

# The EPFW Update

Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch Newsletter

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## Studies Show Clearcutting Increases Global Warming

Climate change is a hot topic. There is almost unanimous agreement in the scientific community and much of the public that human activity is a significant factor in global warming. The major question now is what to do about it. The role of forests and forest management is an important part of this discussion. We now have a number of recent studies showing decisively that clearcutting contributes to global warming.

Widespread clearcutting of California forests is causing immediate large-scale depletion of California's carbon storage capability. Clearcutting emits far more CO<sub>2</sub> than responsible harvesting methods such as selection logging, due to soil disturbance and burning forest debris.

### Forests are Important in Storing Carbon

In human-caused global warming, deforestation ranks just behind petroleum and coal in contributing to global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Increasing levels of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere are a major contributor to global warming by trapping solar radiation that would otherwise be reflected out into space. Forests are the most important terrestrial stores of living carbon. According to "The

"Forests hold 86% of the earth's above-ground carbon and 73% of the planet's soil carbon."

Straight Facts on Forests, Carbon and Global Warming," a study by the group Oregon Wild, "Forests hold 86 percent of the earth's above-ground carbon and 73 percent of the planet's soil carbon."

The large trees that exist in the Sierra Nevada act as a huge source of CO<sub>2</sub> absorption. When forests are clearcut, much of their stored carbon is released back into the atmosphere during harvest. Forest manage-

ment practices can have a large effect of how much CO<sub>2</sub> forests absorb—or release, according to the study.

### Clearcutting is the Worst Way to Manage Forests

A report by Forest Ethics, "The Impact of Sierra Pacific Industries on Global Warming," notes "Clearcutting is particularly bad from a carbon sequestration standpoint, releasing more carbon than any other disturbance including fire." According to the Oregon Wild study, "Short-rotation clearcutting typically practiced by private industrial forest landowners is probably the worst possible way to manage forests for carbon storage, because the young forests never develop large carbon stores; significant soil carbon is lost during and after clearcutting, slash disposal, and site preparation; and the resulting wood products have limited longevity."

### Logging Mature Forests Releases Large Amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>

Sierra Pacific Industries has claimed that younger, faster-growing trees absorb the most CO<sub>2</sub> and give off the most oxygen. However, the Union of Concerned Scientists has stated that this is a "misguided belief," and reports that while younger trees sequester carbon quickly, what happens to stored carbon when mature forests are logged must also be considered. When a forest is logged, some of its carbon may be stored for years or decades in wood products. But large quantities of CO<sub>2</sub> are also released to the atmosphere—immediately through disturbance of forest soils, and over time through the decomposition of leaves, branches and other detritus of timber production.

Beverly Law, professor of global forest science at Oregon State University, using a recently developed technology known as eddy flux measurement, has found that forests hundreds of years old continue

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

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*Josh Bridges, EPFW Outreach Coordinator, hugs what remains of an old growth Black Oak, a victim of Sierra Pacific Industries' South Pearl timber harvest plan in Tuolumne County. This THP included 589 acres of clearcut-type logging.*

to absorb carbon actively, holding great quantities in storage. Resprouting clearcuts, she reports, often emit carbon for years in spite of the rapid growth of young trees. This is because microbes in the soil, which release CO<sub>2</sub> as they break down dead branches and roots, work more quickly after a stand is logged.

As the Forest Ethics report concludes, "The scientific consensus is clear: logging must be done sustainably, which means long rotations, no conversion from forests to tree plantations, and a drastic reduction in clearcutting."

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## **EPFW/CSERC Case Goes to State Supreme Court**

On March 5, a case filed in 2002 challenging some timber harvest plans filed by Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) finally made its way to the State Supreme Court. The case was filed by EPFW and the Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center (CSERC). More than a dozen supporters traveled to San Francisco for the March hearing. Our lawyer, Tom Lippe, made a powerful presentation, citing law and precedent while, in our view, the opposition lawyers failed to provide specifics in law to support their case. Several justices challenged both sides with questions. We await their decision, expected by June.

A brief recap of the history: When a timber company submits a Timber Harvest Plan (THP), it

has to be reviewed by the California Department of Forestry (CAL FIRE). The public can comment on the plan's deficiencies, but if CAL FIRE approves the plan anyway, the only avenue of appeal is to go to court.

In 2001, SPI filed several timber harvest plans, some that came within 200 feet of Big Trees State Park. EPFW and CSERC submitted comments stating that the plans did not adequately assess the cumulative effects of the proposed timber harvesting upon threatened species, and did not contain enough information about the probable effects of the herbicides that SPI planned to use. Nonetheless, CAL FIRE approved the plans.

Together with CSERC, EPFW filed a Writ of Mandate against CAL FIRE asking a judge to determine whether the agency, in approving the plan, took everything required under the Forest Practice Rules into consideration. We lost in the local court.

