

The EPFW Update

Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch Newsletter

Vol. 7, No. 1 • Spring/Summer 2007

Sierra Sleuths on the Move

EPFW volunteers will remember this year as the spring we sprung into action on several fronts. A number of projects have gathered steam this year, all directed toward increasing awareness of clearcutting among different audiences, including legislators, Sierra Nevada Conservancy board members (see story p. 2), local elected officials, and the general public.

As we reported in the Winter 2006/2007 issue of *The Update*, one of these initiatives is EPFW's collaboration with Forest Ethics in the Save the Sierra Campaign. Forest Ethics, one of the foremost conservation groups working to save endangered forests around the world, conducts campaigns that focus on timber companies' biggest customers. Forest Ethics is focusing on home builders who use lumber from Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI). The homebuilding industry gets much of its lumber from SPI, which is the biggest private landowner in California and the company that does the most clearcutting.

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"EPFW and we are allies working in a partnership," said Casey Harrell, Sierra Campaign Director for Forest Ethics. "EPFW complements what we do with its on-the-ground experience working with people in the Sierra. The partnership with EPFW and similar groups is critical to the work we are doing."

Action in the 'Hood

In March, Forest Ethics held a Scavenger Hunt to kick off the campaign and gather information. Volunteers, "Sierra Sleuths," visited about 60 home sites, lumber yards, and other businesses in a one-

day research hunt to find what wood was being used at the various sites, with a specific goal of identifying wood from SPI. The Scavenger Hunt focused on Northern California, but there were volunteers around the state and across the country as well. This was the largest one-day hunt Forest Ethics has run and was so successful it has set the stage for another Scavenger Hunt.

On April 13 there was a Day of Action in 70 locations around the U.S. In northern California, there were actions either at places that sell SPI products or demonstrations in public areas in Arnold, Fremont, San Francisco, Sacramento and Fair Oaks. Participants carried banners, created colorful street theater, handed out information on clearcutting and organized calls to SPI headquarters. In Sacramento, they carried the EPFW quilt in front of the capitol to remind people of the clearcutting crisis.

More Sleuths Needed

While the April 13 event will be over by the time this issue gets to your mailbox, there will be other opportunities to participate in a similar Day of Action. Everyone is welcome to participate. "Our experience has shown that this is a great way to meet other people who are concerned about protecting the Sierra," said Harrell, "and we will directly communicate to SPI and their customer base that there are a growing number of people who are tuning in to what is going on in the Sierra and taking action to voice their opposition."

If you are interested in participating in a second Scavenger Hunt or a Day of Action, contact Josh Buswell-Charkow of Forest Ethics at (josh@forestethics.org) and he will send a "how to" packet and identify some locations near you. For more information from EPFW, call the office at (209)795-8260. For more information about Forest Ethics and the Save the Sierra Campaign, visit their website at www.savethesierra.org.

Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch... a forest and watershed coalition
PO Box 2862 • Arnold, CA 95223 • (209)795-8260 • www.forestwatchers.org

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.

Oaks and Development on Collision Course?

“The rolling oak woodland and savanna communities are my personal California landscapes. This is my California.”

Many of us would probably agree with this statement by botanist Glenn Keator. Rolling golden hills studded with the soft green of oaks are a distinctive California landscape. And there are few places in California with a higher percentage of that landscape than Calaveras County. Look at an oak survey map of the state and you see that the entire southern half and midsection of the county are designated oak woodland and forest.

What also characterizes our county however, is rapid development. Without planning, oaks and development are on a collision course. According to the California Oaks Foundation, “In Madera, Amador and Calaveras counties combined, more than one-third of all oak woodland may be developed before 2040.” The nature of that development, then, becomes crucial. Will it preserve oaks, or destroy them?

The state has taken two major steps to promote oak preservation. In 2001 the legislature established an Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund, which provides grants to individuals, organizations and counties to establish oak conservation easements where future development is prohibited. Another measure requires that developers protect some portion of oaks in their projects, and/or mitigate for oaks that are lost.

These programs are administered through the counties. The catch is that counties can only benefit from Conservation Fund money if they have their own oak management plans in place.

County Plan Lacks Teeth

Until recently, Calaveras County did not. But at their February 13th meeting, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Voluntary Oak Management Plan

(VOMP). The VOMP meets the minimum requirement of the state, that a “plan” be in place, and so it enables local landowners to apply for grants for conservation easements. The Plan lacks any enforcement provisions, however, and it does not apply to damage done to oaks by developers. These shortcomings may be addressed by a county ordinance, but that is still being crafted by the Community Development Agency.

