

Forest[↑]Watcher

Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch News

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Clearcutting carbs up climate

New carbon protocols give credit for poor forestry practices

Trees breathe. Even better for us, they breathe the opposite of humans and animals, taking in carbon dioxide and putting out oxygen. Their inhale is our exhale; their exhale is our inhale. It's a great system.

The carbon they take in is stored in their tissues — in their leaves, trunks and roots, and even in the soil around them. A mature forest stores huge amounts of carbon, and breathes in more huge amounts every day.

So especially in an age when too much carbon is being released into the atmosphere, retaining forests is important to provide a counter-balance. Unfortunately, this is also an age of deforestation. You have probably read about the massive demolition of forests in the Amazon, for example, to make way for farms and development.

But widespread deforestation anywhere works against the carbon-removing service that trees provide. How trees are harvested can protect or diminish their carbon-storing potential.

Professor of Forestry Mark Harmon of Oregon State University singles out clearcutting as the most devastating method: "Timber harvest, clearcutting in particular, removes more carbon from the forest than any other disturbance (including fire)." That is because it removes all the mature trees, with the carbon they have been storing, and leaves disturbed soil and slash which emit carbon. Moreover, in the process of the cut trees becoming lumber and wood products, up to 50% of the carbon in them is released.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) recently released a set of protocols to help the state meet its Assembly Bill 32 objective of cutting greenhouse gas emissions (includ-



'Arnold to Arnold' Letter Given to Governor's Office

Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch members Holly Mines, Addie Jacobson, Susan Robinson and Bruce Castle deliver a letter signed by 175 residents of the greater-Arnold, California area to Bismark Bando, Director of External Affairs (pictured in center), in Governor Schwarzenegger's office.

The letter urges the Governor to roll back the recently added language in the California Forest Project Protocols that allows logging companies to collect carbon credits for clearcut logging. To read the letter visit www.forestwatchers.org and click on "Letter from 175 local Arnold-area residents."

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Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch ... a forest and watershed coalition

P.O. Box 2862, Arnold, CA 95223 ■ (209) 795-8260 ■ www.forestwatchers.org

Film Festival Opens to Halloween Crowd

There was a sheep, a tree, and even Bam Bam from the Flintstones — they came, they saw and they took home prizes. But most of all, the audience (costumed or not) enjoyed eight adventure and environmental films at the opening night of the Sixth Annual Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival on Tour in the Sierra Nevada.

The Halloween event opened the festival's 2009-2010 season by welcoming the largest audience in its history — 200 folks came to Black Bart Playhouse in Murphys.

"It was a very positive, enthusiastic and interested audience," said Penny Sarvis, a member of the EPFW Board. "People really came to see the films." These are films that are not usually seen in your local theater and are carefully selected by the festival's organizers. The movies are different for each venue, Sarvis pointed out.

The film festival is hosted each year by EPFW with films

provided by SYRCL (South Yuba River Citizens League) and Patagonia. In addition to Black Bart Playhouse, the festival has developed partnerships with Columbia College, Newsome Harlow Winery, Chatom Vineyards and Bear Valley Lodge.

The Bear Valley venue will host five films on Feb. 27: *Lynx*, *Division Street*, *Goldfish*, *Red Gold* and *Hotel Charley IV: At Your Own Risk*. Doors open at 4:30 PM. Films are from 5:15–9:40 PM.

Have a film fit for future fest? Says Agata Sulczynski, festival organizer: "If you have a film we will take submissions for review."

For more information, visit sierrafilmfest.org or the Facebook page *Wild and Scenic Film Festival (filmfest)*. If you want to receive reminders of upcoming venues email info@sierrafilmfest.org. And check

out the website to see the festival's sponsors.

Want to be one? Call us!

Upcoming Film Fest Venues

Feb. 27: Bear Valley Lodge

April 16: Columbia College

May 1: Newsome Harlow Tasting Room, free

Sept. 16: Chatom Vineyards, free

Tickets for Bear Valley and Columbia are \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door. Students are \$3 in advance, \$5 at the door.

Carbon Credits *from page 1*

ing carbon dioxide) to 1990 levels by 2020. It would make sense for such guidelines to protect existing forests and promote the planting of new ones. The trees can become the basis of a cap-and-trade system, whereby their carbon-storing capacity becomes a "credit" which industrial polluters can purchase to offset their own emissions.

The Forest Protocol adopted by CARB does that. Initially it also seems to provide for healthy forest practices: "All Forest Projects must promote and maintain a diversity of native species and utilize practices that promote and maintain native forests comprised of multiple ages and mixed native species at multiple landscape levels."

Alas, the Protocol does not stop there. At the eleventh hour, a paragraph was added which stands in stunning contradiction to the first one. This addition allows for even-aged management based upon clearcuts of up to 40 acres. After five years or after replanted trees reach five feet, adjacent plots may be clearcut.