In 2006, two appellate courts heard the case. The 3<sup>rd</sup> District Court found in favor of CAL FIRE; the 5<sup>th</sup> Appellate District Court ruled in our favor. The results of the recent hearing will determine which appellate decision the Supreme Court upholds.

It's an important decision. If the result is in our favor, the court will establish that CAL FIRE must review harvest plans much more rigorously than it has in the past. If this happens, it could create a chain reaction: timber companies will be more forth-

coming about the potential harm of their harvest methods; the public will have more bases for challenging inadequate plans; and companies will have a greater incentive to choose forestry methods that are sustainable.

Stay tuned for the decision.

## 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.

## Local Businesses Take a Stand for Healthy Forests

A special love fest took place in Calaveras County on Valentine's Day this year--a love fest for the forests. The event was called "Businesses with a Heart" and featured more than 125 local business owners who signed on to support ending clearcutting in the Sierra Nevada.

Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch and its partner in the project, the international non-profit Forest Ethics, held a news conference on Valentine's Day in Murphys to honor local businesses for their commitment to healthy forests by signing a declaration demanding an end to destructive logging and a return to selective harvesting.

EPFW and Forest Ethics have focused their business sign-on campaign to stop massive clearcutting by Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI). The campaign is nationwide and already has more than 520 businesses signed up in support, including the Calaveras County businesses.

"It is clear that this issue is very important to the business community," said EPFW vice president Ron Szymanski. "We have had tremendous local support, including members of a new organization, 'Contractors for Responsible Forestry.' Businesses recognize the devastating effects of massive range-wide clearcutting in the Sierra Nevada," he added.

SPI is the largest private landowner in California, with more than 1.6 million acres in the Sierra Nevada. SPI is also the largest land owner in Calaveras County, with approximately 74,000 acres of forested land. The company has said it intends to clearcut most of their land.

Several business leaders attended the news conference. Rocky Bridges of Bridges Construction said, "As a builder I want to make clear that I will not compromise the health of our forests or communities to provide homes for California residents. We have begun working on a campaign asking builders to boycott products from SPI until they adopt a truly sustainable method of harvest."

Susan Shoaff, of Sustenance Books: "The intentions of SPI are clear, a clearcut makes the timber company the most money in the shortest amount of time. This does not take into account the loss of biodiversity, fragmentation of habitat, or loss of jobs in the logging industry, all of which result from clearcutting."

Jill Seale, owner of Sierra Nevada Adventure Company, said, "As our economy becomes increasingly dependent on recreational tourism, we are concerned about preserving the natural surroundings that give birth to our county's tourism industry."

A list of regional business leaders who support the campaign is included on a separate sheet enclosed with this issue of *The Update*. Businesses interested in joining are encouraged to contact EPFW at (209)795-8260.

## Save the Date for Potluck Barbecue and Election

The Annual Meeting and Potluck will be Sunday, June 8 at 3 PM. It is a time for fun and a chance to visit with a bunch of charming and handsome EPFW supporters. Come and join the festivities. We will provide hamburgers, veggie burgers, Polish sausages, condiments and drinks. Bring a side dish, any special beverages you prefer—and a few paper plates or plastic implements. The Potluck will be at the Pine Brook Picnic Area, Flanders and Moran Road in Arnold.

Ballots for the election of EPFW Board members will be counted at the Potluck. This year four incumbent Board members are up for reelection—Bunny Firebaugh, Susan Robinson, Alice Trinkl, and John Trinkl—and two new candidates are standing for the two-year term of office—Mary Schneider and Susan Shoaff.

The other members of the Board who are not up for reelection are Addie Jacobson and Ron Szymanski. Dale Sanders will be leaving the Board in June.

Ballots will be mailed in early May to paid-up EPFW members. Your vote must be received by the time of the Potluck either by mail or in person.

## **Contributions to EPFW Are Tax Deductible**

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 support EPFW, please call (209)795-8260.

## **Valentine's Concert Fills the House**

The fifth annual Valentine's Love the Forest Concert was another success. Once again the dynamic duo of Ron Schaner and Tami Rakstad put together a great program that appealed to people of many musical tastes. Two groups and one solo artist provided three hours of terrific entertainment to a standing-room-only crowd. In addition, there was a wide-ranging selection of raffle prizes, from books to massages, from CDs to live seedlings. The silent auction featured an item-packed tote bag from Two Rivers Trading Company, a Pippi Longstocking basket of goodies, two nights at a vacation rental cottage, a session at Murphys Day Spa and Salon, and a painting by Karen O'Neill.

The opening musical act was Shiraz, featuring singer Erin Ross, backed up by Ron Schaner on guitar, Larry McFall on drums and John Kikagawa on stand-up bass. Next up was guitarist/singer Bill Welles, whose repertoire ranges from James Taylor to the Supremes, in addition to his own compositions. The finale was provided by Tour Guides. The group moved from bossa nova to rock, from country to jazz, and even from English to other languages, led by singer Michela Macfarlane. Michela's fellow tour guides were Fred Treece on lead guitar, Tim Fay on bass, Sam Nilsen on drums and Ron Schaner on guitar.