There is always resistance in our independent-minded county to regulations and mandates. But it is possible to protect the trees while still providing a range of options to developers. For example, John Buckley, of Tuolumne County’s Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center, provides a picture of what is under consideration there: “Depending on how significant the impacts of a project may be, the developer will either need to protect some of the existing oaks, or restore oak woodland off the project site, or plant replacement trees, or pay fees to compensate for the lost trees, or choose a combination of two or more of these options.”

For both oaks and development to survive, Calaveras County must put together some such combination of enforcement and flexibility. EPFW supports our conservation colleagues in the county who are continuing to work on this issue.

EPFW Asks for Help

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) was signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger in September 2004. SNC is funded with \$54 million from Proposition 84 and covers a 25 million acre region, stretching from Kern County to the Oregon border. A primary goal of the Conservancy is to “protect, conserve, and restore the region’s physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources,” a goal being threatened by massive clearcutting.

On February 7, the SNC held its quarterly meeting in the Calaveras/Tuolumne/Amador region for the first time. EPFW members and others concerned with conservation issues took the opportunity to educate SNC Board members on the clearcutting practices of Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) in the Sierra Nevada.

EPFW provided Google Earth pictures from eight Sierra counties that showed the devastation from a satellite view, along with information packets for Board members and staff. Some SNC Board

members said it was the first time they had seen the impact of SPI's clearcutting on the forests. They left the meeting with more information and, we hope, more concern than they had before our presentations.

EPFW also requested the Conservancy Board to create a task force on clearcutting. This is consistent with SNC's stated Guiding Principle, that "SNC convenes and facilitates interested parties to seek solutions for difficult problems to achieve environmental, economic and social benefits."

Two additional SNC public workshops were held on March 27 and 28 in Jackson and Sonora to determine project interests and guidelines for the \$54 million the Conservancy will be receiving. The SNC Board will meet again in May. EPFW members are planning to be present. The public may attend these meetings and make comments. We encourage EPFW supporters who are interested to do so. If you need more information from EPFW, please call 209-795-8260 or email epfw@goldrush.com.

For more information about the SNC, see their website at <http://www.sierranevadaconservancy.ca.gov>.

A Birthday Gift of Love

When William and Virginia Heath, owners of Murphys Music Company, donated a brand new Les Paul electric guitar to the raffle at EPFW's Valentine's Day concert, they had no idea it would end up in the hands of their newest employee, Shane Cather. Even more surprising, Shane got the guitar without buying a raffle ticket.

As Lori Bilderback, who held the winning ticket, picked up the guitar from the stage of the Black Bart Theater, she was heard to murmur, "This is for Shane." Then she headed down the aisle and presented Shane with the guitar—an unexpected birthday gift, just days before he turned eighteen.

"This is the first time I've had a really good electric guitar," said Shane. "My first guitar was a 1950s Sears Silvertone acoustic guitar that I found in a box on its way to the dump. The guitar was really a mess, but I glued it, restrung it, and played it for a few years."

Shane got interested in guitars at an early age: "When I was six years old, Aunt Tracey used to play *Puff, the Magic Dragon* for me. I knew that someday I would be able to play like that."

Shane came to Murphys to live with Kelly and

Tracey Ellifritz when his mother died last year. In one sense it was a return home, as Shane was born in San Andreas and lived in the area until he was 12 years old. At Bret Harte High School in Angels Camp, he got together with an old friend, David Badstubner, and attempted to form a band. When they couldn't find a bassist or a drummer, they created a duo, calling it "Days Avail," suggesting days that end well.

Indeed, that day ended well. Not only had he received a dreamed of guitar, but he and David opened the concert to a lively, appreciative full house at the Black Bart Theater.

Later, Shane said, "I want to thank Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch for giving a couple of young, local artists a chance to get out there in front of an audience."



Shane Cather displays the Les Paul guitar that he received from Lori Bilderback. The guitar was donated as a raffle prize by his employer, the Murphys Music Company.

Contributions to EPFW Are Tax Deductible

Contributions can help reduce your taxes. The IRS has granted EPFW a 501(c)(3) designation (tax ID 68-466959). If you wish, you may direct your contribution for a specific purpose, such as outreach, legal work, or office expenses. For more information on how you can help the ongoing work of EPFW, call (209)795-8260.

EPFW Election in June

The annual election for the EPFW Board is coming up in June. Members will be mailed ballots and return envelopes with the slate of officers seeking election.

Please return the ballots before the date of the annual meeting, at which time the ballots will be counted. Members can also vote at the annual meeting, which will be a Potluck Dinner on Saturday, June 9 from 4 to 6 PM at Pine Brook Picnic Area across from the pond on the corner of Moran Road and Flanders Drive.

