

Under new management: Regime changes re-frame Headwaters, Jackson forests

Decades of struggle to protect two major forests in California's redwood region have culminated in the space of a few recent months as Pacific Lumber Co. (PL), former owners of the Headwaters Forest, finally went bankrupt. The forest's new owner plans to go easier on the land.

Meanwhile Jackson State Forest in Mendocino County will now be managed with the help of a strong new advisory committee that should eliminate industrial-strength logging there.

Forests Forever played key roles in both of these fights over the years.

"It's not just a page turning in the history of these battles," said Forests Forever board president Ken Smith. "It's a new chapter, a new volume."

The old Headwaters regime has finally bit the dust.

A Texas bankruptcy court ruling in June at long last put an end to the PL debacle that for more than 20 years has ravaged California's North Coast.

clothing retailers.

The Fishers reportedly plan to log the forest lightly. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, HRC will reduce harvest levels in the forest from 100 million to 50 million board feet annually. At the height of harvesting in the 1990s PL was cutting 300 million board feet per year.

PL goes belly up

The latest developments began on Jan. 18, 2007, when PL and its subsidiaries filed Chapter 11 petitions. The compa-

ny blamed its "liquidity crisis" on "regulatory limitations on timber harvests." But forest advocates say the real crisis was PL's over-zealous liquidation of its forest assets.

The once relatively sustainably managed, family-owned PL had been



Photo by Andria Strickley

Jackson State Forest gets a management makeover

To the relief of forest advocates including Forests Forever, a new buyer, Mendocino Redwood Co. (MRC), has acquired the former PL and renamed it the Humboldt Redwood Co. (HRC).

Both MRC and the new HRC are controlled by San Francisco's Fisher family, best known as owners of The Gap, Old Navy, and Banana Republic

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End of era in North Coast forest wars: Portends new theater of action more than armistice

There is no squabbling so violent as that between people who accepted an idea yesterday and those who will accept the same idea tomorrow.

— Christopher Morley,
American writer

It seemed things would never change on the North Coast— that the timber wars would endlessly rage, especially on Pacific Lumber Co.'s (PL's) vast holdings.

Nor did it seem the California Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection would ever loosen its grip on its very own, little-known, industrial-logging operation padding the agency's coffers at Jackson State Forest.

Yet, like the collapse of both the Soviet Union and South African apartheid right around 1991, sometimes the biggest changes seem to come all at once.

Within the space of just a few months, sweeping changes in these two major forest areas on the North Coast came to a head. Our banner story on page 1 recounts the basics.

It seems the meek— in the sense of patient and compassionate— have begun to inherit the Earth. Or at least what's left of it.

The fight for Headwaters Forest, once on PL land, was the World War II of environmental battles, on a par with the grandest conservation controversies in U.S. history, while Jackson by contrast was more of a provincial rebellion.

Headwaters saw every conceivable tactic employed— from state and federal bills to ballot measures to lawsuits, tree-sits to shareholder activism,

full-page newspaper ads to broad-based phone network and shoe leather organizing. Some— Judi Bari and David Chain, to name two— even gave their lives to the cause.

One thing both the PL and Jackson battles had in common: They started

*"It seems the meek have begun
to inherit the Earth. Or at
least what's left of it."*

out as unknown issues and a lone hero or two brought the matter to light. On account of their tireless efforts a slumbering public slowly awoke.

Greg King, for example, set out one day in 1987 to explore a blank spot on the map in southern Humboldt County, then known only as timber harvest plans 87-240 and -241. He became the first activist to hike— and later to name— Headwaters Forest.

And just when one might think the era of titanic forestry brawls is over, another potentially even greater specter looms, this time to the east, in the Sierra Nevada.

There Sierra Pacific Industries, the largest private landholder in the state, plans to clearcut up to 900,000 acres of its 1.5 million acres of holdings in the next century. That's an area over four times the size of PL's total ownership.

This in a day when pictures of stump-scapes left behind in the 1880s seem a record as shameful as those of hydraulic mining or the slaughter of

the buffalo.

