas on the forest floor—sacrifice zones.

The photos below show some of the concerned public bringing attention to this important issue. Due to this attention, there is an EIR now in process. Unfortunately, it is not dead and will likely come back. There are many project alternatives that were suggested that are not costly and that do not harm or potentially harm the ancient trees and grove. Many would consider choosing one or more of these alternatives as a no brainer.

The map shows underground pipes in black throughout the length of Armstrong Grove with pits at junctures



Logging Update: Sonoma County/Calistoga

Cal Fire has improved their website so old links to Timber Harvest Plans (THPs) and Non-Industrial Timber Management Plans (NTMPs) may no longer work. The Cal Fire website can be hard to navigate, so the best source for current links to California logging plans is via the Forest Unlimited website, www.forestunlimited.org. Public participation in the review process through written comments is always the best way the public can protect California's forests.

There has been only one logging plan submitted in Sonoma County since the last newsletter, an NTMP. NTMPs are problematic because once approved they allow a landowner to log their property indefinitely as per the plan without additional review or approval.

The new plan is designated **1-15NTMP-001SON** (sometimes called the "Browder" plan) and is for group selection on a total of 320 Acres 2.6 miles west of Occidental. Group selection can do a lot of harm to the forest ecology and can be very much like a series of clearcuts. This is in the drainage for Coleman Valley Creek on Coleman Valley Road. The south end of the property proposed for logging extends to Fitzpatrick Lane close to the Grove of the Old Trees. It is possible some logged areas will be visible from Fitzpatrick Lane on the way to the Grove.

The NTMP claims only 2nd and 3rd growth trees are on the property but the tree survey provided by the forester has trees over 100" in diameter, larger than expected for any but old growth. There is no commitment to protect these large, ancient trees that provide valuable habitat for wildlife. The importance of fog drip needs to be evaluated here since this was an issue in the challenge for Grove of the Old Trees nearby. Forest Unlimited is reviewing the details of this plan and will submit public comments in the near future.

In Napa County **1-13-126NAP** is not a new plan but is very important to us and there are some new developments. This THP proposes tree removal to develop a subdivision, hotel and resort in the hills west and above Calistoga. Vineyard development and commercial logging are not the only threats to our forests. This plan was rejected by Cal Fire following the second review because of objections from the Napa Regional Water Board geologist who found the geology report inadequate. This is very steep ground susceptible to landslides that were not correctly mapped in the original plan. Extensive comments were also submitted by the public and Forest Unlimited. This rejection requires a second pre-harvest inspection (PHI) which is not yet scheduled and will also require a new biological survey to be completed and submitted since the first expired. Forest Unlimited is working closely with and supporting local groups in Calistoga who have been steadfast in their monitoring and objections to this plan.

In addition to forestry issues, this large proposed development is objectionable because it uses a lot of water in a dry area and requires additional water treatment capacity that Calistoga does not have. Calistoga is currently in violation of numerous water quality regulations that the Regional Water Board is forcing them to address. It seems like poor planning for an area that presents itself as a vacation/travel destination to allow so much waste to flow into its major waterway.

Roseland NeighborWood Annual Spring Clean

The annual Roseland NeighborWood Spring Clean will be at **10am on Saturday, April 18, 2015**.

People from out of the area may park cars at the Roseland Creek elementary School across the street from the NeighborWood on Burbank Ave. The event will last two hours with some refreshments afterwards.

Anyone with camera and video equipment skills could also help our effort by taking images for use later on websites and in newsletters, etc.

Looking forward to seeing you all there and please spread the word.

--Coordinated by Duane Dewitt

Our 18th Annual Tree Planting Project

In January of this year, Forest Unlimited planted over 1,000 redwood seedlings for reforestation and erosion control at the Wildwood Retreat Center in the hills above Guerneville. We had over 50 volunteers in the two days of plantings.

This beautiful 210-acre property is protected by a conservation easement. The land will be preserved undeveloped in perpetuity, so the seedlings will not be subject to future logging. We continue to seek and evaluate future appropriate sites.

Special thanks to Forest Unlimited's project managers, Carl Wahl and Bob Nelson.

Two very enthusiastic planters at the 2015 planting



Can They Do That?

Forest Unlimited fields many calls and emails throughout the year that pertain to observations by the concerned public. You yourself may have wondered when you see trees getting cut down near the banks of the creek or somewhere else, "Can they do that?" Or maybe you have heard rumors that a grove of oaks across the street has been purchased for development and worry that these oaks could be cut down. Would it be legal? What about the neighbor who owns a large parcel and is using workers to cut down trees - a few here and a few there. Is that ok? Or, "I hear chainsaws. What should I do?"

