

Forest[▲]Watcher

Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch News

Vol. 10, No. 2 ■ Summer / Fall 2010

Decade-long Effort for Responsible Forestry Continues

Ten years ago a handful of Arnold residents began meeting around a picnic table to explore how to respond to a shocking piece of news. In the Legal Notices part of the newspaper that few ever read, there had appeared a small announcement about an 880 acre timber harvest plan called USA Creek.

A timber harvest plan was nothing new. Logging has long been part of the history and identity of the Sierra. What was new was the method: the 880 acres were to be clearcut. Who was going to do that? A formerly small, suddenly large company called Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI). And what in the world was USA Creek? As it turned out, it was San Antonio Creek, right outside of Arnold.

So this group of startled and alarmed residents met to determine what could be done. Surely there was a way to stop the clearcutting. Was clearcutting even legal in California? Yes, it turned out, it was.

What's more, the 880 acres were but a tiny snapshot of the future SPI was planning for the million and a half acres of forestland it now owned between Yosemite and the Oregon border.

In this early period there was still a sense of disbelief that any of this could happen. Four hundred people crowded into Avery Middle School to learn about the behemoth that had quietly gobbled up thousands upon thousands of acres of timberland and was now planning to mow them down. In Calaveras County alone, SPI now



Above, a forest as it should look — this one at Collins Pine. At left, Sierra the Chickaree shares a hug with a fan at an annual Valentine's concert.

Continued on page 3

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

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

2. Forest Watch Commits Hearts to

Forest Watch Through the Decade

1999

- USA Creek Timber Harvest Plan

2000

- Beginning EPFW meetings around a picnic table at Love Creek
- Community meeting at Avery Middle School brings out 400 people
- Roadside protests begin
- First Collins Pine trip
- Calaveras Enterprise "Timber Tally" — Of 78 responses, 75 oppose SPI clearcutting
- The quilt is created
- Rally in Sacramento with quilt

2001

- Lighthawk tours start
- Lawsuit filed against three THPs with Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center

2002

- First 'Love the Forest' Concert
- Marching in Independence Day parades starts
- Attending Board of Forestry meetings begins
- Adopt-A-Highway volunteer project begins

2003

- Introduction of Sierra the Chickaree
- Film Festivals start

2004

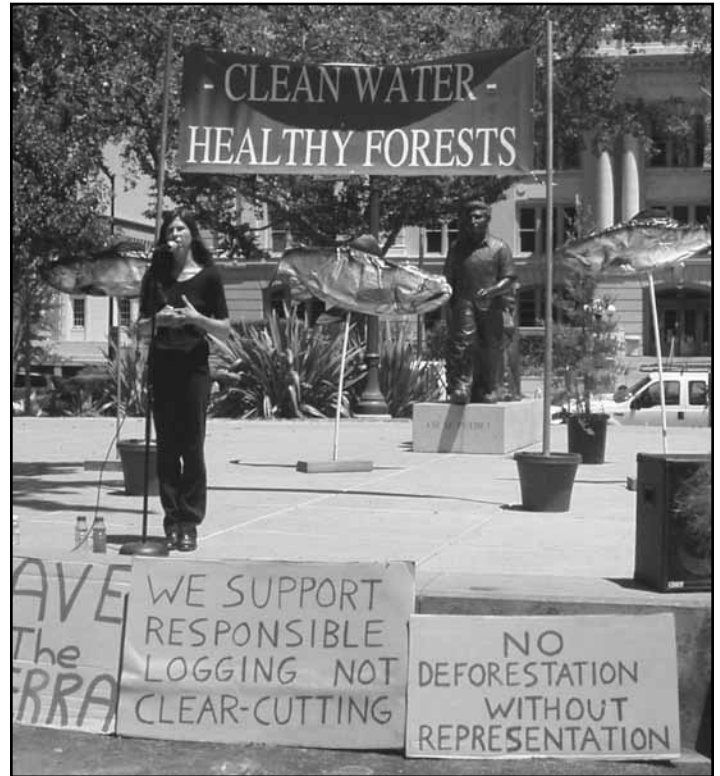
- Water monitoring starts

2006

- Roger Mueller's movie 'Where Have All the Forests Gone' premieres

2008

- Intensive coalition building with other groups begins in earnest



Saving the Sierra



from page 1

owned 73,000 acres — one of every three acres above 3,000 feet.

