



The Watershed

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THE NEWSLETTER OF FORESTS FOREVER

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Bush declares war on U.S. forest protections

Since President George W. Bush unveiled his "Healthy Forests Initiative" in August 2002 his administration has added several tactics to its offensive against U.S. forest protections.

The driving force behind the undermining of the safeguards is Mark Rey, the agriculture department undersecretary

who oversees the U.S. Forest Service— and a former timber industry lobbyist. Rey worked from 1976 to 1994 for the National Forest Products Association, the American Forest Resource Alliance and the American Forest and Paper Association. Given Rey's background, environmentalists expect the Bush administration's assault on forests to be an ongoing battle.

In addition to "Healthy Forests," some of the other ways the Bush administration is trying to undo forest protections include: weakening the National Forest Management Act, failing to implement the Roadless Area Conservation Rule and allowing timber companies a stepped-up role in managing public forests, giving the companies permission to log merchantable trees as payment. All of these changes could have disastrous consequences for California's 18 national forests.

See "Bush," p. 8 col. 2

CDF awards contracts for Jackson logging

The California Department of Forestry (CDF) recently awarded contracts for planned logging of over 900 acres of Jackson Forest's oldest trees.

Yet shortly after CDF granted the first contract to Schmidbauer Lumber Co. of Eureka, the company pulled out of the deal. CDF had awarded the contract to Schmidbauer April 8 for logging of 540 acres in Brandon Gulch, one of Jackson's most scenic and ecologically valuable areas.

A Schmidbauer spokesperson said the company had made a "horrible calculation

error" in submitting its bid of \$456 per thousand board feet— for a total of \$3.4 million. Consequently CDF has offered the contract to the second-highest bidder, Mendocino Forest Products of Fort Bragg, which offered about \$350 per thousand board feet.

Two weeks after awarding the Brandon Gulch contract CDF announced another bid award, for logging at Camp 3. This parcel is located in the central recreation area of the forest, next to Brandon Gulch. This contract went to Willits



Forests Forever protest at CDF offices

photo by Andria Strickley

see "Jackson," p. 10 col. 1

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from the Executive Director...

The simplest path to forest restoration: Put back the parts we have left and add time

A respected forester has said it takes one million years for a forest to produce a 2,000-year-old tree.

While it may be impossible to prove exactly how many years this feat does take, clearly a long period of soil and ecosystem development is required.

This poses an interesting challenge for foresters, ecologists, and activists working to bring some semblance of old-growth characteristics back to a damaged forest ecosystem such as Jackson State Forest.

We cannot bring back virgin, or ancient, forests exactly as they were, even in centuries. But we can restore a cutover forest enough to provide rich and valuable habitat for critters that prefer, or even depend on, old-growth. In doing so humans can gain prime recreation sites and other environmental values.

We can go a long way on such a project in a single human lifespan just by taking commonsense steps.

The beginning point of this discussion, though, must be to recognize that the phrase "restoring ancient forest" is an oxymoron. Ancient forest ecosystems are far too complex for us to describe in detail given our current knowledge, let alone replicate the many parts and processes that comprise them.

Just how complicated are ancient-forest ecosystems?

One way to answer this question is to point out that we don't yet even have a complete inventory of all their parts.

Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson estimates the number of known species of organisms on Earth, microorganisms included, at around 1.4 million. Yet evolutionary biologists generally agree this is less than one tenth the number of species in total. Rainforests such as our *temperate* rainforests in the Pacific Northwest are some of the most bountiful storehouses of biodiversity.

Another way to address the question is to point out the complexity of ecological relationships in an ancient forest.

In our region's virgin forests flying

squirrels swoop to the ground to feed on truffles, the pungent below-ground fruiting bodies of certain fungi. By later excreting the fungal spores the squirrels disperse the fungi, whose spores penetrate the soil and form fungal caps on trees' root tips. The caps enable the roots to absorb water and nitrogen from the soil. At the same time the subterranean fungus, lacking chlorophyll, feeds on photosynthetic sugars flowing through the tree root. Without these mycorrhizal fungi ancient forest trees could not grow normally. Hence the squirrels, trees and fungi all need each other to some degree.

Complicated? Sure. But science has shown that systems this intricate are pretty commonplace in Nature. The

"So how do we go about restoring forest ecosystems we don't even understand? A good start would be to simply stop logging certain places, to let them alone."

above-described interrelationship, now recognized as fundamentally important to the health of forests, was not even understood until the 1980s. There is still a great deal we haven't studied and thus don't know about forests.

Every species saved from extinction represents a wealth of genetic information. This can be used to develop foods, fuels and pharmaceuticals, as well as bring the delight of varied life forms to increasingly concrete-weary humans.

So how do we go about restoring forest ecosystems we don't even understand?

A good start would be to simply stop logging certain places, to let them alone. Forests with big trees (which make up precious and increasingly rare habitat) are prime places to afford greater protection. Forests on steep slopes, where soils are shallow, and forest stands known to harbor rare species, are others.