Take Photos & Ask Questions Later - Leveraging Digital Technology for Nature

Snapping a few photos is simple and cheap. Photos can help get unauthorized activities stopped and mitigated. If your public agency gets an email with photos and hopefully some information as to where the photos were taken, they will be best at deciding if rules are being violated. Photos greatly helps the agencies decide if they can take an action to stop the work while they sort out the issues. The more information you can get on the spot the better.

Common Sense Steps

The end goal of the photographic effort is to prevent the unlawful destruction of irreplaceable trees, salmon, salamander habitat, water supplies, etc. Some nature lovers document vulnerable areas before any harm has come to them in hopes of preserving them as important sites. You can purchase an inexpensive disposable camera and keep it in your car. Those photos can be quickly put on a CD for easy use in emails. Also, you can take pictures with your phone, tablet, or iPad. If you have a digital camera, even better. Again, try to identify the location as well as possible for future use.

Useful and Easy Information to Obtain

While snapping representative photos, include a landmark in some of the photos as a reference point. In an ideal world, photos would include a mailbox, a unique rock, a road sign, or a building. Photos should be taken from as close as one can safely get. If there's an address or name, or company truck, it wouldn't hurt to capture these just in case they might be helpful later.

Try to capture the relative size of trees cut, any pollution created by the activity, dead fish or birds or other wildlife. Any of the above will be very helpful to the agencies in their evaluation of the activity. It is helpful

Professionals *(Cont.'d from P. 1)*

The geologist was Ray Waldbaum, CEG. Ray prevailed in court which affirmed that Ray's geologic analysis in question adhered to professional standards. In a county riddled with landslide and earthquake fault areas, the fact that winery projects can slide through the county process every time is improbable. You would expect that now and then there would be sites not safe or suitable to excavate caves or build large multi-story buildings. In fact, the public's geologist has found that on some applications, reports presented by consulting firms had done inadequate geologic work.

Attacks on peer reviewers must not be tolerated by the professional licensing boards, courts, or our elected representatives. Professionals that provide professional peer review of the work of developer's consultants are invaluable to informed decision making and is in the public interest. Developers must not participate in schemes to pressure peer review scientists working on behalf of the concerned public. Let the science sort things out and we can look forward to better outcomes for the County.

to copy your email and photos to more than one agency, and if the activities are particularly bad, you can also send photos to your County Supervisor.

CAUTION: The point here is that it is NOT necessary to know if the activity is legal or not, and don't assert violations or make affirmative statements about who is doing what offensive act. Let your public agencies sort that out. Simply ask for an investigation and their analysis on the legality of the activity.

Contact Information for Public Resource Agencies

Land Use Questions - Sonoma County **Permit and Resource Management Department: 565-1900** Code Enforcement staff (be sure to get their email address)

Suspected Agricultural PRE-clearing activities - Sonoma County **Agricultural Commissioner: 565-2371;**
Tony.Linegar@sonoma-county.org;
Gail.Davis@sonoma-county.org

All wildlife concerns including aquatic, terrestrial, reptilian, and avian - **California Department of Fish and Wildlife: 944-5500;**
Adam.mckannay@wildlife.ca.gov

Logging - **Cal Fire: 576-2275;** Kim.Sone@fire.ca.gov

Sea going creatures and their habitat - **National Marine Fisheries Service: 707-387-0737**

What Do We Share in Common?

What Do We Share in Common?

Most of us know the answer to this question. The sky and the water are "things" we as beings on this finite planet share in common. They do not fit neatly into artificial borders or banks, and they are what we rely upon to live. Trees protect and directly affect the atmosphere we all need. When cumulatively significant logging or clearing occurs, it affects us all and for a long time. What affects the sky, therefore is also critically important. And it can be said that trees are an important part of the commons.

The Finite Nature of Nature

The commons includes many things including the trees, creeks, the frogs, the bats, and the bees. Like other flora and fauna, these are essential parts of the system that make crops grow, that provide clean air, and make healthy living possible. In order to protect this life support system, the rational thing to do is to accept and respect the finite nature of nature.

