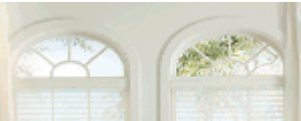




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## Businesses join fight against clearcuts

**Published: February 14, 2008**

By JAMES DAMSCHRODER

The Union Democrat

Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch has gotten 125 Calaveras County businesses to sign a request directed at California's largest private landowner, Sierra Pacific Industries, to stop the clear-cutting of the area's forest.

Four local businesses will be honored for their efforts in the "Save the Sierra" business sign-on campaign at a Valentine's Day reception in Murphys today.

Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch has been identifying local businesses that want to stop area clear-cuts and push for selective timber harvesting to join the effort led by the nonprofit Forest Ethics, said Josh Bridges, the group's outreach coordinator.

More than 100 businesses in Calaveras County have signed on.

"We're doing our part," Bridges said of Calaveras County businesses. "We see the logs getting taken out everyday, but people around the state need to stand up also."

SPI is the largest private landowner in California, owning more than 1.7 million acres in the Sierra Nevada, according to EPFW. SPI is also the largest private landowner in Calaveras County, owning approximately 74,000 acres of the county's forest.

This amounts to about 48 percent of the forested property above 3,500 feet in Calaveras County, according to EPFW.

"It's a request that SPI do the right thing," Bridges said. "It's a pledge directed at Red Emmerson (owner of SPI) that we don't have to clear-cut. Up here, it's doing more harm than good."

Documents filed with the California Department of Forestry show that SPI intends to clear-cut two-thirds of their property over a span of 80 years, according to EPFW.

"The Sierra are a shared resource — how much is being compromised?" asked Bridges.

The four businesses that will be honored at today's reception are Bridges Construction, Sustenance Books, Sierra Nevada Adventure Co. and Two Rivers Trading Co.

"It's important because I live here," Susan Shoaff, owner of Sustenance Books in Murphys, said of the surrounding forest. "I'm watching it get completely taken apart."

"I see more clear-cuts every winter," she added.



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- TC Visitor's Bureau
- Yosemite Chamber of Commerce
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- Cal Chamber of Commerce
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Businesses interested in joining the campaign can contact EPFW at 795-8260.

Contact James Dam-schroder at jdamschroder @uniondemocrat.com or 736-8097.

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