At the dawn of an era when Global Warming, Drought, Wildfire, and Loss of Biodiversity ride terrible as the Four Horsemen of California's environmental present and future, official approval of horizon-to-horizon clearcuts— which greatly exacerbate all four problems— defies reason.

Ironic too, as our educational feature in this issue makes clear ("Regreening Paradise," page 4), the timber industry, having overcut its inventory and automated its operations, stands today an economic midget compared with the array of green livelihoods that depend on lush forests and their amenities.

Big Timber sustains its position of power largely in our imaginations, and in those of politicians who do its bidding or cower from its displeasure. This moribund industry counts heavy political campaign contributions among its key tactics.

As with the earlier battles, brave and self-effacing small-town heroes in places like Arnold and Murphys— some of them bringing advanced degrees and big-town organizing savvy to the contest— are taking up the baton where folks like Greg King left off.

Let a new and awesome chapter in the struggle to save the forests of California begin.

— Paul Hughes



Up in arms in Ebbetts Pass

Citizens battle clearcutting juggernaut in Sierra Nevada

John Muir's beloved Range of Light faces a dark fate from forest clearcutting.

Unless, that is, Californians—rallying alongside front-line activists who live in the Sierra Nevada—succeed in shining a healing light on the range.

A recent tour of the central Sierra in Calaveras County, conducted by members of the nonprofit environmental group Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch (EPFW), revealed to one writer a forest in crisis.

Past EPFW president, marathon bicyclist and former NASA researcher Bruce Castle, accompanied by fellow EPFW activists Ron Szymanski and Barry Boulton, led the tour to survey the extent of damage inflicted on the range by Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI).

This giant West Coast timber company has been rapidly clearcutting its vast landholdings in the Sierra since the mid-1990s.

The logging method has left deep scars across the land. The sight is disturbing, but the issue is more than a matter of aesthetics.

Castle says that SPI's clearcuts and "visual retention" harvests (clearcuts that retain a smattering of standing trees to soften the visual impact) pose serious environmental threats to the Sierra.

He said SPI's logging practices cause the destruction of wildlife habitat, hillside erosion, stream sedimentation, and the spread of herbicides.

He added that clearcutting may lead to rises in forest temperatures in summer and drops in winter, among other microclimate shifts that could affect overall forest health.

The replanting of clearcut areas, Castle said, substitutes single-species, even-aged tree plantations for ecologically diverse forests, and increases fire hazards in plantation areas.

On the tour, Castle documented his observations in great detail with GIS maps and photographs, statistics,

technical notes, and references to California's Forest Practice Rules.

From logging roads between Arnold and Dorrington, one could see clearcuts blighting hillsides all along Upper San Antonio Creek and the South Fork Mokelumne. In no way did SPI's visual retention strategy soften the impact.

Dead patches in and around

tices.

"People don't seem to be able to confront that hostile environment and push back."

In fact, though, folks *are* pushing back, creating quite a stir.

Founded by local residents and currently led by board president and social activist John Trinkl, EPFW seeks to preserve the local character, histori-

Photo by Barry Boulton of EPFW



This "visual retention" clearcut on Sierra Pacific Industries land above USA Creek retains clumps of standing trees to help soften the visual impact.

replanted clearcuts indicated herbicide use to kill off unwanted plant regrowth.

"The range supplies water for two-thirds of California," said fellow EPFW activist Addie Jacobson, a member of Forests Forever's Advisory Council who was instrumental in organizing the tour.

"The Sierra is the state's spine. What happens when a spine breaks? Damage to the nerve center of the state. Those who should be looking are turning their heads.

"It's just so obvious that what SPI is doing is wrong," added Jacobson, noting the company has staunchly resisted all efforts by Sierra Nevada residents to get it to modify its prac-

cal values, and ecological diversity that draw countless visitors to the area each year.

The organization is named after the eponymous traverse on Ebbetts Pass National Scenic Byway, a section of State Highway 4 snaking through Calaveras County.

Most spectacularly, the byway slices through the northern section of Calaveras Big Trees State Park, where some of the oldest, largest, most awe-inspiring trees on earth reside, the giant sequoias.

