

Mendocino Redwood Company Draft EIS/PTEIR for the Habitat Conservation Plan/ Natural Communities Conservation Plan/Timber Management Plan

Public Comments

C.V. Starr Center, 300 S. Lincoln Street, Fort Bragg

Wednesday, December 12, 2012

(Note: there were no official public comments at the Ukiah meeting on December 11, 2012)

Beth Bosk (editor of a bioregional newsprint magazine/forest activist): I have no problem with a timber company thinking 80 years ahead. I just don't want to see any "tit for tat" that makes it more difficult for the folks who live in the neighborhoods of these forest lands to protect them. Any new bureaucracy, any time limits that interfere—in the course of the last decades of forestland protection where people have risked their lives to keep these forests standing. Please understand that (where's John [sic] Shott, who's one of those folks we occasionally talk with/call at the last minute for the last-minute assistance he could give us?). When Mike Jani was hired to be the Chief Forester of the Mendocino Redwood Company, I believe it was the direct result of the problem we had become for the Fisher family in their own social milieu, and to some extent he was sent in to mollify forestland defenders—and, to a very large extent, he did. And sometimes he even got visionary in the process of doing that. One of those situations had to do with what was known as the "Kaizen (spelling?) tree sit." Kaizen was a THP that was left over from what is known as the Enchanted Meadow Albion Nation Uprising, where Louisiana-Pacific had proposed clearcutting three areas of forestland along the Albion drainage and the whole community, the whole coast, and assisted by others coming in, totally rose up, and, in effect, drove Louisiana Pacific out of this county.

When MRC bought the property, two of those THPs had pretty much been devastated by Louisiana Pacific but one remained intact, and they proposed coming in and cutting there. As a result of that intention, there was a tree sit that became a tree village and a lot of negotiation as to how that timber harvest plan could be modified. And the modification was that the selection would be based on carbon sequestration which meant protecting the forest soils with canopy. And despite the fact that the originator of this device from Sri Lanka wasn't allowed back into the country, despite the fact that there was no precedence for that here in the United States, Mike Jani was willing to alter his plan with that in mind. And it worked really well on one half of the landscape. And on the other half of the landscape, using the same selection criteria, it failed miserably. And the reason it failed miserably was because a road that the forestland activists would not commit to, because we live here and we know what happens when all of the sudden there are wind gusts that come in to recently cut alleys and just rip out multiple trees, many of them large, many of them Doug-Fir. And that is exactly what happened in Kaizen on the east side of the road, where the largest of the Doug-Fir remain after the selection process, a road was put in and I want to show, you know, despite the efforts of forestland defenders...here is a young 24-year-old woman who chained herself to a tree that had been put on a road to stop it from going further. And when the deputies were called in, one of the sergeants ordered the poor faller to cut the tree right by her neck. I mean, he could have broken her neck, he could have killed her. It was that

kind of real dedication by the young people in our region displayed. That road went in and a year later, two years later, we have another one of those storms where the wind just whips around finds it's alleys, and forty trees, forty large fir trees unexpectedly to Mike, fell. He was as alarmed, maybe not as upset, but just, it was unexpected. And what is climate change, climate change is those kinds of winds finding those kinds of alleyways, climate change is temperature changing so that our soils change, our vegetation patterns change. It's insane, it's just absolutely insane to base anything on 80 years, for the next 80 years, and making it more difficult for generations of forestland defenders after us, to do their job. CDF (or whatever you're calling yourself these days) adopts our terminology of "ground-truthing." We go in there, we find these ephemeral streams that for some reason the foresters didn't catch 'cause they weren't there that part of the year. We find vegetation species that are supposed to be extinct that aren't, and we hide them from the forest company. Because in past years, they've ripped out that kind of vegetation, they have scared away marbled murrelet, and what they're doing now really is not allowing the spotted owl to thrive. There's gotta be more [...] what I'm saying is, this is, I mean, you were, because of these slides, you were pushed into droning, I mean you're not talking, at least, I don't know if you're thinking, but you're not talking in terms of specific landscapes. It could be that logging for lumber is going to be so passé in another decade or two, where forests will be compensated, forestland ownerships will be compensated for other values like a place for birds to roost or keeping the water fresh, for the salmon habitat. Logging for timber may go extinct. But something like this, it seems to me, stands in the way of that healthy progression. Why can't the timber company just say, "hey, we've got an 80 year plan, this is what we'd like to do, but we're not gonna 'tit for tat' about it," because we honestly, as forestland protectors, do not know what implications of this agreement between you and them are. It, you know, where are we protected as forestland activists, to continue our activities in the forestland. Because our activities in the forestland are permitted and encouraged in California law.