Restoring ancient-forest structures such as dead standing trees ("snags") of varying sizes is key. Leaving large woody debris on the forest floor provides myriad points of shade and moisture, spots to hide from predators, and burrowing and nesting cavities.

Dropping logs back into scoured-out streams creates pools, riffles, shade, little waterfalls—a variety of habitat conditions necessary for invertebrates and the amphibians and fishes that eat them.

To accelerate restoration we can thin stands that have grown up too thick in the wake of industrial logging operations. Better still, controlled burns can open up the canopy in patches, release nutrients and give trees more growing room.

These and many other steps are relatively simple and can go a long way in a few decades toward bringing back old-growth forest conditions.

Beyond a certain point in our restoration efforts at places like Jackson Forest we will need to rely on Nature to take it from there, to fill in the gaps.

We're a long way from that point. But we know more than enough to get going. And the sooner we start the more parts of the ecosystem we will have to work with.

— Paul Hughes



Proposed changes to management plan would open Sequoia Monument to intense logging

The U.S. Forest Service recently released a plan for Giant Sequoia National Monument that would violate the very proclamation that created the monument—and open the area to widespread logging.

In April 2000, then-President Bill Clinton designated the monument to conserve nearly 330,000 acres of sequoia forest ecosystem.

About two-thirds of all the giant sequoias in the Sierra Nevada are within the boundaries of the monument, located in the southern Sierra Nevada about 30 miles east of Porterville.

The area provides critical habitat for sensitive species such as the great gray owl, Northern goshawk and Pacific fisher, a rare mammal related to the mink and otter.

The proposed management plan would allow the Forest Service to log up to 10 million board-feet annually—enough timber to build 800 single-family homes. While the

“The Forest Service has had three years to prepare a plan and the result is nothing less than a logging proposal.”

sequoias themselves would not be logged, surrounding trees would be harvested, disrupting the continuity of the ecosystem to which all the trees belong.

The language of Clinton’s proclamation clearly states that monument lands are not to be opened for commercial logging operations.

Jason Swartz of the California Wilderness Coalition said even with the variety of tactics the Bush administration is currently using to dismantle forest protections (see article page 1), the Sequoia Monument plan shocked conservationists.

“The (monument) proclamation language was so strong... that (the plan) was in fact quite a surprise,” Swartz said.

“The Forest Service has had three years to prepare a plan and the result is nothing

less than a logging proposal.”

The plan cites fire protection to justify intensive logging of the monument—the same claim the Bush Administration used in proposing its so-called “Healthy Forests Initiative.”

The draft plan tosses aside the Forest Service’s own earlier findings that logging activities greatly increase fire risk and severity. Such is the conclusion of both the Forest Service’s National Fire Plan and a 1996 report by the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project commissioned by Congress.

Although a large fire in the monument attracted huge media attention over the summer, sequoias are remarkably fire-resistant. The trees in fact rely on fire to release seeds from their cones, expose mineral soil in which seedlings can take root, recycle nutrients into the soil, and open holes in the forest canopy through which sunlight can reach young seedlings.

Studies of tree rings of giant sequoias in the southern Sierra dating back to 200 B.C. show the trees survived as many as 60 fires during their lifetimes.

Despite their fire resistance, giant sequoias are especially vulnerable to an array of environmental impacts. Sequoias grow only on sites with an ample supply of sub-surface water, for example, and logging therefore can be perilous for the trees because it dries out forest soils.

In addition, the sequoias’ shallow roots leave them vulnerable to toppling when the surrounding forest is cleared by logging.

As part of the draft management plan for the monument, the Forest Service has proposed six alternatives. The only alternative in the draft that does not call for large-scale logging is Alternative 4, which proposes tree cutting only near structures and in other areas of high human use, as recommended in recent fire studies.

In addition, the alternative relies primarily on hand thinning and prescribed burning to restore the forest and restricts off-road vehicle use to forest roads.

The Forest Service’s preferred alternative, Alternative 6, gives the agency the most power to log the monument with the



Giant Sequoia National Monument
photo courtesy of the California Wild Heritage Campaign

least accountability.

The public comment period for the draft plan closed March 17.

Swartz of the Wilderness Coalition said that because of the strength of the monument’s proclamation he believes the Forest Service will have a difficult time legally implementing its preferred alternative.

“They’re going to have a pretty strong fight on their hands,” Swartz said. “They don’t have a lot of legal ground to stand on.”

— A.S.

Forests Forever draws media attention to Jackson State Forest preservation efforts

The Forests Forever Foundation and its work to preserve Jackson State Forest took a major leap forward recently, making the pages of newspapers such as the San Francisco Chronicle and Oakland Tribune.

The foundation—Forests Forever’s educational entity—also garnered coverage for Jackson in the Associated Press (AP), north coast radio stations and many other outlets.