In addition to providing a great occasion for all, the event raised \$3,000 for EPFW. A huge thanks to everyone who participated, as helpers and as audience. Mark your calendars for next year, when the concert will actually be on Valentine's Day.

## **Annual Report**

The EPFW 2008 Annual Report is available online at [www.epfw.org](http://www.epfw.org) or you can receive it by mail by calling (209) 795-8260.

## **President's Message**

### **Good People Doing Good Work**

If conferences are a benchmark for the health of the environmental movement, the Environmental Law Conference earlier this year is an indication that things are on the upswing. An enormous amount of energy and discussion marked the gathering in Eugene, Oregon, March 6-9 attended by 2,000 people. A host of dedicated and talented people are doing good work.

Reflecting the broader public discussion about climate change, the conference highlighted solid documentation on the relationship between forestry practices—deforestation, clearcutting and plantations—and global warming. As an example, the "Forests and Climate Change: Myths and Realities" workshop documented a number of myths and facts about forests and global warming.

### **Myths Debunked**

- Myth: Fast-growing young forests are better carbon stores than slow-growing old forests.
- Fact: Logging and industrial forestry release vast amounts of carbon that is not captured and stored in wood products.
- Myth: Wood products are a good means of storing carbon.
- Fact: Only a small fraction of carbon removed from logged forests ends up as durable goods and buildings. Even then, it lasts only months or years as opposed to decades for mature trees.
- Myth: Forest fires release carbon into the atmosphere, so forests are not good places to store carbon.
- Fact: Only a small fraction of the total forest biomass is lost to the atmosphere.
- Myth: Forests outside the tropics do not contribute significantly to global carbon storage.
- Fact: Temperate and boreal forests do sequester significant carbon.

(The complete report is available at <http://tinyurl.com/2n96m5> ).

Other workshops discussed how conservationists can work with groups who are not always allies. Focusing on the Rocky Mountain states, presenters discussed alliances with anglers, hunters, Native peoples, business groups and others. Speakers cited the broad conservation outlook promoted by Teddy Roosevelt and, especially, by the ecologist and forester Aldo Leopold.

## EPFW Board of Directors and Officers

John Trinkl, President

Ron Szymanski, Vice President

Alice Trinkl, Secretary

Bunny Firebaugh, Treasurer

Addie Jacobson, Susan Robinson, Dale Sanders

A number of workshops took up the question of how conservationists communicate their messages. The role of identity, emotion and values was stressed in how we communicate (as contrasted with relying solely on the rational presentation of issues).

The conference closed with a stirring speech by longtime activist and now elder statesman of the environmental movement, Dave Foreman. He expanded on the principle of habitat corridors to help preserve wildlife, applying the principle on a continental scale, with corridors tens or hundreds of miles wide. He argued that this kind of framework is



WHAT? NEVER SEEN A DOUGLAS FIR BONZAI BEFORE?

Cartoon by Bob Smalling

necessary (and already partly in place) to mitigate against the extinction of many species. This would be significant to EPFW's work because one of the corridors runs down the backbone of the Sierra, which EPFW is fighting to protect.

John Trinkl

## Special Summer/Fall Events

### Arnold Flea Market, Memorial Day Weekend:

Saturday and Sunday, May 24-25, 9 AM to 4 PM, on grounds of Bristol's Ranch House Café

### Independence Day Parade:

Saturday, July 5, 10 AM. Highway 4, Arnold

### Bear Valley Music Festival/Sierra Club Event:

Monday August 4, evening, Tamarack Lodge

### Cedar Center Arts and Crafts Festival:

Labor Day Weekend, Saturday & Sunday, August 30-31, 10 AM to 5 PM

### Sierra Nevada Alliance Conference:

September 12-14, North Tahoe Conference Center, Kings Beach

### Ebbetts Pass Scenic Byway Celebration:

Saturday, September 13, 9 AM to 6 PM, Highway 4, Arnold

### "Disappearing Forests":

Presented by Bruce Castle, Saturday, October 4, 10 AM, Jack Knight Memorial Hall, Calaveras Big Trees State Park

## EPFW Update Staff

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

# 2008 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. May 5, July 7, August 4, September 1

**EPFW Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner:**

Sunday, June 8, 3 PM, Pine Brook Picnic Area, Flanders and Moran Road, Arnold

**Water Monitoring:** All on Saturdays at 10 AM. Meet at the Dorrington Hotel. May 17, June 7, July 12, August 9, and September 6

**Adopt a Highway:** Meet at the Dorrington Hotel on Thursday at 10 AM. June 19 and August 1

**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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