Clearcuts and plantations do not "promote and maintain native forests comprised of multiple ages and mixed native species at multiple landscape levels." In fact, they do the opposite.

So, how did this egregious dismantling of "Natural Forest Management" get inserted into the Protocol? So far as we can tell, by political and economic pressure. An earlier voluntary protocol for cap-and-trade, which did not allow for clearcutting, was not able to enlist participation by major timber companies, including Sierra Pacific Industries. Once clearcutting was embraced by the new protocol, these companies signed on.

In fact, one week after the Air Resources Board adopted the new guidelines, SPI announced a huge carbon trading arrange-

ment with a company that buys and stores credits and then sells them to industrial buyers.

Details of this or subsequent deals are not clear, but the Protocol opens the door to the absurdity that companies might receive millions of dollars for replanting clearcuts; that is, be paid for the carbon-storing potential of seedlings, while being able to ignore the huge carbon emissions of the clearcuts that make room for the seedlings. For the first decade or two the carbon releases will be greater than the reductions. Note: the

... the Protocol opens the door to the absurdity that companies might receive millions of dollars for replanting clearcuts ...

first decade or two will embrace 2020, the target date for reducing emissions to 1990 levels.

It is surreal, an economic and political Frankenstein. According to news reports, CARB's adoption of the Forest Protocol "was pushed through the... Air Resources Board by the Schwarzenegger administration." It allowed the Governor to announce the cap-and-trade system and the SPI deal as trophies on the eve of his hosting an international climate change conference in Los Angeles.

For several years EPFW has been working with other, larger environmental groups to find ways to pass legislation severely curtailing or eliminating clearcutting, which a vast majority of Californians oppose. Watching clearcutting slip into the Forest Protocol only highlights the importance of creating a legislative end to this destructive, but powerfully protected practice.

Sierra Groups Challenge Mokelumne Dam

By
Chris Wright,
Executive
Director,
Foothill
Conservancy

Sierra conservation groups are acting together to protect the Mokelumne River.

Foothill Conservancy, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA), and Friends of the River (FOR) filed suit on November 19, 2009 in Amador County Superior Court to protect the Mokelumne River from the proposed expansion of Pardee Reservoir. The expansion is included in the East Bay Municipal Utility District's 2040 water plan, which was approved by the East Bay Municipal Utility District's (EBMUD) Board of Directors October 13.

"We're grateful to the Conservancy, FOR and CSPA for pursuing this litigation," said John Trinkl of EPFW and Community Action Project (CAP), Calaveras County.

"The proposed option for a new Pardee Dam on the Mokelumne River would be a disaster for the region's recreation, economy and scenic beauty. The building of a new dam flies in the face of other options that could meet potential water needs but not harm this beautiful Sierra region," he said.

The lawsuit seeks to overturn the environmental impact report on which the water plan and reservoir expansion are based. The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) included review of one expansion option that would flood the entire Middle Bar reach of the Mokelumne River and up to a mile of the Electra Run above Highway 49. The EBMUD board retained four alternatives for a new Pardee Dam, three of which would destroy the Middle Bar reach and historic 1912 Middle Bar Bridge. The threatened area is valued for its whitewater boating, fishing, scenery, wildlife and cultural and historic resources. The new dam also threatens already troubled fisheries downstream in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

"The Mokelumne River is not the property of East Bay MUD, and they are not above the law," Foothill Conservancy Executive Director Chris Wright said in announcing the litigation. "Their program EIR doesn't comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), but EBMUD approved it anyway—just like they kept the reservoir expansion in their plan over the objections of so many people, organizations, agencies, elected officials and local governments.

"We won't let this big, powerful utility destroy more of the Mokelumne. We will

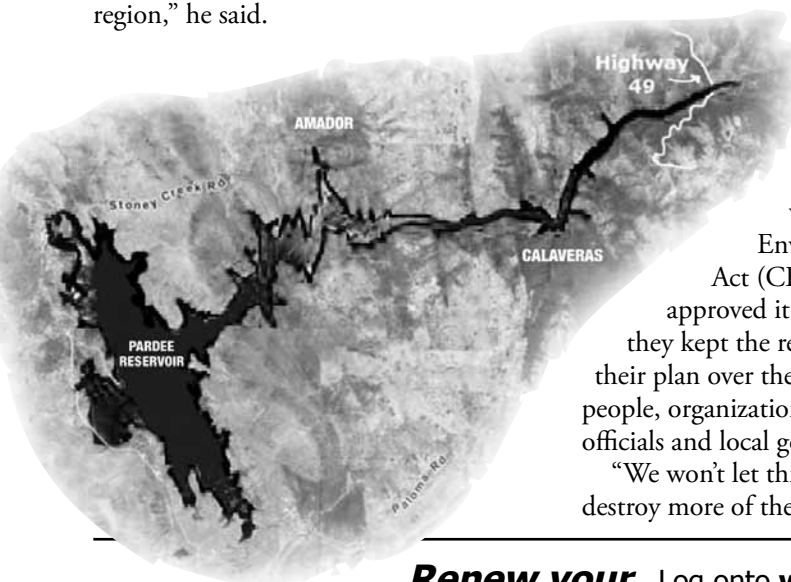
do what it takes to protect this special river for communities, people, fish, and wildlife," Wright said.