People protested. We went to local government bodies, to the Statehouse; we lined highways with signs, and a few intrepid souls chained themselves together to block the gates to the logging roads and were arrested. There was still the belief that enough citizen outrage could put a quick end to the carnage of clearcutting.

No one objected to logging. The objection was to the decimation of forests through clearcutting.

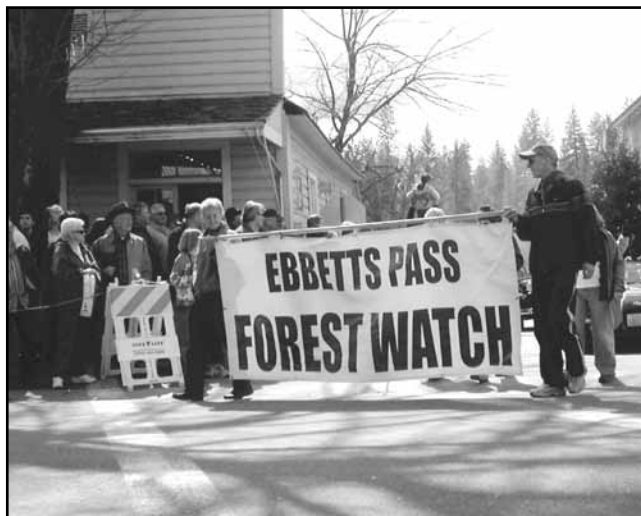
We have come to understand that this struggle is a long-haul proposition. Those early minutemen and women around the

picnic table organized themselves into Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch, and EPFW has spearheaded the local campaign for responsible logging ever since. Most recently, we have successfully enlisted larger, statewide and national conservation groups in a coalition to bring more resources to bear than our small group can

alone. Our focus is to change state law and/or forest practice rules to make clearcutting a seldom-if-ever used practice — to make it as rare as the endangered plants and animals it currently threatens.



"We are for life, and health, and a long future, and we understand that our lives, and the forests' life, cannot be separated."

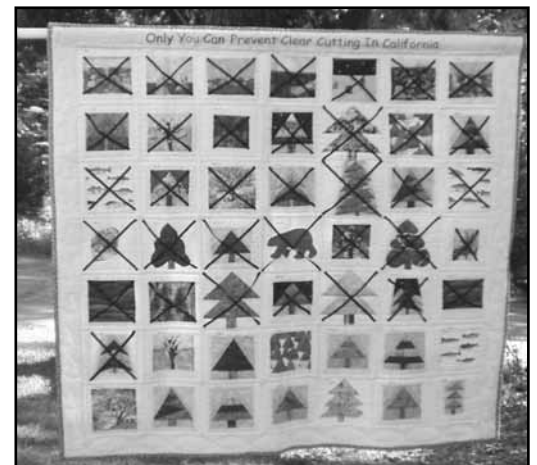


Since opposing clearcutting is a primary focus of EPFW, we are frequently asked, what are you **for**? And besides, aren't the clearcuts replanted? Yes, they are, but replanting of clearcuts with one-size-fits-all plantations is a slow motion death knell.

What we are **for** is logging that respects the forest as a living system, as a diverse and vibrant whole, all of whose parts matter.

We are **for** timber harvest methods that work with the forest over time, that partner with it, that see forest and logging as in a relationship forever.

We are **for** life, and health, and a long future, and we understand that our lives, and the forest's life, cannot be separated.



Cal Fire Continues to Allow Destruction of John Muir's Range of Light

Although other major California companies like Mendocino Redwood Company have stopped clearcutting, Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) continues to submit timber harvest plans relying heavily on clearcutting. Of all available harvest methods, clearcutting is the one which will most devastate wildlife habitat and fragile forest ecosystems. SPI remains determined to complete its business plan to clearcut over one million acres of the Sierra Nevada, including approximately 50,000 acres in Calaveras County. And Cal Fire, the agency tasked with assuring that logging protects natural resources, continues to permit this destructive behavior.

