

The EPFW Update

Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch Newsletter

Vol. 8, No. 3 • Winter 2008-2009

Slow Economy Doesn't Stop the Clearcuts

Despite a halting economy and a housing bust, Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) continues to increase its clearcutting in Calaveras County. SPI filed four new Timber Harvest Plans (THPs) in Calaveras County this year totaling 1,447 acres. Of that, more than 80% will be clearcuts. In 2007 Cal Fire approved three SPI THPs totaling 3,032 acres, yet only 22% of those acres were clearcuts.

The last two years of timber harvest plans have contained almost as many clearcuts as the four years prior combined. SPI's 2008 THPs will result in the largest amount of clearcuts since their 2003 submissions. Over the last 13 years, SPI has filed THPs for 61% of the land they own in Calaveras County. They have clearcut (or have approved or pending plans to clearcut) 19.8 square miles, an area about the size of Bermuda. That's more than twice the size of Big Trees State Park.

The new timber harvests are located north of Highway 4, one in the Swamp Creek watershed near Blue Mountain, the other two farther north, along Blue Creek, northwest of Ganns Meadow several miles. These THPs are open and pending approval. *Continued on p. 3*

Take Action

Write to the state's top three elected officials and tell them it's past time our state stopped allowing clearcutting on this massive scale.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor
State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814
(916)445-2841

Lt. Gov. John Garamendi
State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814
(916)445-8994

Jerry Brown, Attorney General
1300 I ST, Sacramento, CA 95814
(916)324-5437



Mickey Williamson and Rhoda Nussbaum wow the crowd at the Black Bart with their latest bag-lady fashions during the November 1 opening.

Film Festival Heads to Bear Valley in February

The Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival is underway and continues February 21 at the Bear Valley Lodge in Bear Valley, and April 18 at Newsome-Harlow Winery in Murphys.

Highlighting the February show are "Edge of Eden," which focuses on a Canadian who has raised orphaned grizzly bear cubs for the past 10 years in the wilderness of the Southern Kamchatka Peninsula. "Coast to Coast" takes viewers on an aerial journey from the east to the west coast of Africa.

The festival, sponsored by EPFW, kicked off Nov. 1 at the Black Bart Playhouse in Murphys with a great crowd enjoying five diverse films.

Tickets for the four Bear Valley films are \$8 in advance and \$10 at the door. The April 18 showing of "The Greening of Southie," which follows the saga of Boston's first LEED-certified residential green-building development, is free, yet reservations are encouraged because the venue is small. Call (209)795-8260 for reservations. For info about the films, visit sierrafilmfest.org.

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

2008: Power in Numbers

This year EPFW stepped into a larger arena. Around the state, large and small environmental groups began to come together in a coalition to address the threat of widespread clearcutting. EPFW, which has fought this battle almost alone for eight years, is now right at the center of this coalition.

- We have joined Forest Ethics' "Save the Sierra" campaign, and along with them signed up 544 businesses and 500 individuals throughout California who have called upon SPI to stop clearcutting and obtain Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. As part of this campaign, we supported or participated in actions in Arnold, Redding, Sacramento, the Bay Area, Monterey, and Anderson (SPI's home town).
- In April we held a Legislative Day in Sacramento, visiting 25 offices to educate legislators about the threats posed by industrial timber harvesting.
- We played a leading role in drafting legislation that would put greater limits on clearcutting—such as requiring a 10-year wait rather than just 5 years—before timber parcels adjacent to clearcuts can be clearcut. Coalition partner Forests Forever presented the bill to the Assembly Natural Resources Committee, supported by EPFW and such groups as the Sierra Club California and Forest Ethics.

We fell two votes short of the bill passing the committee and going to the Legislature, a rather remarkable achievement given that this was our first effort at crafting such legislation. It will not be our last!

We also continued to review and comment upon timber harvest plans, write letters to the editor, make presentations to groups, conduct flyovers of the clearcuts for the press and state officials, and be a presence at such local events as the Labor Day Craft Fair, the Scenic Byway Celebration, and the Harvest Home Festival. EPFW also staged two great events: the Love the Forest Valentine Concert and the Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival.

All of this we do together, because we all love the forest. Thank you for being part of these efforts through your participation, your dollars, and your commitment.

Meet the Board

New board member Susan Shoaff has been a critic of clearcutting since 2000, when she attended the first, and now legendary, town hall meeting in Avery that galvanized the local community. It was this meeting that publicized Sierra Pacific Industries' USA Creek timber harvest plan. It was also the meeting that launched Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch.

Susan came to Calaveras County in 1999 to work for the Calaveras Enterprise. She was a journalist and had previously worked for several papers as a writer, editor, and graphic artist, most recently at the Los Angeles Times. "I came to California 14 years ago and fell in love with the landscape of Northern California," she said.

Susan lives in Hathaway Pines and owns Sustenance Books in Murphys. She bought the bookstore eight years ago. It was called Sasha's Reading Room until the store burned in 2004, and she renamed it when it was rebuilt. "I had always had a relationship with EPFW, we carried their T-shirts and the newsletter at the store," she said. "And after the fire, EPFW donated the proceeds of the annual Valentine Concert to help get the store going again."