The first major coverage of Jackson occurred on Thanksgiving Day when the Chronicle ran a lengthy feature on the issue. The article included an inset map and photos of the forest and activist leaders involved.

"The recent approval of a logging plan for this lush redwood forest in the mountains northeast of the town of Mendocino," the article begins, "has angered environmentalists, who say it fails to consider alternative approaches for state-owned woodlands."

Written by Chronicle environment reporter Glen Martin, the article includes information on the lawsuit Forests Forever and the Jackson Campaign group filed against the California Department of Forestry (CDF) over the management plan for the forest (see related article, page 1).

"In the logged areas, we could expect to lose 30 to 40 percent of the canopy," Forests Forever Foundation Executive Director Paul Hughes says in the article. "That would greatly reduce the value of these areas as habitat. It would also encourage nonnative flora such as pampas grass and gorse, and would contribute to the siltation

of rivers and creeks, threatening coho salmon and steelhead trout."

sources, including the Oakland Tribune. The Tribune story, which ran the day of the protest, describes Jackson as "growing into what all sides agree is prime wildlife habitat: mature trees representing the closest thing to an old-growth canopy necessary for such species as the marbled murrelet, a small seabird."

Written by Tribune staff writer Douglas Fischer, the article accurately characterizes the Jackson effort as a struggle to preserve not old-growth, but important second-growth redwoods: "...to activists, these trees are important: 200-foot-tall behemoths that have stood 100 or more years along the Brandon Gulch in the Jackson Demonstration State Forest, near Ukiah.

"Environmentalists say logging would reset the clock on efforts to restore towering old-growth trees in a spot last logged when Grover Cleveland was president."

Other newspapers and radio stations that have covered the Jackson issue recently include the Santa Rosa Press Democrat, Willits News, Ukiah Daily Journal, West County Times (Richmond), Daily Independent (Ridgecrest), Tri-Valley Herald (Pleasanton), KUKI-FM (Ukiah) and KMUD-FM (Garberville).

To read the Chronicle and Tribune stories and other articles on Jackson, visit www.forestsforever.org/newsarticles1.html.

— A.S.

San Francisco Chronicle

BAY AREA AND CALIFORNIA

A place to strut rather than cut

By Glen Martin
CHRONICLE ENVIRONMENT WRITER

JACKSON STATE FOREST,
Mendocino County

The recent approval of a logging plan for this lush redwood forest in the mountains northeast of the town of Mendocino has angered environmentalists, who say it is time to consider alternative approaches for state-owned woodlands.

Specifically, conservationists want to see Jackson and other state forests managed for recreational use, watershed protection and wildlife rather than timber production.

Jackson is by far the biggest of the eight forests in the state forest system, which was founded in 1947. In total, the octet of forests comprises 75,000 acres; Jackson alone accounts for 50,000 acres.

Administered by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), Jackson and its sister forests were founded to serve as "demonstration" forests — commercial woodlands where various approaches to logging could be tried, with "sustained yield" the goal.

In the parlance of commercial forestry, sustained yield refers

Paul Hughes (left) and Vince Taylor say state forests should be managed for conservation and recreation.




Source: ESRI, GDT
Chronicle Graphic

► **TIMBER:** Page A34 Col. 1

Last fall the AP reported on Forests Forever’s lawsuit against CDF. Several newspapers around the state ran articles based on the AP reporting.

More recently Forests Forever held a press conference to protest CDF’s plans to log 540 acres in Jackson.

The press conference and protest attracted attention from several news

Not just 'that tree-hugging woman'

Armed with gumption and research, teacher and sequoia activist Carla Cloer takes on foes in government and the timber industry

Carla Cloer is a woman who is unafraid of controversy.

Winner of the Sierra Club's prestigious John Muir Award, the fourth-generation native of the southern Sierra Nevada town of Porterville still lives in her hometown with her four horses, donkey, mule, seven cats, and dog. And it is there that she works, seemingly tirelessly, to protect her beloved Sequoia National Forest.

Born in 1942, Cloer attended public schools in Porterville before she went on to graduate from UCLA.

"I grew up with no role models for the kind of person I was," she says. "I tried desperately to fit in but always blurted out the truth. I felt at home only in the Sierra Nevada."

Her grandfather built a small summer home in the Sequoia National Forest area in 1930. As a girl, Cloer was so independent that her parents allowed her from age 12 onward to spend her summers alone in the cabin, checking in on her only during weekends.

"I would take my horse and ride these little trails that weren't mapped," she says. "I was a loner and felt that I could be myself only in Sequoia National Forest. I saw the forest just the way (renowned California conservationist) Muir had seen it, before it was changed."

Cloer first became aware of the change in Sequoia National Forest in 1962, when one of her favorite places in the mountains was clear-cut.

"It never occurred to me that people had done this deliberately," she says. "I thought that it was a natural disaster. I called the district ranger and asked what had happened. He replied condescendingly, 'We're logging up there.' I thought that it had been a fire or a bomb, but he said, 'No, ma'am, we're just logging it.'"