Members (and friends) are encouraged to attend the meeting; bring a dish to share. Beverages and barbeque fare will be provided. For more information, please call the EPFW office at (209)795-8260.



Your Paper Use and Trees

Facial Tissue: If every household in the U.S. replaced just one box of virgin fiber facial tissues (175 sheets) with 100% recycled ones, we could save 163,000 trees.

Toilet Paper: If every household in the U.S. replaced just one roll of virgin fiber toilet paper (500 sheets) with 100% recycled ones, we could save 423,900 trees.

Paper Towels: If every household in the U.S. replaced just one roll of virgin fiber paper towels (70 sheets) with 100% recycled ones, we could save 544,000 trees.

Courtesy of San Francisco Network Ministries

Ebbetts Pass National Scenic Byway Memberships Available

After five years of collaborative efforts to attain National Scenic Byway status for the Ebbetts Pass corridor, the Ebbetts Pass Scenic Byway Association (EPSBA) was formed with a mission to preserve, enhance and promote the byway for generations to come.

The Ebbetts Pass National Scenic Byway is a 61-mile stretch of Highways 4 and 89 between Arnold in Calaveras County and Markleeville in Alpine County. Ebbetts Pass was honored with the prestigious designation of National Scenic Byway in September 2005 by the U.S. Department of Transportation, joining the elite group of only six designated byways in California and 125 such designated byways in the U.S. A supporter of EPSBA since the beginning, Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch continues to be a member.

Benefits of a National Scenic Byway include national exposure and recognition, preservation of the corridor's scenic and recreational assets, and access to federal and state grants for implementing enhancements on the byway as outlined in the approved Corridor Management Plan.

EPSBA is now a California nonprofit tax-exempt corporation and is currently in the process of applying for federal tax-exempt status. Upcoming projects include improving and making more accessible existing scenic and recreational areas and facilities; creating additional interpretive displays and pull-outs; placing signage along the corridor identifying Ebbetts Pass as a National Scenic Byway; publicizing the scenic beauty of the byway; promoting byway-related tourism; and establishing an EPSBA visitor center.

Annual memberships are encouraged to support this work. They range from \$25 for "Friend" and \$50 for "Supporter," to \$100 for "Business" and \$250 and up for "Sustaining Member." Information is available online at www.scenic4.org, e-mail info@scenic4.org or call (209)795-4789.

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President's Message

As our cover story indicates, EPFW is ramping up a number of activities. We are working on the "Save the Sierra" campaign with Forest Ethics. By the time you read this, there will have been a number of activities educating people about the effects of clearcutting by SPI. More will follow. In the spring, EPFW will begin conducting tours of clearcut areas to give supporters first hand, on-the-ground information about clearcutting.