She changed the name to Sustenance Books in order to call attention to the environment and educate people in how to live more sustainably. "The clearcutting issue was the impetus to focus on issues of sustainability," she said. "It is very important that we get people involved."

In 2007, Susan was flying over Lake Alpine on a trip back to San Francisco. "I was so excited to look down and see my homeland until I flew over the crazy patchwork of clearcuts. It was so intense, so huge. It woke me up."

"It would be a no-brainer to stop clearcutting if people knew what was going on—the degree of destruction," she said. "People just don't realize the extent because much of it is hidden. Beauty strips should be outlawed because they hide the damage."

With her background in journalism, Susan believes her contribution can and should be in educating the public. "We have to wake people up."

EPFW Update Staff

Susan Shoaff, Editor; Bill Senger, Layout; Roger Mueller, Penny Sarvis; Alice Trinkl

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Taking into account other even-aged harvest methods SPI has employed since 1996, the company has worked to convert nearly 21% of its 72,845 acres in Calaveras County to plantations in the last 13 years. This is 34.3% of the acres submitted for harvesting during this time. Since 1999 this figure jumps to an astounding 58.2% of the acres submitted for harvesting.

“Our work is cut out for us; we must stop this destruction before it is too late.”

With the company owning well over a third of the forested land of Calaveras County, and its plans to convert two-thirds of its holdings to tree plantations, our county stands to lose a quarter of its forests. The ramifications for wildlife habitat, water quality, climate control and tourism are huge.

Calaveras County forests are not an exception. SPI is the single largest landowner in California with 1.7 million acres, much of it in the Sierra Nevada. The company is clearcutting massive amounts throughout northern California. One needs only to look at Google Map satellite views of the Sierra to see the huge extent of clearcutting that has already occurred. Our work is cut out for us; we must stop this destruction before it is too late.

Keep Forests in Your Future Plans

One of the best ways to make a meaningful and long-lasting contribution to the environment is a bequest to Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch. For information, please call our office at (209)795-8260.

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—0466959). If you wish, you may direct that your contribution be used for a specific purpose, such as outreach, legal work or office expenses. And if you work for a company that has a matching funds program, please let them know about your contribution to EPFW. For more information on how you can help the ongoing work of EPFW, call (209)795-8260.

President's Message

The political climate is changing. The California League of Conservation Voters reported that it won 89 out of 94 November political contests in which they made an endorsement. But pro-conservation and pro-environment policies won't happen unless we all work hard for them.

I want to thank our supporters for their help and dedication this past year. Together, we have achieved some important successes. (See the year-end wrap-up article on page 2.) Among the most important is the continued success of the Save the Sierra Campaign in getting businesses to sign on to a letter demanding that Sierra Pacific Industries stop its massive clearcutting. To date, spearheaded by the national group Forest Ethics, 544 businesses have signed the letter. EPFW has signed some 140 of these locally. This broad base of business support provides a solid foundation for our future work.

Another important building block for the future is the work of our volunteer coordinator and organizer, Ron Schaner, whom we were able to hire in 2008. Ron is a long-time resident of Calaveras County with much experience in local issues. He will be doing outreach and follow-up on our programs in ways we were not able to do before.

But he, and all of us at EPFW, cannot do this work alone—we need your help. You can call our office (209)795-8260 and volunteer to help.

Financial support remains critical for our efforts. Most of you should be receiving a letter this month outlining our work and financial needs. (If not, you can send in the form enclosed in this newsletter. Please make as generous a contribution as possible. Your donation is fully tax deductible.)

As we celebrate the successes of 2008 and enjoy the holiday season, we turn our attention to the challenges ahead in 2009. With your support, we look forward to continuing our efforts for a better, sustainable environment.

Best wishes for the New Year.

John Trinkl, President

PayPal Online!

You can now use PayPal to donate or renew your membership with EPFW. It's simple. Log onto www.epfw.org and hit the "Donate" button at the top of the page or the "Act" button for membership renewal.

2008-2009 EPFW Calendar

EPFW General Meetings: On Mondays at the EPFW office above Two Rivers Trading Company, Cedar Center, Arnold, from 12:30 to 3:30 PM. January 5, February 2, March 2, April 6, May 4

Planning and Conservation League, "Steps to a Sustainable California: Saturday, February 7, 9 AM to 4:30 PM, Sheraton Hotel, Sacramento

Valentine Concert: Saturday, February 14, 7 PM, Black Bark Playhouse, Murphys

Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival: Saturday, April 18, 5:30 PM, Newsome-Harlow Tasting Room, Murphys. FREE

Usual Office Hours: Most Wednesdays from 10 AM to 2 PM above Two Rivers Trading Company, Cedar Center, Arnold. Please call before coming to make sure we are here. (209)795-8260

Water Monitoring: Saturdays at 10 AM. Meet at the Dorrington Hotel. December 13, January 10, February 14, March 14, April 18

Adopt a Highway: Meet at the Dorrington Hotel on Thursday at 10 AM. March 19, April 18

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors: Tuesdays, 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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