"Challenging government agencies," Cloer continues, "was the antithesis of the way that I had been raised. I had a very idealistic view that government agencies

would do what they were supposed to do. I was raised in a conservative family, and I thought that government officials were squeaky clean. Anger burned in me for several years, but I didn't know what I



Carla Cloer

photo by William Neill/www.williamneill.com

could do."

In the late 1970s Cloer discovered a way to make her voice heard when developers proposed building condominiums near her grandparents' cabin. According to Cloer, "I became aware that the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) made agencies include public participation: the law made them listen to me. There are laws that control these guys. There are some things that I can do. We started our own group— the Mountain Community Property Owners— and defeated those sons of guns.... I learned about growth and

grade and percolation test and public disclosure. I armed myself with knowledge."

From 1980 to 1985 Cloer worked with the Peppermint Alert, a group that fought the proposed construction of the Peppermint Ski Resort about 50 miles from her cabin. Ultimately Cloer and her colleagues were successful in defeating the plan, which would have included logging.

After the ski resort battle was won, Cloer's friend Charlene Little of Kernville persuaded her to join the effort to prohibit logging in the giant sequoia groves of Sequoia National Forest.

Says Cloer, "I had presumed that they weren't logging in groves because it was prohibited according to regional guidelines. But the (U.S.) Forest Service said that guidelines weren't official policy. I was really mad. Charlene and I and other environmentalists practiced seat-of-the-pants law."

Thus began Cloer's long fight to save the sequoias. During that two-decades-long battle she and other activists often discussed the idea of making the groves into a national monument.

"No judge would ever say, 'Don't log anymore,'" she says. "We needed something bigger."

After years of work, including writing timber appeals, filing lawsuits, producing slide shows and writing legislation Cloer got her something bigger. On April 15, 2000, President Bill Clinton signed a proclamation giving the groves the national monument status she had fought so long for. (Forests Forever worked from 1998 to 2000 on the sequoia issue, generating 21,473 letters and commitments to write, call, fax, or email regarding the area's protection.)

In September 2000 Cloer won the Sierra Club's John Muir Award for her 20-year effort to save the sequoias, culminating in

see "Carla Cloer," p. 11 col. 2

CDF and California's logging laws: The state's flawed timber regulations are aimed at logging forests, not protecting them

The responsibility for regulating logging in all of California's non-federal forests rests primarily with one agency: the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF).

Forest activists and ecologists widely agree that CDF fails to live up to its responsibility to adequately protect California's

and half by non-industrial private parties. The agency's employees are paid staff who report to the California Board of Forestry and carry out its policy directives. The board does not deeply involve itself in how well those directives are implemented, however. Further, the board typically instructs CDF itself to develop the detailed

companies— and approved by the director of CDF. The plans are intended to address issues such as harvest methods used, volume of cut, slopes and potential erosion, and endangered wildlife present.

Many forest activists believe that CDF, which rarely denies any of the average 1,500 harvest plans it receives annually, mostly rubber-stamps the documents without giving close consideration to the plans' impacts on forests and water.

Although harvest plans are supposed to be reviewed also by the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the California Geological Survey and others, CDF is the primary agency responsible for approving the plans. This, said activist Richard Gienger, gives CDF an unhealthy amount of power.

"If CDF said something is so, it's so. The courts defer to them," said Gienger, a founding member of the Environmental Protection Information Center. "A lead agency has just about overwhelming authority."

Ignoring outside information

CDF in fact often overrides the authority of other agencies, Gienger said. Under state law, for instance, the DFG has ultimate authority over where and how bridges and roads that cross waterways are built. Yet CDF continues to fight that authority, ignoring the DFG's input regarding such issues, he said.

A report published in 2000 by Washington, D.C.-based Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) supports Gienger's position. The report, titled "California's Failed Forest Policy: State Biologists Speak Out," states that biologists interviewed "contend that CDF...increasingly ignores Fish and Game recommendations." The report also states that DFG biologists feel their agency's review of timber harvest plans "is viewed as interfering with the CDF process."

In June 2002, 26 environmental groups, including Forests Forever, signed a petition asking that CDF's authority to approve timber harvesting plans be revoked and



CDF fire truck circa 1929

photo courtesy of CDF

environment from logging damage, however.

While this reputation for ignoring environmental concerns is warranted, the problem with California logging regulation has as much— or perhaps more— to do with the state's timber harvest law, activists say. Aimed more at facilitating logging than protecting the state's forest ecosystems, this law includes few specific environmental protection guidelines, requires little scientific documentation of logging's impacts on forests and leaves wide room for interpretation by the agency.

Regulating logging: CDF's role

CDF regulates about 7.6 million acres of commercially harvestable forestland in California, about half owned by industry

approaches necessary to carry out those directives and does not often look closely at CDF's underlying assumptions. As a result CDF actually has more influence than the board as to how the state's forest policies are carried out on the ground.