Since 1996, SPI's submitted timber harvest plans in Calaveras County alone have included about 24 square miles (over 15,000 acres) of clearcut-type logging. To see an example of the clearcutting's extent from a satellite view, go to www.maps.google.com and type in Dorrington, CA. Zooming out, you will see the clearcuts around Calaveras Big Trees State Park. Zoom out far enough, and SPI clearcuts across northern California extend as far as the eye can see.

Recently, two new plans have been filed in Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties. The first, named Six Mix, is for 160 acres, 91% of it clearcut. The site contains areas of high erosion hazard with slopes up to 70%, five unstable landforms, one goshawk nest site within one mile, and seven California spotted owl territories. The second, named Grizzly Meadow, is for 628 acres, 94% of it through clearcut-type logging. This THP is in the Beaver Creek Watershed, which feeds into Calaveras Big Trees State Park and is also in the Tuolumne State Game Refuge.

Wall Street, Massey Energy Company (coal), and BP have shown us what corporate greed unrestrained by the agencies tasked with overseeing it can produce. We all pay the price for regulatory laxity. EPFW will do everything in its power to make Cal Fire adequately assess the impacts of these newly-submitted plans in the context of the thousands of acres of nearby recent clearcuts and young plantations, while also continuing to work with other environmental groups on sound state policies relating to forests.

This will be our last print newsletter

Like all other non-profits, we are feeling the pinch of difficult financial times. As a forest protection group, we also want to limit our use of paper. So henceforth we will send you regular, engaging, news updates by email, and will send printed copies of those notices to our readers who do not have computer access.

This newsletter contains the last printed donation forms we will be sending out. *We invite and encourage you to use them!* Your donations and your partnership with us allow the work on behalf of forests to continue. We can very much use your support right now, and we thank you for your generosity.

'Tap' into our film festival finale

The 2009-2010 Wild and Scenic Film Festival on Tour concludes at Chatom Winery on Thursday evening, September 16. During this year's ongoing Festival, EPFW has brought a different array of movies to four different venues: Black Bart Theater, Bear Valley Lodge, Columbia College, and Newsome-Harlow Winery. Chatom Winery will be host for the fifth and last Festival evening.

From 6:30 to 8 PM Chatom will host a wine tasting in their beautiful courtyard and tasting room. At 8 PM we will be showing the feature, "Tapped."

This is a riveting exploration of the bottled water industry. From the "mining" of groundwater (often to the surprise and dismay of citizens living in the area) to the bottling itself, to the marketing, and finally the disposal of millions of plastic bottles, many of which become part of floating islands of plastic in the oceans, this movie provides eye-popping insight into the life cycle of a commodity we have come to take for granted. One person who watched the film in her living room was so moved she jumped to her feet at the end, "a one person standing ovation." Come and share the experience with other wine and film lovers.

And, a heads-up: The 2011 Film Festival will be premiering in March or April. Once again, Black Bart Theater will host the inaugural film selection, with other venues throughout the year to be announced. We will keep you posted.

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

Bob Dean, President
 Ron Szymanski, Vice President
 Penny Sarvis, Secretary ■ Bunny Firebaugh, Treasurer
 Steve Elias, Sanders Lamont, Susan Robinson,
 Alice Trinkl, John Trinkl

Politics plays role in deforestation

This small book is filled with startling facts that many of us know but have perhaps not put together into a global picture. The threat that industrial-scale logging poses to the continuation of forests is something we do witness locally throughout the Sierra, and this specific impact is also addressed in the book.

Strangely Like War's first chapter, "Deforestation," explains that we don't know globally how fast surviving forests are disappearing, only that they are being cut at a terrific rate. In many places vast tracts are being clearcut and burned. Many forests are simply being replaced with development or commercial crops. Even where forests are replaced by plantation

tree farms, there is extensive damage from erosion, pesticide use, and loss of habitat diversity for the flora and fauna that lived there. Worse, the roads through the forests open them to many more problems. In general, the US Forest Service and BLM do not engage in clearcutting. They do continue to sell trees from public lands to timber companies at bargain prices.

The activity of Sierra Pacific Industries is reviewed in Chapter 3, "Accountability." The authors explore the extensive political relationships among big timber companies, government bodies and elected officials who get campaign monies from the companies. These relationships are both blatant and often hidden from view.