For some, this acceptance will have to be preceded by prudent public policies which may seem impossible to

achieve. As Tennessee Williams pointed out many years ago; however, "The violets in the mountains have broken the rocks." This means that the seemingly impossible can happen when, as in this case, the concerned public is paying attention, puts roots down, and refuses to let go, rocks can be broken. The time is now to define the commons, and to properly value those

"The violets in the mountains have broken the rocks."
- Tennessee Williams

things to which no one person can claim title. Henry David Thoreau's writings support the ideas of the commons and recognize the inherent value of nature in a person's life. He wrote, "I once had a sparrow alight upon my shoulder a moment, while I was hoeing a village garden, and I felt that I was more distinguished

by that circumstance than I should have been by any epaulet I could have worn."

By defining the commons broadly to include the wild, more folks will be able to experience the connection Thoreau experienced. This might result in less demand for "new and improved" products visited upon us by Madison Avenue.

Sustaining The Commons

When folks use the term sustainability now, it is very unclear what is meant by the term. We must ask, sustain what? And is sustaining something the same as keeping something truly healthy?

A good rule of thumb is whether a sustainable effort respects the limits of nature. Is sustainability based on the limits of nature at the center of our region's

development model?

This is surely not the case. It is not sustainable to acknowledge a water supply problem during many parts of the year, but then to propose or approve additional water usurping activities. It is not sustainable to engage in soil ripping and land clearing activities that level oak woodlands, turn up ancient soils, and release large amounts of carbon into the atmosphere. And clearing land of trees to

grow cattle is a triple whammy to the climate and undermines all efforts to reduce carbon outputs from transportation (United Nations report). Promoting a diet high in meat, therefore is not a sustainable activity.

Does a sustainable brand or label equal sustainability? Consumers can only be confused by a green label now unless it comes backed up with information as to whether the label takes into account the impacts flowing from a products production. What are those impacts? Are these impacts felt region wide or world wide? Is a good practice in one place off set by other harmful practices and activities?

Some Components of a Sustainable Region

Sustaining the commons means sustaining watersheds - the biological strongholds for civilizations. Watersheds

(Cont'd to P. 7)



Commons *(Cont'd from p. 6)*

are complex and essential, and we cannot create them. As Leo Szilard advised, "[d]o not destroy what you cannot create." Our times require a commitment to scale down our demands on our watersheds. The test of true sustainability will include analyzing whether there are healthy salmon runs in the region or dead and dying rivers? Do wildlife have safe passage, food, and water sources or have these been fenced and drained on a regional scale? And are we making trade offs that undo advances made in one sector by ignoring inputs from other sectors?

What You Can Do

Thinking a thousand times before cutting down trees will be an important component to sustainable living. Even the County's Climate Action Plan calls out deforestation as a large contributor to the climate crisis. A lesser known fact, according to the United Nations report mentioned above, is that eating high on the food chain is a major, if not **the** major, GHG source and individual demand for large cheap meat portions drive this. By just leaving more in the store, every day folks can send a strong message about what consumers really want—a sustainable ecological economy. Eating low on the food chain is easy and the best we can do to save biodiversity, the ice pack, the polar bears, the picas, sustainable farming, and water in our creeks.

There are other ways you can help too. Schools and other large institutions like prisons and the military are subject to some federal policies like dietary guidelines. Their procurements trigger what types of food are produced by our nation's farms. Public comments on dietary guidelines are being accepted now. This effort provides a path towards a brighter future for the rapidly heating planet. Comment on federal dietary standards by May 8, 2015 at: <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2015/comments/>

Trees *(Cont'd from P. 1)*

Now that PRMD is slated to work on this, we must be sure the work is fully funded. Final vote on this is in June. Public input on this is key for getting funding and meaningful protections.



This oak woodland on Piner Road is unprotected from intensive agricultural cultivation.

Please call your Supervisor and demand an update of the Tree Protection Ordinance that follows best science and plans for a resilient and thriving future for Sonoma County. Please show up at the Board Meeting where this issue will be heard. We will send out alerts. While the update of the policies proceeds, all tree cutting activity should be held in abeyance. The main number for the Board is 565-2241.

Fun times at the All Species Ball *(Forest Unlimited's Halloween Alternative)*



Animals responded to the call to come to the All Species Ball at Masonic Hall, October 2014

Forest Unlimited Summer Solstice Barbeque, Saturday, June 27, 3-6 pm
2nd Annual Barbeque, Anderson Hall, Camp Meeker—wild salmon & grilled vegetable options

Sign up for eScripts! at Olivers and Fircrest Markets. Ask them to direct donations to Forest Unlimited.

Rethinking... Is Sonoma County Wine Country or is it more accurate to say **Wire Country**? Could it ever be called **Redwood Country**? Visit our website—www.forestunlimited.org. Look under News (Different Views).

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 _____

Your address _____

City, State, Zip _____

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