The state Forest Practice Act requires the preparation and approval of timber harvesting plans for all logging projects on non-federal land. Charged with reviewing these harvesting plans, CDF is supposed to be accountable for preventing logging from degrading watersheds, harming endangered species and their critical habitat and causing landslides. Non-federal lands include a small proportion of state forests and other government-owned parcels.

The act requires that harvest plans be prepared by a Registered Professional Forester— typically a consultant who works most of the year for one or more timber

transferred to the California Water Quality Control Board. Conservationists generally contend that the water quality board is more committed to environmental protection than CDF. According to Gienger the mandates that established the two agencies are responsible for this difference in attitude.

"The primary role for CDF is to facilitate timber harvesting, whereas water quality's primary mission is to protect water quality," he said.

In filing the petition to take timber harvests' approval out of CDF's hands, the environmental groups cited the fact that more than 85 percent of North Coast waterbodies are listed as "impaired" under the federal Clean Water Act. In addition, the petition states, steelhead, coho and chinook salmon are listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. During the 1990s the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency determined that logging-generated silt was the primary cause of the degradation of these rivers and fish populations.

Yet it is California's forestry law that enables CDF to get away with such lax protection, many activists say.

"Despite the reams of paper that go into these harvest plans, there is often a lack of simple direct information..."

The state Forest Practice Act: filled with loop holes

Passed in 1973 the Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act was written to greatly expand the regulation of logging in California. The law was created not with the primary goal of protecting the state's forests and waterways, however, but chiefly to facilitate timber harvesting.

The act states that timber production takes precedence over ecological preservation:

"The Legislature thus declares that it is

the policy of this state to encourage prudent and responsible forest resource management calculated to serve the public's need for timber and other forest products, while giving consideration to the public's need for watershed protection, fisheries and wildlife, and recreational opportunities alike in this and future generations."

"This mission creates an imbalance in which the timber resource takes precedence," Gienger said.

Contain no real documentation

Another of the Forest Practice Act's major flaws is that it does not require precise evaluation of impacts to watersheds, activists say. Under the notorious "Technical Rule Addendum No. 2," the state's forest practice rules, which flesh out the Forest Practice Act, specifically state that "no actual measurements are intended" in evaluating watershed impacts. This means numerical values such as stream temperatures and turbidity levels in water— among many impacts brought on by logging— need not be collected or assessed.

"Despite the reams of paper that go into these harvest plans, there is often a lack of simple direct information that would allow adequate protection of the resources," said Gienger.

Many scientists and public agencies have criticized the Forest Practice Act for failing to protect watersheds and wildlife from logging damage. In 1999 U.S. Forest Service geologist Leslie Reid wrote a paper in response to a request from then-Assemblymember Fred Keeley (D-Boulder Creek) pinpointing some of the rules' shortcomings. In her response Reid concluded that the regulations allow logging that causes mudslides, hurts water supplies and endangers fish and wildlife. In the report Reid urged state officials to shift authority over logging rules from CDF to

the cabinet-level Resources Agency. In addition she said that state forestry authorities should accept more scientific research



Logs from old-growth harvest

photo © Djuna Ivereigh

from outside sources.

Reid's paper, which was not endorsed by the Forest Service, drew fire from six congressional Republicans, who urged her agency to fire her for writing it. Shortly thereafter the Forest Service decided in Reid's favor and allowed her to keep her job.

Interviewed by Forests Forever for this article, Reid did not directly criticize the forest practice rules. She did speak generally, however, about the logging damage she sees occurring in California's forests. She also noted the lack of a monitoring system to prevent such damage.

"One of the things that's pretty noticeable is that a lot of the waterways in California have been listed as impaired," she said. "That suggests sediment is a pretty broad problem."

Reid also spoke of the increasing number of landslides caused by logging in California. Activities such as tractor logging greatly increase erosion, she said. Eliminating large sections of the forest canopy through logging also increases the amount of rainfall that hits the ground directly, adding to erosion.

The effects of logging-induced erosion can be devastating, as the residents of Stafford, Calif., found out in 1997. That year a landslide caused by a CDF-approved Pacific Lumber Co. clear-cut above the town destroyed five homes and damaged several others.

see "CDF," p. 9 col. 1

Spotlight: **The Sierra Nevada Framework**

The U.S. Forest Service in March proposed changes to the Sierra Nevada Framework that would double current levels of logging in the national forests in the Sierra Nevada range.

First implemented in 2001, the framework was heralded by environmentalists for protecting old-growth and laying the groundwork for watershed restoration.

Under the revised plan, logging companies would be allowed to cut trees up to 30 inches in diameter in old-growth forest reserves—areas where only 12-inch-diameter trees can be cut under current rules.

Ecologists believe that this proposed logging increase poses huge threats to the health of Sierra forest ecosystems and the wildlife that depend on them for survival. The Forest Service is expected to make final the proposed changes in September.