Bernie Macdonald (years of community activism, Sierra Club toxics committee): My comment is just with one small area, because the nature of what we're doing to the planet at the moment with herbicides and pesticides is outrageous, unethical, it's immoral. We've managed to change things, disease occurrences, orders of magnitude, we're having a lot of trouble with birth defects and such. I don't know if the salmon are having problems but I would suspect with what's being thrown in there, its part of the problem. So, what I want to see done, with this is that I want no herbicides at all used in this application of the woods ever again. It's only being used for monetary convenience. If we're going to kill these forests, these forests that we have responsibility for are very important. What we're talking about here are basically the lungs of the west coast, if we do a lot of cleaning up of air that passes through here. What I want to see is I want to see... the fact with the Mendocino County has a law that says "precautionary principal." You don't do something if there's a possible damage to the environment, you don't do it. That's what we need, we need to take responsibility for that. Much of my effort will be involved in blocking that totally. Any use of any potentially dangerous chemistry, potentially dangerous, I didn't say dangerous, potentially dangerous chemistry. Is so that we can avoid being the Gulf, which has dead spots over much of the Gulf, and was not exactly helped by the Macondo spill and their application of the right chemistry so that their damaged by error to the environment would be kind of minimized. That's basically what I want to say, I want to say it now so that we can

move on it, because I have no question in my mind that we'll cause damage and it could be beyond recovery if we continually use herbicides.

David Gurney (Ft. Bragg): Based on what I've heard here tonight from people affected by this who say they'd have a hard time getting through 2,600 pages of detailed scientific documents, and the fact that only 82 days remain for public comment, that now spans the Christmas holiday season, I want to formally request that the public comment period be extended for a period of at least 60 days to April 21st, 2013. I feel that for a plan that looks to cover 80 years into the future and has taken approximately a dozen years to create, giving the public a few short months to respond is very little to ask. I also wanted to mention that, something I didn't hear tonight that someone whispered in my ears, is the issue of carbon credits that these forests represent. I wonder if that's going to be dealt with at all in these environmental impact statements. I think that's an important issue as we're looking at global warming, these forests represent something more than just lumber, they represent the air that we breathe and the survival of our planet, possibly, so I think that's a serious issue that needs to be taken into consideration.

Malcom Macdonald (local resident): My name is Malcom Macdonald, and I live along the Albion River in a ranch, where Macdonalds have lived and worked and also died since the 1800's. I could recite every single one of the mill owners because members of my family worked with worked for or knew on a personal basis everyone from Mr. McPherson, whose name is misspelled on the street here in Ft. Bragg. I can tell you where he shot and killed his pet bear outside of his house in the 1870's during the financial crisis that more or less shut the mill in Noyo at that time, and anyway, we won't go into that, that's another story. So 80 years ago, Franklin Roosevelt wasn't even president yet, there wasn't any social security. Eighty years before that, there wasn't even a mill in Albion, let alone Noyo. The first mill was started there in the mid-1850's. Essentially I'm not alone I would think 80 years into the future is ridiculous. And on a sort of personal level, as I said the Macdonald family and the Robertson family (which Macdonald's married into) have known every single one of these mill owners on a personal level. Standish and Hickey, who owned the property in the 1890's and 1900's, probably the last people who actually lived in or near Albion or this whole area on a full-time basis—they're the last people that anybody in my family would have really wanted to invite over for lunch or dinner more than once. Mr. Jani came once in 1999 and brought a potted plant from Kmart with the sticker still on it, to my mom you know, who had lived there for 80 years. That tells you something about him and Sandy Dean who came with him. So, on a personal basis about what's happening, you might as well give them a take permit for human beings too, because just this year, right next to/within a hundred feet, maybe a couple hundred feet of the house I live in, MRC felled trees across the road that I walk and drive down to the river bottom on, every single day I walk or drive on it during good weather. Multiple times during good weather usually, to check on the calves, to check on the apple trees, to check on this and that, to get firewood, to whatever. They felled trees across that road for their cable corridor without any warning to me, without any warning signs put up, without it in their Timber Harvest Plan. Talk about the changes in how things are amended, it was only after I called CDF/CALF IRE and spoke to Chris Curtis (so you can check on this), only afterwards was the amendment put in. So if I'd been killed—we actually had a hearing-impaired visitor just a month before that (maybe it was 2 months) visiting us who literally could