A casual glance at all this beauty from the byway suggests all is well in the majestic forests of Calaveras

see "Up in arms," p. 6

Regreening Paradise

Big Timber gives way to tourism, retirement and recreation

Once upon a time people argued that saving forests meant losing jobs.

These days in California, however, the old “jobs vs. the environment” cliché is being turned on its head. People are discovering that saving forests and creating jobs go hand in hand.

As California’s economic engine downshifts, more and more historically timber-reliant communities are turning for sustenance from logging and milling to tourism and retirees.

In many cases, communities have little choice but to embrace such shifts in economic and social development.

As the timber industry has automated mills and consolidated operations, fewer and fewer workers have been employed to process greater and greater volumes of timber. The industry’s goal has been to log as fast as possible, emphasizing efficiency over jobs and health of the forests.

Only thanks to better-late-than-never environmental safeguards, some ancient forest remnants will survive for generations to come. But the timber industry’s insatiable quest to maximize profits and pay down its debts has sped its own near demise.

“The timber industry accounts for less than one one-thousandth of the state’s total economic production,” reports Vince Taylor of the Campaign to Restore Jackson State Redwood Forest, based in Mendocino County.

Rather than bemoan the jobs lost as the timber industry continues its long decline, however, Taylor suggests looking at the situation from a differ-

“People are attracted to moving to a place where natural beauty is protected, creating additional demands for services and facilities in the area.”

The challenge is to harness that economic benefit for local workers.

High unemployment rates dog forest-dependent counties, and solutions need to be found.

Calls by the timber industry for further timber harvesting to create more jobs ring empty, however. They’re echoes of an old, outmoded way of seeking prosperity.

“Timber extraction is not a strong expansionary force in California, even in its major timber counties,” concludes *Poverty and Employment in Timber-Dependent Counties*, a paper published in 2000 by the Washington, D.C.-based think-tank Resources for the Future. “Solutions to rural unemployment and poverty in these counties are unlikely to be found in expanded timber harvests.”

Greener economic pastures

If not timber harvesting and wood processing, what options for economic development do California counties have?

For counties seeking to harvest tax revenues even as timber operations fold, a favorite tool is the “bed tax,” i.e. Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT), a fee levied on tourist lodgings in unincorporated areas.