The case also alleges that EBMUD inadequately responded to concerns raised by foothill communities, public interest groups, and government agencies dedicated to protecting foothill resources. EBMUD ignored the moving testimony of foothill citizens and public officials who spoke at EBMUD's public hearings in Sutter Creek, San Andreas and Oakland.

The case concludes that, "EBMUD's approval is uninformed and not supported by the type of analysis and findings necessary under CEQA before EBMUD may shift the harm of its future water supply program onto a crashing Delta ecosystem and onto Sierra foothill counties that have neither electoral nor legislative remedies at their disposal to ensure that the resources enjoyed by their local communities are protected." The suit asks the court to set aside EBMUD's approval of the 2040 water plan.

To contribute to the Foothill Conservancy's Mokelumne River Legal Defense Fund contact Chris Wright of the Foothill Conservancy at 209-295-4900 or chris@foothillconservancy.org.

Black in map shows water levels after dam. Above, rafters enjoy one of the rapids that will be sunk by the new dam. Photo by Katherine Evatt.



Renew your membership and donate online Log onto www.forestwatchers.org and hit the 'Donate' button at the bottom of the home page. In the 'Purpose' box, put "Donation" and/or "Membership." Then follow the PayPal directions.

Grassroots Groups Power Movement

It's a cliché that a small group of determined activists can have profound influence.

A hat is passed around at a meeting of law students and biologists at the University of Tennessee concerned about the environmental effects of a new dam; \$29 is raised to fund their environmental campaign. An Idaho Fish and Game employee disgusted with the lack of protection for wildlife carries a dead caribou out of the woods; he declares: "it's over, we're going to federal protection." Young activists live in tepees, hitchhike into Albuquerque to do research in the university library all day, sleeping in the bushes outside the library at night.

The first of these actions leads to a landmark Supreme Court ruling that gave the Fish and Wildlife service the power to halt actions by other federal agencies that jeopardized endangered species. The former Fish and Game employee's work leads to the creation of regional biodiversity groups around the country and the launching of aggressive endangered species litigation that preserves millions of acres of wilderness. The young activists' research work eventually results in one of the most important recent environmental groups in the country, the Center for Biological Diversity.

The Rebirth of Environmentalism, although focused on the environmental movement — and mainly forestry and endangered species issues — addresses questions and has lessons for almost all social movements: organizational structure, the role of foundations in channeling social change, direct action, legislation and litigation, and the relationship of grassroots groups to the large national groups.

There are hundreds of grassroots environmental groups around the country, most formed over the last two or three decades, that have played a prominent role — the author argues the *major* role — in environmental protection over the last quarter century. The book documents that the proliferation of these "grassroots biodiversity groups" in the late 1980s and 1990s corresponded to a marked increase in forest and endangered species protection. For example, the number of board feet cut in National Forests in 2004 was one-sixth of what it was in 1988.

The author doesn't pretend to offer an overall survey of all of these groups. Instead, the focus of the book is on three case studies for the broader lessons they offer. The first study is of a

BOOK REVIEW

significant movement by grassroots groups in Northern California in the Headwaters Forest campaign to preserve the largest remaining stands of old growth Redwoods in the country. The second describes a prolonged effort to reform the Sierra Club and to get it to take a more activist role. And the third describes how a grassroots movement evolved into an innovative and influential national group.

Throughout, the author champions an "outsider" strategy as opposed to an "insider" strategy. The insider strategy depends on privileged access to politicians and powerbrokers to influence political deal making and attempts to make change largely through conventional participation in electoral politics. The "outsider" strategy relies on more contentious tactics that directly challenge harmful activities. The message of many of the grassroots groups in the book is that environmental advocates need to ask for what they really want or they will never get it.

As a Center for Biological Diversity activist concluded, "Many groups are hampered by fear of upsetting their congressional connections, their funders, the media, etc. While we feel the pull of such things, we daily remind ourselves that social change comes with social tension and our job is to create that dynamic tension, regardless of the pressure to back down or compromise."



The Rebirth of Environmentalism

By Douglas Bevington

Island Press,
244 pages
\$35.00

Heads Up!

Douglas Bevington will be speaking and signing books at our Love the Forest Valentine's Concert Feb. 13 in Murphys.