have been walking down that road and not heard the chainsaws. I don't think I or Larry Tunsey or some of the few people I know who live around here who would walk where they could hear chain sawing really close. But it literally could have been possible if that visitor was six weeks later or their logging was six weeks earlier, those trees could have fallen onto somebody. It was only because I got busy on the phone or the computer that I didn't drive my pickup down there before those trees were felled, and that pickup would have been stuck there, because it's the only road to get out—for another ten days, because it was going to be ten days until they planned to (excuse me, this makes me a little emotional, as you could probably guess), it was going to be ten days before they were going to cable those logs off that road. Now, after I called and called again, called the CDF, called to John Andersen (the local forester), the local forester himself came up in a couple of days and cut those trees out of there. Down the river, overlapping in time, there was another Timber Harvest Plan of MRC's where the cables went across the Albion River in tidewater. Twice I walked down the river while those cables, on the days they were logging with cables, I waited until they dropped it down. Well, one day I did, the other day it was up, I just made sure where it was and scootched under it quick. Both of those days there were canoeists or kayakers or boaters on the river. I can't say that I saw them go up to where the cables were because I went father down. There was no warning sign on the road, and there was definitely no warning sign for the canoeists/kayakers on the river. Those people, you can have imagined what would happen. You know, it's a one in at least probably hundreds of thousands if one of those cables would snap, but it's possible. MRC does not practice safety for humans, let alone for wildlife and birds. They have a barbed wire that goes back to the Masonite days in the Slaughterhouse Gulch area that I've told the local forester about—definitely last winter, and I may have done this several years ago too, informed them about it. A barbed wire that goes back to the old eucalyptus plot of Masonite (that's some brilliant forestry right there from 50 years ago) and those eucalyptus trees, even though they've hacked and squirted them, there are hundreds if not thousands of little seedlings coming up, some of which are taller than this building, and I've said/reminded them about that, maybe they need to go in there and do something about the ones that area coming up, and that's been for since maybe two years after the original hack and squirt there. Nothing's been done about those. In that area, where the eucalyptus are, there's a barbed wire fence, that a barbed wire top of an old fence (it was probably 50 years ago put up) that runs about yay high, some places there are branches falling over it, and there are either deer, or humans, or lots of other wildlife that can just walk right into that willy-nilly, you know, accidentally. I almost walked into it because so much of the eucalyptus bark has peeled off and fallen down over the wires that you can't see it, you know, most of the time unless the sun is shining exactly in the right place. As I said, I've told MRC about this and it was still there within the last week. I went and checked, once I finally found out that this meeting was going on. The thing about the cable logging over the river with no warning signs, and the falling tees over the road without any warning to the immediate neighbors, and the tail holds that they were putting up (were within about a hundred feet of power lines, by the way), CAL FIRE/CDF has no rules, as far as I can tell, at least Mr. Curtis couldn't find one, about logging within a hundred feet of power lines. Apparently, there aren't any rules about falling trees over roads. Apparently there aren't really specific rules about the cables over the rivers. And I want to emphasize again, all of the amendments about that, those violations were done after the fact, they were written in after the boaters went up and down the river. They were basically written in on the boating part, after that whole logging operation was brought to a standstill, you know, was done. I

don't think that's a way to run CAL FIRE, run CDF, and I don't think, you know, agencies like that that can't even provide common sense rules about safety for human beings, let alone the wildlife, can be giving an 80-year permit to some company that I wouldn't trust from here to the door. I've seen Mr. Jani, he reminds me of the old song "Smiling Faces." You know, where they say one thing at one time, and they mean something else, and I've seen him do that in action. I only have my five minutes, which are probably already over, but if you guys want to know some more about this, maybe you should read the column I write in the newspaper, because some of that's already in there. And, I'm sorry to say, I don't even know these people. I've lived on the Albion River, you know, since I was born. My father, my grandparents, my great uncle, my great aunts, all of that, have been there, and you know, I don't know Mr. Browder from anybody. I don't know these foresters, I don't know any of these other so-called "experts" who I'm sure are highly educated, good people in many ways. But, if you can't contact the Macdonald family, you can't find the Macdonald ranch on the Albion River, we're about the only actual people/non-corporation between the town of Albion and the Flynn Creek Road and the other/main branch of the Albion all the way out to the Comptche Road. You can't find us in the last 10 or 11 years to comment on this. Hello? Catch a clue.