TAKE ACTION:

Write a letter to the editor of your local paper opposing the proposed changes to the Sierra Nevada Framework. Send copies of your letter to Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein. See box next page for the addresses.

"Bush"
continued from p. 1

'Healthy Forests' initiative

Introduced in August 2002 at the height of the fire season in the West, Bush's "Healthy Forests Initiative" would increase logging in national forests in the name of fire protection. Under the plan, the Forest Service could skip environmental reviews for logging projects the agency deems necessary for preventing fires.

Environmental groups see the initiative as an attempt to play on public fears and convince the nation that logging is the best approach to preventing wildfires. Fire ecologists and other experts, however, say that logging actually can increase fire risk

by removing the bigger trees in a given area. These larger trees are the most fire-resistant and provide moisture and shade that prevent the spread of blazes.

Bills backing the Bush initiative were introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate last fall but were not voted on. Now the administration is attempting to implement the plan by rewriting Forest Service rules. Some of the proposed changes include:

- Categorically excluding commercial logging, salvage logging and ranching/grazing from environmental review by considering them "hazardous fuels reduction activities." Max Wilson of the American Lands Alliance in Washington, D.C., said these categorical exclusions are likely to result in the Forest Service abusing its discretion in order to promote logging. "Under categorical exclusions you need so little documentation and so little oversight that it's always very easy for the Forest Service to pack more (logging) into these projects than it really should," Wilson said. "There wouldn't be any opportunity for administrative appeal on these projects so the only way for anyone to have any real sway is through litigation."
- "Streamlining" environmental analysis and compliance with the Endangered Species Act for hazardous fuels reduction projects. This step would affect

projects that currently require in-depth environmental analysis under federal



The proposed changes threaten species such as the great gray owl
photo courtesy of the Bureau of Land Management

law—such as logging in archaeologically significant areas—and thus cannot be conducted under a categorical exclusion. Ten pilot projects are scheduled to be implemented soon to test the streamlined procedures.

- Restricting public participation. Under the proposed changes, the right to appeal on Forest Service projects would be limited to individuals or organizations that submit substantive comments during the project's public comment period. The scope of the appeal would be restricted to their original comments. The changes would limit dramatically the public's power to stop potentially damaging logging projects.

Undoing years of progress:

From NFMA to the Roadless Rule

Besides the Healthy Forests Initiative, the administration's most significant attempt to increase logging in national forests is arguably its proposed new rules for implementation of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA).

Passed in 1976, the act requires that each of America's 155 national forests have a management plan in place. Forest plans are critical for protecting species viability, incorporating sci-

see "Bush," p. 9 col. 1

ence and involving the public in public lands management. The plans set timber harvest goals and limits, restrict off-road vehicle use, and evaluate potential wilderness areas.

The proposed changes would remove the requirement that forest management plans consider the cumulative effects of multiple projects in the same area. In addition, the proposed changes would eliminate requirements for public and scientific involvement in approval of forest plans.

In addition to the NFMA changes, the administration is pursuing several other avenues that would undermine forest protections. These include:

- Categorical exclusions allowing logging of up to 50 acres of live trees or 250 acres of "salvage" trees— trees dead or dying from disease or wildfire— in national forests. The trees could be logged in virtually any part of the forest not home to endangered species or designated a wilderness area, without opportunity for public comment.
- Failing to support the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. The rule, which

President Bill Clinton signed during his final days in office, protects 58.5 million acres of national forest roadless areas from road construction and most logging. The rule is supported by overwhelming scientific evidence of roadless areas' importance to the survival of wildlife, particularly species at risk of extinction.

Timber companies sued against the rule, and a 2001 court order delayed its implementation. The court order has since been rescinded by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

- Increased "goods-for-services stewardship" contracts. With its passage of the 2003 Omnibus Appropriations bill on Feb. 14 Congress greatly expanded the Forest Service's authority to allow private timber companies to manage areas of public forest, giving the companies permission to log big trees as payment. This "goods-for-services stewardship contracting" creates a powerful new incentive for companies to log large fire-resistant trees, old growth, and other ecologically valuable trees.

Wilson of American Lands said in addition to the damage each of the forest protection changes would do individually, they also would have cumulative effects.

"It's nightmarish," he said.

—A.S.

TAKE ACTION:

Contact your congressional representative. Contact information can be found at:

www.house.gov/MemStateSearch.html.

Send a copy to:

Senator Dianne Feinstein
One Post St., #2450
San Francisco, CA 94104

Senator Barbara Boxer
1700 Montgomery St., #240
San Francisco, CA 94111

The Forest Service limits how much logging can take place in a particular area to help ensure that cumulative impacts of erosion do not cause the kind of devastation the Stafford slide did. California, however, lacks a system for measuring logging's cumulative impacts, Reid said.