Our Mission

The mission of Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch is to protect, promote and restore healthy forests and watersheds to maintain quality of life in the Sierra Nevada.

Board of Directors

John Trinkl, President
Ron Szymanski, Vice President
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New Plate Supports Sierra Nevada Agency

A new specialty license plate, the Sierra Nevada License Plate, has been launched.

Proceeds from the sale and renewal of these license plates will directly fund the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's programs and projects designed to protect and restore the Sierra's 25 million acres of rivers, lakes, meadows, forests, farms, ranches and towns.

The Conservancy is a state agency created by bipartisan legislation and signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger in 2004. It was created with the understanding that the environmental, economic and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada and its communities are closely linked and that the region would benefit from an organization providing a strategic direction.

The mission of the Conservancy is to initiate, encourage, and support efforts that improve the environmental, economic and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region, its communities and the citizens of California.

The California we all know and love survives on fresh water for drinking, agriculture, recreation, and commerce. The Sierra Nevada covers a quarter of the state and provides California with 65% of its fresh water. Forests are vital parts of many ecosystems. Ensuring a healthy ecosystem that includes forests also means sustainable preservation of other species. Forests are natural regulators of carbon dioxide content in the atmosphere. The increase of CO₂ in the atmosphere is the major cause of global warming. Forests are carbon sinks, meaning they absorb great amounts of CO₂. These are just some of the reasons that it is crucial for Californians to be good stewards of the Sierra.

Proceeds from the sale and renewal of the new license plates will help the Sierra Nevada Conservancy support stewardship of California's primary water sources and the landscapes and communities surrounding them.

You can support the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's efforts and contribute to a positive future for the Sierra Nevada and California by purchasing the Sierra Nevada License Plate. Please visit www.sierralicenseplate.org for more information or to order the plates online.

President's Message

2009 was a tumultuous year.

From forest practice protocols that allow clearcutting as a means to offset carbon emissions from other sources to the proposal for a new dam on the Mokelumne River, there have been serious new threats to the environment.

But the movement to address these threats is growing. EPFW has allied with other groups to develop legislation that will create and protect healthy forests and watersheds. We also have joined them to oppose legisla-

tion and regulations that would devastate our forests and harm the environment for years to come. EPFW members testified at meetings around the state against the misguided protocols. We work with other groups such as the Center for Biological Diversity, which has brought legal action against Sierra Pacific Industries' clearcutting. We participate in



environmental coalitions working on climate change and forests. We continue to provide on-the-ground and aerial tours of clearcuts and produce and distribute scientific references, maps, and photographs documenting the effects of clearcutting.

And we continue to work to educate the public about all aspects of the relationship between clearcutting and global warming.

EPFW is not just reactive to harmful practices, but we are laying the groundwork for more proactive work in protecting forests and the environment. EPFW is working with others to develop good forestry legislation and regulations. We are presenting a positive picture about the many important reasons to maintain healthy and diverse forests in the Sierra. We are projecting a picture of the world we want, not just the world we don't want.

Our work is dependent on support from concerned people like you. If you haven't already done so, please make a tax-deductible donation using the form included with this newsletter.

A sincere thank you to all our supporters for your help and dedication this past year.

With Best Wishes for 2010,

John Trinkl

President, EPFW

EPFW Calendar

■ Eighth Annual Love the Forest Valentine's Concert:

Saturday Feb.
13, 7 PM. Black
Bart Playhouse,
Murphys.



■ Wild and Scenic

Film Festival—Bear Valley: 5:30 -
9:40 PM Saturday, Feb. 27. Doors open
at 4:30 PM. Bear Valley Lodge, Bear
Valley.

■ **Sierra Green Days:** Saturday and
Sunday, Mar. 20 and 21, 10AM -
4 PM, Ironstone Vineyards, Murphys.

■ **Wild and Scenic Film
Festival—Columbia
College:** Friday, Apr. 16,
Columbia College.

■ **Wild and Scenic Film
Festival—Newsome
Harlow Tasting Room:**
Saturday, May 1, Murphys.

■ **Ebbett's Pass Forest Watch 10th
Anniversary Celebration:** Saturday,
June 26. *Save the date!*

■ **Board of Supervisors:**
Every Tuesday 9 AM, Government
Center, San Andreas

■ **Board of Forestry:** First Tuesday
and Wednesday of the month,
Sacramento



Contribute for Healthy Forests

Contributions can reduce your taxes. The IRS has granted EPFW a 501(c)(3) designation (tax ID 68-0466959). If you wish, you may direct your contribution to be used for a specific purpose. If you work for a company that has a matching funds program, please let them know about your contribution to EPFW. For information on making a bequest to EPFW, or how you can help our ongoing work, call (209) 795-8260. You can use PayPal to donate and renew membership at our website:

www.forestwatchers.org

For information on any of these activities, call 795-8260.



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