"Bodyguard of Lies" reminds us that environmental reviews do not ensure good decision making. There is often collusion between regulators and the industry being regulated. If you are going to tell one big whopper, surround it with many smaller lies. Enlist language as an accomplice. Clearcuts become "temporary meadows," "even age management," "mechanical fire suppression." Even the most absurd expressions are seldom challenged. There are a number of often used lies to which the authors list common sense rebuttals.

"Failure of Solutions" states we must move away from industrial forestry to restoration forestry and eventually towards restoration ecology. This will require a wholly different mindset. Each of us can begin to create that mindset: For your health, walk with friends in old growth forests, and express gratitude daily for the beauty surrounding us.

This challenging and provocative book concludes with an incredible list of resources and notes. It makes fascinating reading and is available in the Verna Johnston Nature Library through the Calaveras library system.

BOOK REVIEW

STRANGELY LIKE WAR: THE GLOBAL ASSAULT ON FORESTS

By Derrick Jensen and George Draffan

Chelsea Green Publishing
\$15.00

President's Message

Dear Friends,
This is my last letter as President of EPFW. I am stepping down after four years; Bob Dean, who has been very active in many issues — particularly water issues — is the new President. Bob is very experienced in conservation matters, knows Calaveras County and the Sierra well and is well equipped to steer EPFW through the tumultuous times ahead.



When I first assumed the presidency in 2006, we had links with other groups and regions, but our main focus was local. We still have deep roots in Calaveras County and much of our work is done here, but our focus is much more on changing state law concerning clearcutting. We now have deep ties with groups around the state and national groups such as the Center for Biological Diversity. Thanks largely to the work of former board member Addie Jacobson and board member Susan Robinson, EPFW is much better positioned to work at the state level and have an effect on the legislative process.

Another change in the last four years is the shift to much more consciousness about the environment. Even though global warming legislation has been sidetracked for now in Congress, awareness about the earth's resources and the need for sustainable practices is higher than in the past. Corporations are falling over one another to portray themselves as eco-friendly. Even though much of this is public relations "green washing," the political terrain for dialog about the environment is much more favorable than in the past.

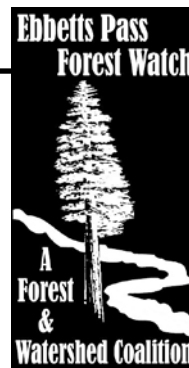
EPFW by itself cannot stop clearcutting, much less reverse global warming. But as part of a broader movement of countless other grassroots groups we can make a difference, as documented in Doug Bevington's book, "The Rebirth of Environmentalism." All we can do is fight. As the great environmentalist David Brower said, "We are to hold fast to what we believe is right, fight for it, and find allies and adduce all possible arguments for our cause. If we cannot find enough vigor in us or them to win, then let someone else propose the compromise. We thereupon work hard to coax it our way. We become a nucleus around which the strongest force can build and function."

With Best Wishes,
John Trinkl

EPFW Calendar

- **Craft Faire**, Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 4 & 5, Cedar Center, Arnold
- **SNA Community Organizer Academy**, Sept. 10 - 12, Mariposa
- **EPFW General Meeting**, Sept. 13, 9 to 12 PM, in Cedar Center Office
- **Wild & Scenic Film Festival**, Thursday, Sept. 16, 6:30 PM wine tasting, 8 PM film, Chatom Vineyards, Murphys
- **EPFW General Meeting**, Oct. 11, 9 to 12 PM, in Cedar Center Office

- **EPFW General Meeting**, Nov. 8, 9 to 12 PM, in Cedar Center Office
- **EPFW General Meeting**, Dec. 13, 9 to 12 PM, in Cedar Center Office
- **Adopt-A-Highway** Sept. 15, Nov. 17 (weather permitting) 10 AM. Meet at the Dorrington Hotel. Lunch follows. *For information on any of these activities, call 795-8260.*



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, 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

Please save your ink cartridges, laser cartridges and cell phones!

We are collecting these items for a recycling fundraising program under Planet Green. They will pay us for each item we send them. Please check our fundraising website: www.planetgreenrecycle.com/forestwatchers for further information, or contact Bunny (209) 795-4305.



This newsletter is printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper



Return Service Requested

PO Box 2862
Arnold, CA 95223

**Ebbetts Pass
Forest Watch**

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage Paid
Permit No. 5
Arnold, CA