Dennis Tavares (retired licensed forester for California): I've lived here since 1963, and I've lived in the country, and I'm now surrounded by bears and deer and 'coons and cougars. I've commented to Mr. Jani that, like a rising tide raises all boats, a rising forest inventory solves all kinds of problems. If that thing was flat, then you could argue about a whole lot of things. But the fact that they are going to raise the inventory, almost to half of what the old growth line of 50,000 to 60,000 feet per acre was, is remarkable in itself, that they would make that commitment. And I see problems, various problems, and I agree with Malcolm that 80 years is a long time. Once I went to SJ Hall lecture at the University of California given by John Zivnuska and he was, well after the Forest Practice Act was implemented, he was about 80-something and he said, well at the time people were promoting 100-year plans, you know. And John said, think about it—it's 1980. Go back a hundred years, it's 1880, not far after the Civil War. If you had lived then, and you wanted to project, for some reason, what was going to be the future that you had to deal with, could you have even envisioned the world we live in now? No, no way. So, I commend the people from Mendocino Redwood and the federal government for even wanting to look out that far, and in some parts of, some aspects of governance and business activity and our social life, we do have to take a long look. I've fought a short outlook in business many, many years. So, I think this is a good thing for our time now. We're a powerful species, we have huge impacts when we do things. I remember coming down—I wrote a book about this place—I was coming down Philbrook, was logging Big River, it was a 120-year old redwood stand, trees almost 250 feet tall. And a wind came up, mid-afternoon, a little unexpected, it had all the trees the layouts made for them to fall 'em downstream, the wind was pushing this way, the guy had the undercut facing downstream to the west already in, so the guys just with their machinery and their organization, and the power that they could command, they took some of the dirt piles, pushed them up against the other side of the tree, put a blade on the Cat up there, stabilized the tree, and some faller (screwball guy) went in under the blade, put the back-cut in, and they had some skidders with ropes, and took the tree where it was supposed to go, and they saved the tree; and they were a happy group of human guys, they conquered nature, and in a point of adversity. So, that's what we are. We're powerful, we organize, and we know how to get

things done. And that also creates problems for us, because we can impact large areas quickly. With the advent of the chainsaw was a remarkable thing, the advent of the crawler tractor was a remarkable thing. So, in this modern world in which we have these tools, like the atomic bomb in this area of warfare and so forth, we have to have big, scoping activities, and think about things, and actually make plans, even though we can't really tell where we're going. There's no way that Mendocino Redwood Company knows what 80 years from now looks like. So, like I say, I've been at this game a long time and I commend them for even taking the time and trouble to do it, instead of cutting out and getting out the easy way, and all the more power to them and anybody else who wants to put time in on this thing. I would think that I was glad to see it had the aspect where it would, what they call (I forget the term) as you get information (that's why I asked the question), as information comes in, do we get to learn from it? Do we all get to see it, so that if Fish and Game says "no more fishing salmon," and Mendocino Redwoods biologists and everybody else says "the rivers are packed with them," and we say "somebody's making a mistake in the sampling out there." So we have to have access to information, and if for no other reason, the fact that MRC is going to fund the monitoring, we will learn a lot and if they can actually accomplish a build-up of that inventory, you won't recognize this place. When I came here, every ridge you looked at had a very uneven top to it, because it had old-growth mixed trees, you know, and now it's all been shaved down like a [?] haircut, crewcut. It's going to back the other way, if this occurs, in much of this area that Mendocino Redwood Company owns, so anyhow, from my part (I mean, I'm not engaged in the game anymore, I don't make any money from it, although I have some timberland out in the country), I think it's a good deal. I just hope that the funding is adequate because the people who (I forget the name of the Mendocino land trust or whatever), that bought the 7,000 acres for Big River for parks, they can't get the funding, the \$50,000 a year endowment to take care of problems, that hardly takes care of one roadslide. You don't understand how expensive it is to maintain a property. Georgia Pacific had 1,000 miles of road to take care of. Mull your mind over that and put dollars on it, and you didn't drive them away that, Bosk, they walked away because they couldn't make enough money any more, in the game. They cut too many trees too fast, and then there wasn't enough left to keep the game going.