"It's really straightforward," Reid said. "The idea is that if you manage the rate of an activity to keep the level of impact below a particular threshold then you can avoid (damaging the forest). ... The state doesn't really have anything like that."

Forests Forever Executive Director Paul Hughes notes that California's wild salmon fishery declined steadily from 1973, the year the Forest Practice Act became law. Now the fishery is shut down entirely. Bad forestry, he said, is pretty clearly the leading culprit in the fishery's demise.

"It's evidence that our current Forest Practice Act isn't working," he said.

Hughes emphasized that few if any activists are saying that CDF staff members are intentionally trying to harm forests or benefit the timber industry.

"By and large, CDF employees are hard-working and well intentioned. Unfortunately, they are also working within a flawed regulatory system."

Since the Forest Practice Act's inception various environmental groups have attempted to reform the law through legislation. In 1999 Forests Forever originated the most sweeping forestry reform legislation to go through the state legislature in over 30 years. Assembly Bill (AB) 717 would have rewritten the state's logging regulations to require timber companies to use scientifically valid data to measure the impacts of their activities on wildlife and water quality. Gov. Gray Davis, in apparent response to timber industry pressure, withheld his endorsement of the bill

throughout its life in the Capitol. His failure to support the bill was a key reason it died.

"A long list of reforms to California's forest practices is needed," Hughes said. He cited wider no-cut buffers along streams, mandated and clearly defined sustained-yield standards, and bans on clear-cutting and removal of ancient forest. "We are constantly chipping away at this list of priorities. The key is getting it done while there are still quality forests left to save."

The Board of Forestry: Strong ties to timber

Because the Board of Forestry is respon-

see "CDF," p. 10 col. 1

sible for developing general forest policy for California, it could therefore toughen the Forest Practice Act rules— and require CDF to actively enforce them. Instead the board continually has ignored requests from agencies such as the water quality control board to revise the rules.

As part of the Forest Practice Act's passage, the nine-member Board of Forestry was restructured to help ensure that the public had a greater influence in its decisions. The law mandated that five of the board's members be from the public, three from the forest products industry and one from the range-livestock industry. All are appointed by the governor to serve four-year terms. In the years since the act was passed, however, many of the "public" appointees have had ties to the timber industry.

"There's quite a range of what you can interpret as 'public,'" Gienger said.

In January 2002, Board of Forestry member Paula Ross resigned following criticism from environmental groups that she was too closely tied to the timber industry. Ross, who was appointed by

Davis, worked for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, which represents timber mill workers. Although nominated as a public member, environmental groups said she had generally voted with timber interests.

The reason both the Board of Forestry and CDF have such strong allegiances to timber is because the agencies and rules were established largely by the very people who stood to benefit from logging, Gienger said.

"Timber harvesting was self-regulated from the beginning," he said.

Finding solutions: legislation and beyond

CDF and the Board of Forestry have such strong loyalties to the timber industry that even if the Forest Practice Act were greatly strengthened it would not be enough to change the way they operate, Gienger said. In his opinion forest management models need to be established that give concrete proof of the effectiveness of environmentally sound logging.

Gienger envisions coalitions buying up tracts of timberland and carrying out timber harvests that do not damage the forest. That way, he said, "People can see that they can work in the forest and earn a living and sustain themselves outside of the industrial model."

Hughes said achieving ideal forest protections will require reforms in several areas— from rewriting the Forest Practice Act to increasing funding for inspection of logging activities. The reforms must eventually extend even to areas seemingly unrelated to forestry, such as campaign finance reform, he said.

Said Hughes: "Until we better regulate timber industry contributions to politicians we will have the likelihood of conflict of interest creeping into Board of Forestry appointments."

—A.S.

Redwood Products, which bid \$419.65 per thousand board feet. Together the Brandon Gulch and Camp 3 plans would produce almost 19 million board feet.

"CDF is liquidating these mature redwoods to swell its agency budget," said Forests Forever Executive Director Paul Hughes. "To do so they are using intensive and outmoded logging methods that destroy water quality, salmon habitat and recreational areas."

Together with the Campaign to Restore Jackson State Redwood Forest and other local concerned citizens, Forests Forever held a protest and press conference April 8 at CDF offices near Willits to protest the Brandon Gulch harvest. The protest drew about a half dozen media outlets, including the Oakland Tribune. (See related story, page 4.)

Forests Forever and the Jackson Campaign hope to obtain a court order to stave off logging in Jackson until a lawsuit the groups filed against CDF last October goes to court. If the groups win the suit

TAKE ACTION:

Contact Sen. Wesley Chesbro (D-Arcata) and Assemblymember Patty Berg (D-Sebastopol) and urge them to actively seek to halt the Brandon Gulch and Camp 3 timber harvests.

Write to:

Senator Wesley Chesbro
POB 785
Ukiah, CA 95482
phone (707) 468-8914
fax (707) 468-8931

Assemblymember Patty Berg
104 West Church St.
Ukiah, CA 95482
phone (707) 463-5770
fax (707) 463-5773

If you live outside Chesbro's and Berg's districts you can look up your own state legislators' contact information at www.leginfo.ca.gov. Click on "Your Legislature."