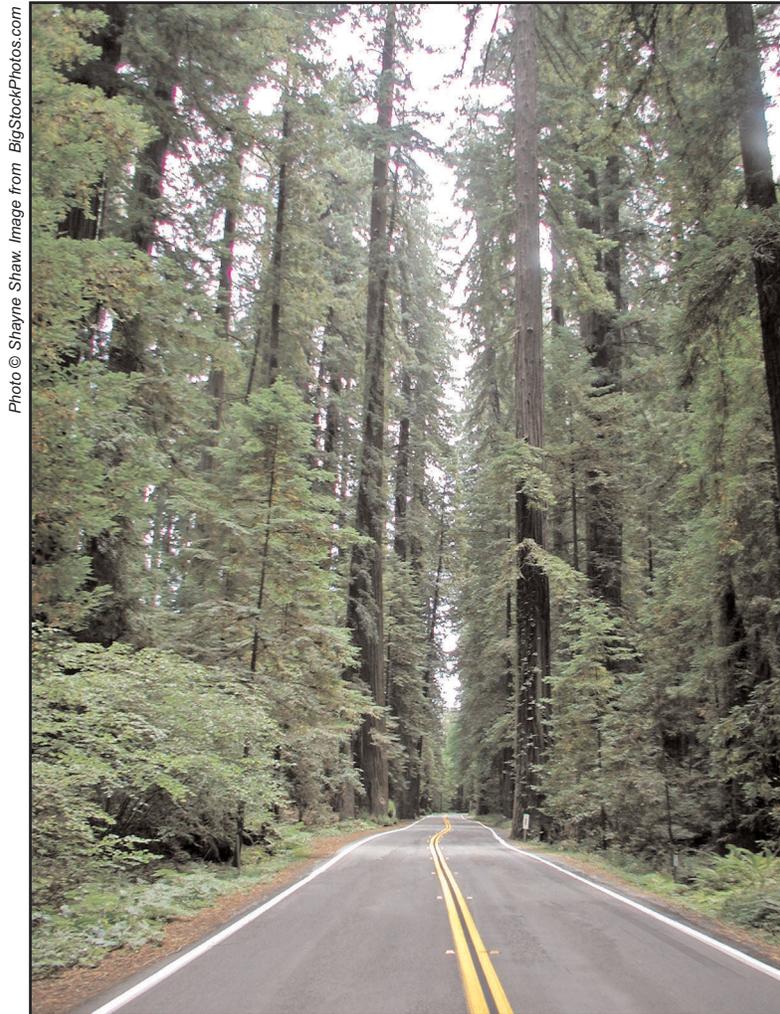


Photo © Shayne Shaw. Image from BigStockPhotos.com

ent perspective.

“A number of economic analyses have shown that many positive economic benefits result from reducing logging,” he reported in 2000 at a Mendocino Institute conference. “These benefits generally flow from the enhanced natural environment that occurs when logging is reduced.

“People value living near and visiting a more beautiful environment. This ‘value’ is an economic benefit.

see “Regreening,” p. 5

Such fees can apply to bed and breakfast facilities, cabins, campgrounds, guest houses, hotels, inns, RV parks, rooms in private homes, and similar locations where tourists stay for 30 days or less.

A 2004 review of TOTs in nine California counties, conducted by the County of Santa Cruz, found that Butte, Marin, Merced, Monterey, Placer, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz and Tulare—most of them with forest areas that attract tourists and retirees— all had implemented TOTs ranging from 8 to 10.5 percent. TOTs in Santa Cruz County accounted for more than eight percent of its total revenues.

Tourism brings in far more than bed taxes, however.

A 2007 report published by the California Travel and Tourism Commission (CTTC) indicates that more than a third of an estimated 4.6 million overseas visitors to California in 2006 headed for the state's national parks.

In addition, hundreds of thousands went camping, hiking, hunting and fishing or took part in environmental and ecological excursions.

During 2007, the CTTC reported, "total direct travel spending in California was \$96.7 billion, up 3.6 percent from the prior year." The spending generated \$5.8 billion in tax revenues— a \$300 million increase from 2006— and directly supported more than 924,000 jobs.

The Outdoor Industry Foundation estimates outdoor activities across the board contribute some \$46 billion annually to California's economy, creating about 408,000 jobs.

Tourists support local and state economies in another big way, through day-use fees, primarily for parking. In California state parks, for instance, day-use fees range from \$4 to \$14 at developed parking sites and \$2 to \$4 in undeveloped areas.

In 2007, the California State Parks Foundation (CSPF) reported, user fees accounted for \$122 million of the state park system's budget, and in 2008 are

expected to account for more than a quarter of the total budget for the state parks.

"In general," the CSPF added, "for every \$1 spent supporting the state park system, \$2.35 is returned to the state's General Fund in the form of economic activity from park visitors, through purchases in local economies and in the state parks themselves."

In short, developing tourism makes more sense these days than developing logging.

bered some 3.8 million in 2004, or about 11 percent of the total state population, according to *Senior Journal*.

More than two decades ago the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Research Station identified retirees as an important contributor to shifting forest economies.

In a research paper published in May 1986, *The Growing Importance of Retirement Income in Timber-Dependent Areas*, the agency found that retired seniors moving from urban to rural areas are an important factor in making up for

the loss of logging jobs and taxes.

Retired migrants tend to receive income from combinations of Social Security payments, veterans' and military retirement benefits, unemployment and welfare benefits, private pension payouts, and income from properties. They could inject new income into many rural economies.

"The growth of the retirement sector could compensate for future declines in the wood products sector," the report concluded. "The recipients of this new source of income may mobilize to become a more dominant political voice in the Pacific Northwest and elsewhere.

"It is not apparent whether this new voice will heighten or reduce tensions between environmentalists and the timber industry. In any event, resource managers and land use planners will need to become more responsive" to this segment of the population.

The fate of the forests is to a large extent in the hands of those who live among and rely upon them for their livelihoods. The greening of California's forest-dependent economies means saving the trees while capitalizing on their many charms.

—M.M.



Retiring to the woods

California's booming senior population presents further opportunities for economic development in forest regions.