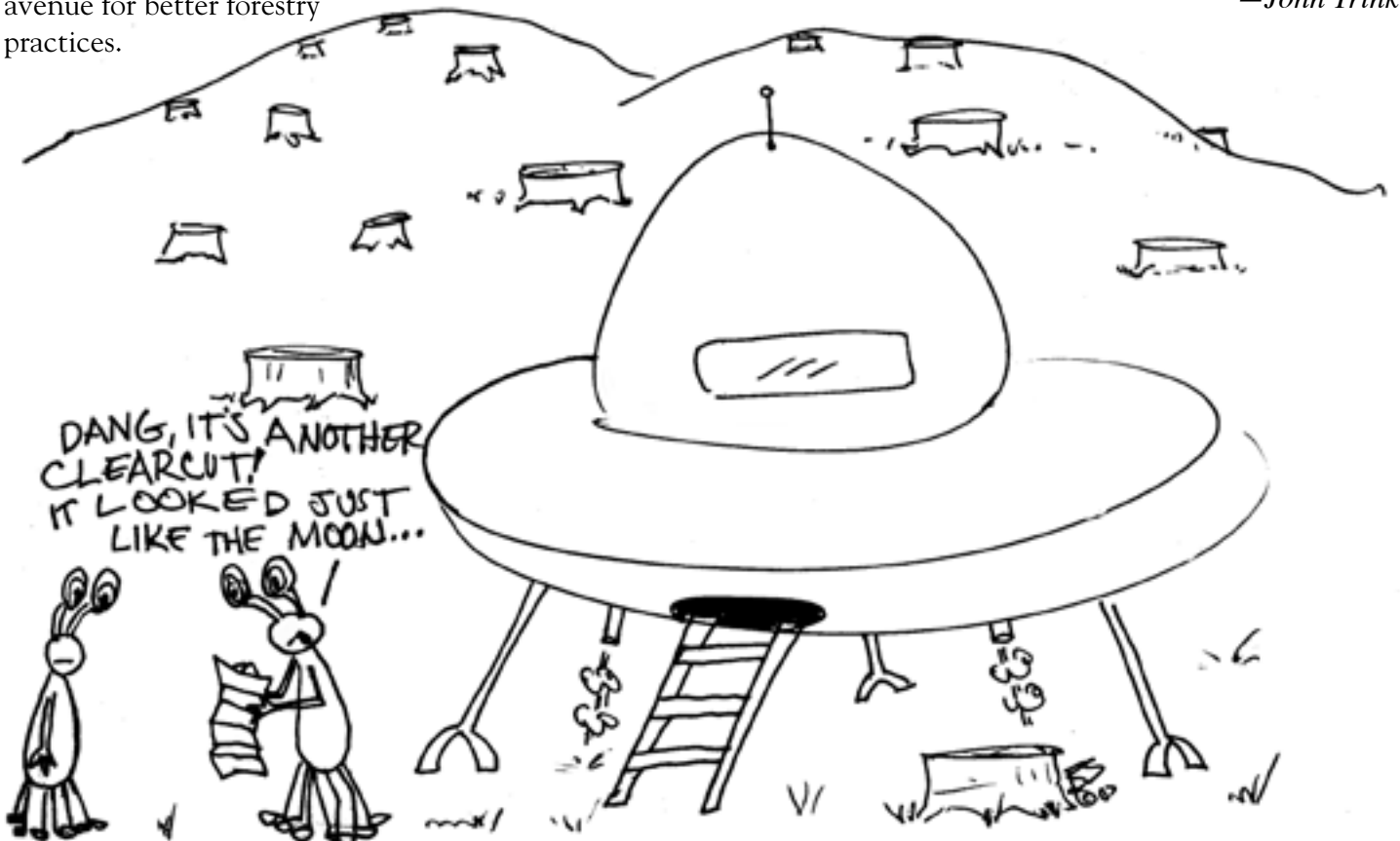
On the state level, EPFW will be more actively educating legislators in Sacramento in the months ahead. Regionally, we are staying in close touch with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, working toward projects under its auspices that further our conservation efforts. We are looking into County Rules as an avenue for better forestry practices.

On the legal front, our case against the California Board of Forestry concerning clearcutting near Calaveras Big Trees State Park continues to be heard before the California Supreme Court. According to EPFW's lawyer in the case, a recent California Supreme Court case, Vineyard Area Citizens for Responsible Growth vs. City of Rancho Cordova, was a decision with favorable implications for our case, which probably will not be decided until early fall.

The Community Action Project, launched by EPFW, continues to help foster coordination among Calaveras groups and citizens concerned about the effects of rampant growth on the county. By encouraging citizen involvement and activism around growth and development issues, energy is directed to many issues that affect the future of the county,

EPFW is not a large group. With so many activities, it might be easy to go off in many different directions at once, diluting our resources. However, we are making every effort to coordinate these activities and working hard to ensure that there is synergy among them. We are also strengthening our alliances with other groups to tackle the tasks ahead more effectively. And, at bottom, we rely on you, our supporters in all our endeavors.

—John Trinkl



2007 EPFW Calendar

EPFW Board Meetings: On Mondays at the EPFW office above Two Rivers Trading Company, Cedar Center, Arnold, from 12:30—3:30 PM. Members are welcome to attend. May 14; Saturday, June 9 (Annual Meeting, 4 to 6 PM (see story p.4); July 9; August 13, and September 10.

Arnold Flea Market: Highway 4 at Bristol's Ranch House Café, Saturday and Sunday, May 26 and 27, 9 AM to 4 PM.

Sierra Nevada Alliance Conference: Lake Tahoe, Friday through Sunday, August 3 to 5.

Cedar Center Arts and Crafts Festival: Cedar Center, Arnold, Saturday and Sunday, September 1 and 2.

Usual Office Hours: Wednesdays from 10 AM to 2 PM above Two Rivers Trading Company, Cedar Center, Arnold. Please call before coming to avoid an unnecessary trip (209)795-8260.

Water Monitoring: All on Saturdays at 10 AM. Meet at the Dorrington Hotel. May 12, June 9, July 14, August 11, and September 8.

Adopt a Highway: On Thursdays at 10 AM. Meet at the Dorrington Hotel. May 17, July 19, September 20.

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors: Every Tuesday, 9 AM, Government Center, San Andreas.

Board of Forestry: Second Tuesday and Wednesday of the month, Sacramento and other locations to be announced.



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