CDF probably will have to stop logging Jackson until it rewrites the forest management plan to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The suit asserts that the management plan and its accompanying environmental

report fail to meet fundamental CEQA requirements. These include assessment of cumulative environmental impacts and CDF's failure to adequately address public and expert comments. The suit is set for a

see "Jackson," p. 12 col. 1

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*"Restore,
Reinhabit,
Re-enchant"*

"Carla Cloer"
continued from p. 5

the designation of the monument.

Ara Marderosian, executive director of the nonprofit Sequoia ForestKeeper, says part of what sets Cloer apart as an activist is her fearlessness.

"She will just stand out there and not bend her ideas and concepts," Marderosian says. "She's had so many experiences that have allowed her to be hardened to criticism."

Yet Cloer's accomplishments are not due to gutsiness alone, Marderosian says. Behind her passion lies an arsenal of well-researched facts.

"She can translate what she's hearing to other people and let them know what the reality is," he says. "She's an interpreter of the Forest Service's Orwellian language."

Cloer's work undoubtedly is not over yet. Despite the designation of the monument, the sequoias are facing renewed threats of logging. The Forest Service has proposed

a management plan for the monument that would allow the agency to log up to 10 million board-feet annually—enough to build 800 single-family homes. (See article, page 3.)

Cloer knew the monument designation, while a major victory, did not guarantee the sequoias permanent protection. The day after Clinton signed the proclamation, she says, "We found huge loopholes. Logging was not banned. The Forest Service wants to log the monument now more than before it was a monument."

Her constant work on the sequoia issue has left little time for Cloer to reflect on her accomplishments. Asked what her proudest moment as an environmentalist has been, Cloer takes a long pause. "There have been two," she says finally. "The John Muir Award was really an honor. But," she quickly points out, "I didn't do the work alone. And I'm lucky enough to be working on an environmental issue that has these big trees as its symbol."

"My other proud moment," she continues, "occurred during a recent trip to the back country in Sequoia National Monument. On my way to the trailhead I spotted a stand of trees with blue paint—indicating that they were to be logged—still on them. But those trees have been saved, at least for now. In my little town I'm ostracized as 'that tree-hugging woman' but when I saw those trees I saw the tangible results of my efforts."

Cloer has the following advice for those new to environmental activism. "People who have a passion to protect the environment might go to a meeting, feel inadequate to the challenge, and drop out. But look at me. I'm a schoolteacher from Porterville with no money, power, or influential friends. If you want to achieve something, don't think that someone else can do it for you or do it better than you."

—Kathy Kaiser

"(Cloer) can translate what she's hearing to other people and let them know what the reality is. She's an interpreter of the Forest Service's Orwellian language."

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"Jackson"
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hearing July 7 in Mendocino County Superior Court.

Forests Forever held a major donor briefing March 20 at the San Francisco home of Jeanne and Jim Newman to help underwrite the lawsuit. Even though the Iraq war began on the day of the event and anti-war protests gridlocked many intersections for hours, the fundraiser still drew 11 guests. The event had raised \$4,500 by press time, with several more pledges due in.

While pursuing legal remedies Forests Forever over the past several months also made significant strides in putting the Jackson issue before the eyes of state legislators.

Working with Sierra Club California, Forests Forever sought a legislative sponsor for a draft bill that would have ended large-scale commercial logging in Jackson and changed the forest's official purpose to restoration of old-growth characteristics.

From November to March, Forests Forever generated more than 4,000 citizen-directed postcards to Gov. Gray Davis and senators and assemblymembers asking them to support such legislation.

Forests Forever additionally garnered 140 commitments from Californians to visit Sen. Wesley Chesbro (D-Arcata) to encourage him to support Jackson legislation.

Chesbro was the primary legislator Forests Forever targeted to introduce the Jackson bill. Chesbro, in whose district Jackson is located, ultimately refused, citing chiefly the magnitude of his new responsibilities as chair of the Senate Finance Committee.

Despite the refusal of Chesbro and other legislators to sponsor the bill, Hughes said he is optimistic that with persistence Jackson advocates ultimately will get the legislation introduced—possibly as soon as next year.

"Almost 5,000 citizens spoke up in opposition to CDF's Jackson logging plans

last fall, and only 50 were in favor," Hughes said. "Elected officials know they can't continue to turn a blind eye to this growing controversy and it isn't going away."

Restoring Jackson will likely be achieved through more than one avenue, Hughes said.

"Bringing about changes comparable to the ones we're seeking at Jackson typically takes 10 or 15 years," he added. "The Headwaters fight took 10 years before a small preserve was finally set aside in '99 and that battle continues hot and heavy.

"Our campaign to restore Jackson Forest is off to a very promising start."

— A.S.

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