"The leading edge of California's baby boom is nearing 60," observed a California State Parks publication, *Park and Recreation Trends in California 2005*. "This, the largest generation ever . . . is looking for an amenity-rich and meaningful outdoor recreation experience, increasing the need for programs, facilities and infrastructure."

Californians aged 65 and over num-

County. But more and more, Jacobson said, the facade of pristine forest along the byway is giving way to the ugly reality of SPI clearcuts beyond.

For miles and miles as the red-tailed hawk flies, a vast patchwork of clearcuts has ravaged the Sierra's trees, understory, wildlife habitat, watershed and scenic values.

Sierra Pacific's clearcutting galvanized citizen opposition eight years ago when locals from Arnold, Big Trees Village, Murphys, Hathaway Pines, Dorrington and other communities were shocked to find clearcuts encroaching on their towns and approaching the state park's borders.

"This issue came to us in the spring of 2000," said Jacobson, "when we found out that SPI had gotten a timber harvest plan approved and it caught everybody by surprise."

That particular Timber Harvest Plan (THP) covered 918 acres in 51 discrete harvest units in the Upper San Antonio Creek watershed. It was approved by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) in November 1999 without the general public realizing it would take out trees in the vicinity of Arnold.

Alas, the logging of USA Creek would not be tucked away deep in the woods, unseen by tourists. Instead the clearcuts would scar the land near White Pines Lake, along the scenic byway and near the state park.

"The fact that clearcuts come up close to the park is worrisome at best," said Jacobson.

As word of SPI's logging plans spread through the area "we went into a frenzy of going to the legislature and leafletting," said Jacobson, who has become a familiar presence in Sacramento, showing up and often tes-

tifying at legislative sessions and meetings of the Board of Forestry and the Air Resources Board.

"Once people realized the extent of the clearcutting going on it galvanized the community. Nobody was looking for a cause. It just showed up at our doorstep. This issue organized the people rather than the other way."

That summer of 2000, EPFW activists staged protests, contacted county supervisors and state legislators, spoke up at public hearings, and directly voiced their concerns to SPI. Clearcutting, they said, is inimical to local values.

Virtually everyone in the Ebbetts Pass area supports selective timber harvests, an accepted practice in the central Sierra Nevada since European settlers arrived, and likely before when the Northern Miwok thrived here.

Sierra Pacific's logging plan so upset the women of a quilting group at Independence Hall in White Pines, said Jacobson, that they sewed a quilt with blocks representing each of 28 forest patches slated to be clearcut.

Eventually, as each patch was cut, "they took black silk ribbon and sewed an X over that block of the quilt."

The EPFW activists took the quilt to Sacramento to display for then-Assembly Speaker Pro Tem Fred Keeley (D-Santa Cruz), who then intro-

duced legislation "to protect sensitive watersheds from reckless timber harvesting practices." The bill (A.B. 717, sponsored by Forests Forever) would have placed a moratorium on clearcutting in the Sierra.

"On the last day of the legislative session we thought we would get it out, but it didn't succeed."

Undaunted, and against all odds in successive years, EPFW members have continued waging their David vs. Goliath fight. Alas the wealth, political might and sheer stubbornness of SPI have thwarted most reform efforts.

Nevertheless, Jacobson, Castle and the others at EPFW remain undeterred. They continue to educate the public about the threat to the forest, even as they work to promote positive alternatives.

They point to the success of the responsibly managed 94,000-acre Collins Almanor Forest in neighboring Plumas and Tehama counties. That forest is selectively logged by the Collins Pine Company, a founding member of the Forest Stewardship

Council.

Ultimately, Jacobson would like the clearcutting issue to disappear so she can simply enjoy her retirement.

"I had never done direct advocacy before I got into this," said Jacobson. "Its something I do because I can't help myself. I'm compelled to be doing what I'm doing."

- M.M.



EPFW's Bruce Castle surveys SPI's clearcuts



Addie Jacobson of EPFW

"This issue organized the people rather than the other way."

- Addie Jacobson

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Paul Hughes
Executive Editor

Mark Mardon
Editor

Chris Besey
Design

Gary Bentrup
Flag Artwork

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FORESTS FOREVER

50 First St., Suite 401
San Francisco, CA 94105
phone (415) 974-3636
fax (415) 974-3664
mail@forestsforever.org
www.forestsforever.org

Board of Directors:

Ken Smith
President

James Newman
Secretary

Mark A. Fletcher, Ph.D.
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Advisory Council:

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Addie Jacobson

Martin Litton

Jill Ratner

**"Restore,
Reinhabit,
Re-enchant"**

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acquired for \$900 million in a 1986 leveraged buyout by corporate raider Charles Hurwitz, CEO of Texas-based MAXXAM Corp.

Ostensibly to pay off its enormous acquisition debt, PL proceeded to wreak havoc on its 210,000 acres of forest, including the old-growth redwoods and Douglas-firs of the Headwaters area 15 miles southeast of Eureka.

For the next 13 years, one of the most multi-faceted and dramatic environmental show-downs ever seen played out in Humboldt County. Forests Forever emerged in 1989 to qualify and pass Proposition 130, popularly dubbed the "Forests Forever" initiative.

A central element in that ballot measure was a provision for the state to acquire 3,000 acres of Headwaters Forest, including the then-largest unprotected virgin redwood groves in the world.

The measure came within a few percentage points of victory even though the timber industry spent more than \$50 million—over eight times the Forests Forever initiative's budget—to defeat the measure.

"While some groups were working in court and others were pushing the legislature, and Earth First! was blockading logging operations in the woods," Smith said, "Forests Forever was organizing first at the ballot box, then in neighborhoods and communities up and down the state.

"During the period from 1993 to 1999," he added, "we probably generated 100,000 letters and countless calls,

faxes, and other communications to key decision-makers."

After that Forests Forever kept right on organizing for Headwaters and against PL.

Finally, in 1999 the federal and state governments spent \$480 million to purchase the eventual 7,500-acre Headwaters Forest Reserve. Today the reserve is managed by the federal

THE FOREST PRIMEVAL



Bureau of Land Management and is prime habitat for marbled murrelet, Northern spotted owl, Coho salmon and other threatened and endangered species.

Jackson Forest goes green

Before 2002 not many people in California— not even state legislators—knew much if anything about Jackson

see "New management," p. 8

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Demonstration State Forest.

Situated between Willits and Fort Bragg on the Mendocino County coast, Jackson is the largest of eight taxpayer-owned forests in the California state forest system.

In October 2002 Forests Forever joined the Campaign to Restore Jackson State Redwood Forest (the Campaign) and the Dharma Cloud Foundation in a lawsuit against the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). The suit challenged the agency's management plan for Jackson, in particular the adequacy of its environmental impact report.

To the surprise of almost everyone who learned of it, the CDF had long been conducting massive industrial logging operations in the Jackson as a cash cow for the agency's coffers.

In August 2003, Mendocino County Superior Court decided in our

favor, tossing out the old management plan. As the new plan worked its way through the rewriting process, no logging occurred at Jackson.

By May 2008, when Forests Forever and other litigants signed a

period the forest will be subject to strict harvest restrictions.

The plan includes a new public oversight body called the Jackson Advisory Group. Taylor said the group has the authority to review essentially all timber harvest plans during the implementation period.

In that time the group "will work with the public and Jackson staff to develop a consensus long-term landscape plan for the forest."

Taylor said the advisory group at present is made up of 13 people (including himself) from the Mendocino area who possess

a mix of backgrounds in science, timber management, conservation and environmental activism, and recreation.

Finally Jackson Forest may live up to its formal name, demonstrating that restoration, not clearcutting, is the best way to manage a priceless state forest reserve.

—M.M.

Photo courtesy Diana Ivereigh



In new hands: Pacific Lumber Co. sawmill in Scotia

negotiated settlement agreement, the 50,000-acre forest had been the subject of demonstrations, major media coverage, state legislation, and a successful lawsuit filed by forest advocates.

Today a newly revamped management plan is in place and bodes well for the forest. According to Vince Taylor of the Campaign, during an initial three-year implementation

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Forests Forever
50 First St. #401
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